



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Kilkenny County Council Delivering New Homes



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT
MAY 2021



**To: Each Member of
Kilkenny County Council**

Monthly Management Report
to Members of Kilkenny County
Council for consideration at the May
Monthly Meeting.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

CORPORATE:PAGE 5

ROADS:PAGE 7

PLANNING:PAGE 9

ENVIRONMENT: PAGE 11

PARKS:PAGE 13

TOURISM:PAGE 16

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: PAGE 17

HOUSING:PAGE 18

COMMUNITY:PAGE 21

ARTS:PAGE 22

HERITAGE:PAGE 23

LIBRARY SERVICES:PAGE 25

FIRE SERVICES:PAGE 27

SPECIAL PROJECTS:PAGE 28

FINANCE:PAGE 31

P.8



P.11



P.14



P.28



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Council Chamber for inspection by the Elected Members.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1ST JUNE, 2021

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme is currently open for Public consultation on the constraints study until Tuesday 1st June, 2021.

4TH JUNE, 2021

Closing date for receipt of submissions for Loughmacask Link Road.

Closing date for receipt of submissions for temporary construction compound/access ramp at Abbeylands & Rathculliheen.

12TH JUNE, 2021

An exciting range of projects for children and young people will take place in Kilkenny for Cruinniú na nÓg.

16TH JUNE, 2021

National Heritage Week website opens for groups to register projects for Heritage Week 2021 (www.heritageweek.ie)

28TH MAY AND 17TH JUNE 2021

The Department are seeking expressions of interest by the 28th May with the closing date for receipt of applications 17th June, 2021 for Town & Village Renewal/ Rural Regeneration Promotional Campaign

BEALTAINE EVENTS:

Planting with Eva Holmes...8th May at 6.30 pm & 22nd May at 7pm.

Flower Arranging with Eva Holmes 16th May at 2.30pm

HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY TALKS:

Parenting for Young Children...4th May at 7 p.m.

Coping with Grief...11th May at 7 p.m.

Decluttering Talk...18th May...7 p.m.

Parenting for Teens...25th May at 7 p.m.

CORPORATE

COMMUNICATIONS

The Council remained very active in the first quarter of 2021 in increasing public awareness of the role and contribution of the Council as a provider of services and a community leader.

Media

The following table sets out the details of the interaction between the Council's Communications Team and the local media from January to March 2021:

Section	Number of Press Releases Issued
Corporate	7
Community & Heritage	5
Civil Defence	1
Economic Development	1
Environment	1
Fire Services	1
Kilkenny Area	2
Local Enterprise Office	2
Library	1
Tourism & Marketing	1
Roads	1
Special Projects	2

Social Media Statistics

FACEBOOK STATISTICS FROM 1ST JANUARY TO 31ST MARCH 2021

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Period	Page Likes	Page Followers	Engagement	Reactions	Shares	Comments	Impressions	Lifetime Post Total Reach
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	7,787	8,551	2,458	541	90	324	181,577	121,082
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	7,804	8,700	1,660	439	120	33	132,720	96,298
1/3/2021 - 31/3/202	7,900	8,767	3,472	748	240	129	230,055	116,703

KILKENNY.IE - NEW PAGE FORMED OCTOBER 2020

1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	490		29	21	2	0	3,661	2,027
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	731	855	731	191	6	7	23,713	10,603
1/3/2021 - 31/3/202	744	833	781	160	9	5	38,356	14,434

INVEST KILKENNY

1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	574	770	35	16	0	0	1,490	692
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	579	775	170	46	5	4	2,869	1,759
1/3/2021 - 31/3/202	591	779	285	89	8	4	8,753	6,224

SHOP KILKENNY

1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	1,390	1,642	66	23	0	5	76,637	1,836
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	1,408	1,691	292	42	2	1	11,196	7,507
1/3/2021 - 31/3/202	1,431	1,700	560	42	0	0	14,832	10,360

TASTE KILKENNY

1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	3,076	3,220	56	8	0	0	10,021	5,380
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	3,079	3,230	171	43	4	2	12,972	6,546
1/3/2021 - 31/3/202	3,132	3,250	1,906	217	10	24	42,900	28,429

INSTAGRAM STATISTICS FROM 1ST JANUARY TO 31ST MARCH 2021

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL					
Period	Page Likes	Engagement	Saved Posts	Comments	Impressions
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	789	26	3	1	3,417
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	855	4	0	0	1,447
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	921	34	5	0	2,650
KILKENNY.IE					
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	705	113	0	2	1,314
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	826	437	6	10	5,423
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	916	594	7	12	14,967
SHOP KILKENNY					
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	1,185	94	23	0	76,637
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	1,222	150	42	2	11,196
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	1,257	560	42	0	14,832
TASTE KILKENNY					
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	3,076	56	5	6	6,279
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	3,079	171	0	6	6,603
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	3,132	181	1	10	11,544

TWITTER STATISTICS FROM 1ST JANUARY TO 31ST MARCH 2021

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL				
Period	Page Likes	Engagement	Retweets	Comments
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	5,134	139	27	4
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	5,182	160	28	2
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	5,221	40	10	2
INVEST KILKENNY				
1/1/2021 - 31/1/2021	2,036	4	0	0
1/2/2021 - 28/2/2021	2,068	22	1	0
1/3/2021 - 31/3/2021	2,066	7	1	0

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

The Council received 28 Freedom of Information Requests in the first quarter of 2021. The requests received can be broken down as follows:

	Jouna- list	Bus./ Int. Group	Oireachtas/ Public Reps	Staff	Client	Other
J	1	0	0	0	0	8
F	2	0	0	0	0	8
M	0	0	0	0	0	9
T	3	0	0	0	0	25

FOI DECISIONS MADE IN QUARTER 1 2021

A total of 25 decisions were made by the Freedom of Information Officer in 2021 broken down as follows:

REQUESTS				
	Granted	Part- Granted	Refused	Withdrawn
J	2	1	3	0
F	3	0	6	1
M	3	2	3	1
T	8	3	12	2

ROADS

National Roads

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Approval to progress to Phase 2 Option Selection has been received from TII. The scheme is currently open for Public consultation on the constraints study until Tuesday 1st June, 2021. All the information on viewing the documentation and making a submission is available on the website N24waterford2cahir.ie. Phase 2 will culminate with the selection of the preferred solution for the Scheme. Timeline of Q1 2023 for this stage

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

This scheme is within the concluding stage of Phase 2 – Option Selection. The final report has been signed off by the peer review team which has now facilitated the completion of various additional deliverables required to conclude Phase 2. The information and procedures for the public display event are being prepared at present which will include the announcement of the emerging preferred route corridor.

Castlecomer Footbridge

The contract for construction of Castlecomer Footbridge has been awarded to Kenny Civils & Plant Ltd. The contractor is preparing the various licences required to permit works to commence. The main construction works in respect of the river will be undertaken during the summer months and the bridge is expected to open in November 2021.

N77 Kilkenny to Ballyragget Pavement Works

Works are completed on the 3.4km stretch from the Baun Roundabout on the Kilkenny Ring Road to Hennebry's Cross.

Tender preparation is on-going on the N77 Oldtown to Ballyragget Pavement Scheme. This is expected to be on etenders during June 2021.

N76 Kilkenny to Clonmel Pavement Works

The tender has been uploaded to etenders for the 2.55km stretch of N76 Riversfield to Ahanure North Pavement Scheme. It is expected to be at tender award stage during June 2021.



ROADS

Non National Roads

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure Scheme

Construction of this scheme, consisting of 2.4km of new and improved roads in Kilkenny City, is nearing completion following the recommencement of works after the latest Covid-19 shutdown. Expected scheme completion date is now August 2021.

Loughmacask Link Road

The Part 8 Planning process for this scheme was advertised on April 23rd and is currently in the public display phase. Details of the proposals are currently available to view in Kilkenny County Council's planning office and on the Consult Kilkenny website. Closing date for receipt of submissions in relation to the proposals is Friday, 4th June, 2021.

Flood Relief Schemes

Given the size and scale of the National Programme to deliver 118 No Flood Relief Schemes across the Country over the next Ten years, the OPW Published a document in May 2018, referred to as 'Appendix 4' listing the first 50 schemes (Tranche 1) to be advanced out of the 118 Schemes.

In regard to the six schemes listed for Kilkenny the following is the position:

- Tranche 1 Schemes: Graiguenamanagh & Ballyhale were both listed as Flood Relief Schemes and have commenced to Stage 1.
- The remaining 4 Schemes for Kilkenny have yet to be scheduled by the OPW. There is a working group in the OPW who are currently reviewing the delivery of the remainder of the schemes and Kilkenny has written to the OPW seeking permission to commence the 4 No remaining schemes of Freshford, Thomastown, Inistoige & Piltown the resources are available in Kilkenny County Council to deliver these schemes.

Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Update:

Kilkenny County Council appointed Byrne Looby & Partners as Consultants to develop and implement a Flood Relief Scheme in March 2020. One of the first tasks delivered by the Consultant was the Project Website which went live in June 2020. Stage 1 is the Design stage and is due to be completed by the end of 2021. There are a total of 5 Stages to deliver the schemes with Stage 5 due for completion in 2026 with the handover of the scheme.

Completed tasks to date for the scheme:

- Public Consultation – Online due to Covid 19 restrictions July 2020.
- Newsletter Drop – October 2020.
- Topographical Survey completed in November 2020.
- Environmental Baseline Surveys are on-going in the Scheme Area.
- Hydrology & Hydraulic Design of both the Barrow and Duiske Rivers is on-going.

Next Steps for Graiguenamanagh FRS:

- Advance Site Investigation Contract over the coming months.
- Develop Options and preferred Option for the scheme.
- Public Consultation with Preferred Option.
- Develop NIS/EIAR if required.
- MCA – Multi Criteria Analysis & CBA – Cost Benefit Scheme.

Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme Update:

Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme commenced in March 2020 with the appointment of DBFL Consulting Engineers from the OPW Framework. The current Stage 1 is due for completion in Q3 2021 with the full scheme design.

Completed tasks to date for the scheme:

- Public Consultation – Online due to Covid 19 restrictions May 2020.
- A full Hydrology & Hydraulic assessment of the Ballyhale River has been completed.
- A full topographical survey has been carried out.
- A number of Environmental Surveys were completed in 2020 to establish baseline data.

Next Steps for Ballyhale FRS:

- Advance Site Investigation Contract over the coming months.
- Develop Options and preferred Option for the scheme.
- Public Consultation with Preferred Option.
- Develop NIS/EIAR if required.
- MCA – Multi Criteria Analysis & CBA – Cost Benefit Scheme.



PLANNING

Development Management to April 2021

PLANNING SUMMARY	Total to April	
	2020	2021
Applications Received	59	112
Applications Granted	41	66
Applications Refused	1	4
Complaints Received	28	51
Warning Letters Issued	28	47
Enforcement Notices Issued	6	5
Cases Closed	26	28

The Planning Department continues to remain open for business subject to Covid-19 recommendations for social distancing and other safety measures for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment.

Appointment can be made by telephoning the Planning Office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie.

There has been a significant increase in the number of planning applications received this year compared to the same period last year – almost double. There is also a notable increase in the number of complaints received and enforcement notices issued, up 82% and 68% respectively.

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan

The statutory public consultation on the draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan concluded on the 12th of March 2021. A total of 460 submissions were received. These submissions are now being summarised and the Chief Executive will respond to the issues raised in a report to be issued to the Elected Members within the statutory 12 weeks. The next stage in the process will be to consider material alterations to the draft Plan, which will involve a further period of public consultation. The intention is to have the City & County Development Plan presented to the Elected Members for adoption before the end of July, 2021.

Joint Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area Plan

The Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Joint Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area was approved by Members by the Council on the 15th March, 2021. The Material Alterations were subsequently screened for potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites and it was concluded that a full Environmental Report and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was not required for the Material Alterations. The Screening Reports and Material Alterations Report were on public display until the 7th of May 2021.

Masterplans

Work is continuing with the preparation of Masterplans for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice's Campus (the former St. Canice's Hospital) and the Fairgreen area of the City. These were also impacted by Covid 19. Loughmacask is the furthest advanced. A draft Master Plan will be presented to Members in the coming weeks before any draft is placed on public display. St. Canice's Campus and the Fair Green area will recommence shortly.

Conservation

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS):

The BHIS is one of two built heritage funding schemes run by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The BHIS seeks to leverage/encourage private investment in small scale projects to repair and conserve Protected Structures and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftworkers and tradespeople.

Through grants of up to €15,000, the BHIS assists owners of heritage structures – including those on the Local Authorities' Record of Protected Structures to meet their obligations to care for their properties. There are a total of 14 successful applicants under the BHIS conservation grant scheme this year. Consent for the works are currently being assessed and work will commence shortly. The projects include window, thatch, masonry, roof and lime render repairs to buildings and structures that form an integral component of Kilkenny's architectural heritage as follows:

Applicant	Grant Award
St. Johns Church, John Street Lower	€6,000.00
Knocktopher Church, Knocktopher, Co. Kilkenny	€8,650.00
Brandondale House Gdns, Graiguenamanagh	€7,500.00
Phil Barron's Cottage (Thatched) Clogh	€11,000.00
Brandonvale Creamery, Graiguenamanagh	€9,590.00
Stone House, Piltown	€10,000.00
Ballyduff Mill, Thomastown	€6,500.00
Church of the Immaculate Conception, Castlecomer	€8,500.00
Killinney Mill House, Kells	€9,500.00
Murrays Public House, Graiguenamanagh	€8,600.00
Old Creamery, Coolhill,	

PLANNING

Applicant	Grant Award
Windgap	€8,500
Fennellys, Upper Bridge Street, Callan	€5,760
The Old Fever Hospital,	
Freshford	€9,000
Farm Managers House, Three Castles Demesne, Freshford	€8,500
Total	€117,600

Historic Structures Fund (HSF):

The HSF assists with works to safeguard structures or parts of structures in immediate danger of significant deterioration. A total of 8 projects were forwarded to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage for consideration under the HSF Grant Scheme. The Department has offered grant funding as follows:

Rothe House	€ 50,000
Shee Alms House	€150,000
Tynan's Bridge House	€ 15,000
Rose Cottage	€ 10,000
Shankill Castle	€ 50,000
Kells House, Kells	€ 37,000

Historic Towns Initiative (HTI)

Grant funding in the amount of €57,000 has been secured from the Heritage Council under the HTI for Phase 2 works of the St. Mary's Church railing conservation works. Discussions are underway with the ironworks contractor, and onsite works will proceed shortly. Phase 1 of this project will be completed shortly.

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices	2021	2020
Received to end of April	123	120

Disability Access Certificate	2021	2020
Received to end of April	23	27

Taking in Charge

The following estates will proceed for initiation stage at the May Council meeting:

- Brookfield, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny
- Haven Court, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny

Works are substantially complete for the final taking in charge at the June Council Meeting as follows:

- Banagher Court, Piltown
- Bellfield, Ferrybank
- Newpark Crescent, Kilkenny City
- The Green, Ballyfoyle

Works are also ongoing at the following Estates:

Planning Authority carrying out works on following:

- Rathullard, Kilkenny City
- Filbuckstown, Mooncoin
- Arbourmount, Ferrybank
- The Greens, Thomastown - Schedule of works in process of being agreed.
- Abhainn Ri, Kilmanagh - CCTV to wastewater has been completed and some works to foul sewers will follow.

Developer carrying out works on following:

- Friary Walk, Callan
- Lakeside, Kilkenny City
- Roseleigh, Mooncoin
- Whitehall, Paulstown
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank - Schedule of works to be collated.
- Seville Rise, Callan Road - Awaiting reports from Service Areas.
- The Fairways & Greenoaks, Ferrybank - Schedule of works has been agreed.

Vacant Sites

There are currently 32 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, two of which are under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

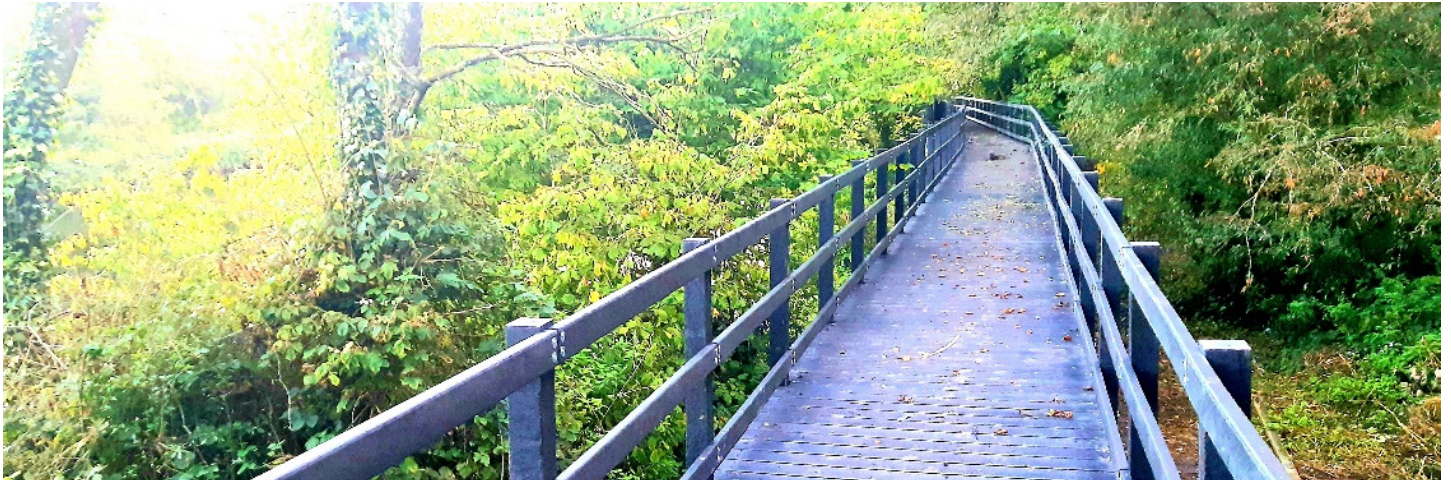
The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 16 sites.

Revised valuations were determined for sites that have been on the Register since 2017, and notice of the right of appeal to the Valuations Tribunal have been issued to the owners concerned.

One site recorded a qualifying change of ownership in line with Section 17 of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act; VSR20-3 Pudding Lane in Kilkenny City which exempts the site from the levy for 2021 and 2020.

The Council continues to implement the Vacant Site Levy in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

ENVIRONMENT



Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plan

The Council's RMCEI Plan for 2021 has been submitted to the EPA for review. Environment Staff will again endeavour to carry out as many inspections as possible whilst adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

Environmental Complaints

The increasing trend (experienced during 2020) in the number of complaints being received by Environment Staff for investigation is continuing for 2021 with 573 cases logged to date compared with 496 for the same period last year (i.e. an increase of circa 16%). The nature of these complaints range from littering and illegal dumping through to water quality and abandoned cars.

However, the vast majority continue to relate to littering and illegal dumping. Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19, our Enforcement Officers remain very active on the ground in dealing with these complaints while adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

Graveyard Grants

The Environment Section has received 32 applications under the Scheme. The applications will be assessed in the coming weeks and they will be presented for approval at the June Council Meeting.

Following a recommendation from SPC 4, the Council approved an amendment to the criteria for the scheme to include the cost of insurance as an eligible expenditure item for inclusion in grant claims. The grant contributes towards the cost of:

- Graveyard maintenance, including appropriate works to help pollinators;
- Graveyard recording schemes;
- Heritage studies of graveyards; and
- Costs associated with providing Public Liability Insurance (from 2021).



ENVIRONMENT

Decarbonisation Zone

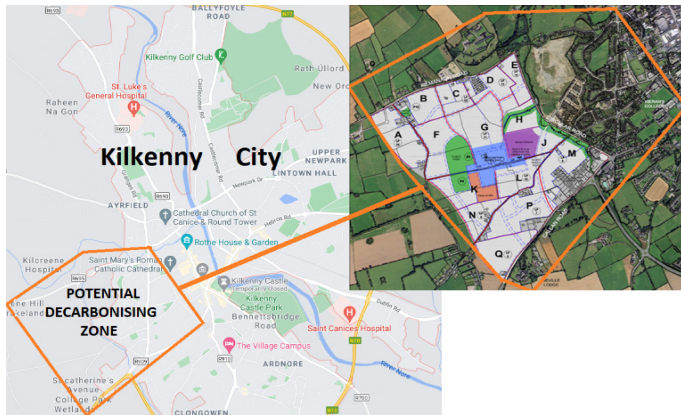
Kilkenny County Council was required to identify a potential Decarbonisation Zone as per the National Climate Action Plan.

A potential Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) for County Kilkenny has been identified to the South West of Kilkenny City Centre that covers an area of approximately 3 sq. km.

The potential DZ includes a range of urban and urban fringe areas with a variety of uses and zonings under both the current City and Environs Development Plan 2014 and the draft City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The new Pocket Park which adjoins Fairview Housing Estate and the Borris Road was delivered under the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment 2019 Anti-Dumping Initiative Programme.

The works consisted of both hard and soft landscaping which incorporated age friendly seating. The focus of the planting is pollinator friendly and a wildflower area will be planted in Spring to compliment the works already completed to-date.



The potential DZ includes both existing built up areas characterised by mature urban infrastructure, as well as a significant area earmarked for new build, the primary extent of which is now referred to as the Breaghagh Valley. The population of the potential DZ is currently circa 4,000 and it is anticipated that when the new areas are built out in the coming years, there will be upwards of 7,000 residents living there by 2030. It is anticipated that by 2030, approximately 600-700 additional housing units will be provided in this area alone. Extant planning permissions are in place for a further 350+ additional housing units in other lands within the potential DZ, including 80+ social housing units at Crokers Hill.

The potential DZ also includes an area which has been earmarked for urban renewal within the City, generally referred to as the Fair Green and comprising an area which lies in large part between Kickham Street and the Gaol Road. A Masterplan for this area will commence shortly.

The potential DZ boundary was specifically chosen to have a significant institutional presence and as proposed includes Kilcreene Orthopaedic Hospital, Kilkenny Ambulance Services, the EPA Regional Offices, the HQ of the Kilkenny-Carlow Educational & Training Board (KCETB), the HQ of Kilkenny Gardai, Kilkenny SOS Centre and the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) outreach centre at Burrell's Hall, as well as commercial premises such as Hotel Kilkenny and various other smaller business premises. The identified DZ currently includes 3 second level schools, being St. Kieran's College, the City Vocational School and the High Support Special School at Seville Lodge and the CBS primary school. It is also anticipated that within the Breaghagh Valley, work will soon start on an already approved campus with 3 additional schools, 2 secondary and 1 primary.

The area is traversed by the River Breaghagh, which is a tributary of the River Nore and as such is afforded Special Area of Conservation (SAC) status under the Habitats Directive.

Kilkenny County Council will now establish an Implementation Working Group of key staff and relevant stakeholders, including the Three Counties Energy Agency (3CEA) to consider the DZ and to develop an Implementation Plan by year end. The 3CEA will undertake a thorough analysis to determine the baseline analysis for the potential DZ and will also assist in the establishment of a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC).

PARKS

South East Greenway

Final site clearance works are now underway having been stalled during Level 5 restrictions. Level 5 restrictions also impacted on engagement with landowners, however we are now in the final stages of reaching agreement on accommodation works with both the farming and residential community. The main construction of the 24km Greenway is being awarded in a number of Lots. The first 3 Lots have been tendered and will be awarded shortly.

Further contracts will be awarded as the detailed design is finalised and the landowner accommodation works are agreed in each Lot. A Part 8 Planning Application is currently on public display for the temporary construction compound and temporary access ramp at Abbeylands and Rathculliheen. The site is on the boundary of the unfinished section of the Clover Meadows estate, abutting the boundary hedge with nearby Bellfield estate. **Submissions on the proposal can be made up until the 4th of June.**

Parks & Playgrounds

With the longer days and the lifting of some Covid restrictions, the playgrounds County wide have been extremely busy. In addition to the efforts of the local Tidy Towns group in Ferrybank who are assisting the Parks Department to pick litter in the new park and playground, the Transition Year students from Abbey Community College have now also joined forces to provide help during the week. The litter situation had been very challenging and there has been a big improvement thanks to the extra efforts by the community. A local waste disposal company, Kollekt, have very generously sponsored litter bins for the park and are emptying them on a weekly basis free of charge.

An application has been submitted for a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) for Ferrybank to cater for the volumes of children playing ball games. If we are successful in this application under the Sports Capital Fund, a new all-weather ball games area will be installed facilitating ball games year-round. An application for funding for playground enhancement has also been made to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for new pieces of equipment for Kells Playground and Woodstock Garden Playground.

The annual playground repair programme is well under way across the County with the focus on the older playgrounds where play equipment is showing signs of wear and tear. The Thomastown playground has just been repainted and shortly a new piece of equipment will be installed. Woodstock playground will also be painted. We will be installing a new piece of equipment in Castlecomer Discovery Park playground.

Repairs have also been carried out in Kells playground and works are commencing on the playground in Windgap to improve ground conditions where waterlogging is a problem.



Works have commenced on the construction of a new playground in Piltown. The site, located to the rear of the old Garda Station, which is a protected structure, is on the Main Street and immediately adjacent to the River Pil. The playground will be developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and funding from the Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme. Upon completion the Park Department will take the playground in charge and maintain it under our maintenance and inspection schedule.



Woodstock Gardens & Wider Estate

A recent meeting was held with Coillte to discuss our application to National Parks and Wildlife to undertake a management plan for the control of Cherry Laurel in Woodstock. Coillte are fully supportive of our efforts to control this highly invasive plant which leaves a detrimental impact on the habitat of the woodland.

Staff at Woodstock have been busy pruning the old Victorian varieties of roses, the fruit bushes and the topiary in the Winter Garden. The garden is a great resource for students of horticulture. Two students from the GROW project in Waterford will commence practical work in the gardens shortly which will be of mutual benefit.

PARKS

Easter weekend and daylight saving saw the opening hours at Woodstock extended from 4.30 pm closing time to 7pm. The refreshment service from the coffee van is also now available at weekends until June after which we will have a facility on site 7 days per week. As soon as Covid restrictions allow, we plan to open our new and improved tea shop housed in the conservatory. We also plan to erect a large stretch tent in the gardens to accommodate outdoor dining and provide shelter in inclement weather. We expect a busy season as most Irish people will stay at home for their annual holidays.

Amenity Grants

187 applications have been received, an increase of 21 on 2020. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. In 2021, there will be an increased focus on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner in line with the pollinator plan which the Council has adopted and in line with actions set out in the Council's Climate Action Policy. This is already evident from the applications being received.

The applications were assessed by Parks Staff in April and will be brought to the May Council meeting for consideration.

Sustainable Grassland Management

In line with actions identified in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Parks Department is working with the Heritage Office and Area Offices to reduce mowing where possible across the County in an effort to increase the biodiversity of grass verges and parklands providing a valuable source of food and habitat for insects in particular our pollinators. The Kilkenny Ring Road for example will now be cut on the City side of the road only with the exception of maintaining sightlines at roundabouts.

The large meadows at Dukesmeadows and Bishopsmeadows have been managed with an annual cut yearly for some years now, providing an incredible habitat in the City Centre. Short mown paths are cut through the longer meadow grass to allow access for the public. Other areas are being examined for this approach in consultation with residents many of whom are embracing the less maintained appearance recognising the benefits to wildlife. In fact, many residents' groups are approaching the Parks Department with a view to managing their areas in a more sustainable manner. The Parks Department is happy to provide advice to resident's groups to assist in pollinator projects.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme Measure 1- Walking Trails

Tenders for repairs to the Freshford Looped Walk and rehabilitation / enhancement of the Cois Bearbha walk in Goresbridge were recently assessed. The successful contractors will be appointed in May with works commencing shortly thereafter.



View of the weir on the River Barrow from Cois Bearbha

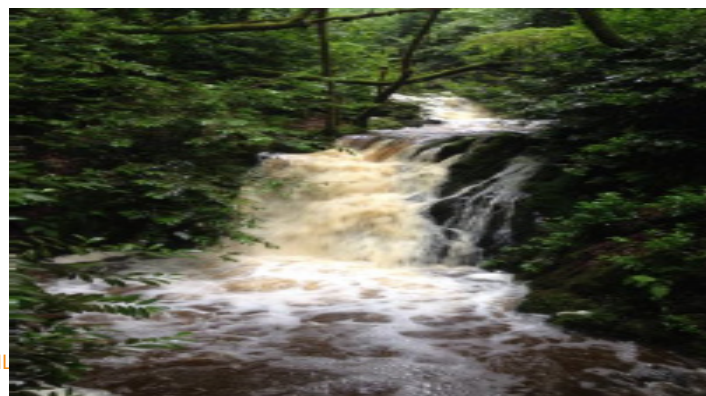
Tenders for upgrading of signage, marker posts and stiles along the Nore Valley Walk between Kilkenny and Bennettsbridge were also received and the successful tenderer will be notified in the coming weeks.

Direction signage has been designed for the Brandon Hill Summit Walk. This route will be signed from the Coillte barriers at Deerpark on the Graiguenamanagh side and at Raheendonore on the Inistioge side. The new signage will provide clear directions for visitors wishing to reach the summit along the most direct trail. The signs will also provide visitors with the average walking time to reach the summit from each signed location. Tenders for the supply and installation of same will be issued shortly.

Separately, in acknowledgment of the popularity of the route, Coillte has agreed to construct a 20-bay carpark on their lands at the Raheendonore access point and this work is expected to commence in the coming weeks.

Measure 2 Schemes

Woodstock Loop Trail Enhancement Phase 2
The works include the restoration of 2.7km of the original Victorian Estate paths, opening up access from Woodstock House Gardens and Arboretum, to the Brownsford Stream Waterfall. The removal of invasive species and recreating the viewing area at Brownsford Stream Waterfall.



Brownsford Stream Waterfall

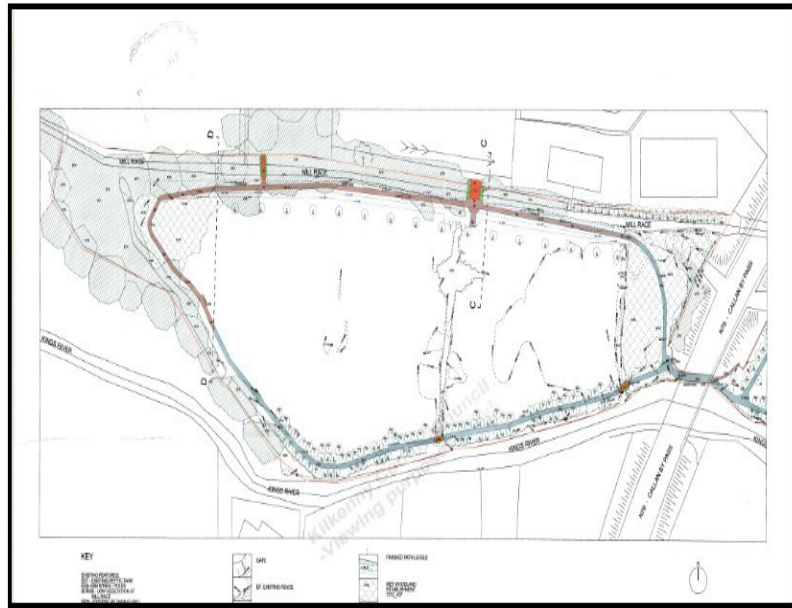
PARKS

The Moat Field Nature & Heritage Trail

The completion of the second and final phase of this project, which encompasses two fields, an area of 7.61ha., on the banks of the King's River in Callan will have a trail length when finished will be 1.6km (Phase 1 (Loop 1) comprising of 0.8km was completed in 2020).

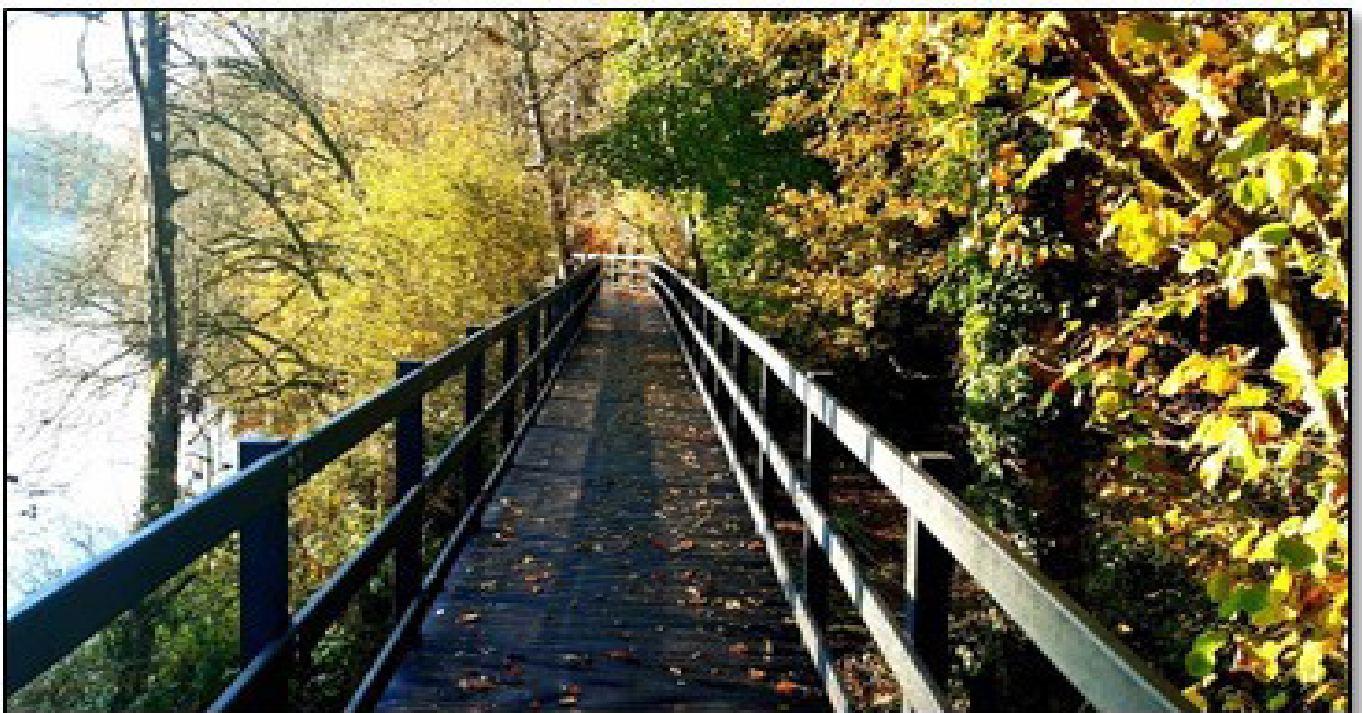
The Council is currently in the process of agreeing a long- term lease for lands required to facilitate this trail with Camphill Communities of Ireland. The area required is circa.1-acre, fencing will be provided along the inside of the Loop Walk so as the large encompassed area of land will remain available for use and will as such remain outside the lease agreement.

In conjunction with the above tender documents for the engagement of consultancy services to undertake the detailed design, tender documents and tender administration will progressed over the coming weeks.



Branding of Parks Department Maintenance Vehicles

To raise awareness of the Council's role in providing and maintaining these amenity spaces, which are becoming ever more popular with the public, our maintenance vehicles will receive new branding which will promote all the recreational offerings provided and maintained by the Council. This branding will also help to promote Woodstock Gardens and the Council's ethos around helping our pollinators as our vehicles travel around the County.



TOURISM



Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Team continue in its efforts to support the tourism and hospitality sector during the current level 5 lockdown. We continue to work with the sector locally to prepare to re-open the City and County to visitors in the not too distant future.

New Tourist Map

In April, we finalised our new Visitor Brochure for Kilkenny City. The brochure will be distributed to all Hotels and Tourist Attractions throughout the City in time for our re-opening to visitors. This map, funded by Fáilte Ireland, focuses on the key pedestrian visitor routes and highlights landmarks and main visitor destinations. It also directs visitors to our web-site www.visitkilkenny.ie to find out more for things to see and do throughout the County. This new map can now be used for all other mapping for festivals, hotels, trails or others to layer events.

Kilkenny Catwalk 2021

Work continues to develop and deliver additional tourism attractions for the County. Our Kilkenny Catwalk, a tourism and art trail around the City for the second half of 2021, continues to be developed.



Kilkenny Tourism & Visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues to promote Kilkenny's Tourism offering in 2021. Our re-opening campaign continues to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind for when they are able to travel again. By showcasing Kilkenny's wonderful hotel offerings alongside all that the City and County has to offer for families, we are aiming for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destination for their 2021 staycation. Check out www.visitkilkenny.ie for further details and up to date blogs.

"More to Explore" competition continued to run through April, offering followers an opportunity to win a staycation here in Kilkenny over the summer months. The

campaign proved to be a great success. Kilkenny Tourism also ramps up its promotion of Awesome Things to do in Kilkenny for under 30's.

Kilkenny Tourism's Recovery Taskforce

Fáilte Ireland's suite of business development supports continue to be delivered over the months of April and May to help local businesses sustain themselves in the current climate, adapt it to meet domestic consumer needs, build digital skills to help target new customers in 2021 while operating safely and efficiently, and remaining financially viable.

Fáilte Ireland's goal for 2021 is to sustain businesses, supporting survival in the short term to thrive in the long term. The work of the Taskforces is on-going and is being led by Kilkenny County Council, Fáilte Ireland and key tourism stakeholders locally with their role being to deliver a roadmap within Kilkenny to move towards re-opening, recovery, and growth.

New Water Based Facilities Hub Approved For Kilkenny

April saw the announcement by Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin and Fáilte Ireland of a major new investment in water-based activities worth €19million nationally.

The funding will be used to build world-class facility centres at 22 locations across the country where water-based activities are a key visitor attraction.

Kilkenny Water Sports Hub on the grounds of County Hall will be developed under this scheme by Kilkenny County Council. The centre will provide hot shower, changing and toilet facilities, secure storage, induction spaces, equipment washdown and orientation points.

The significant increase in people enjoying outdoor water-based activities such as kayaking, surfing, paddleboarding and open water swimming is expected to continue to grow year on year, and not just during the summer months.

This means all-weather changing facilities, secure storage and bathrooms at beaches and inland water spots will be in huge demand.



LEO/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Green For Micro Initiative

The objective of the 'Green for Micro' programme - a new national initiative - aims to prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. This is a free programme, available to businesses with up to ten employees in County Kilkenny. Business can access 2 days specialised mentoring in a broad range of green related topics. Applicants can apply online through the national web portal at www.localenterprise.ie/green. Alternatively contact the LEO at (056) 7752662 to speak to a Business Advisor.

Lean For Micro Initiative

There are two types of Lean Support available to Kilkenny based businesses:

Lean Start: this programme is more focused for smaller companies with targeted Lean needs and wanting to adapt their current business. Businesses are eligible to receive support for a maximum of 3 consultancy days. Lean Start is available to all businesses across all sectors in Kilkenny.

Lean for Micro: businesses are eligible to receive support for a maximum of 5.5 consultancy days. Lean for Micro is available to eligible companies who employ up to 10 employees in the manufacturing sector and/or have the potential to export / internationally trade. Further information is available on <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Financial-Supports/LEAN-for-Micro-Enterprises/>

Supports For Business Reopening

The Local Enterprise Office are currently providing free one-to one business advice with experienced business mentors in relation to reopening their businesses. Mentoring clinic days are being held in the following areas:

- Cashflow and Finance
- HR & Staffing related matters
- Marketing
- Applying for Loan Finance
- Digital Marketing and Promoting the re-opening of the Business

Should you know of businesses looking for support in these areas, you can refer them to <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/> or **contact the LEO at (056) 7752662 to speak to a Business Advisor.**

Student Enterprise Programme – National Final

A formal presentation by the Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness took place on Wednesday 28th April whereby specially commissioned Jerpoint Glass was presented to the national finalists in advance of the National Student Enterprise Programme Final on the 14th May.



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

Mentoring Clinics

For Re-Opening Businesses

Cashflow and Finance
HR and Staffing
Digital Marketing Strategy
Applying for Loan Finance

Book Your FREE appointment today



HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

The capital schemes programmed for delivery in 2021 are outlined in the table below: -

	SCHEME TYPE	PROJECT NAME	NUMBER OF UNITS	PROJECT STATUS
1	AHB CALF Turnkey	Cois Na Bearu, Graiguenamanagh [Cooperative Housing]	14	COMPLETED
2	AHB CALF Turnkey	Margaret's Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny City [Respond]	40	COMPLETED
3	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer	33	ONSITE
4	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Station road, Ballyragget	22	ONSITE
5	CAS CONSTRUCTION	Grennan Villa, Thomastown [Camphill Communities]	5	ONSITE
6	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Pairc Nua [The Broguemaker], Kilkenny	18	ONSITE
7	SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	New Road & Chapel Street, Mooncoin	6	WORKS ON HOLD
8	AHB CALF Turnkey	Nuncio Road Phase 3	22	ON SITE
9	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	8	6 units completed. 2 at tender.
10	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny	16	COMPLETED
11	SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City	8	ONSITE
12	CAS CONSTRUCTION	"Woodville", Belmont Road, Ferrybank	4	COMPLETED
13	CAS AHB B & R	25 a & b Green Street, Kilkenny	2	ONSITE
			198	

Other Units 'Under Construction' at 30th April 2021 – 112 units

- 58 Units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown (KCC Direct Build)
- 23 Units at New Orchard, Kilkenny City [AHB Calf Turnkey – Cluid]
- 12 Units Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny GSC
- 17 Units at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank

KCC Turnkey Projects due to start in Q2 2021

- 4 Units at Main Street, Piltown

KCC Direct Build Projects – out to tender as at 30th April 2021

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road.

KCC Direct Build Projects – out to tender as at 30th April 2021

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road

KCC Direct Build Projects – due to go to tender in May 2021

- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)

Pre Tender Stage [90 units]

- 88 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)



Works ongoing at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road [Turnkey Project – 66 units]

Housing List

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY APRIL 2021

Number awaiting social housing support at April 30th (Gross Need)	1,917
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at April 30th (Net Need)	814
No. of Social Housing Applications received in April 30th	72
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	48
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	30
No. of applications assessed during April	34
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at April 30th	49

HOUSING ASSISTANCE SUMMARY APRIL 2021

Number of active HAP tenancies to April 30th	850
New HAP tenancies set up	65
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	39
Closed HAP Tenancies	23
HAP Rent Reviews	74
Other tenancy amendments	251
HAP Calls Received	970

April 2021 Monthly Statistics

APRIL 2021

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of April (offers made):	26
Number of LA tenancies surrendered	12
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in April	38
Maintenance Calls for April	441
Maintenance Calls year to date	1898

Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council approved a budget of €1.5m for all three private grants (HOP/MAG/HGD). The Council recoups 80% of all eligible expenditure from the Department. The estimated position at 30th April 2021 is as follows:

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED UP TO 30TH APRIL 2021

Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	63	€608,139
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	20	€87,435
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	100	€617,132
Total	183	€1,312,705

GRANTS PAID OUT UP TO 30TH APRIL 2021

Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	23	€213,797
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	12	€47,216
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	31	€181,148
Total	66	€442,161

HOUSING

Housing Loan Activity - 1st January to 30th April 2021

	Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	Reconstruction Loan	Caravan Loan	TOTAL
Received	20	0	0	20
Approved	5	0	0	5
Amount Approved	€727,777	0	0	€727,777
No. Paid	5	0	0	5
Amt. Paid	€757,018	0	0	€757,018



Blackwater Grove, Kilmacow - Completed April 2021

Homeless Update

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY APRIL 2021

Homeless Presentations	24
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
<i>Preventions and Interventions</i>	10
<i>Emergency Service</i>	5
<i>Not Eligible/Did not avail of the Service</i>	9
HAP Place Finder Service	
<i>Number of tenancies at first day of the month</i>	81
<i>Number of tenancies created during the month</i>	0
<i>Number of tenancies in place at the last day of the month</i>	81
<i>Number of tenancy breakdowns</i>	0
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	1
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	1
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	10
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families	1



COMMUNITY

Clár 2021

The CLÁR 2021 scheme is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage through rural depopulation. The Council can submit up to 10 applications for funding to the Department of Rural and Community Development. These were submitted by the closing date of 7th May, 2021.

The CLÁR Innovation Measure is targeted at piloting new ideas which address specific challenges faced by communities in CLÁR areas, including those of rural isolation, village decline, service accessibility, social disadvantage and marginalisation in communities within the CLÁR areas. The measure seeks to support fresh ideas and new ways of working that might not otherwise be identified or supported. **Closing date for submission of Expression of Interests to Department of Rural and Community Development is 21st May, 2021.**

Streetscape Scheme 2021

The vision of the scheme is to assist with the cost of painting the front façade of buildings and traditional signage throughout the County. The scheme will offer a grant of €450 or 50% of the cost of the work – whichever is the lesser – to each applicant who is successful in the application process.

Applications are invited from owners and/or occupiers of Commercial Properties (or any person who with the written consent of the owner/s). **The scheme was advertised in the Kilkenny People of 7th April, 2021 with the closing date of 7th May, 2021.**

Town & Village Renewal/ Rural Regeneration Promotional Campaign

A promotional campaign that highlights some of the Town & Village Renewal/ Rural Regeneration projects carried out in County Kilkenny over the last few years has commenced. The campaign incorporates a community interactive magazine showcasing completed projects throughout County Kilkenny and new projects recently funded. As part of this campaign a number of promotional videos have also been developed that showcase sample projects on social media, these will continue to be promoted over the coming weeks. <https://youtu.be/WKZArivVwsU>

The Department of Rural and Community Development has announced the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for 2021. Full details are awaited before advertising for expressions of interest from community groups. Funding is again at 90% for 2021. The Department also announced a new initiative under Town and Village Renewal – Connected Hubs. The Department are seeking expressions of interest by the 28th May with the closing date for receipt of applications 17th June, 2021. Eligible applicants must be BCPs or existing hubs, which provide or will provide remote working facilities.

Consultations in relation to health checks and development of Town Plans and Town Teams continues in the first and second week of May in respect of Castlecomer, Goresbridge, Mullinavat, Thomastown and Urlingford-Johnstown.

KRSP

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership is in the process of consulting on its 2022–2025 KRSP Strategic Plan. A strategy committee has been established to facilitate this process. The consultation will incorporate stakeholders from various organisations and clubs in County Kilkenny.

ARTS



Covid Care Concerts

The Mobile Music Machine Covid Care Concerts 2021 saw ten live concerts with world class artists rolled out for the residents of Kilkenny hospital settings and residential care homes during the month of April with more concerts planned for the summer months. This series, a partnership with Kilkenny County Council as part of our Creative Ireland Kilkenny programme and funded by Age Friendly Ireland, featured world class singers and musicians, Sandra Oman, Paula O’Hanlon, Aoife Durning and Aura Stone. Residents, patients and staff were treated to a selection from Bach to Beethoven and the Beatles to Abba as well as traditional Irish music.

Poetry Broadsheet 21

50 poets submitted 98 poems for consideration for the 2021 Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet. Our 2021 editor, Jessica Traynor, has selected 12 poems by 11 poets for publication and a further 12 poets were shortlisted. Jessica said the standard of poetry was very high.

We are midway through our series of online sessions aimed at artists and other creatives in Kilkenny to explore ideas around dealing with the ongoing Covid19 restrictions, which are having a major impact on artists. Exploring various themes on consecutive Wednesdays, they are informal and led by experienced practitioners who are supporting and guiding artists through these challenging times. To date we have reviewed the past year and how artists are managing and we provided a session on improving confidence and representing and promoting themselves online.

Knitted Together 2

Once more the crafters and makers of Kilkenny and beyond have stepped up to the mark and are busy knitting and crocheting squares for our KT2 project. We have distributed knit and crochet kits to anyone that might be short on supplies due to their usual suppliers closed under Covid restrictions and to any newbies that want to get involved this year. We are organising online tutorials where volunteers can learn how to crochet and also join each other for online get togethers where they can talk with other crafters and makers. DCCI have also come on board with us this year with funding and practical support.



Knitted Together 2

Artists Supports

CREATION 21/22 - is a new collaborative initiative of Irish and international artistic partners including the Local Authority Arts Offices of Carlow, Kilkenny, Dublin City, South Dublin, Kildare, Waterford and Wexford in collaboration with Carlow Arts Festival, Dublin Dance Festival, National Circus Festival, ISACS Network, United Fall Dance, Danseu Festival and led by The Performance Corporation.

The Performance Corporation has developed Ireland’s first multi-disciplinary artist’s residency for performing artists to develop their practice, network, learn and showcase. The project offers artistic development opportunities through mentoring, coaching, residencies and ‘in-progress’ presentation opportunities. This project is an opportunity to deeply collaborate with artists from various performing art forms and areas of experience.

This residency is specifically focussed on performing artists in the East and South East region of Ireland, as well as European partners. It will be designed hand in hand with makers from the Theatre, Dance, and Circus/Street Art/Spectacle worlds to ensure it is delivering to the participating artists what they need at this time. <https://www.creationartists.ie/>



HERITAGE

Kilkenny County Council Cruinniú na nÓg Programme

An exciting range of projects for children and young people will take place in Kilkenny on June 12th for Cruinniú na nÓg, the national day of free creativity for children and young people. The projects funded by the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme via a public grant scheme co-ordinated by the Culture Section of Kilkenny County Council. <https://cruinniu.creativeireland.gov.ie/>



Project Details	Amount Allocated
My Kilkenny Automata Workshop [Calmast, Waterford IT] A workshop exploring the world of animation for children aged 8-11 years old where the children will create and build their own autoata	€350
Creative Workshops [Kilkenny County Council Library Service] A programme of 8 creative workshops including: creative writing/poetry workshop for older teens; planting/growing/cooking; creative crafts for children; creative drawing/animation	€2,700

Project Details	Amount Allocated
The Magpie Song [Aileen Lambert] Traditional song workshop about a child and a magpie delivered by Aileen Lambert and her daughter Nellie	€ 500
Family [TADA Theatre School] Online drama workshops for young people	€2,450
Re-Imagine [St. Canice's Community Action - Dreamstuff Youth Theatre] A series of 8 workshops for young people aged 13-18 around the theme of "What If?" and "Ideal Worlds" which will culminate in an interdisciplinary exhibition	€3,000
Our 2020 [Barnstorm Theatre Company] 20 members of Kilkenny Youth Theatre will develop 20 creative ideas, and 20 short films.	€5,000
Craft Connections [Design & Crafts Council of Ireland] Creation of a mini Craft Village with live demonstrations and workshops of traditional crafts	€1,000

Help Kilkenny's Hedgehogs

Would you like to help monitor hedgehogs in Kilkenny and make the County more hedgehog friendly? The Kilkenny Heritage Office has co-funded a new nationwide citizen science hedgehog survey by researchers at NUI Galway and the National Biodiversity Data Centre and we would like people in the County to get onboard.



To take part in the survey, and find out more about the project

<https://www.irishhedgehogsurvey.com/>

To log a sighting of a hedgehog
<https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/additional-survey-schemes/irish-hedgehog-survey>

For simple tips on how to make your garden or community more hedgehog friendly <https://www.irishhedgehog-survey.com/helping-hedgehogs> If you'd like a hardcopy of this leaflet (Irish and English versions) please email us at heritage@kilkennycoco.ie.

HERITAGE

Kilkenny County Council Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021

The Kilkenny County Council Community Strand of the Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021 is designed to raise awareness and encourage engagement with significant events and people from County Kilkenny associated with 1921. The Council invited applications from the community for a public grant scheme and to date has awarded funding to eight projects.

First Round Decade of Centenaries Grant offers:

PROJECT	AWARD
Placing a time capsule at Sinnott's Cross monument to commemorate the centenary of Sinnott's Cross Ambush (18th June 1921). Area: <i>Mooncoin</i> Applicant: <i>Sinnotts' Cross Memorial Committee</i>	€ 315
History Ireland Hedge School podcast will explore events and activities in Kilkenny during the revolutionary decade. Area: <i>Countywide</i> Applicant: <i>History Ireland</i>	€1,885
Creation of a drama about 3 women and their relationship to the Coolbawn Ambush (18th June 1921). Area: <i>Coolbawn</i> Applicant: <i>TADA Theatre Group</i>	€3,220
Film about an event that took place in April 1921 in South Kilkenny when a member of the South Kilkenny Flying Column was accidentally shot by a teenage boy. Area: <i>Windgap</i> Applicant: <i>Kevin Hughes, Wallslough Studios</i>	€5,000
A series of 8 online lectures, on topics including: Joseph MacDonagh, T.D, Ernie O'Malley, the Coolbawn Ambush, the last months of British rule in Kilkenny, Cumann na mBan, and the Kilkenny Gaol break. Area: <i>Countywide</i> Applicant: <i>South Kilkenny Historical Society</i>	€1,200
Digitising and indexing a collection of letters written in 1921 by people in Ireland to the American Committee for Relief in Ireland requesting funding to rebuild businesses from losses as a result of the activities of the Crown Forces. Area: <i>National Interest</i> Applicant: <i>Kilkenny Archaeological Society</i>	€2,220

PROJECT	AWARD
An on-line commemoration of the death of Capt. Pat Walsh Area: <i>Dunamaggin</i> Applicant: <i>Pat Walsh Memorial Committee</i>	€2,050
Commemoration of incident at Knocknagrass, Tullaroan in May 1921 in which Patrick Walsh and Sean Quinn are killed by the Crown Forces. Area: <i>Tullaroan</i> Applicant: <i>Knocknagrass Commemoration Committee</i>	€1,885
Creation of a drama about 3 women and their relationship to the Coolbawn Ambush (18th June 1921). Area: <i>Coolbawn</i> Applicant: <i>TADA Theatre Group</i>	€1,850

In addition, the Heritage Office, and the Library Service, will deliver a county-wide programme of projects which commemorate the events and people from 1921 in Co. Kilkenny. This will include a radio series with KCLR called "**The History Fix**"; a series of 14 history podcasts on events in Kilkenny in 1921; a local history film; and a brochure about the Kilkenny Gaol break-out.

Kilkenny County Council received funding for the Decade of Centenaries Programme from the National Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. All events/projects are to be delivered in line with Govt/HSE COVID 19 Guidance.

Signwriting on Kilkenny's Traditional Shopfronts

The Heritage Office has commenced a new survey of the different styles of signwriting on the traditional shopfronts of Kilkenny City, including identifying the signwriters who created them. A standard method of assessing and categorising signwriting will be developed which can be used throughout the County. This is funded under the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme. If you have information on Kilkenny's signwriting and signwriters we'd love to hear from you. A public call to participate and share information will be rolled out shortly.



LIBRARY SERVICES

April 2021

Door to Door Library Service



220

Deliveries made in April



1,142

Items delivered in April

388

Phone calls made in April



Age Friendly Digital Ambassadors programme begins



Age Friendly Digital Ambassadors. Age Friendly Ireland, Libraries Development (LGMA) and Kilkenny Library has commenced the support programme whereby library staff will provide older people with remote support to help them make use of the online resources in libraries. If this is something you would be interested in learning or you know someone who would benefit from this contact Graiguenamanagh library on 056 779 4178 / graig@kilkennylibrary.ie to register your interest.



* New online memberships & their use of online services is not reflected in these figures

Online Services use:



1,518

eBooks borrowed
▼ 10% on 2020

639

eMagazines borrowed
▼ 56% on 2020



5,627

eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 54% on 2020

858

Songs accessed
▲ 5262% on 2020



2,068

eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 18% on 2020

1,050

Online Course sessions
▼ 79% on 2020



108

Language sessions

▲ Same as 2020

LIBRARY SERVICES

Grow it Forward

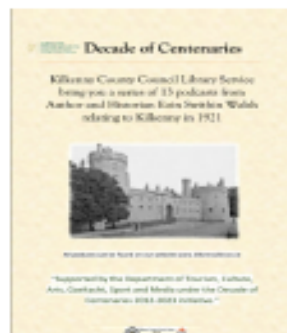
The National Grow it Forward Campaign continued with huge interest all over the county. With over 650 packs posted out to eager gardeners already, we are delighted to support people in living healthier and more sustainable lives.

To register, email/phone your local library, or email info@kilkennylibrary.ie.



1921 Podcast Series

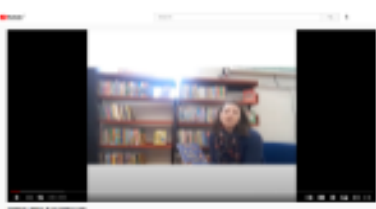
Kilkenny County Council Library Service are rolling out a series of 13 1921 themed podcasts to commemorate the Decade of Centenaries initiative. The podcasts were developed by Author and Historian, Eoin Swithin Walsh. Full details of current and forth-coming podcasts are available through our interactive booklet on our website.



Spring into Storytime

Spring into Storytime is part of our National Right to Read Literacy Campaign, and runs throughout April and May this year. Due to the limitations of Covid, we have been very busy recording, editing and developing storytimes and crafts for young children, to encourage them to enjoy books and reading for fun.

In April we had: Staff crafts & Storytimes, 4 Yoga workshops, 2 Storytimes Author and Storyteller Liz Weir & a Reading and Cookery Workshop with Dolores Keaveney.

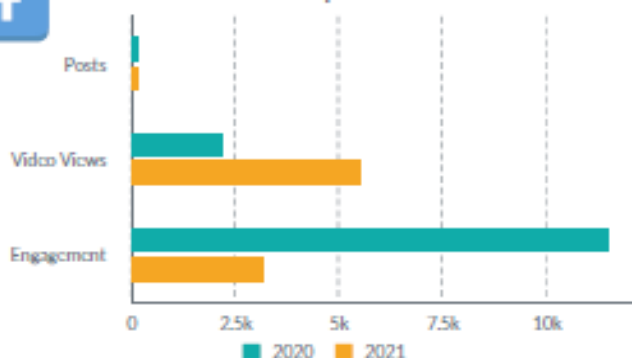


Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **449** posts on our social media platforms in April. Our videos were viewed **7,157** times.



Facebook April 20 v 21



Twitter April 20 v 21



FIRE SERVICES

Fire Safety Certificates

28 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to-date.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- 7 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.
- 3 Dangerous Substance Licence Applications were received and assessed to-date.
- 24 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have been carried out to date during Level 5 Covid 19.

Fire Brigade Operations

In house courses on Emergency Traffic Management, Breathing Apparatus Refresher and a Compressed Air Foam System course were held in April 2021.



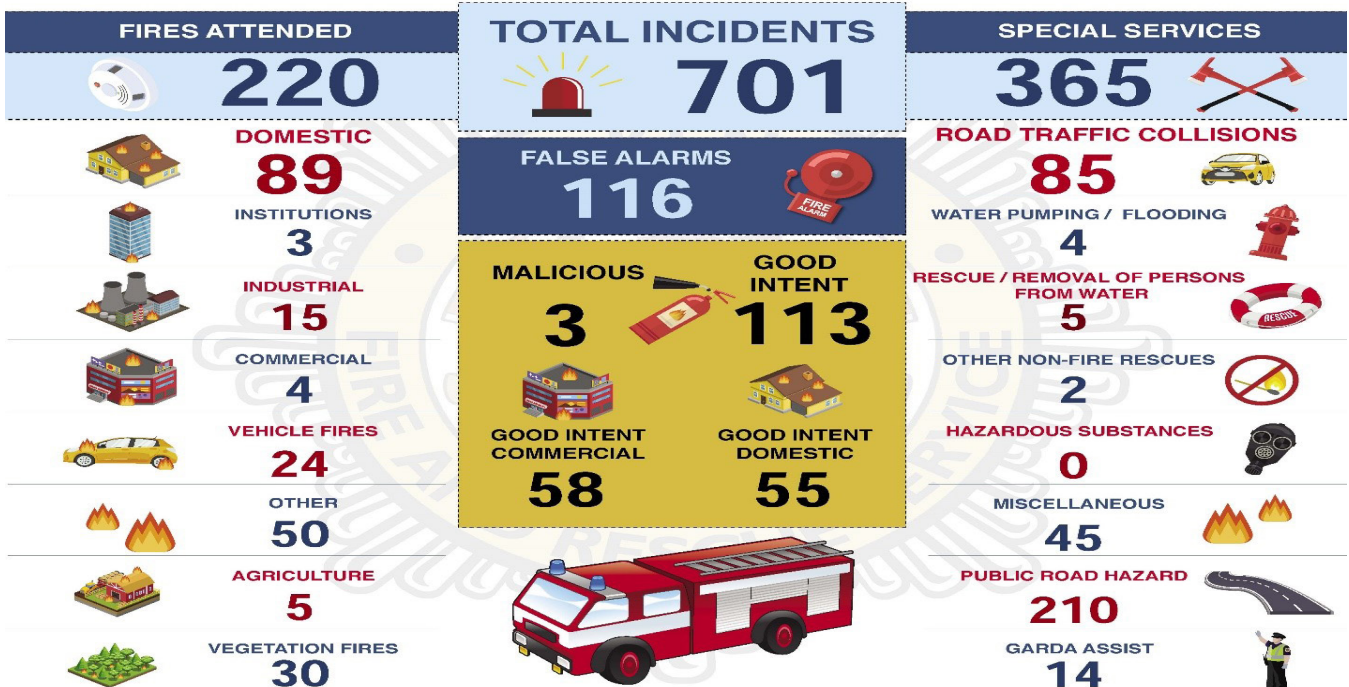
Callan Fire Brigade received their Compressed Air Foam System Training recently.



Breathing Apparatus Refresher Training in the Brick Factory, Castlecomer



KILKENNY FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE 2020 IN NUMBERS



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Quarter



Riverside Garden Project

In line with Government COVID 19 restrictions on construction work, work on the development of the Riverside Garden project was suspended on 8th Jan 2021. Work recommenced on 18th March and the project is now substantially completed. The project provides a riverside walk from the Tea Houses at Bateman Quay to Greensbridge, with an area of temporary walkway provided in the area of the Urban Park that is to be developed in the area of St. Francis Abbey.

The Riverside Garden project incorporates the new skate park, which has now been completed. The skate park was opened to the public on Saturday 1st May 2021, with access from Greens Bridge. To date the facility has been very heavily used, with skaters of all abilities and ages using the park.



Work on the section of the park from Bateman Quay to the skate park is substantially completed and will be opened in the coming weeks. The completion of this project will provide members of the public with their first opportunity to access the former Brewery site and is the first of a number of projects that will integrate the former Brewery Site into the City.



The project has been constructed by Niall Barry & Co. Ltd, with the skate park constructed by Spraioi Linn Ltd. The project has been part funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund, European Regional Development Fund and



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Quarter

Tea Houses

Tenders for the conservation of the Tea Houses at Bateman Quay have been invited through E Tenders, with tenders due to be received in mid May. It is expected that work on this project will commence in July and will be completed before the end of 2021. This project is funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund.



Brewhouse incl. Horse Barrack Lane & Brewhouse Courtyard

Similar to the Riverside Garden project, work on the development of the Brewhouse was suspended on 8th Jan in line with government COVID 19 restrictions on construction works. With the easing of these restrictions on 4th May 2021, work has now recommenced on site and it is expected that the project will be completed before the end of the year, subject to no further COVID 19 restrictions delaying progress.

This project includes the development of the Public Realm area of Horse Barrack Lane and the Brewhouse Courtyard, with these projects being part funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Quarter

Mayfair Library

A Tender notice for the renovation of the former Mayfair Ballroom for reuse as the new City Library has been advertised on the OJEU and E Tenders with tenders to be received in early June 2021. It is expected that work on the project will commence in late summer, with works to be completed by the end of 2022.



Urban Park and Street

Planning permission was granted in Feb 2021 for the development of the Urban Street and Park project in the Abbey Quarter. The Urban park, which will be centred around St. Francis Abbey, will be the central focus of the Abbey Quarter development, while the development of the street will open up the former Brewery site for the development of new buildings.

A design team for the preparation of the detailed design and tender documents and to oversee the construction of the project will be appointed in early May, with a view to the project being ready to go to tender before the end of



The project is part funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with some funding for the street element of the project provided by the European regional Development fund.



Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Ltd.

With planning granted and funding allocated to the development of the Urban Street through the Abbey Quarter, work can now commence on the preparation of designs for the new buildings on the Abbey Quarter site that will be accessed from the street. Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Ltd has now appointed a design team to prepare the design to planning of the first of these new buildings and is currently considering options to progress with the design of other new buildings on the site.

FINANCIAL REPORT



FINANCE REPORT – APRIL 2021

The expenditure by service division to the end of April is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €30.2m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD April 2021 €'000's	Budget Full Year 2021 €'000's
Housing & Building	7,124	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	6,903	25,500
Water Services	2,186	7,115
Development Management	3,039	10,679
Environmental Services	3,355	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	1,936	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	188	672
Miscellaneous Services	5,473	7,516
OVERALL TOTAL	30,204	89,962

Finance Update

The Covid-19 restrictions in place for the first four months of 2021 have had a serious impact on the Council's income streams to date, especially commercial rates and car parking income. A significant number of businesses had to close and still remain closed due to Covid. The Government has announced a commercial rates waiver for the six month period to the end of June for businesses impacted. The value of this waiver amounts to €3.4m and compensation will be provided by Government for this amount.

Income from car parking is also significantly below budget with only 10% of the annual budget figure received to the end of March.

It is still too early to predict with accuracy the expected income shortfall for the year.

A submission will be made by the sector to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the coming months seeking compensation for the shortfall.

As previously advised to Members a number of discretionary expenditure items in the 2021 Budget totalling €2m have been deferred until more clarity is available on the projected outcome for the year.

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the four month period to the end of April 2021. The temporary closure of a number of construction projects due to Covid 19 restrictions has had a positive impact on cashflow but this will now change with the resumption of construction activity on all projects.

Rates Waiver 2021

On the 27th January the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage issued details of a three-month Commercial Rates Waiver to be applied for the first quarter of 2021.

The waiver was further extended to cover quarter 2 providing a total of six months credit in lieu of commercial rates for eligible businesses. Credit in lieu of commercial rates was applied to the rate accounts of all eligible businesses closed by or badly impacted by Level 5 restrictions and the Rates Section communicated this with eligible and ineligible businesses last month. The total value of the waiver applied for the six month period is €3.4m.

Businesses that fall into the ineligible category may seek eligibility if it can be shown the business was severely impacted by the pandemic. The closing date for receipt of such applications is the 14th May, 2021 and documentary evidence to support eligibility must be provided. **Business can apply on line at rateswaiver@kilkennycoco.ie or call 056-7794209. A list of supporting proofs is available on www.kilkennycoco.ie.**

Small Business Assistance Scheme (SBAS)

The Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment launched the Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) which was intended to target those businesses with operating costs that do not qualify for the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) operated by the Revenue Commissioners subject to key eligibility criteria. To date Kilkenny County Council has received 147 applications which are currently being processed.

Rates Revaluation

Following the full revaluation of all commercial properties carried out by the Valuation office in 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 184 appeals have been completed. 144 of the 184 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €832,784. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been completed by the Tribunal.

