

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AR AN GCRUINNÍÚ IOMLÁNACH DE CHUID
CHOMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH TIONÓLTA AR AN LUAN,
20 DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2025 AG 3.00 I.N. I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE,
HALLA AN CHONTAE & VIA FOIRNE MS**



**MINUTES OF PLENARY MEETING OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2025 AT 3.00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL & VIA MS TEAMS**

Chair: Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh.

Elected Members: *Council Chamber*

Cllrs. Tomás Breathnach, John Brennan, John Coonan, Jenny Catt Slattery, Fidelis Doherty, Michael Doyle, Patrick Dunphy, David Fitzgerald, Pat Fitzpatrick, Michael McCarthy, Andrew McGuinness, Eugene McGuinness, Seán Ó hArgáin, Joe Sheridan & Maurice Shortall.

MS Teams

Cllrs. Brian Cleere, Maria Dollard, Deirdre Cullen, Michael Delaney and Ger Frisby and Joe Lyons.

Officials: Lar Power, Tim Butler, Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Seamus Kavanagh, Mary Cashin, Margo Hayes & Brenda Kelly.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh welcomed John Purcell and Brian Redmond, KCLR to the meeting.

Fógraí - Announcements

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh wished all involved in Kilkenny Savour Food Festival well for the weekend.

Vótaí Comhbhrón - Votes of Sympathy

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh extended vote of sympathy to the following:

- Family of work colleague John Donovan, Crokers Hill.
- Family of the late Melissa O'Neill, Abbeylands, former Elected Member.
- Niall O'Dwyer, Water Services on the death of his mother Gwen O'Dwyer.
- Claire Prendergast, Climate Action on the death of her mother Margaret [Peggy] Barron.
- Phil Costigan, Kilkenny MD on the death of her sister Ann Parkinson.
- Alan Rhatigan, Dunmore on the death of his father John Rhatigan.
- Family of Ita Scott, Parkview, Freshford.

A minutes silence was held and meeting was adjourned for five minutes as a mark of respect to former colleague Melissa O'Neill.

Meeting re-convened at 3.14 p.m.

1. Dearbhú Miontuairiscí - Confirmation of Minutes

- (i) **Nótaí de Chruinniú Plé ar an Mhéan Fómhair - Minutes of September Plenary Meeting**
Proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty and agreed:
"That Minutes of Plenary Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Monday, 15th September, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".
- (ii) **Miontuairiscí Cruinnithe Speisialta - Iarrthóirí Uachtaráin**
Minutes of Special Meeting - Presidential Candidates
Proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed:
"That Minutes of Special Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Monday, 22nd September, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

- (iii) **Miontuairiscí de Chruinniú SPC 1 - Minutes of SPC 1 Meeting**
Proposed by Cllr. Michael Doyle, seconded by Cllr. John Coonan and agreed:
"That Minutes of SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 27th March, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".
- (iv) **Miontuairiscí de Chruinniú SPC 1 - Minutes of SPC 1 Meeting**
Proposed by Cllr. John Coonan, seconded by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and agreed:
"That Minutes of SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 19th June, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".
- (v) **Miontuairiscí de Chruinniú SPC 2 - Minutes of SPC 2 Meeting**
Proposed by Cllr. Maurice Shortall, seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Cullen and agreed:
"That Minutes of SPC 2: Transportation Policy/Mobility Management & Infrastructure held on Friday, 6th June, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

2. (a) **Tithíocht & Díuscairt Eile - Housing & Other Disposal**

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr. Pat Dunphy, seconded by Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery and agreed:
"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest in land at Church Street, Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny (as identified on the attached map) to Tom and Nicola Foley, Church Street, Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny for the sum of €86,000 (eighty-six thousand euro) with each party being responsible for their own legal costs associated with the sale. Site area measures 0.020 ha. The Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is not required."
- (ii) It was proposed by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin and agreed:
"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest in plot of ground to the rear of no.6 Edenvale Close, Nuncio Road, Kilkenny with the condition that no structure be built so close to the main foul sewer pipe at rear of property so as to cause a risk or interference with the structural integrity of or prevent access to the pipe for service/maintenance works in the future as outlined in Section 104 of the Water Services Act 2007 for the nominal sum of €10.00 (ten euro) together with payment of the Kilkenny County Council's legal fees . Plot of ground measures 67.5 m2 approx." The Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is not required."

2. (b) **Pleanail - Planning**

- (i) **Glacadh i gCúram -Taking in Charge: (TC 164) Westcourt, Callan, Co. Kilkenny**
It was proposed by Cllr. Joe Sheridan, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed that:
"We, the Members of Kilkenny County Council approve the initiation of proceedings for the taking in charge of the following development in accordance with Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993 and in compliance with Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended by Section 59 of the Planning & Development Act 2010".

Development: [TC 164] Westcourt, Callan, Co Kilkenny

(c) **Bóithre- Roads**

(i) ***Plan de Maintenance Hivernale 2025-2026***
Winter Maintenance Plan 2025 -2026

Mr. Seamus Kavanagh presented his report on the Winter Maintenance Plan for 2025/2026. He advised the Members that the season will extend from 13th October, 2025 to 30th April, 2026 and that the service delivery target is to keep Priority 1 and 2 network frost/ice free over 24 hours/7 days a week. The total length of the network is 428km. Four vehicles are deployed to deliver this service.

Elected Members given an opportunity at their Municipal District Meetings to discuss the proposed Priority 3 Routes. These routes will receive treatment during Orange Weather Warnings and prolonged periods of cold weather.

Mr. Kavanagh confirmed that the IFA are agreeable to work with the Council and meetings have been arranged to agree on call outs etc. Kilkenny County Council also has a Severe Weather Plan in operation for severe weather events. This provides for the pooling of resources with IFA, local schools and other emergency service providers.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Andrew McGuinness, Eugene McGuinness, Pat Fitzpatrick and Seán Ó'hArgáin in relation to the following:

- Availability of salt to local communities and housing estates within the City and County especially to support elderly residents and Carers who may need extra help.
- Salting of cycle lanes and footpaths.
- Salt Boxes in communities and urban areas.
- Engagement with OC/Army in Military Barracks.

Mr. Kavanagh responded to the queries raised by the Members.

It was proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness agreed that:

"That Kilkenny County Council approves the Winter Maintenance Plan 2025/2026 as circulated to the Members."

(e) **Airgeadas – Finance**

(i) ***Formheas an Áis Imeallaithe - Approval of Overdraft Facility***

Mr. Martin Prendiville advised the meeting that a facility of €20m for overdraft is being requested for the Year 2026. This is the same amount as approved for 2025. The approval of the Department will be required if the Members approve of the €20m facility.

It was proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. David Fitzgerald and agreed that:

"That subject to the sanction of the Minister for the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves overdraft borrowings to a maximum amount of €20,000,000 for the full year ending 31st December, 2026."

(i) **Tuarascáil Mhíosúil an Phríomhfheidhmeannaigh**
Chief Executive's Monthly Report

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh advised that the Chief Executive Report will be taken as read. The following questions were raised by Elected Members.

Cllr. Michael McCarthy

- Due to the rising levels of the Nuenna River water is posing a risk on the R693 at Cascade, Freshford and creating a hazard for road users. He asked that remedial works be urgently carried out to prevent a hazardous situation with potential accidents waiting to happen.

Mr. Seamus Kavanagh confirmed that he would arrange for the Flood Scheme Team to liaise with Municipal District Engineer to investigate the issue.

- The Freshford Road roundabout is becoming a major congestion point causing frustration among motorists throughout North Kilkenny with traffic delays stretching back to Chancellor Mills. Concerns have been raised about the lack of attention to this issue and a request has been made for the Council to assess the situation and implement appropriate safety and traffic management measures to ease the pressure.

Mr. Kavanagh confirmed that Traffic counters would be set up in the next few months to monitor movement of traffic. Signing Contracts for new Ring Road extension which will help to alleviate traffic. Engagement with landowners is ongoing and efforts are being made to ensure their concerns are addressed and that they are satisfied with the process.

Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin

- Submitted questions in relation to the number of CPO's, Derelict Sites Act and Quarries.

Letter to issue with response.

Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick

- Coon Village in North Kilkenny has been without electricity for twelve days. Residents are urging that immediate pressure be applied to resolve the issue and restore power as soon as possible.

Noted.

(ii) **Táscairí Feidhmíochta 2024 - Performance Indicators 2024**

Ms. Margo Hayes gave a presentation and advised that the Report on the Local Authority Performance Indicators for 2024 on 46 Indicators was published in September 2025.

The Report gives an overview on the performance of Kilkenny County Council and allows us to compare our performance against other Local Authorities and improve the level of service we are providing. Kilkenny County Council performed well in some areas and there is scope for improvement in other areas.

Mr. Ian Gardner responded to a query from Cllr. Seán Ó'hArgáin on Voids as follows:

- NOAC figures are a snapshot on a particular date which in this case was the 31st December, 2024.

- Of the 198 recorded **Voids**:
 - 129 voids were new builds awaiting initial occupation
[88 units at Crokers Hill and 30 units at Castle Oaks]
These new builds skewed the overall voids figure significantly.
- **New Builds** are counted in stock after substantial completion but are not considered occupied until the keys are handed over to tenants. The delay is due to finishing works, snagging, certification and allocation process.
- Omitting the new build figures at the end of 2024 would give a voids percentage of 2.53% compared to the national average of 2.75%
- Breakdown of remaining Voids:
 - 5 Derelict Properties
 - 3 acquired for Redevelopment
 - 4 under Rolling Refurbishment Scheme
 - 2 illegally occupied
 - 1 with legal ownership issues
 - 6 awaiting return of keys following cessation of tenancy
 - 8 allocated but not yet occupied.
- Omitting the above units leaves 40 units or 1.69% of stock which gives a truer picture of the voids situation in Kilkenny.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Seán Ó'hArgáin, Eugene McGuinness, David Fitzgerald and Maria Dollard as follows:

- How quickly does Department release funds for Voids.
- Turnaround from funding to occupancy.
- Hard to assess Kilkenny's performance due to large amount of data and limited clarity.
- Requested Ranking System to compare Kilkenny with other Local Authorities.
- Financial incentives for property owners to rent out vacant properties to keep the City active and occupied.
- Use an infographic in future reports to clearly summarise findings and show current performance status.
- Include more detailed breakdowns to improve clarity and understanding of the data presented.

Mr. Ian Gardner and Ms. Margo Hayes responded to the queries raised by the Members.

3. *Comhfhreagras - Correspondence*

- (i) **Response from Minister's Office in relation to Notice of Motion 10-2025 in relation to Waterford Airport**
Noted.
- (ii) **Correspondence from Presidential Candidates**
The Cathaoirleach advised that Margo Hayes would circulate letters from Catherine Morrissey and Barry Wheely Row to Elected Members for their information.

4. *Gnó ar athló ó chruinniúroimhe seo - Business adjourned from a previous Meeting*

None.

5. Dátaí agus Amanta do chruinnithe a shocrú - Fix Dates & Times of Meetings

(i) Sceideal na gCruinnithe - Schedule of Meetings

Noted and agreed by all.

**6. Plé ar Thuairiscí agus Moltaí ó Choistí an Comhairle
Consideration of Reports & Recommendations of Committees of the Council**

The following Reports were noted and agreed by all Elected Members:

Tuarascáil ar Chruinniú SPC 1 - Report of SPC 1 Meeting

"That Report of SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 27th March, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

Tuarascáil ar Chruinniú SPC 1 - Report of SPC 1 Meeting

"That Report of SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 19th June, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

Tuarascáil ar Chruinniú SPC 2 - Report of SPC 2 Meeting

"That Report of SPC 2: Transportation Policy/Mobility Management & Infrastructure held on Friday, 6th June, 2025 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

**7. Gnó Eile romhainn i bhFógra reachtála an Chruinnithe
Other Business set forth in the Notice convening the Meeting**

None.

8. Oideachas agus Oiliúint - Education & Training

(i) Schedule of Conferences

Noted and agreed by all.

9. Gnótha ag éirí as Miontuairiscí - Matters Arising from Minutes

None.

10. Aon Ghnó Eile - Any Other Business

None.

11. Fógraí Rúin - Notices of Motion

21 (25) Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin

Proposed by Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin, seconded by Tomás Breathnach and agreed:

"Given the importance of the creative and artistic industry to our City and County, Kilkenny County Council fully supports the campaign by the National Campaign for the Arts for a substantial increase in funding for the national Basic Income for the Arts Scheme and its extension to a far larger number of artists of all genres.

I warmly welcome the Minister's announcement that the case made by the National Campaign for the Arts has now been accepted after a decade or more of campaigning. While the decision to make the previous pilot scheme permanent is overdue, many in the arts communities, who are at the heart of every town, village and rural community in Kilkenny, have expressed disappointment at the failure to expand the number of artists who will be involved. As we know from the number of artist in our County, a national limit of 2,000 artists is a very small number indeed.

Our City and County has a huge history and culture of the arts. The training and policy initiatives include the creation of Kilkenny Design in the early seventies, the subsequent attraction of the National Crafts Council to our City and of course the incredible facility that is Grennan Mill College have seen thousands of artists and craftspeople attracted to our city and county. Add into that institutions like Young Irish Film Makers and Barnstorm Theatre and now the hugely successful Cartoon Saloon and Lighthouse Cinema Company and we can see that this industry is crucial to employment and the cultural life of Kilkenny.

While many of these groups are commercially successful, hundreds of our visual artists, musicians, singers, composers and craftworkers are literally often living from hand to mouth. This scheme has proven its worth and is now being made permanent. What is unfortunate is that the number of 2,000 recipients is staying the same.

The other issue is that the current scheme ends in February 2026 and its successor will not begin until late 2026. This leaves current recipients in the dark. They don't know whether they will be retained on the payment or whether a whole new cohort of artists will replace them.

I ask that we write as a Council to Minister O' Donovan, seeking a considerable extension of the scheme, covering at least another 1,000 artists and that certainty will be given to those currently in receipt of the payment. They are a vital part of our cultural and economic life and deserve our wholehearted support."

22 (25) Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin

Proposed by Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin, seconded by Tomás Breathnach and agreed:

"Kilkenny County Council notes with concern the findings of the Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2024, issued by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) in relation to local authority housing stock vacancy at the end of 2024. This indicated that 6.97% of our Council's housing stock was vacant at that time, amounting to approximately 198 housing units. This rate is considerably higher than the national average of 2.75%.

We seek a clear setting out of a strategy to ensure this vacancy rate is addressed and that the maximum number of local authority housing units are returned to the active housing stock as quickly as possible now and in the future."

23 (25) Cllr. David Fitzgerald

Proposed by Cllr. David Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and agreed:

"That Kilkenny County Council fast track the delivery of a new road to connect the Ballycallan Road to the Tullaroan Bypass and reduce the volume of traffic on the Waterbarracks and Butts Roundabout in order to alleviate the traffic congestion in St. Canice's Parish."

24 (25) Cllr. Maurice Shortall

Proposed by Cllr. Maurice Shortall, seconded by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach and agreed:

"That Kilkenny County Council calls on the Minister for Justice to review and reform Ireland's laws relating to "one-punch" assaults where a single, unprovoked blow results in death, to ensure that such offences are treated with the seriousness they deserve. The Council notes the distress caused to victims' families by inconsistent sentencing and believes current laws under the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997 do not fully reflect the gravity of these incidents. The Council further urges the Minister to consider the approach taken in New Zealand, where stronger legal provisions and sentencing guidelines ensure accountability in one-punch fatality cases, and to introduce similar reforms in Ireland. The Council also supports the introduction of a national awareness campaign to highlight the dangers and legal consequences of one-punch violence, particularly in situations involving alcohol or late-night social activity, and requests that this motion be circulated to all local authorities and forwarded to the Minister for consideration."

12. ***Fógraí i dtaobh Rúin ó Údaráis Áitiúla eile ag lorg tacaíochta ó Chomhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh - Notices of Motion from other local authorities seeking support of Kilkenny County Council***

It was proposed by agreed by all that the following Notice of Motion 18(25) be taken as read and noted:

18 (25) Kerry County Council

“That Kerry County Council write to the Minister for Health calling for the introduction of a ban on vaping in all workplaces, on the grounds of protecting public health and ensuring safe, aerosol-free working environments. This motion to be referred to all local authorities for their support.”

That concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE