



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh  
Kilkenny County Council

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2025 ISSUE



### EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Corporate Department for inspection by the Elected Members.

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**The National Day of Commemoration Regional Ceremony 2025 was held on Sunday, 13th July, on the grounds of Kilkenny Castle.**



**Fáilte Ireland announcing Kilkenny County Council has been selected to receive funding under its new Home of Halloween Pilot Destination Development Scheme.**



**Launch of the Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025–2028**



# PLANNING

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to August 2024	Total January to August 2025
Planning Applications Received	525	650
Planning Applications Granted	439	498
Planning Applications Refused	38	45
Complaints Received	103	89
Warning Letters Issued	43	68
Enforcements Notices Issued	21	39
Cases Closed	47	102
Cases sent for legal prosecution	0	11
Section 5's Received	47	47
Section 5's Decided Upon	45	39

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Development Plan 2021 – 2027 - Update on Review

The Minister recently published new Guidelines on the implementation of the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision*. (*NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*). These Guidelines set out the housing demand projections to 2040 for each local authority by translating the NPF requirements into estimated annual average figures. As a first step, Planning Authorities are required to assess the current City and County Development Plan core strategy and settlement strategy against the objective of the Guidelines. This comprises a review of the adequacy of existing zoned lands to cater for the NPF housing growth requirement figures for the full duration of the existing Development Plan.

Upon completion of that step, a Report will be issued to the Members, with a recommendation from the Chief Executive detailing how the objectives of the Guidelines will be secured. Kilkenny County Council are currently in the process of two variations dealing with Castelcomer and Ferrybank/Belview which will be assessed against the Guidelines. An assessment for remainder of the County and impacted settlements is currently underway.

Pending the outcome of that process, the commencement of the review of the 2021 City and County Development Plan, and preparation of the new Development Plan, will be determined at a future date in consultation with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.

### Castlecomer Settlement Plan

A Proposed Variation 5 to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan (KCCDP) and align the KCCDP with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) as relevant commenced public display on the 30<sup>th</sup> May and submissions were accepted up until the 27<sup>th</sup> June. A total of 15 submissions were received.

The Chief Executive's Report on submissions was considered by members at the July 2025 Council meeting, and it was resolved to materially alter the Proposed Variation. The preparation of the material alteration documents, and associated environmental assessments, will also consider the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued in July under Section 28 of the Planning Acts.

### **Ferrybank / Belview Settlement Plan**

A proposed Variation 6 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 commenced public display on July 18<sup>th</sup>, with the closing date for submissions being September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Variation no. 6 proposes to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Ferrybank / Belview into the current City and County Development Plan.

A drop-in public information session was held in the Abbey Community College in Ferrybank on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, with an afternoon and an evening session. Approximately 70 people attended this information session.

A Chief Executive Report will be completed following the statutory public consultation.

The Chief Executives report will consider the proposed variation, the submissions made and will also consider the requirements of the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued in July under Section 28 of the Planning Acts.

### **TAKING IN CHARGE**

Works are progressing on the following estates:

- Fiodh Mor & Leaca Ard, Abbeylands
- Hillview, Bennettsbridge
- Rathullord

### ***Active Land Management***

- The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has come into effect. The Council prepare the RZLT maps, and Revenue administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. Relevant landowners must have filed a return with Revenue by 30<sup>th</sup> May, and any queries in relation to payment of the tax should be directed to Revenue. Two sets of maps were on public display until April; the Final Maps for 2025 and the Annual Draft Maps for 2026. Five rezoning requests were made by landowners for impacted sites on the Final Maps 2025. Ten submissions were made on the inclusion or exclusion of sites from scope for the tax, on the Annual Draft Maps. Decisions on the rezoning requests were communicated to the landowners by 30<sup>th</sup> June. Determinations on the ten submissions on scope were made and the landowners were notified by 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Planning Authority has received notification of four appeals to An Comisiún Pleanála regarding determinations on scope.

- There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT later this year, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council.

### **Conservation**

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social.

An advisory service on conservation matters is provided to the public and colleagues while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

**Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025:** Conservation projects are ongoing.

**Thatching Grant 2025:** Conservation projects are ongoing.

**Inistioge Architectural Heritage:** EDPM Ltd. Were recently successful in their tender application for consultancy works on historic cobbles, the Tighe Memorial and the steps of Inistioge Castle.

**Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2026:** The scheme has been launched for 2026. The closing date for submission of applications to the Conservation Office, Planning Department, Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny is 5pm Friday 26th September 2025. Applications can be found on the Kilkenny County Council website at [Grants - Kilkenny County Council](#) or at the Planning Office.

For the month of July and August, the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

- Planning Referrals.....21
- Further Information Requests .....2
- Clarification of Further Information Requests.....2
- Section 57 Declarations.....1
- Post Planning .....1
- Part VIII – 1 (*Part 8 05/25 Redevelopment of Thomastown Community Centre*)

### **Building Control**

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
August 2025..... 225	August 2025 ..... 32
August 2024..... 229	August 2024 ..... 28
August 2023..... 227	August 2023 ..... 27
August 2022..... 239	August 2022 ..... 28



**Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant**

Applications for the vacant homes grant continue to come in on a steady basis. 82 grants have been paid out to date. The TRO promoted the scheme at the recently held Iverk Show in Piltown. It was a very busy day for the staff with a lot of interest in the scheme.



To date the Council have paid out €4.5 million to successful applicants. The following are the full statistics up to 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2025:

Number of Applications Submitted to-date.....	360
Number of Approvals/ Approvals in Principle to-date .....	170
Grant Drawdown to-date.....	82
Number of Queries during the month of August .....	68

**Derelict Sites**

CPO's for properties at Kilmacow and Callan are now completed. There were no additions to the Derelict Sites Register and two properties were removed.

**Butts Area Regeneration Framework**

The final Regeneration Framework Plan for The Butts were presented to Kilkenny City Municipal District Members at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July. The members were fully supportive of the proposals. The plan is being finalised in conjunction with our consultants for submission to the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government.

# ENVIRONMENT

## CLIMATE ACTION

### Community Climate Action Fund – Phase 2

Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme is now open for Expressions of Interest (EOI) at [Submit.com](https://submit.com). To date, 50 people have made informal contact and 24 have completed an EOI on submit. Community Climate Officers of Carlow, Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny worked together and with 4 successful communities of CCAF phase 1 to show examples of good practice projects. The Climate Action Office selected 3 groups from CCAF phase 1 for shooting of videos presenting the measures completed on their grounds. Two videos with short and long version have been released and showed high engagement. A third video will be released in September. Release date for Phase 2 of the CCAF have not yet been confirmed by DCEE.

### Over 55's Climate Course

Kilkenny County Council's Age Friendly team, Older People's Council (OPC), and Climate Action team are hosting a six-week climate action course in Kilkenny City, specially designed for people aged 55 and over. The course starting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September is expected to attract 40 people, 33 have registered to date.

### Supporting Delivery of Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Office continues to meet with each of the 25 service areas in the Council who have committed actions in the KCC Climate Action Plan, in order to review delivery of the actions and provide support to service areas as required. To date, we've met with 10 Service Areas (LEO, Arts Office, Creative Ireland, Civil Defence, Fire & Rescue Services, Biodiversity, Architectural Conservation, Heritage, Public Lighting and Internal Audit). The remaining meetings will take place later in the year.

### CO2 Emissions

A letter from DCEE was issued at the end of July to all public bodies highlighting the public sector progress towards 2030 targets and updating public bodies on new EU Directives. SEAI published their annual Public Sector Energy Performance report, outlining results of each public bodies in 2023. Results for 2024 and final scorecard will be made available in September and SEAI annual report will be published in Q1 2026. Currently, based on data inputted on the SEAI M&R system in May, Kilkenny County Councils' CO2 emissions reduced by 7% in 2024 compared to 2023, and reduced by 36.6% compared to the 2016-2018 baseline period. The M&R system is a web-based software system through which public bodies such as Kilkenny County Council report energy, emissions and related data (Energy Projects, Building Stock Register, Vehicle Register & Procurement and Business Travel) to SEAI each year to enable SEAI to track progress towards energy and climate policy targets.

### Retrofitting Council Buildings

Work is continuing on the SEAI Pathfinder Programme, which with the support of the Regional Energy Unit, will allow Kilkenny County Council to access 50% for capital costs of retrofitting Council buildings. The first three buildings which it is proposed to work on are County Hall, The Watergate Theatre and the Watershed Leisure Centre. A Project Design manager and Integrated Design team framework is currently being established and designers for project on the County Hall building should be appointed in November. Funding for first phase of works at the Watergate Theatre, tendered by the facilities management section, are at approval stage with the SEAI. Works are schedule to start in October 2025 and finish in May 2026. A designer team for phase 2 will be appointed in Q2 2026.



## **Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy**

The Climate Action Regional Officer and Energy Officer are working with the Roads Section (*Machinery Yard*) to develop the Council's first Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy for Kilkenny County Council Fleet. The emissions from fossil fuels used in the fleet are one of the most significant challenges for the local authority sector. The strategy, which is driven by new EU legislation and is an action of Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan and is a very detailed look at how we can tackle this.

It will address the following:

- An audit of the vehicle stock
- Eco-driver training for fleet staff
- Replacing fossil fuels with renewables/biofuels
- Replacing diesel vehicles with EV's
- Fuel procurement and payment systems
- Route selection

A Draft Strategy Report has been reviewed by the Working Group and a first version will be presented to Senior Management in mid September.

## **Climate Action Training**

Since March of this year training has been provided to staff and members of the Climate Action Steering Committee, by the CARO under the [Local Authority Climate Action Training](#) programme across 8 themes including Climate Risk Assessment, Nature-based Solutions, Biodiversity, Weather Forecasting; Green Public Procurement; Biomethane, Energy Performance and Financing of Climate adaptation and Mitigation. After a break for the summer, more training will be available from September and will continue throughout 2026-2027. Since the end of June, all webinar recordings and presentations from the *Local Authority Climate Action Webinar Series* (under the *Building Capacity* training pillar) are accessible via the Climate Action Training Programme LMS available on the **Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG)** [LMS Moodle platform](#).

## **Local Enterprise Office – Going Green Event**

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in conjunction with the Climate Action Team are hosting Funding and Supports for Going Green 2025. This event is taking place on Tuesday 30th September. This event is aimed at informing entrepreneurs about the supports that are available to support the sustainable journey and becoming greener. This collaborative event will involve agencies that have a remit and are offering supports towards sustainable development.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

### **TEAM UP TO CLEAN UP-TOGETHER FOR KILKENNY [19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2025]**

Last year, over 120 incredible groups from residents' associations, schools, Tidy Towns committees, businesses, and community and environmental groups came together, resulting in over 1,200 volunteers taking action across the City and County. It was a big success, not just for the environment but for the strong sense of community it fostered.

This year's clean-up weekend will take place **from Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2025. All groups and schools can register via our online portal <http://cleanup.kilkenny.ie> and/or can email [togetherforkilkenny@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:togetherforkilkenny@kilkennycoco.ie).**

## **Savour Your Wellness Event-Mountain View, Ballyhale**

The Environmental Awareness Officer and members from the Community Department of Kilkenny County Council have teamed up to collaborate with the staff at Mountain View to organise a Vintage Clothing Expo and Clothes Swap event on the October Bank Holiday Monday.

Mountain View, Ballyhale will become a feel-good hub for all things sustainable, stylish and soul-nourishing. From 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. it will bring together a clothes swap, vintage fashion finds, wholesome food and plenty of fresh-air vibes.

There will be inspiring talks on sustainable style, food waste, and healthy living plus energising physical activities to encourage increased mobility and movement. This event is rooted in the national drive for a circular economy. Donations from car parking (*included in race entry*), race entries, and stallholder fees go directly to Cois Nore's €2 million fundraising effort.

## **Green Teams Update-Waste Audit and Characterisation of Council Buildings**

The Green Team is an all-organisation approach to improving Kilkenny County Council operationally and structurally and put us on a more sustainable footing. Membership is made up of representatives from all departments in the organisation. Their role is to co-ordinate and facilitate actions to influence colleagues to take environmental, social and resource efficiency measures in the workplace. A key part of the role is to communicate with colleagues about what they can do to help improve sustainability.

The Environment Department as part of Kilkenny County Council's Green Teams tendered for a "Waste Audit and Characterisation" of the three main buildings which are County Hall, John's Green House and Patrick's Court. The Clean Technology Unit from Munster Technological University won the tender. Work is progressing on the Waste Audit of the 3 main buildings with County Hall and John's Green completed with Patrick's Court being assessed next week. A Draft Report will issue to the Green Team for their input following completing of the audit.

## **WASTE**

### **RMCEI Inspection**

The Waste Team are working their way through the almost 2,000 inspections planned for 2025 under the RMCEI Programme (*Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental nspections*). By the end of Quarter 2 the team have completed over 1,000 inspections.

Inspections are carried out in the areas of commercial and household waste, construction and demolition waste and illegal waste activities amongst other areas. The team complete this program of works whilst also investigating complaints received by members of the public. To-date the team have closed out over 250 complaints.

### **Bring Banks Usage**

The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of **727 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres to date in 2025. Loughboy Shopping Centre (*19 tonnes collected*) Aldi - Kilkenny City (*17 tonnes collected*) and Lidl - Johnswell Road (*15 tonnes collected*) were the busiest locations in the City in April. Lidl in Thomastown (*11 tonnes collected*) and Supervalu in Thomastown (*9 tonnes collected*) were the busiest outside of the City in April.



Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday period

## SUMMER IN DUNMORE

### Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

A busy summer in Dunmore saw 432t of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and 283t of Municipal Dry Waste (MDW) deposited at the site. Broken down across the three months of June, July and August the figures looked like 138.6t, 148.9t and 144.5t respectively for MSW. While 91.1t, 85.04t and 107.1t represent MDW figure broken down across the three respective months.

The various recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the months of June, July and August and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

RECYCLING STREAM	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Cardboard	5.3	11	10.2
Plastic	4	4.3	4.2
Paper	6.8	7.4	9.3
Glass Bottles & Cans	5.5	6.6	2.8
Food Waste	1	0.9	1.9
Green Waste	42	17	51.4
Mattresses	4.3	4.8	3
Metal	12.4	14	9.5
Timber	8.8	11.7	11.7
Tetra Pac	0.46	0.5	0.44
Waste Oil	1.3	0.4	0
WEEE	14.3	19.4	16.5



Planning for the annual Bulk Waste drop off week to take place in September 2025 was on going throughout the summer months.

This ADI allows the public to dispose of bulky furniture and timber product for a nominal fee of €5 per load and will run from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>. It has proven to be a huge success each year it has been rolled out.



New WEEE signage and advertising was added to the WEEE storage shed in May 2025 bringing colour to the site and guidance to the customers.

## **AIR NOISE WATER**

### **Water Quality – Farm Inspections**

Council staff continue to carry out farm inspections with 210 initial inspections and 80 follow ups completed to date. Farm inspectors are carrying out the onsite inspections and identifying sub basins that have high Nitrates and Phosphates present and focusing the inspection program in areas that are at risk from this pollution. The target for 2025 is 308 inspections.

### **Septic Tank Inspections**

Septic tank inspections have now commenced with 45 completed to date. The target for 2025 is 59 inspections to complete. The EPA recently published 2024 annual report on Domestic Waste Water Treatment System Inspections. The report highlights that at the end of 2024, there were 221 failures between 2013-2024 and that 67% of that number had been fully closed out and remediated. This is a significant improvement on the EPAs 2023 Annual report results, which highlighted that of the 187 failures in Kilkenny between 2013-2023, 57% had been fully closed out and remediated.

### **Environmental Complaints**

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for the month of April 2025 is 68 compared to 81 complaints received in April 2024. The number of complaints received for January – April 2025 is 342 compared to 359 complaints for the same four-month period in 2024. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

### **Noise**

Several staff in the Environment Office have completed Noise Monitoring Course in the previous month. This Training will enable staff to deal with noise complaints going forward and will allow Environment Section to be able to act more efficiently on noise complaints from the public.

### **Air**

Two new air monitors have been installed – Butts area and City Centre. Staff will be monitoring the information received from these air monitors. The majority of Air inspections will take place later in the year. Solid fuel inspections will commence for Q3/Q4. Environment staff have completed 30 inspections to date with 50 additional inspections to complete before year end. The Team are collaborating with the EPA, An Taisce and Waterford Council on an exciting citizen science project with the “Clean Air Together – Waterford” in the MASP.



## **RURAL WATER**

### **Rural Water Monitoring Committee**

Kilkenny County Council intend to re-establish within the coming months.

### **Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026**

Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage approved funding to the value of €663,075 in respect of 13 measures across 5 Group Water Schemes under the MARWP 2024 -2026. GWS benefitting from funding are:

- **Seskin Lisdowney GWS** – Total €243,950. Breakdown as follows:-
  - *Measure A5* – Extension to existing private GWS and new GWS €212,500
  - *Measure A9* – Innovative demonstration projects €7,650
  - *Measure A4* – Water conservation, leakage reduction and prevention €23,800 - recommended by The Expert Panel DHLGH.
- **Kilkeasy GWS**
  - *Measure A6* – Taking-in-charge of GWS and Group Sewerage Schemes €40,000
- **Caherleske-Coolaghmore GWS** – Total €224,125. Breakdown as follows:-
  - *Measure A4* – Water conservation, leakage reduction and prevention €219,300
  - *Measure A9* – Innovative demonstration projects €4,825
- **Ballykillaboy GWS**
  - *Measure A6* – Taking-in-charge of GWS and Group Sewerage Schemes €75,000
- **Annamult Ennisnag GWS**
  - *Measure A6* – Taking-in-charge of GWS and Group Sewerage Schemes €80,000

### **Subsidies for GWS Operations**

51 GWS applied for subsidies in respect of operational costs for year 2024. Payments to the value of €131,512 in respect of 9 subsidy claims released to date. Remaining applications being reviewed.

### **Well Grants - Improvement Works to Private Water Supply**

157 applications received to date, year 2025. Funding to the value of €305,270 paid out. 145 applications received in the same period 2024. Funding to the value of €336,698 released.

### **Tender for Water Testing**

Tender for Water Testing is currently being prepared and is expected to be published shortly. Tender will cover water testing for Public Group Water Schemes, Private Group Water Schemes and Small Private Suppliers for a 2-year period, with the option of extending for a third year.

### **Rural Water Services Conference 2025**

Quality and Quantity – Building Resilience in a Changing Environment. Conference takes place on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at Clayton Hotel, Galway.

## PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

### The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

As part of the above, restoration and enhancement works on the Tholsel building continue to progress throughout the building. Some of the key elements progressed since July include:

**Basement** – Archaeological excavation completed, installation of insulation and first fix M&E and limecrete subfloor poured and underfloor heating pipes installed, see image below. Limecrete floor poured over heating system and ready for laying of limestone slabs.

**Rear Annex & Ground Floor** – Archaeological dig in annex complete, structural stabilisation works in annex completed, installation of R.C. lift shaft commenced, see image below. Stone repairs within loggia continuing.

**First Floor** - New floor installed to accommodate toilets over public reception area.

**Second Floor** – Removal of r.c. concrete flat roof at rear extension, fireproof cladding of existing steel beams completed, treatment of defective floor joints ongoing, windows removed for restoration/replacement.



**Third Floor** – Introduced mezzanine floor now completely removed.

**Fourth Floor** – Soft strip completed, west and north roof elevation re-felted and conservation roof light installation commenced, re-slating of roof also commenced, see image to right.

**External** – repairs to stonework and joint repointing 80% complete on south, west and north elevations, removal of cementitious plaster commenced at east elevation (rear).



The above works form part of the wider “Museum of Medieval Kilkenny” project which will see the unification of the Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum as one single visitor experience.

Other related works:

- The Exhibition Style Guide and Design is now sign-off and advanced to detail design and tender preparation stage.
- The preliminary design proposal for the enhancement of the open space around St. Mary’s Church (MMM) and to St. Mary’s Lane itself is nearing completion and planning will be sought for same under Part 8 in the coming months.

### 2024-2025 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) M1 - PDM

In August 2025, The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht advised that Kilkenny County Council was successful in securing funding under the Project Development Measure and Measure 1 categories of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Programme, funded schemes provided hereunder:

Measure	Project Name	Description	Grant Allocated
<b>Project Development</b>	Goresbridge Riverside Amenity Masterplan	Preparation of a masterplan for Goresbridge Riverside Amenity Area, incorporating Cois Bearbha Park and the Quay, that sets out a roadmap to develop tourism in the area based around outdoor recreational activities.	€49,500
<b>M1</b>	Dunmore Trailhead Link	Development of a new footpath link between the existing Dunmore Community Hall Car Park and the Mass Path leading to Kilkenny Countryside Park.	€37,800
<b>M1</b>	Installation of a floating pontoon & disabled kayak launch pad on the River Barrow at the Boat House Graiguenamanagh	Installation of a floating pontoon & disabled kayak launch pad on the River Barrow, the installation of 2no. age-friendly benches and hard & soft landscaping at the picnic area along the Wood Road Trail Link.	€39,600
<b>M1</b>	Freshford Loop Walk - Trail Improvement Works	This trail is c.6km in length, it's proposed to upgrade 1km of same to include drainage and surface repairs along with the installation of a steel footbridge. The works will also include an upgrade of the existing signage to afford users a more informative and immersive experience. The proposals also include enhancement works at the picnic area.	€40,000
<b>M1</b>	The Kilfane Wood Walking Trail Development Scheme	Development of a new 2.5km woodland walking trail. Works will include the upgrading of trail path surface, directional, information and interpretive signage and age friendly seating along the trail walk.	€40,000
<b>M1</b>	Bearna Breac Loop Walk Windgap Trail Enhancement Scheme	Upgrading of an existing 9.5km walking trail including the trail surface repairs, the provision of a small carpark, information and interpretive signage and seating along the trail walk.	€40,000
<b>M1</b>	Knockadrinna Wood Walking Trail Development Scheme	A new 4.5km walking trail offering spectacular views of the surrounding countryside of South Kilkenny. Works include the provision of a small carpark, information and interpretive signage and seating.	€40,000

10% match funding from the Council's own funds will be added to each of the above allocations which will see an investment of c.€316,000. We were advised that further announcements in respect of the higher value Measures 2 and 3 applications under the Scheme will be made later this year.

### **Community Sports Facility Fund**

The Community Sport Facilities Fund is the primary vehicle for government support for the development of sports and recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment throughout the country. The name of the programme has been changed from the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme to the Community Sport Facilities Fund to better reflect the community focus of the programme.



Under the last call Kilkenny County Council secured funding for the following four projects:

- **Fairgreen – Ballyragget** – Replace goal posts and install artificial grass goal mouths, install walking track around pitch perimeter and seating.
- **Kilkenny Countryside Park** – Purchase storage container to house landscaping equipment associated with trail maintenance & install fencing around hurling wall
- **Garringreen MUGA** – Schedule of repairs to be confirmed
- **Waterbarrack Basketball Court** – Resurface court, replace baskets, install semi amphitheatre seating area etc.

The tendering process for 1) to 3) above is now complete and recommendations issued to the Dept. for final approval to award. While works in the Waterbarracks were completed during the summer and included the upgrading of the existing outdoor basketball court with new nets, a new surface, hoops/backing boards and fencing as well as the installation of lighting and Kilkenny cities first Boules Court. We were delighted with the popularity and use of same post completion, see images below.



*Waterbarrack's Basketball and Boules Court*

### **The Clover Centre Ferrybank**

Earlier this year the council appointed Digby Brady Landscaping Architects, to assist with the preparation of a masterplan for a 9.5-acre site in Christendom, Ferrybank. An initial public consultation evening was held earlier in the year to determine the community needs and desires. On foot of this feedback a preliminary design process commenced and arising concepts were developed and assessed by the wider project team.

The concept plan to emerge from the above process will be presented at the second public consultation event which will take place on Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, at 7pm in Abbey Community College. Once the feedback from this event is considered and the preliminary proposal agreed, a presentation will be made to the Piltown Municipal District members for review with the intention of advancing to planning stage, under Part 8, thereafter.

### **Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum**

Woodstock Gardens experienced a wonderful summer season; welcoming large numbers of visitors who enjoyed the new enhancement works completed in spring. The Walled Garden stood out as a highlight, showcasing the team's dedication and the colourful new perennial planting that brought vibrant displays throughout the summer. Preparations are already underway for the 2026 season, with bulb planting and garden works being carried out to ready the gardens for winter.





This summer, Woodstock shone as an exceptional venue for events. Its stunning setting, historic charm, and beautifully maintained gardens created a unique backdrop for several weddings and the launch of the Biodiversity Action Plan. The Tea Rooms added to the visitor experience, offering a warm and welcoming space for light refreshments and further strengthening Woodstock's reputation as one of Kilkenny's most attractive event venues. During September, the Tea Rooms and coffee truck will remain open on weekends only.



In late July a commemoration ceremony was held at Woodstock Gardens to honour the late Andy Cotterell, Matt Drea, and Anthony Tighe. A commemorative plaque was unveiled, and a tree was planted for each to serve as a lasting tribute to each man's invaluable contribution to the restoration of the gardens. After the formalities, guests gathered in the Tea Room where family and friends fondly shared stories about the three men whose efforts left an enduring legacy at Woodstock.



### **Playground**

Two of our larger playgrounds received painting works in recent weeks, with Callan brightened up by a fresh coat of colour. At Newpark Playground, significant upgrades were carried out, including repainting, a full repair of the zipline, and extensive surface restoration.

In Bigwood, a new community led playground was completed with the support of the Parks Dept. and Community Section. This new amenity has proven very popular with the community and is ideally located just opposite the national school. Going forward this amenity will be maintained by the Parks Dept. in conjunction with the local community.



## LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Summary of 2025 Awards to Businesses

- €216,730 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 10 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €152,017 in Business Expansion Grant assistance
- €45,000 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance
- €19,713 awarded in Feasibility Study Grant Assistance
- 14 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses
- 24 businesses have availed of the Digital for Business programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 21 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €169,840 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises.
- 30 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 6 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 612 people participated in focused small business training, including 69 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 254 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

### Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny Autumn Training and Events Programme 2025

Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh officially launched the Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny Autumn Training and Events Programme 2025 alongside trainers and Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny staff.

This programme schedule provides potential new entrepreneurs and small business currently operating in the County, the opportunity to develop new skills and adapt to the ever-changing economic environment.



The courses on offer range from Start Your Own Business Programmes, Management Development Series, Facebook for Business and some mentoring clinics in areas such as Social Media, Financial, Business Advisory, Digital Marketing and many more.

### BROADBAND/ DIGITAL UPDATE

#### Promotion of 'Screen Kilkenny' at the Galway Film Fleadh

Representatives from the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Economic Development Unit attended the Galway Film Festival on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July to promote an exciting new initiative, 'Screen Kilkenny', a dedicated website to showcase what County Kilkenny has to offer. This project aims to position County Kilkenny as a premier destination for film production, offering a rich selection of locations, skilled professionals, and robust support services in the heart of the South-East.





## **‘Our Kids Code’ Workshops at BCPs**

After a successful series of Trinity College Dublin (TCD) ‘Our Kids Code’ taster workshops at Kilkenny libraries over the summer, this initiative returns to a number of Broadband Connection Points (BCP’s) for the Autumn programme, coordinated by the Broadband Officer. The family coding activities are aimed at children aged 7 to 12 years old, but all children are welcome to participate.

## **Basic IT Training**

The Broadband Officer is working in partnership with the KCETB to provide opportunities to rural communities to engage in basic IT training at their local Broadband Connection Point (BCP). Following on from a successful course delivered at Muckalee Community Centre, the six-week Autumn programme will commence in September for new and existing learners.

## **Night Time Economy**

Call 3 of the Night Time Economy Diversification fund was launched in July to support events taking place after 6pm between Sunday and Thursday in Kilkenny City during September, October and November. The following applicants have been approved funding:

- Low Lane Café
- Ryans Bar
- The Nerd Quiz
- Gillian Grattan
- Cult Collective
- National Reptile Zoon
- SEA School
- The Set Theatre
- The Dance Club
- Medieval Mile Museum
- The Happy Pottery.

## **TOURISM**

### **Festival Supports**



Kilkenny County Council was successful in its application for inclusion in Failte Irelands “Home of Halloween” three-year pilot project aimed at reclaiming Ireland internationally as the authentic “Home of Halloween”.



Roll out will including working with members of Kilkenny Tourism to support their Halloween activity, to elevate our authentic Kilkenny lore around the Kilkenny Witch trails and engage with City Centre retailers to “*Dress the City*” for the new season and to engage with the public to come out and enjoy all the additional events currently being programmed.

### **Marketing and PR**



Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in preparing Kilkenny’s marketing and PR plans for 2025. To support the destination for the shoulder season, Kilkenny Tourism launched its autumn campaign “Take it Slow” in September.



The campaign is performing very well for both the craft and food producers. The promotion of Home of Halloween and Yulefest will also feature heavily our end of year campaigns.

## Tradeshows and Events

July and August have been busy months for the tourism team in terms of events and the promotion of Kilkenny both locally and nationally. Hotels have reported good occupancy rates for August, although visitor attractions are not seeing this reflected in their numbers.

### Iverk Show 2025



Kilkenny Tourism welcomed all guests of Iverk Show to Kilkenny on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Attendance was estimated at 20,000 with Kilkenny Tourism's stand located in the Enterprise Section of the site.

Feedback from volunteers on the day was that there was great interaction from Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary visitors in particular. Numerous visitors from as far away as Westport, Mayo, Adare and Donegal. The event was very worthwhile, from a domestic tourism audience and it is felt that Kilkenny Tourism CLG should attend the show annually in order to build membership into the future.



2025 is the first year Kilkenny Tourism had a presence at the Tullamore Agricultural Show and it proved to be a great success. The event was held on 10<sup>th</sup> August with over 60,000 people in attendance on the day.

### 2025 Summer Networking Event

Kilkenny Tourism, supported by the Council and the Local Enterprise Office, held a networking event on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> July where all tourism & hospitality businesses in Kilkenny were welcomed. The event gave both existing and prospective members of Kilkenny Tourism the chance to meet and discuss ways to work together to promote Kilkenny as a great tourism destination.

Guests heard tourism thoughts & insights from a distinguished panel of guests on the evening. It also offered guests on the evening the chance to enjoy Kilkenny's Medieval Mile Museum.





## HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up-to-date progress for August 2025 under the various support services.



Work Commenced on a 12-unit Turnkey + Part V project on Barrack Street, Goresbridge by MGM Construction for Kilkenny County Council



18 units at the Mews, Abbeylands, Ferrybank - turnkey and Part V project - completed and handed over to KCC by Whitebox Developments in August 2025



2 x wheelchair liveable homes completed at Loughboy, on the site of the former community centre. Photo August 2025



Works Progressing well in Abbeyhill, Thomastown - Mixed Tenure project by KCC Housing Capital under a Design and Build Contract.

## AFFORDABLE HOMES

The summer months have been a busy time for the Affordable Housing Team, promoting the Affordable Purchase Scheme as an unmissable opportunity for First Time Buyers and Fresh Starters to become a homeowner.

### 2025 CURRENT SCHEMES:

Work has been progressing to deliver Affordable Homes at two new developments at Kilmacow and Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

#### Church View Kilmacow:

Working in collaboration with Michael Murphy Building Services, 13 No 3-bedroom A rated Affordable Homes have been announced for sale with the support of the LA Affordable Purchase Scheme. The online portal will open for applications on **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 at 12.00 noon.**



*Affordable Housing Team meeting with An Garda Síochána, Waterford as part of the marketing and promotion of the upcoming Affordable Homes. left to right: Superintendent Gavin Hegarty, Bríd Hynes KCC, Grace Quinn KCC, Inspector Shay Keevans, Chief Superintendent Anthony Petit.*

### **Abbey Hill, Thomastown:**

Abbey Hill, Thomastown is the first Kilkenny County Council led mixed tenure development inclusive of Affordable Homes under the Affordable Purchase Scheme. Built by Ormonde Construction and supported by Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Abbey Hill is a stunning new development of 2 & 3 bed homes of exceptional build quality. A total of 22 homes are available for purchase under the Affordable Purchase Scheme - 16 No 3 bed and 6 No 2 bed homes. All are A2 BER Rating. Abbey Hill is also one of the first developments in County Kilkenny to have achieved Home Performance Index (HPI) Certification, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and high-quality construction.

Date and time of Application Portal has yet to be confirmed but it is expected to be early to mid-October.



### **FURTHER UPDATES:**

#### **2024: 46 AFFORDABLE HOMES DELIVERED**

Work has been actively progressing with the successful applicants, their legal representatives, Kilkenny County Council's legal team, and the developers involved in the three housing schemes launched in 2024. The Affordable Housing Team can confirm that all 46 units have now successfully reached sale closure, marking a significant milestone in the delivery of these schemes.



2024 SCHEMES	Number of Units	Status
Nyne Park Callan Road, Kilkenny City	22	All sales closed
Cluain Glasan, Granges Road, Kilkenny City	10	All sales closed
Abbey Meadows Ferrybank	14	All sales closed
<b>Total Number of Affordable Homes</b>	<b>46</b>	

#### 2026 AFFORDABLE HOMES:

- Work is progressing with the team to deliver further Affordable Homes across the City and County. Kilkenny County Council are in the planning stages of another LA led mixed tenure site in Kilkenny City which will include Affordable Homes.
- In addition, there is ongoing engagement with Developers across the City and County to explore other options of Affordable Homes.

Full Information on the Affordable Purchase Scheme and all Kilkenny Schemes are at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>

Affordable homes offered through the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme are primarily aimed at first-time buyers (with some exceptions), who need help bridging the gap between their available funds – including any support from the Help to Buy scheme – the mortgage they can secure, and the full cost of a new home. Through this shared equity scheme, eligible buyers can purchase a newly built home at a reduced price, while the local authority retains a percentage equity share. This share is calculated individually, based on the buyer's income, savings, and maximum mortgage capacity. Buyers can gradually repay this equity share over time. The scheme allows for a discount of between 20% and 25% off the market price, depending on the property's value and the applicant's financial situation.

For any queries in relation to any of the above please contact the Affordable Housing Team at: Email: [affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie) Tel: 056-7794280

#### HOMELESS SERVICES

The government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address [NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie) . Further details are available on [www.kilkennycoco.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie).

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants or who may wish to in the coming months should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

<b>HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY AUGUST 2025</b>	
<b>Homeless Presentations</b>	77
<b>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</b>	
Prevention & Interventions	59
Emergency Service	15
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	3
<b>HAP Place Finder Service</b>	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 <sup>st</sup> day of month	150
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	2
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	148
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	5
<b>Provision of Emergency Accommodation</b>	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ August 31 <sup>st</sup>	38
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	7
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	5
Households ( <i>singles/couples</i> ) in Transition Emergency Accom. ( <i>Own Front Door</i> )	42
Households ( <i>Families</i> ) in Transition Emergency Accommodation ( <i>Own Front Door</i> )	16

## SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

<b>SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2025</b>	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on August 31 <sup>st</sup> ( <i>Gross Need</i> )	1,326
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on August 31 <sup>st</sup> ( <i>Net Need</i> )	669
Number of Social Housing Applications received in August	74
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	46
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	28
Number of applications assessed during August	22
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at August 31 <sup>st</sup>	19

<b>HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY AUGUST 2025</b>	
Total active HAP tenancies	411
New HAP tenancies set up	31
HAP allocated Social Housing	49
Closed HAP tenancies	52
HAP Rent Reviews	163
HAP Other tenancy amendments	776

<b>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS AUGUST 2025</b>	
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made in August	12
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made to date 2025	201

## TENANCY MANAGEMENT

### Complaints

The Tenancy Management Section of Kilkenny County Council deals with anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. Total number of issues as of the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2025 were 175 issues.



Complaint Type	Number of Complaints	Number Investigated	Number Ongoing	Number Closed
Drugs related; Violence; Racism; Threats & Intimidation	51	35	6	10
Damage to property, animal related (dog/horse/fowl); Refuse/dumping/hoarding	58	34	11	13
Noise; Parking/boundary issues; Other	66	35	9	22

### MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

The Housing Operations team have commenced a pilot scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock as agreed with the department. The completion of stock surveys will allow Kilkenny County Council to improve the delivery of our planned maintenance programme.

MAINTENANCE CALLS AUGUST 2025	
Maintenance calls in August	486
Maintenance calls year to date	4,804

### PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2025 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in the amount of **€2,575,197** comprised of €2,188,917 (85%) grant and €386,280 (15%) KCC contribution.

#### GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED AUGUST 2025

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	128	€1,476,201
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	14	€46,668
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	207	€1,221,078
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>€2,743,947</b>

#### GRANTS PAID OUT AUGUST 2025

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	42	€466,510
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	4	€12,768
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	96	€512,167
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>€991,445</b>

### HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 2025

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	21	2	€216,000	4	€434,278
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>€216,000</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>€434,278</b>

### VOIDS ACTIVITY AUGUST 2025

Number of Voids Upgraded Ready for Allocation in August 2025	6
Number of Voids to Upgrade on the 31 <sup>st</sup> of August 2025	48
Total Number of Voids Upgraded for Allocation to Date 2025	52

## COMMUNITY

### Community Projects

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing projects and schemes in the Community Department.

TOWN & VILLAGE SCHEME			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	Near completion
Callan 2023	King's River Town & Village Project – River bank and amenity area	€247,500	Revision to proposal required, design to be prepared
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	Tender awarded and works due to commence September 2025
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Works in progress
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Tender awarded, to commence mid-September 2025
Paulstown Community Group  Project Development Measure 2024	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	In progress. Surveys complete

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	Detail Design Stage
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Design team appointed
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works progressing as scheduled

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES CAPITAL SCHEME				
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	Status	
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Due to commence	
1st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Completed	in August 2025
Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA 2022	Walking track & flood lighting	€40,000	Completed in July 2025	
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Planning stage	
Bigwood Playground 2023	New playground	€35,000	Completed	in August 2025
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Work in progress. Due to be completed in September 2025	
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works commenced	
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender posted to e- tenders	
Glenmore Camogie Club 2025	Contribution towards the re- instatement of walkway	€29,000	Works not yet commenced	
Mullinavat Drama Group 2025	Lighting, Sound, Projector, Screen, Curtains	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Marian Hall Kilmacow 2025	Installation of heating, bathrooms, kitchen	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Kilkenny Girl Guides 2025	Emergency Lighting & Fire Alarm	€15,000	Works not yet commenced	
Kilkenny SOS Lawn Bowls 2025	Fencing, Lighting, Bicycle Bays, shed	€30,000	Works not yet commenced	
Kilkenny Ambers Women's Refuge 2025	New Playground	€35,000	Works not yet commenced	
Freshford Town AFC 2025	Floodlighting for all weather pitch	€32,000	Works not yet commenced	
Deen Celtic Castlecomer 2025	Refurbishment of shower facility into girls dressing room	€26,000	Works not yet commenced	
Graiguenamanagh GAA Club 2025	Gym flooring and showers	€15,000	Completed	in August 2025
St. Joseph's Athletic Club 2025	Shelter and walking track	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Graiguenamanagh Rowing Club 2025	Storage racking for rowing boats	€15,000	Works not yet commenced	
Evergreen Football Club 2025	Spectator Stand	€20,000	Works not yet commenced	



CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullogher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000	Completed in August 2025
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Works commenced
Ballyouskill Community Hall	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced
Windgap Handball Alley	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Not yet commenced
Windgap GAA	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Procurement being finalised

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Christian Youth Centre	Development of existing building to provide community space, meeting rooms	€390,607	Tender period closed. Contractor to be appointed by October 2025
Fr. McGrath Centre	Installation of Solar Panels, Painting of building	€100,474	In progress, windows complete
Muckalee Community Cafe	Coffee Machine, Tarmac, Tables and Chairs, access fob	€50,000	In progress, 50% complete
Castlecomer Community Hall	Repairs to roof, wooden flooring and painting	€50,000	Works due to commence
Ballyragget Community Hall	Renovation of CYMS Hall	€173,000	Procurement process ongoing

### Pride of Place

Kilkenny County Council have nominated three groups for the IPB Pride of Place Awards for 2025. The Judging took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 2025. The groups nominated were Gowran Community Group under the Inclusive Communities category, Windgap Community Group under the Community Wellbeing category and Piltown Community Group for the population category (1000-2000).

In Gowran, the judges were invited to see the new Multi Use Games Area and intergenerational playground and visited Dalton House Daycare centre and tearooms. The judges met with all sporting groups of Gowran at the Young Ireland's facility. Kilkenny County Council provided CCFCS funding for works to provide gym space at the facility.

In Windgap, the judges received a presentation and enjoyed a guided tour of the community centre and tearooms. Judges also went on a looped walk of the village. Along the walk, they met with members of the local artist's groups, heritage group, visited the GAA grounds, and met with the memorial garden committee and a teacher from the school.

In Piltown, the community group gave a presentation at the community centre, before visiting a number of sites in the village. Judges visited the Biodiversity Ink Bottle Bug Hotel, Piltown AFC, Piltown GAA and Iverk Showgrounds. The Judges also visited the Enterprise centre, playground and recently renovated Garda Station which is now the new Garda Station and Community Hub Space.

The awards will be announced on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the awards ceremony in Limerick.



*Pride of Place judging in Gowran*



*Pride of Place judging in Windgap*



*Pride of Place judging in Piltown*

### **Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025–2028**

Kilkenny County Council launched the Age Friendly Strategy 2025–2028 on the 30th July 2025. The Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy is a comprehensive roadmap aimed at enhancing the quality of life for older people across the County. Community consultations were conducted to gather insights and feedback, shaping a strategy grounded in the real experiences and needs of older adults. The strategy aims to continue making Kilkenny an Age Friendly place to live and visit.

Kilkenny has been recognised for several Age Friendly initiatives, including the first Age Friendly City, hospital, train station, hotel, and shopping centre in Ireland.

This new strategy builds on the success of previous initiatives and reflects Kilkenny's ongoing commitment to becoming a truly age-friendly County. Developed in collaboration with the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance, local communities, service providers, and older people, the strategy outlines a series of targeted actions across key areas such as:

- Housing and the Built Environment
- Transportation and Mobility
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Participation
- Civic Engagement and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Safety and Security



The Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025–2028 is available to view on the Kilkenny County Council website: [www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/publications/council\\_publications/age-friendly-strategy-2025-2028.html](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/publications/council_publications/age-friendly-strategy-2025-2028.html)



*From left: Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh; Mary O'Hanlon, Older Peoples Council, Nickey Brennan Kilkenny Age Friendly Ambassador, Anne Marie Shortall Age Friendly Programme Manager and Catherine McGuigan Chief Officer Age Friendly Ireland*



*From left: Ian Gardner A/Director of Services, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Mayor Cllr. John Coonan, Alison McGrath Age Friendly Programme, Deputy Peter Chap Cleere T.D., Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Anne Marie Shortall Age Friendly Programme Manager, Lar Power Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council, Catherine McGuigan Chief Officer Age Friendly Ireland, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Nickey Brennan Kilkenny Age Friendly Ambassador and Cllr. Pat Dunphy*

### **National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2025**

Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly Programme has been shortlisted for the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2025 under the Age Friendly Community Innovation Award category for the 'Creative Christmas Connections' programme. In collaboration with Creative Ireland, a number of free events were organised throughout the month of December for older people to enhance community connections by engaging in creative workshops and events such as festive flower arranging, christmas crafts, storytelling, embroidery sessions and an afternoon of comedy sketches, poetry and sing along for the 'Rambling House Christmas Show'. The winners will be announced at the 2025 National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards ceremony in Galway on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025.



### **Chambers Ireland - Excellence in Local Government Awards**

A project developed through the Age Friendly Programme -‘Information and Activities Programme 2024 for Older People’ has been shortlisted in the Age Friendly Initiative category for the Excellence in Local Government Awards. The Healthy Ireland UcanACT project has also been shortlisted in the Health & Wellbeing category. The Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2025 ceremony will take place on 27th November 2025 at the Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport in Santry, Dublin.

### **Healthy Kilkenny - Eastern Environs Health and Wellbeing Grants**

Kilkenny LCDC recently awarded €20,000 through the Healthy Ireland Fund to support community groups in the Eastern Environs of Kilkenny City. The following organisations and community groups will use the funding to deliver a variety of projects promoting health and wellbeing; Newpark Family Resource Centre, Foroige, Twilight, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Bishop Birch Community Group, Millennium Court Residents Association and Happe House. Activities over the coming months will include youth programmes, community events, nature walks, healthy eating initiatives, smoking and vaping prevention, personal development workshops, and wellbeing talks for older adults. These projects aim to strengthen community connections and encourage healthier lifestyles across the area.

### **Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership**

The Department of Justice has issued all relevant guidance documents and branding guidelines for the establishment of the Local Community Safety Partnership. An expression of interest was circulated through the Public Participation Network (PPN) to identify community representatives, and we are pleased to report a strong and positive response.

The Local Community Safety Coordinator is currently awaiting the statutory nominations from the Department of Justice, which are required before the first meeting of the partnership can be held.

Kilkenny Local Community Safety Office will be launching a community safety survey aimed at gathering insights from residents across the County. The findings will help the partnership identify key safety concerns and inform the development of a comprehensive Community Safety Plan tailored to the needs of Kilkenny.

### **Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN)**

Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN) currently has 483-member groups representing a wide range of community interests across Kilkenny. The PPN was the primary mechanism for nominating community representatives to the newly established Local Community Safety Partnership. There were nine expressions of interest were received through the PPN, resulting in the appointment of representatives from the voluntary sector, older people, youth, people with disabilities, and minority/new communities.

Kilkenny PPN, in collaboration with other PPN's in the South Eastern Region, hosted an online information seminar with Sustainable Energy System to promote their Community Fund 2025. This new fund of €500,000, supports community and not-for-profit organisations in Ireland to carry out sustainable energy upgrades to community buildings and related initiatives. The PPN in collaboration with the Youth Council, the Older Peoples Council and the County Council worked together to initiate intergenerational projects.

Kilkenny PPN also participated in a National PPN Gathering focused on building community resilience in times of emergency. Further information, including newsletters, funding opportunities, public consultations, events, daily updates, and membership applications, is available on the Kilkenny PPN website - [www.kilkennyppn.ie](http://www.kilkennyppn.ie) and on the Kilkenny PPN Facebook page.

## INTEGRATION

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continues to provide on-going integration support to people categorised in the following groups living in County Kilkenny:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) (Ukrainians)
- International Protection Applicants (IPAs)
- Programme Refugees
- Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status

Currently there are 605 Ukrainians in 12 properties under contracts with the Department of Justice, Migration & Home Affairs, 206 Ukrainians living in Offer A Home properties and Irish Red Cross pledged properties, of which they avail of the Accommodation Recognition Payment. There are 195 International Protection Applicants (IPA's) in 4 properties under contract with the Department of Justice.

69% of Ukrainians and 64% of IPAs are registered as employed.

In July, the LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy to:

- 200 Ukrainians with 401 interventions including queries relating to linking them in with partner organisations when they move to other parts of the country and assistance with changing their address
- 71 IPA's with 154 interventions including queries around the immigration process, work permits and accommodation

In total for 2025 so far, the LAIT have supported 787 individuals with 2,557 interventions.

### Events:

The LAIT regularly collaborates with partner agencies and is planning more events for the year ahead. Below are a few of the events that took place over the summer:

- On 10<sup>th</sup> July, The LAIT (in collaboration with KLP) facilitated an information session for BOTPs in Kilkenny on the topic of legal status and entitlements in collaboration with the Irish Refugee Council
- The LAIT-facilitated photography exhibition 'I am Me, not just a Refugee' was on display at the Mayfair Library from 14<sup>th</sup> July to 19<sup>th</sup> July. As part of this there was also a 'meet the photographers' coffee morning at this exhibition in the Mayfair on 17<sup>th</sup> July at 11.00 a.m.
- In early September, the LAIT are holding an information session in collaboration with KCETB on the topic of further education in Ireland. This will be open to all our cohorts and will be held at the Mayfair Library meeting room
- The LAIT also continues to facilitate weekly drop-in clinics in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre Neighbourhood Hall every Tuesday morning



## Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025:

August 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	55	186
Pledged Properties ( <i>shared and not shared</i> )	4	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>205</b>

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status. There was a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction sought to mitigate any unintended impact on the private rental sector. It also reflects recent policy changes which aim to ensure that such temporary and timebound supports for people who are Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are proportionate and equitable.

As the payment is payable monthly in arrears, the first payment at the reduced rate was received by hosts on 8 July 2025. Further details are available on [www.offerahome.ie](http://www.offerahome.ie) or you can contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

A separate programme is in place run by the Irish Red Cross which is seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. If an owner wishes to pledge a spare room in their house, they can contact the Irish Red Cross at (01) 6424600 or email [info@redcross.ie](mailto:info@redcross.ie).

### Community Recognition Fund:

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting Ukrainians coming to Ireland. This funding is specifically targeted at projects that are located in areas within Kilkenny hosting Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. The Dept of Rural and Community Development has recently announced the successful projects under Window 3 of the Community Recognition Fund 2024. For Kilkenny, the following group has been awarded funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development:

### Community Recognition Fund (CRF) 2024 Window 3

Local Authority	City/Town/Village Area	Project Name	Group	Project Title	Total Grant Sought
Kilkenny	Ballyragget	Beech Hall Committee	CYSM	Roof replacement in Ballyragget CYSM Hall	€173,843



## **FIRE SERVICES**

### **Fire Brigade Operations**

The existence of a professional fire and rescue service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hrs per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. 656 no callouts were received to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, hay barn fires, ambulance assists, outdoor rubbish, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

### **Fire Safety Certificate Applications**

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Fire senior fire officers advise on current Building Regulations in relation to the fire safety standards required for proposed developments. In addition, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service fire prevention officers hold fire safety certificate/fire prevention clinics under Section 18(5) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. These are predominantly held on a weekly basis and/or upon request in Fire Station HQ.

- 73 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.
  - A Fire Safety Certificate is a certificate issued by the Building Control Authority which states that the works or building to which the application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997.
- A number of risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and fire safety certification applications to ensure minimum standards.

### **Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003**

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during the first few months of 2025.
- 17 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 4 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation was assessed to date
- 70 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place to date.

### **Recruitment of Retained Firefighters**

Our current complement of Fire fighting staff in our 7 Fire Brigades are as follows:

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| ▪ Kilkenny City (14) | ▪ Thomastown (11)      |
| ▪ Castlecomer (11)   | ▪ Callan (12)          |
| ▪ Freshford (12)     | ▪ Graiguenamanagh (12) |
| ▪ Urlingford (9)     |                        |

The WRC recommendation is to have a minimum of 12 firefighters in all Fire Stations. Three out of the four recruits completed their initial 3 week firefighting skills course in July. These recruit fire fighters have started their service in the brigades of Freshford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. Recruitment for Castlecomer, Urlingford and Thomastown is underway As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment.

Retained Firefighters are men and women who are on call to respond to a range of emergencies. Many retained firefighters have other full or part-time jobs but when the call comes they are ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of a team, ready to face any emergency.

## Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service are obliged under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that our Fire-fighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties.

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed Instructor courses in order that they in turn can instruct and direct delivery of training sessions / courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.



*Urlingford Fire Brigade doing Breathing Apparatus training.*

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. local station, fire authority, region, national and international*) and through a variety of arrangements.

A nominated Entry Control Officer is detailed as the Stage 1 Entry Control Officer for each entry control point by the officer in charge. Entry Control Officers must wear a black and yellow chequered breathing apparatus control tabard.

## Health and Safety

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service are committed to attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (LA SMS).

## Community Fire Safety

The fire service completed its 19<sup>th</sup> year of the primary schools fire safety programme for third class pupils. We attended 51 schools. We delivered the 'fire safety message' to over 1,351no children throughout Kilkenny City and County,he programme is delivered through a package called "Rua the Firehound" and consists of a one-hour fire safety talk given by local firefighters. The programme is designed to enhance the level of awareness of fire safety in the home and to raise the level of awareness of fire safety in the community. The school children are expected as part of their homework, to interact with their families on the elements of the programme.

As part of our Community Fire safety Programme, Graiguenamanagh Fire brigade participated in the Graiguenamanagh Book Fair in promoting fire safety in the home.

## LIBRARY



### Skills for Life Launch

Kilkenny County Council Library Service was delighted to launch Skills for Life, a new national library initiative, at Loughboy Library on Tuesday July 1st. This innovative programme marks a renewed commitment to fostering life-long learning, personal development, and community engagement through Ireland's library network.

With a focus on six key areas – digital literacy, financial literacy, media literacy, business and employment skills, health awareness, and sustainable lifestyles and environmental awareness – this initiative aims to equip adults and young adults with the essential skills needed to navigate modern life.

The programme is supported by funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development and will be rolled out across library branches countywide, offering free events, workshops, and resources designed to empower individuals and promote a culture of continuous learning and wellbeing.





### Kilkenny Mobile Library Makes an Appearance at the Iverk Show

Kilkenny County Council's Mobile Library made its first ever appearance at Ireland's longest running agricultural show, the Iverk Show on August 23rd. Staff were on hand to register new members, provide information on the library, check out books and provide assistance with our online resources. Over 300 people came to visit us on the day to browse the mobile library and avail of our outdoor reading area. We look forward to returning again next year for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the show.



### Official Launch of the Newly Digitised Tholsel Charters

On August 19<sup>th</sup>, Kilkenny Library Service's Local Studies Department proudly launched a selection of recently digitised charters (previously homed in the Tholsel) making them freely accessible to the public through the [Kilkenny Digital Archive](#). This milestone marks a significant step in preserving and sharing the County's rich historical legacy in a meaningful and accessible way. These fragile and invaluable records range from the 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century and reflect the administration and daily life of Kilkenny across eight centuries and offer rare insights into how the community navigated war, pestilence, and societal change.



### Thomastown Library Update

- The ESB, Enet & Eir cables are now installed into the building by the 3 service providers.
- Scaffolding at the rear and gable will be dismantled this week.
- Scaffolding is erected at the front of the building to facilitate plastering.
- External railings are in manufacture, internal railings and handrails will be fitted shortly.
- External render finishes are completed to the rear and to the gable. The front façade will commence shortly.



## Heritage Week 2025

Kilkenny County Council Library Service hosted a rich and varied programme of events for National Heritage Week 2025 which took place from August 16th – 24th, celebrating the theme “Exploring Our Foundations”. This year’s activities invite the public to reflect on the stories, traditions and innovations that have shaped Kilkenny’s cultural identity.

Our programme of events commemorated a number of significant local events including the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of James Stephens and the 200<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Lady Louisa and William Frederick Fownes Tighe of Woodstock Estate.



## Online Services Usage Aug 2025



**3,953**

eAudiobooks borrowed



**241**

online learning sessions



**1,497**

eBooks borrowed



**142**

language learning sessions



**17,390**

eNewspapers and magazines borrowed



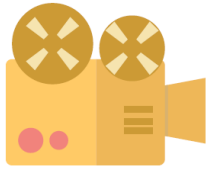
**127**

eComics borrowed



**143**

films and shows streamed



## Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **330** posts and videos on our social media platforms in August. Our engagements for the month were **4,685** and our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,799** email accounts.

### Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in August:



A number of our library branches hosted tea mornings to promote and provide assistance using our online resources in a fun, social environment.



The Mayfair Library and Kilkenny County Council's Integration Team hosted a fantastic photographic exhibition titled "I Am Me - Not Just a Refugee" to help explore identity, resilience, and the person beyond displacement.



## The Tea Houses

The Tea House programme was established with the objective of supporting the development, creation, and presentation of a new programme of activities, thereby enriching Kilkenny's cultural landscape for both local and national artists and audiences. The Tea Houses are envisioned as a prominent venue for contemporary art – actively connecting with existing artist communities, networks, and cultural audiences across Kilkenny City and County. Collaboration with the Kilkenny Arts Office in curating and programming the space ensures alignment with Kilkenny County Council's strategic arts priorities and fosters a vibrant, artist-led environment. Curator Rachel Botha has worked collaboratively with the Arts Office to deliver a hugely successful programme, including exhibitions, residencies, artists support events, and community projects.

The programming, in its first year, has fully met if not exceeded the above, with 36 events organised across the 12 months and a footfall of over 2,086 artists, students, participants and audience members. The Tea Houses have already established themselves as a vital aspect of support for artists and the arts community in Kilkenny. Our programme aligns with local and national aims and objectives, advancing key strategic priorities through its artist-centered, inclusive and community-driven approach



*The Tea House*

## Age and Opportunity & The Arts Office Residency Award

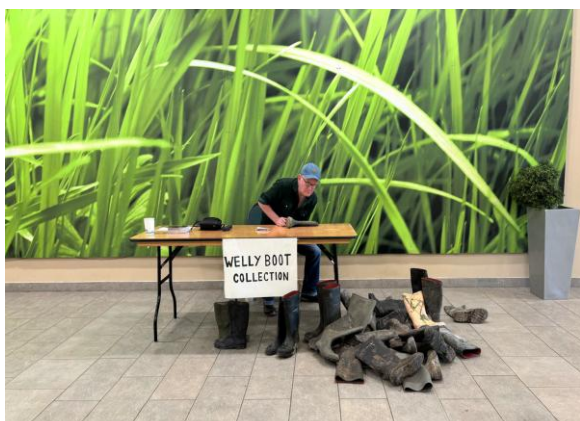
The Age & Opportunity Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency Award in partnership with Kilkenny County Council Arts Office aims to support older professional artists to develop their practice, by creating time and space to think and reflect on their work and to bolster their peer network. This is achieved through a dedicated bursary to attend a residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre over the course of a week. Located in the beautiful, tranquil setting of Annaghmakerrig County Monaghan the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and will provide an ideal environment to focus on research or the development of new work. This year's successful applicant is artist Paul Bokslag.

Paul's Bokslag comment on receiving the news of the residency: *I am delighted to have been awarded a Kilkenny Arts Office Age and Opportunity Tyrone Guthrie Bursary. I am looking forward to focussing on the research and development of new work in the supportive environment of Annaghmakerrig.*

## Public Arts Programme

All Public Arts projects are progressing. Brown Mountain Diamonds third residency is underway. Current artist in residence John Boyd has been connecting with farmers through attending the Marts and asking for wellies donations for his work. John's work and that of five other artists is in response to the theme 'rural life' as part of RURAL LIFE 1.0 at Brown Mountain Diamond.

An exhibition of all the artists' work will take place in October 2026, on site at Brown Mountain Diamond, Kilkenny. Composer Michael Gallen and filmmaker Shawn Fitzgerald Ahern of the collective Straymaker have been undertaking research and connecting with people across Kilkenny who hold Cures, recording a number of interviews with individuals. Asylum's Production 'The Alice Project' is underway with rehearsals for 'The Words of Dred' and 'The Words of Alice' taking place ahead of performances in the Kilkenny Arts Festival.



*Artist John Byrne in Cillin Hill*



*Artist John Byrne visits Ballinakill Mart in Laois*

## Beyond, Beneath, Beside

*Beyond, Beneath, Beside* is an exhibition that explores the site of the Tea Houses and their proximity to the River Nore and its nearby tributary the River Breaghagh. Artist Kate Fahey had a residency at the Tea Houses in which she investigated the locale, including Talbot's Inch model arts and crafts village, the former Greenvale Woollen Mills, and engaged with the rich subterranean, cultural and industrial history associated with the rivers, including the great flood in 1947. The exhibition opening during Kilkenny Arts Festival and is running until Friday 19th September 2026, 11.30am to 5.30pm. There has been a great response to the exhibition with many visitors sharing their own stories and memories of the river.

## Home Body

Current Artist in Residence at the Tea Houses is Róisín Sheehy, dancer and writer. Roisin hosted a creative workshop consisting of a walk and creative writing session for the public. The session commenced with a short physical warm up at the studio allowing time to settle and connect with our environment. Róisín then led the group on a walk-in silence along the river with the aim of engaging with our senses and imagination. The group were encouraged to pause during sections of the walk to reflect and write. Following the walk refreshments were offered at the Tea House and it was opportunity for participants to share their writing.

Róisín Sheehy is an award-winning poet, playwright, dancer and broadcaster. Coiscéim published her debut collection *Líomóidí 's Rúbarb*. Her play *Snámh na Saoirse* was published by Leabhar Comhar. Her poetry and plays have been awarded Oireachtas na Gaeilge awards. *Snámh na Saoirse* was awarded a Stewart Parker Trust award. She received a Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship in 2021



## Inflow

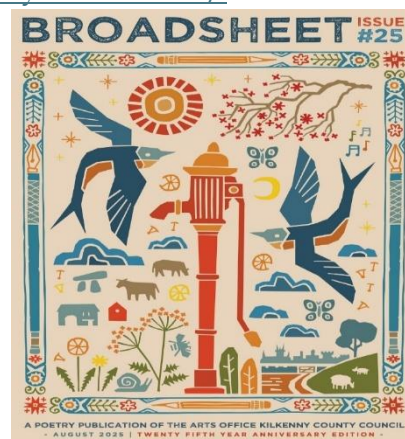
The Arts Office's community and climate action 2025 programme the community project InFlow held a culmination event on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025. All participants were invited to a picnic held in a green space in the Abbey Quarter next to the Nore, the river around which the project was based. Participants had been working steadily over the weeks learning new skills in dying, printing, sewing and embroidery, utilising the local textile waste stream to create artworks which then became a picnic blanket. The group connected their work together to form large bunting which was displayed along the river railings while returning river water collected during the project back to its source, the river Nore. The event was a chance for participants to reflect on the impact the project had on them, to form connections with one another and share their stories and memories of the river which is so important to many, with each person having their own special relationship with it.



*Inflow Community Project next to the River Nore*

## Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet Launch

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Broadsheet was launched during the Kilkenny Arts Festival in the Parade Tower by Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Broadsheet Editor Enda Wyley and Arts Officer Mary Butler. All 25 poets read their published poem and over 100 people were in attendance. As a continuation of these celebrations, the published poems will be screened on the outdoor screens at the Parade, The Butler Gallery and Mac Donagh Junction for the month of August and September 2025. Details of each poet and a digital copy of the Broadsheet can be found on the Kilkenny Arts Office website - <https://kilkennyartsoffice.ie/celebrating-25-years-of-the-poetry-broadsheet/>



## CREATIVE IRELAND

### JUMA

JUMA is a pilot programme developed in partnership with KCETB Youth Office, Music Generation Kilkenny, local schools, and youth organisations. The programme will deliver inclusive, youth-led creative activities in areas of high deprivation, with the aim of fostering artistic engagement, social inclusion, and informing a future UBU youth project application through the Department of Education and Youth. Focus communities will include Johnstown and Urlingford.



## Plein Air Demonstration at Butler Gallery and Graiguenamanagh Events

During Heritage Week, Butler Gallery hosted a collaborative Plein Air demonstration in partnership with Plein Air Graiguenamanagh. Six of Ireland's leading plein air artists transformed the gallery grounds into an open-air studio, offering the public a unique opportunity to engage directly with professional artists. Materials were provided to ensure inclusive participation across all ages and abilities, reinforcing the event's commitment to accessibility. The demonstration attracted 85 artists which is double the previous year's participation and drew hundreds of visitors. The event activated public spaces, fostered creative expression, and demonstrated the power of cultural programming to build social cohesion and engage diverse audiences.

Key impacts include:

- Strategic collaboration between Butler Gallery and community-led initiatives, establishing a foundation for future joint programming.
- Elevated profile of the Plein Air programme as a high-quality, inclusive cultural experience with potential for regional and national development.
- Strengthened community relationships, with local organisations, businesses, and volunteers contributing meaningfully to the event's success.
- Enhanced volunteerism and intergenerational collaboration, with individuals of all ages supporting logistics, facilitation, hospitality, and audience engagement.
- Promotion of inclusivity, ensuring broad access to cultural participation and creative opportunities.
- This initiative exemplifies the value of inclusive, cross-sector collaboration in delivering impactful cultural experiences. It provides a strong model for future strategic planning with Butler Gallery and other stakeholders committed to community wellbeing and cultural enrichment.

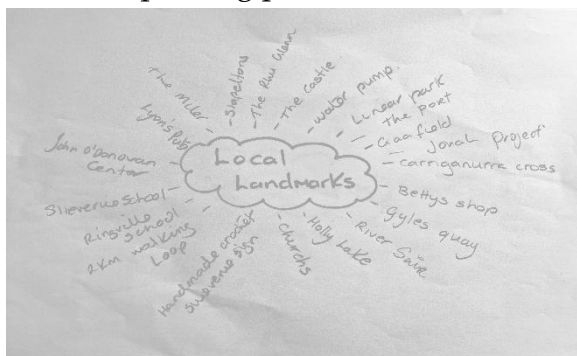


*Plein Air Demonstration at Butler Gallery*

## Ferrybank Mural

The Ferrybank Mural initiative, led by the Parks Department, represents a proactive and community-led response to anti-social behaviour in the area. The 160 square metre wall is part of an exciting new nature walk opening soon.

By activating the site through public art, the project has successfully encouraged local ownership and transformed the space into a valued community amenity. The mural has fostered positive engagement across generations, promoting inclusivity and pride in place. It has also strengthened partnerships between local residents, artists, and council services, demonstrating the potential of creative placemaking to reclaim public spaces and enhance community wellbeing. The initiative serves as a model for future collaborative interventions aimed at improving public environments and supporting social cohesion.



*Ferrybank Mural Community Consultation process*



*Ferrybank Mural Credit: Street Art Ink*

## HERITAGE

### National Heritage Week 2025 in Kilkenny

National Heritage Week 2025, which took place from 16<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025 across Kilkenny City and County has come to an end after a highly successful programme of heritage engagement for all. With over 60 diverse events and hundreds of participants, this year's theme, "*Exploring Our Foundations*", inspired communities to delve into the stories, landscapes, and traditions that shape Kilkenny's rich heritage.

From historic walking tours and craft demonstrations to digital heritage workshops and folklore storytelling, the week offered something for everyone and crowds of all ages turned out in the sunshine to explore our local built, cultural and natural heritage. Along with supporting event organisers, the Heritage Office organised four well-attended events connected to some of our current projects: The Talbots Tower Breathwork Experience; A bi-lingual guided walk along Dunmore Mass Path and two tours around Kilkenny's medieval City Walls.



*The Talbot's Tower Breathwork Experience.  
Photo Credit: Freddie Greenall*



*Mass Paths in Memory – a bi-lingual walk along  
Dunmore Mass Path*



*John Dunphy guiding participants around  
Dunphy's Mill.*



*Exploring Kilkenny's rich archives during  
Heritage Week.*





*Trad Session for Heritage Week at the Keeper's Lit Festival.*



*Heritage Week Forest School Taster Session at Shankill Castle.*



*Heritage Week Canoe Trip exploring the Heritage of the River Nore.*



*The Song of the Scythe.*

### **The Man Born to be King**

As part of their 800th anniversary commemorations, the Black Abbey and Lake Productions supported by Kilkenny County Council present *The Man Born to be King* at The Black Abbey. The play is an adaptation of a Mystery Play, a genre of theatre which was popular in Medieval Kilkenny depicting scenes from the Bible. This play will be a dramatisation of the life of Jesus and his disciples. This production was funded under the Kilkenny County Council Public Commemoration Programme. The play will run for three nights from Tuesday 9th to Thursday 11th September 2025 at 7:30pm. Tickets must be purchased in advance so book your tickets now via EventBrite to secure your place - <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/the-man-born-to-be-king-tickets-1465616842429>

### **Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble Shortlisted for Excellence in Local Government Awards**

Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble has been shortlisted in the annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards in the Festival of the Year Category. The festival which took place in 2024 commemorated the 700th Anniversary of the Kilkenny Witch Trials with a diverse and engaging programme which included theatrical re-enactments, exhibitions, podcasts, a conference and a Service of Atonement and Forgiveness. The initiative was coordinated by the Heritage Office in partnership with representatives from cultural organisations across Kilkenny City.



## BIODIVERSITY

### Launch of the Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030

Kilkenny is leading by example with its comprehensive Kilkenny County Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030, committing to record, conserve and restore habitats, protect and, where possible, restore ecological corridors. The five-year Action Plan unveiled at Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum, Inistioge, Kilkenny, also provides Kilkenny County Council with an opportunity to examine its own work practices. Community groups, landowners, statutory agencies, elected members and council officials all worked together with biodiversity specialists over 18 months on the comprehensive plan. It builds on much of the work completed over the past 20 years by the Heritage Officer for the County, and more recently by the Biodiversity Officer, Bernadette Moloney. The Action Plan showcases how Kilkenny is leading the way by designing nature-inclusive housing estates, parks and open spaces. It also commits to improving water quality and habitat diversity on public grounds.



*Launch of the Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan at Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum, Inistioge*

### Biodiversity Events during National Heritage Week

The Biodiversity Officer organised a number of events as part of National Heritage Week. A Bat Walk in Thomstown yielded close to 50 attendee's the highest ever attended bat walk in recent years. The bat walk was located in Thomastown to support the community who are currently developing a Community Biodiversity Action Plan for Thomastown, being led by the TCN and ecologist Deborah D'Arcy under the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Biodiversity Action Fund. Another event was located in Callan to support the local community as they complete a Community Biodiversity Action Plan funded under the Community Foundation of Ireland. A seed saving walk and talk was led by Monica Fleming taking advantage of the grasslands of the Motte Field, a treasured local amenity.



*Seed Saving Walk and Talk was led by Monica Fleming during National Heritage Week 2025*

### We are Nature

Under Heritage Council funding, the Biodiversity Office was delighted to support the local community project NOREYOURRIVER, a climate action project. The funding provided an art workshop led by Michelle McMahon to complete a print workshop to explore native animal and plant species as part of the Community Programme.

## CIVIL DEFENCE

An incredibly busy summer has been continuing for the volunteers in Civil Defence. Starting with some team bonding for the volunteers, we engaged with river-bend adventures and the volunteers partook in stand up paddle boarding.

We assisted our colleagues in Laois with the Folly Festival and Wicklow at the Gravity Enduro mountain bike event.



The volunteers provided medical cover at Kilkenny's pride parade and attended The open day at Kilkenny Fire Station. An information night was organised by Kilkenny for volunteers from: Laois, Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny Fire and rescue on Hypothermia presented by Advanced Paramedic Dave Murtagh.

## FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of August is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €84m compared with the annual budget of €120m.

Table 1	Actual YTD August 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	23,464	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	20,414	31,383
Water Services	4,108	7,180
Development Management	9,062	15,417
Environmental Services	11,948	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	5,683	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	286	354
Miscellaneous Services	6,385	6,938
Central Management Charges for Allocation	2,808	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>84,156</b>	<b>120,472</b>

### Rates Invoices 2025

The annual rate invoices for 2025 totalling €24.4 million were issued to 2,850 rate customers in February. Commercial rates are payable in full from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2025. A prompt payment discount of 8.3% (*capped at €300 per rate account*) is available for customers who pay bill in full before end of May 2025 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2025.

### Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To-date 191 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal	149 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9 cases
Appeals Outstanding	2 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €853k.

### Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the eight month period to the end of August. The audit by the Local Government Audit for FY 2024 has now been completed and the Audit Report will be presented to Council at the September meeting.

### Budget 2026

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Council budget for 2026. Workshops will be held with Elected Members over the coming weeks to discuss the issues arising.