

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

APRIL 2023 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.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1st – 30th April

Spring Into Storytime

Kilkenny Earth Day – 22nd April

Join in the Kilkenny Earth Day events on Saturday 22nd April. There will be energy saving tips and information on grants, recycling, home composting and much more at the Earth Day pop-up-shop in McDonagh Junction from 12 noon until 3.00 p.m.

Climate Action Heroes – 22nd April

This is a team-based climate challenge for you and members from your community that supports you in taking climate friendly actions together. It starts on 22nd April.

Community Facilities & Cultural Grants Scheme

The 2023 Community Facilities & Cultural Grants Scheme will be advertised in April 2023. community@kilkennycoco.ie.

27th April

National Poetry Day

All-Ireland Skills Programme Bursaries – 28th April

The deadline for applications is Friday April 28th at 12.00 noon.

1st to 31st May

Bealtaine Festival

Commercial Premises Paint Scheme 2023 – 5th May

The closing date for receipt of applications is *Friday 5th May, 2023*.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

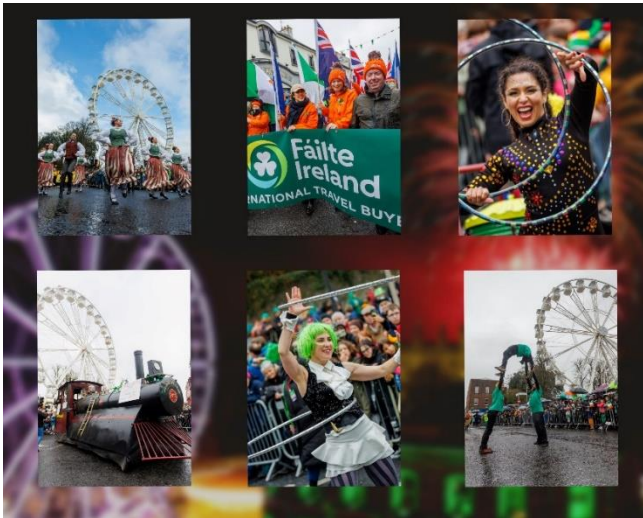
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CORPORATE



Kilkenny's St. Patrick's Festival was this year a five-day event bursting with excitement and

entertainment including fire-shows, fairground attractions, circus acts, drum workshops, street entertainment and concluded with an amazing fireworks display in Kilkenny Castle Park. The City proudly hosted marching bands from across the US who got an opportunity to perform at Kilkenny Castle and through the medieval streets of Kilkenny.



Along with the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Kilkenny Tradfest Festival celebrated its tenth anniversary of Irish traditional and folk music, singing and dancing with over a dozen headline concerts by major Irish artists, including Stockton's Wing, Scullion, the Kilfenora and Tulla Céilí bands and upcoming stars including Emma Langford, Lisa Lambe and the Bonnymen. Over the course of the festival, visitors enjoyed over 90 free music sessions as people had the chance to see the cream of local and national talent in the informal settings of the City's best old and newer hosterries on the TradTrail.



Kilkenny City's St. Patrick's Day Parade defied the weather odds as the public once again flocked to the sides of the Marble City's streets to witness and play their part in a vibrant, multicultural and hugely colourful celebration of the national holiday.

It is estimated that crowds of 20,000 lined the streets to see the 1,500 local people participating in the Parade. Representing community, school, sports clubs and cultural groups, it took over an hour to pass the main reviewing stand at the junction of Patrick Street and the Parade.

Kilkenny hosted the Mayors of our twin towns, Malbork in Poland and our long-standing arrangement with Morêt sur Loing in France. Kilkenny was also selected by Fáilte Ireland as the place they brought a hugely important group of international tourism buyers, as part of their Meitheal programme and we were very reassured that the future attractiveness of our tourism industry benefited hugely from what those visitors saw and heard over the weekend.



The presence of Gabe Sadlier of Travelzoo travel and media company, broadcasting live to 28 million viewers from the Parade to the USA on Thursday 16th March, including to the major US TV networks, was an incredible achievement for our small City where he commented live on CNN, FOX and other channels that our City is the best place to visit, outside of Dublin.

To see texts and WhatsApp messages coming in from Kilkenny people all over the world saying how proud they were to see the City getting such incredible exposure on international media channels is surely an indication as to how far we have come with our St. Patrick's Festival. The work of our festival committee and of the Festival Director, Marian Flannery and her small team has made this all a reality.

Of course, we had Edward Hayden as our Grand Marshall. Edward has been a great friend of our festivals for years and a fantastic ambassador for Kilkenny at all times. The live broadcast by Virgin Media, with their Ireland AM show on Thursday morning highlighting all aspects of the City and the festival added even more to the excellent media coverage we got from our local print and radio media outlets.

We never rest on our laurels as planning for the 2024 festival will commence in the near future. We hope to be back bigger and even better next year.

ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

The Design Team is working on corridor options. The Project Liaison Officer (PLO) is continuing to work with landowners to agree access to facilitate the completion of the preliminary ground investigation works. Although investigation works commenced in November 2022, the works were suspended in December 2022 due to saturated ground conditions as a result of consistently poor weather. The works will recommence in March 2023 and are due to be completed in April 2023. The findings of these investigations will input into The Preferred Transport Solution. This was scheduled to be put on public display at the end of Q2 2023, however this is now scheduled to take place in Q4 of 2023.

MINOR PROJECTS

(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

The tender in respect of construction of the scheme was awarded to Wills Bros Ltd, Co. Mayo on the 1st December 2022. Construction commenced on the 16th January and due to positive weather conditions at the start of the year construction is presently marginally ahead of schedule. Substantial completion is expected by the end of 2023.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

The formal Notice to Treat under CPO procedures issued to all affected landowners and occupiers in mid-September 2022 and a follow up reminder issued in December 2022. Responses to same continue to be received and will be evaluated in consultation with landowners and their representatives. The preparation of contract documents is on-going and it is expected that the

tender will be issued in early Q3 2023. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be in excess of €10m.

N24 Carrick Road

Simultaneous applications to An Bord Pleanála for 177AE Planning approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Approval were made on the 25th November 2022. The public consultation period for both ran until the 20th January, 2023.

To note Kilkenny County Council is aware of 5 objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order Approval application. If these are not withdrawn, there will be an oral hearing in respect of this scheme. There were also 5 objections to the 177AE planning application. It is a matter for An Bord Pleanála if there is a requirement for an oral hearing. A final decision with or in the absence of an oral hearing is not expected until Q3 2023.

OTHER

Pavement Schemes

The N10 Danesfort Pavement Improvement Scheme commenced construction during November 2022 and was completed in March 2023. Final snagging of the completed scheme is on-going.

The N77 Georges Tree to Dunmore West (*Phase 1 Ardloo Junction North*) Pavement Improvement Works has been awarded. The works are expected to start towards the end of Q2 2023 and is weather dependent.

The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme and the N77 Suttonsrath Pavement Schemes are on-going. It is intended to have these awarded for construction in 2023. The Callan By Pass scheme in particular is complex given its semi urban location.

National Road Bridge Works

The tenders have been received by Kildare County Council in respect of the N10 Ossory Bridge Rehabilitation Scheme. Kildare County Council are project managing N10 Ossory Bridge Rehabilitation Scheme under a Section 85 agreement on behalf of Kilkenny County Council. The works will entail significant works to the approaches and parapets of the bridge structure and will provide a significant enhancement of the existing substandard shared surface facilities across the structure.

Tender award procedures for the successful contractor are on-going and subject to tender award works will commence towards the end of Q2 2023.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Kilkenny Earth Day (Saturday April 22nd)

Join in the Kilkenny Earth Day events on Saturday 22nd April. There will be energy saving tips and information on grants, recycling, home composting and much more at the Earth Day pop-up-shop in McDonagh Junction from 12 noon until 3.00 p.m.

To find out more contact Therese Curran, Mentor for the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme at therese.curran@cklp.ie

Climate Action Heroes

Climate Heroes is team-based climate challenge for you and members from your community that supports you in taking climate friendly actions together. It starts on 22nd April.

- Learn about your own climate impact and how your simple actions, added together with your team, do make a difference.
- And have a fun friendly competition with other groups across Ireland to find Ireland's most climate friendly community group.

To find out more, join one of the information sessions on 12th April:

Lunchtime session @ 01:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81581640884?pwd=djVSZnQ3RFFDMCtnNEpPY21VdHhBQT09>

Meeting ID: 815 8164 0884. Passcode: 204124

Evening Session @ 7pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87051310659?pwd=eFFzemw2K0w3SmdrdkQ0L2p2QkovZz09>

Meeting ID: 870 5131 0659

Passcode: 835036

Progress on the Kilkenny County Climate Action Plan

Work is continuing on gathering baseline data and putting supports in place to inform and support the delivery of the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan by the statutory deadline of 23rd February, 2023.

This includes:

- An Inventory of Greenhouse Gases omitted in County Kilkenny in 2018 (2018 is the baseline year against which we will measure our targets)
- A Climate Change Risk Assessment – identifying the main risks from climate change to the delivery of Council services
- Appointment of consultants to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the Climate Action Plan.
- Schedule of all stages in the preparation of the Climate Action Plan.
- On-going participation in the national [Local Authority Climate Action Training](#) programme by relevant staff, including Green Public Procurement, Climate Action Plan Preparation etc.
- Recruitment of sanctioned staff for the Climate Action Team
- Working with the South East Energy Agency regarding energy and emissions reduction in local authority buildings and facilities
- Supporting the SEAI [Sustainable Energy Communities Programme](#) in the County.



Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)

Our 2022 inspection data has been submitted to the EPA. A synopsis of the data returned is captured in the Table below:

RMCEI Inspections for 2022	No. of Completed Inspections at the end of the Previous Year
Routine Waste Inspections	546
Non-Routine Waste Inspections	527
Routine Litter Patrols/Investigations	572
Routine Water/Wastewater Inspections	1684
Non-Routine Water/Wastewater Inspections	41
Routine Air/Noise Inspections	28.5
Non-Routine Air/Noise Inspections	18
Routine producer Responsibility Inspections	0
Planning inspections	816

Our 2023 RMCEI plan has also been submitted to the EPA. The plan has over 4,300 inspections to be completed for the year ahead. Our staff are now using the National Environmental Management Information System (NEMIS) for inputting their inspections in 2023. The focus for this year will be on the National Enforcement Priorities which cover Waste, Air, Noise and Water.

Environment Complaints

All Environment complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints being received and logged by Environment staff for investigation for the first three months of 2023 was 241 compared with 264 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints ranges from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. The vast majority continue to be related to littering and 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.

WASTE, RECYCLING & COLLECTION

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 533 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres so far this year. This represents an 1.5% increase on the same period last year. Loughboy Shopping Centre (44.36 tonnes collected YTD), LIDL Johnswell Road (37.09 tonnes collected YTD) and Newpark Shopping Centre (35.68 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest locations in the City and Graiguenamanagh (31.22 tonnes collected YTD) is the busiest outside of the City. 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 periods.

LITTER AWARENESS



On Friday 24th March, 2023, schools and workplaces participated in Lets Team Up to Clean Up Together for Kilkenny. All other groups were able to pick a time suitable to themselves over the rest of the weekend.

Kits were assembled by Council staff, army personnel in St Stephens Barracks and junior packs were assembled with the assistance from the CBS Secondary. Kit distribution was completed by the assistance of Elected Members, staff, Area Offices and community hubs across the County. 160 adult kits and 30 junior kits were prepared for the event weekend which were provided to groups who had registered for the first time.



Some groups decided to hold their clean ups on an alternative weekend, others due to the health and safety limitations, preferred opting for the National Spring Clean. Regardless, this initiative definitely saw a lot more litter picking over the designated weekend and it was reflected accordingly in local media.

Jason Dempsey – Senior Bank Manager of AIB, Kilkenny

“AIB Kilkenny Staff from High Street & Callan Branch and others who have a connection to Kilkenny are delighted to partake in the great voluntary community project. “Team Up to Clean Up”. Supporting AIB’s sustainability agenda and under the AIB Together Volunteer Programme it will see us as a group take on a litter pick initiative in two locations in Kilkenny City & Callan”.



Svitlana Saseyi

“Ukrainians are really grateful to Ireland and especially to Kilkenny Council for their constant support and care. Many of us can't express it verbally due to the language barrier. But the event of tidying up unites us and makes it easier to say "Thank You!". The fact that we were welcomed by the Council shows that our efforts are being appreciated”.



Animal Welfare



At the end of March there were 106 dogs handled by the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter. Of the 106 dogs 89 - were strays and there were 9 surrenders. There were 39 dogs re-homed by the shelter and 36 dogs transferred to charities for rehoming along with 17 dogs being reclaimed by their owners.

Calls in relation to dog control have increased from the public who are now more active in reporting incidences of loose dogs and in particular restricted breeds.

BURIAL GROUNDS

Columbarium Wall Garden St. Kieran's Cemetery

The construction of the Columbarium Wall and all associated site works is almost complete at St. Kieran's Cemetery. A total of 100 niches will be available within the Columbarium Wall units in the Garden, with the option to add more units subject to future demand. We are now waiting on ESB to connect up street lighting at three locations surrounding the Columbarium Wall in order to try and reduce anti-social behaviour.



Recently constructed Columbarium Wall Garden St. Kieran's Cemetery

Community Monuments Fund

Kilkenny County Council have submitted three projects for capital funding under the Community Monument Fund for 2023:-

- Butler Gallery complex/garden medieval wall
- Grangefertagh historic church and graveyard
- Thomple historic church and graveyard

Further funding is currently being applied for projects at Tubrid and Rathpatrick historic churches and graveyards for proposed conservation works and repairs. Vegetation removal has recently taken place on both Tubrid and Rathpatrick historic churches which will enable Conservation Engineers to carry out an assessment with a view to carrying out future conservation work.



Rathpatrick Church and Graveyard with vegetation removed



Tubrid Church and Graveyard

Graveyard Grants

The closing date for the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2023 was Friday 24th February, 2023. There have been over 40 applications received. Each application will be assessed by the Environment Section in the coming weeks. The grant may contribute towards the cost of:

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

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Kilkenny Countryside Park

Work is progressing well on Phase 1 of the new Kilkenny Countryside Park at Dunmore, with significant progress made on the construction of the viewing area and the various trails which traverse the remediated landfill. The road widening along the Bleach Road access to the new parking area is now substantially complete and works pertaining to the provision of the 17 car and 60 bicycle parking area has also progressed well over recent weeks.



On the eastern side of the Park progress has also been made on the installation of the ball wall (see image below) and the fencing for the dog friendly enclosure has also commenced. With the agreement of the Dunmore Community Committee works has also started to prepare the Dunmore Community Carpark for the opening of the Park. This carpark is linked to the Park via a very attractive off-road trail, an old “Mass Path”, that was upgraded last year in anticipation of the delivery of the new Park. This Phase of the project is being funded under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

In conjunction with the above, we are continuing to try to identify potential suitable funding streams to deliver Phase 2 of the project which will include the installation of play and exercise equipment, fun elements within break-out amenity spaces, additional trail development and interpretation signage that tell the story of the site from waste landfill to an area rich in biodiversity.



South East Greenway

Works are progressing well to ready the section of the Greenway between New Ross and Glenmore for opening to the public this summer. These works include public light duct installation, fencing, preparation of the temporary carparks at Rosbercon (see image below) and Glenmore, installation of 2 controlled crossings, signage installation and the completion of final snagging items.

The opening date for the above section is expected in June and a definitive date will be announced in the coming weeks.

The works tender for Lot 5A, a 5km section from Ferrybank to Luffany, was advertised on the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) in March. The closing date for tender submissions is the 21st April. It is anticipated, subject to the necessary TII approvals that the successful contractor will be appointed for the works contract in July. The tender period for this section of the Greenway is estimated to be 12 months. Included under this contract is the installation of the public lighting within Lot 3 and the construction of the permanent carpark at Glenmore.



The focus of the Design Team has now switched to the preparation of the detail design for Lot 4 - Red Bridge and Mountelloitt Tunnel and Lot 5b Curraghmore to Aylwardstown and it is anticipated that Lot 4 will be the next tender to be advertised.

The Road Design Office recently completed the Greenway land transfer mapping to facilitate the transfer of same from CIE to the respective local authorities. This mapping has been issued to CIE who are currently reviewing same.

Woodstock Gardens

Staff are preparing to undertake a significant replanting of the central spine herbaceous borders within the Walled Garden. In 2022, the box hedging delineating the borders became infested with box blight and was removed along with the herbaceous planting. The latter being in need of rejuvenation.

In the coming weeks, the herbaceous borders shall be refreshed with new planting that was popular in the Victorian era. The planting theme will also have a strong focus on pollinator friendly plants which will provide a valuable food source for our important pollinators.

Plans are also being progressed to roll out the food and beverage offering for the coming tourism season. The offering will include hot and cold drinks, cakes, scones, sweets and ice-creams which will be served from the glass conservatory Tea Room, Woodstock Coffee Truck and Ice-cream parlour. Interviews for seasonal staff were held recently and it is expected these positions will be filled in the coming weeks.

Making Woodstock More Inclusive For All

On foot of securing funding in 2022 under the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund and Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, significant efforts are being made to make the Woodstock offering more inclusive for people with reduced mobility. Under these funding streams, dedicated disabled and age friendly parking bays have been provided and two new wheelchair inclusive play components, in the form of a Play Tower and See-saw, are currently being installed. These new play elements will afford wheelchair users the opportunity for play immersion with peer and families groups.



In addition to the above, we are expecting delivery of our new wheelchair accessible electric buggy over the coming weeks. During peak season this vehicle will be available to wheelchair users who wish to travel from the carpark to the Tea Room, giving same the opportunity to take in the gardens on route.

National Tree Week

National Tree Week 2023 took place from the 19th to 26th of March. Kilkenny County Council undertook a number of planting projects during the week to celebrate this national initiative.

We were delighted to support planting initiatives such as that undertaken at James Stephens Army Barracks, Woodstock Gardens, Freshford and Ballyragget. In total 300 native saplings will be planted under this initiative in a bid to increase tree canopy cover and promote biodiversity and climate resilience.



Parks and Playgrounds

Staff play a key role to ensure our playgrounds are maintained to a high standard and any defects identified are remedied in a timely manner. Over the month of March, repairs were carried out in a number of playgrounds across the County namely Coon, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Paulstown.



Under the Anti-Litter/Anti-Graffiti Programme, both the Environment and Parks Section worked closely to resolve a localised issue in Ferrybank Park. In order to reduce the incidents of graffiti on a particular wall within the park we engaged with *Street Art Ink* who painted a mural on same titled 'Biodiversity & the Environment'. Under this initiative, the artists engaged undertook a workshop with a local youth group who then assisted the artists with the painting of the mural. The hope is by getting some of the young people who make use of the park involved it will create a sense of ownership of same and in turn hopefully reduce the likelihood of future incidents of graffiti.

Amenity Grants

The closing date for the submission of amenity grant applications for 2023 was the 31st of March. The applications received will be assessed over the coming weeks and a recommendation prepared for Council.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total March	
	2022	2023
Planning Applications Received	204	203
Planning Applications Granted	192	129
Planning Applications Refused	23	31
Complaints Received	20	22
Warning Letters Issued	17	18
Enforcements Notices Issued	13	11
Cases Closed	27	15

FORWARD PLANNING

Masterplans:

Abbey Quarter

The process of reviewing the Abbey Quarter Masterplan commenced in October 2022. A public survey on the Abbey Quarter went live for 4 weeks and closed on 16th December. A further online public consultation event took place on the 18th of January to inform the public of the survey results and of the review process. The meeting was well attended and valuable inputs were received. The consultants are currently working on the draft plan and it is anticipated that it will be published later in April for a series of public consultation events. It is anticipated that the process will be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

St. Canice's Campus

A final meeting took place with the HSE project working group on the draft spatial framework. This framework is now being considered by the HSE and once approved will be brought to the Municipal District Members. It will then be placed on public display for a round of public consultation.

Loughmacask

The draft Loughmacask Masterplan was placed on public display from the 26th August, 2022 to the 28th October, 2022. Three public information sessions on the draft were held in September and October and a total of 182 submissions were received during the consultation timeframe. A workshop was held with the Kilkenny City MD on the 10th February, 2023. The Interim Chief Executive's report was presented to the Municipal District Members at their meeting on the 20th March, 2023. Also on the 20th March the Plenary Council resolved to accept the recommendations and to put the changes arising from the Interim Chief Executive's report on display for a further period of at least 4 weeks. Once Environmental screenings have been completed, the amended Masterplan will be placed on display. This will happen during the month of April. It will then revert back to the Council for final consideration and adoption.

Urlingford

The Council's Consultants indicated that the Urlingford Town Centre Masterplan is being finalised. The draft plan once received will be presented to the Municipal District Members before being placed on public display. A public workshop on this draft plan is planned once the draft plan is on display.

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Work has commenced on the preparation of Masterplans for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. Three public meetings, one for each town, took place 18th, 19th and 20th of January 2023. With due consideration of inputs from these meetings the Consultants are currently drafting the three Masterplans, which are expected in May 2023. The draft plans will be presented to the respective Municipal Districts prior to them going on public display.

Taking in Charge

Progress to date in 2023:

Works are almost complete in the Paddocks, Gowran and works continuing in Ogenty, Gowran.

- *Abbeygate, Ferrybank* - works almost completed by developer.
- *An Choill Rua, Paulstown* - developer arranging to complete remaining works
- *Ogenty, Gowran* - Castlecomer Area office have commenced works
- *Rioch Court, Kilkenny* - Kilkenny Area office proceeding with works
- *The Greens, Thomastown* - developer continuing to progress works.
- *Kilkenny Internal Road* - developer to complete works.
- *Lakeside, Kilkenny* - all works completed - to go to initiation stage shortly.
- *College Park, Callan Road* - works not yet commenced
- *Greenoaks, The Fairways* - developer to complete works

E-PLANNING

Kilkenny County Council volunteered to be part of the pilot project for the roll out of E-Planning nationally. E-Planning is now available as part of the planning application process in Kilkenny County Council. Users must register on the e-planning portal at:

<https://planning.localgov.ie/en/local-government-ireland-planning-system>, where after they can then make a

planning application, submit documentation online with the application and submit further information later if required. The status of applications can be viewed quickly and easily. Paper applications are still accepted and the same timelines apply to both an online application and a paper application.

Fifty seven percent (57%) of planning applications are now being made through e-planning. There has been positive feedback from both agents and members of the public that the service is quick and easy to use.

Active Land Management

The Draft Maps of land in scope for the Residential Zoned Land Tax were published on the 1st November. A total of 25 submissions were made to the process, 4 of which include re-zoning requests. Determinations were made on each of these submissions, and landowners were notified of the determinations at the end of March 2023. Landowners now have an opportunity of appeal to An Bord Pleanála. A Final Map of lands in scope for the tax will be published by December 2023.

There are 29 sites on the Derelict Sites Register. Notices of valuations were served on 5 property owners in March and these can be appealed to the Valuation Tribunal. Funding was announced in the third round of URDF specifically to address long term vacancy and dereliction and measures to utilise this funding are being examined.

There are 24 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 23. Payment demands for 2022 will issue shortly. The Vacant site levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax in 2024, but any outstanding levies 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.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: 16 grant applicants successfully acquired funding from a total of 18 applications. The applicants have accepted the grant offer and work will commence once methodologies are agreed with the Conservation Office. Table 1 shows the successful applicants.

Project	Funding
St. Lachtains Church, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny	€13,600.00
St. Johns Church, John Street, Kilkenny	€9,500.00
Deerpark Mills, Deerpark, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny	€11,000.00
J&B Art Glass Studio, The Glass Triangle, Knocktopher, Co. Kilkenny	€3,585.00
3 Florence Terrace, Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny	€12,500.00
Thatch Cottage, Cloneen, Crettyard, Co. Kilkenny	€10,300.00
The Old Fever Hospital, Clintstown, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny	€11,000.00
Killinney Mill House, Killinney, Kells, Co. Kilkenny	€12,415.00
13 Banim Terrace, Freshford Road, Kilkenny	€12,300.00
14 Banim Terrace, Freshford Road, Kilkenny	€12,300.00
St. Kieran's College Trustees, St. Kieran's College, College Road, Kilkenny	€13,000.00
16 Banim Terrace, Freshford Road, Kilkenny	€12,300.00
20 Parliament Street, Kilkenny	€12,500.00
Fictilius Ltd., Racing Office, 4/5 St. Marys Lane, Kilkenny	€10,500.00
Ballybur Castle & Coach House, Ballybur, Cuffesgrange, Co. Kilkenny	€9,310.08
6 Priors Orchard, Johns Quay, Kilkenny	€9,310.08
Total	€175,420.16

Historic Structures Fund: 6 applications were received. 5 projects were selected and forwarded to the Department of Housing, Local Government and the Heritage (DHLGH) for consideration. The DHLGH have decided to support 1 project:

- Repair works to the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, to the value of €37,000

Heritage Stewardship Funding 2023: The Conservation Office successfully acquired funding of €30,000 from the Heritage Council under this scheme. The project involves the laser scan, photogrammetry and building interpretation of two 16th century buildings in Parliament Street. The project will create a high-

resolution record of these structures and increase awareness of Kilkenny's nationally significant 16th century townhouses, and in the long term will add to the offering of the Medieval Mile in Kilkenny City.

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Submitted Start of Year to End of Month

March 2023	62
March 2022	105
March 2021	77
March 2020	97

Valid Disability Access Applications Received Start of Year to End of Month

March 2023	7
March 2022	21
March 2021	11
March 2020	20

COMMUNITY

Commercial Premises Paint Scheme 2023

The objective of this 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 commercial 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 will be advertised in the Kilkenny People on 7th April, 2023 and on Kilkenny County Council website. It is also on Page 24-25 of the Grants Booklet for 2023.

The closing date for receipt of applications for the above scheme is *Friday 5th May, 2023*.

Community Facilities & Cultural Grants Scheme

The 2023 Community Facilities & Cultural Grants Scheme will be advertised in April 2023. For more information please contact the Community & Culture Department on 0567794920 or community@kilkennycoco.ie.

Pride of Place 2023

Recommendations for groups to represent Kilkenny in the 2023 National Pride of Place Awards include the following:

- Fr McGrath Centre
- Freshford Village
- Callan Community Energy Group

Event Grants Scheme 2023

There were a total of 51 grant applications approved under the 2023 Community Events Grant Scheme. The 2023 applications increased by 60% in comparison to 2022.

HERITAGE

Funding awarded for County Heritage Plan Grant 2023

Kilkenny County Council has been awarded €37,500 under the Heritage Council County Heritage Plan grant. This funding will be for a Heritage Awareness and Engagement Campaign to support the priorities of the Heritage Office and a Data Collection Programme to conduct surveys of the holy wells and mass paths of County Kilkenny in 2023.



Kenny's Well

Decade of Centenaries Programme 2023

Kilkenny County Council received an allocation of €50,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries Programme. Applications made under the public grant scheme to commemorate events/people/life in County Kilkenny in 1923 and reflecting on the whole Decade 1912-1923 have now been assessed and awarded. The 2023 programme will include a diverse range of projects from across the County including a lecture series organised by South Kilkenny Historical Society; *Come Back* a short film by Kevin Hughes, theatre and film projects by Ita Morrissey and Gillian Grattan; and a City walking tour by Larry Scallon retracing the steps of those involved in the Civil War in Kilkenny in 1923 and the sites associated with these events. Along with these community projects, Kilkenny County Library have organised an engaging programme of lectures, podcasts and children's events to engage members of the public with the events of 100 years ago. Lastly, the Heritage Office will run an oral history project to record unheard memories and the legacy of the revolutionary

period in Kilkenny. We will also produce a retrospective booklet to document all of the projects, events and activities funded by the Decade of Centenaries Programme through Kilkenny County Council over the past ten years.



Application for funding made to the Irish Walled Towns Network

The Heritage Office has applied for funding for interpretation of the City Walls of Kilkenny under the Heritage Council ITWN grant scheme. The aim of the project is to design and install information plaques on 5 key sections of the Kilkenny City walls. This is Phase 1 of a larger project to develop a trail of Kilkenny City walls. Phase 2 will involve installation of further plaques and development of a trail route and information.

Citizen science kits available in Kilkenny Libraries

Kilkenny Library Services are making ecology equipment freely available for citizens looking to join the fight against biodiversity loss. The initiative, a partnership between Kilkenny County Library and the Heritage Council is designed to assist an increasingly engaged public, many of whom are eager to contribute to the preservation of our biodiversity but who lack the tools to do so. It is expected that the kits will be used by students looking to conduct their own studies, amateur ecologists wishing to produce their own biodiversity action plans and by community groups such as Tidy Towns, River Trusts and Field Clubs who want to gather information to bolster local biodiversity projects. <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/citizen-science-kits-to-equip-people-to-tackle-biodiversity-loss>



Launch of Citizen Science Kits at Loughboy Library

All-Ireland Skills Programme Bursaries

The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme is a collaboration between The Prince's Foundation, The Heritage Council and Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division (HED). This year, eight bursaries are available for people already working or studying in heritage skills and the construction sector – in particular stonemasonry, carpentry, joinery, bricklaying, blacksmithing, plastering, thatching, roofing, tiling, painting, and decorating – and who would like to raise their skills to the next level. The deadline for applications is Friday April 28th at 12.00 p.m. For more information see:

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/irish-craftspeople-encouraged-to-carve-out-a-career-in-built-heritage>

National Biodiversity Data Centre 2023 Workshop Programme

The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) is running their workshop programme again in 2023. Through this programme participants have the opportunity to attend workshops led by NBDC staff or from their partner organisations.

To find out more go to <https://biodiversityireland.ie/workshops/?fbclid=IwAR2xn6DX71M30NleMS-Z7fp1TR9WT0SOtFz2ipfYt3IYLOZvM1SAqVI5b0>



Healthy Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council: Urban Action for Cancer Prevention

Kilkenny County Council and Healthy Kilkenny are proud to be participating in a project called 'UcanACT - Urban ACTION for cancer prevention: adult and senior citizens practice physical activity within public urban green spaces to prevent cancer diseases' (2022-2025). This initiative is an intersectoral project funded by the European Union, and involves collaborations with 7 partners. There are 3 associations of physiotherapists, two academic partners, one Local Authority and one non-profit organisation. They all will bring their expertise and knowledge to the successful development of the project outcomes. The three pilot territories for implementation includes: Kilkenny (Ireland), Bologna (Italy), and Munich (Germany).

The 7 Project Partners are:

- The European Foundation for physiotherapy and physical activity (Belgium),
- Outdoor Against Cancer (Germany),
- University of Sevilla (Spain),
- University of Bologna (Italy),
- Italian Association of physiotherapists (Italy),
- Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (Ireland),
- Kilkenny County Council (Ireland)

The overall objective of 'UcanACT' is to engage adult and senior citizens to participate in regular physical activity as a tool for cancer prevention within public urban green spaces. Kilkenny County Council will lead out on the development and implementation of a Citizen Engagement Strategy which will inform policies on methods of citizen engagement, stakeholder involvement and how citizens can be empowered to undertake physical activity in Public Urban Green Spaces.

The other main objectives of the project involve; the development of a Physical Activity App to support adult and senior citizens willing to practice cancer-preventive physical activity within public urban green spaces by providing them and other users (physiotherapists, health professionals, family members and caregivers) physical activity programmes. Additionally, physiotherapist students and qualified physiotherapists will be provided training on the App and the physical activity intervention.

The project will include three target groups living in Kilkenny City:

- Age 50+ who never had a diagnosis of Cancer (*primary prevention*)
- Age 50 + who have a diagnosis of cancer (*secondary prevention*)
- Age 50+ in recovery from cancer or had a previous diagnosis of cancer in the past

Kilkenny County Council will work in Collaboration with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) to recruit Citizens in Kilkenny to participate in physio-led exercise programmes in three selected Public Urban Green Spaces in Kilkenny City. The programmes will be rolled-out in 2024 and the App will be trialled by Citizens in Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council will also undertake a communications campaign to promote physical activity for all Kilkenny Citizens with the aim to increase awareness of physical activity and achieving a lifelong approach to health and wellbeing.

In achieving the objectives and health outcomes of this project, Kilkenny County Council will work closely with local services and agencies; Cois Nore, Dragon Paddlers, South East Community Healthcare, HSE, Public Participation Network and Newpark Family Resource Centre.

For more information on this project, please contact the Healthy Kilkenny Coordinator, Janette Boran; janette.boran@kilkennycoco.ie or phone 087-4068122



ARTS

School Arts Bursary 2023

Five secondary schools have been awarded a School Arts Bursary for 2023 totalling €7,700. Projects include film production, printmaking, sculpting, drama workshops and a collaborative project where students will develop a schools mural working with a professional street artist.

Creative Ireland 2023 Grant Scheme

The main purpose of the scheme is to provide financial support to local and community groups and individuals, artistic and creative practitioners, event organisers and those involved in creative, cultural and heritage activities and projects, to encourage and enable cultural participation throughout Kilkenny supporting the delivery of the *Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027*. This grant scheme is supported by the national Creative Ireland programme.

Twelve grants were awarded this year:

Name of Applicant & Project	Award
Butler Gallery <i>National Drawing Day</i>	€2,500
Alternative Kilkenny Arts Festival <i>Alternative Kilkenny Arts Festival</i>	€2,500
Barnstorm Theatre- Anja Terpstra <i>Moving Up & Transition Year Programme</i>	€2,500
Christian Conefery <i>Jazz ta Hole in Wall</i>	€2,500
Ionad Lachtain	€1,500

<i>Féile Lachtain 2023</i>	
Ita Morrissey <i>Taken for A Ride</i>	€4,760
KK Traveller C.M. <i>KTCM Creative Together</i>	€5,000
Melody Makers <i>Skough Sessions</i>	€2,500
KK One Parent Community <i>Smartphone Photography Exhibition</i>	€2,500
Presentation Primary School Castlecomer <i>Biodiversity Mural Wall</i>	€1,200
SOS Kilkenny <i>Ally</i>	€2,500
Callan Workhouse Union <i>Town Ecologies</i>	€2,500
Total Funding Allocation	€32,460

Young People & the Arts

Due to the change in the secondary school art curriculum the Arts Office has designed a pilot programme providing secondary school teachers with effective teaching and learning resources to support Post Primary Art teachers in their implementation of this new curriculum for the junior and senior cycle.

The Arts Office have partnered with JCT, (the dedicated CPD support service from the Department of Education) in order to execute this programme. This pilot series is covering the Art of Curating, Art and the Environment and Art as Social Commentary

To date we have delivered the *Art of Curating* which offered the teachers an opportunity to:

- gain insights into the role of contemporary curators and their impact on the world and broader society
- explore the curatorial decision-making process and learn how curators create cohesive and meaningful experiences
- discuss the diverse approaches and practices of professional curators, and how they adapt to changing social, political, and cultural contexts

The session was hugely successful as is evident below and it also provided us with the opportunity to request suggestions for further sessions.

Youth Residency

The Youth Residency programme is back with Artist in Residence Aoife Doherty. Aoife is working with youth groups in the Drum Youth Centre Foróige and Ossory Youth delivering a 6-week Art programme.

This programme aims to engage young people in new ways of making art, including sculpture making, printmaking, magazine collage and bookmaking, taking inspiration from art movements throughout history. The residency programme was developed to create a safe space for young people to explore their creativity and to encourage curiosity. It gives the participants the space to experiment and focus on the process of making rather than the end result. Aoife has designed the programme to enable alternative ways of making by using different materials to encourage a fun and playful approaches to creative practices.

Throughout this 6-week residency the young people will engage in artmaking as well as taking a trip to Kilkenny's Butler Gallery to further enhance their experience and understanding of creative possibilities. This art programme will continue for four more weeks and will continue to explore similar themes to enable the young people to play and engage with creative practices.



Youth Residency Programme Project

Literature

Our Broadsheet editor Afric McGlinchey hosted a Poetry and Alchemy full day workshop. The workshop was fully subscribed and hugely successful, giving the participants insight into writing and editing their own work.

New selection of poems uploaded to the Arts Office Poetry Phone

Hugo Jellett was tasked with selecting poems for the Arts Office Poetry Phone from previously published Poetry Broadsheets, the Rhyme Rag platform and the Mark My Words publication (*all Arts Office programmes*).

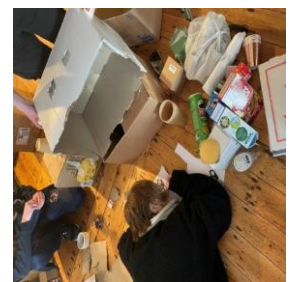
Hugo Jellett is the Co-founder and Creative Producer of the Borris House Festival of Writing & Ideas, and one of the lead creatives in Electric Picnic. He has worked for Lilliput Press, HarperCollins and Random House and for the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Gaiety Theatre and Irish Film Institute. Everyone can listen to these beautiful poems by ringing **Free Phone 1800 272 994** and select a number between 0 and 9 or you can go to <https://kilkennyartsoffice.ie/new-selection-of-poems-uploaded-to-the-arts-office-poetry-phone/> to listen

to the poems and find out a bit more about the poets.

Johns Green House Window Gallery

The Window gallery currently displays the Brat Bride Project. This female empowerment printmaking project was developed by artist Michelle McMahon. To date, approximately seventy women have taken part in the printmaking workshops, where they created a print of a Goddess, matrilineal figure or feminine symbol of power that resonated with them on a piece of fabric - i.e. a Brat Bríde. Traditionally, a Brat Bríde was a piece of cloth, usually red or white, that was left outside the house on Brigid's Eve to collect dew. The Brat was then believed to have curative powers (Duchas.ie).

The Brat Bride project was curated and delivered by Michelle McMahon in partnership with Kilkenny Arts Office, The Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Carlow ETB Kilkenny, Kilkenny One Parent Community, Home Focus and SG Education Art Supplies.



Brat Bríde Project

LEO

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny Announces the County Recipient of the National Enterprise Awards

CHI Environmental based in Grannagh will represent County Kilkenny at the National Enterprise Awards. This family run business have been nominated to represent Kilkenny at the 23rd National Enterprise Awards which will be held in the Round Room at the Mansion House, Dublin on 1st June. The operation has grown from being a family business with a core management team consisting of Directors Bob Murphy along with his sons Richard, Pat and Nicholas and 10 employees, 8 fulltime and 2 part-time.



Local Enterprise Week

From 6th to 10th March, Local Enterprise Week provided the opportunity for over 300 attendees to sample the range of supports that are on offer from their Local Enterprise Office across an array of events, workshops and seminars. A flavour of the local events in Local Enterprise Week included 'Going Green - 5 Areas Businesses Should Consider', 'Gearing up to explore new business opportunities outside Ireland', 'Gaining business advantage during inflationary times workshop' with Blaise Brosnan and the national spotlight event hosted by the Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny 'Innovate For Business Success' to name a few. These events focused on Business Development, Exporting, Finance and Innovation.

Student Enterprise County Final

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny announced that teenage entrepreneurs from Grennan College, St. Kieran's College and Coláiste Abhainn Rí will represent Kilkenny at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Finals on Friday 5th May. The students all took part in the Kilkenny Final on Wednesday, 8th March which was held at Lyrath Hotel. Over 1,000 students from 12 schools took part in the annual programme with 130 students making it to the County final.



In the Junior Category, the students representing Kilkenny at the National Finals are Jane Kelly and Isabelle Doheny from Worry Not at Coláiste Abhainn Rí. They sold polished stones that consumers could use for meditation or to ease anxiety by rubbing. Cian Holohan and Jack Dooley from HD Horseshoe Designs at St. Kieran's College will be representing the County

at the Finals in the Intermediate Category. This company sold a variety of ornaments made from repurposed horseshoes.

In the Senior Category Kilkenny will be represented on 5th May by Michael Bookle, Conor Monks, Darragh Dack, Conor Kelly and Isaac Magnez from The Gaming Guard at Grennan College. An Xbox and PlayStation 5 controller accessory that helps players avoid being kicked out of live online games made from 3-D printing.

In the "My Entrepreneurial Journey" competition two Coláiste Abhainn Rí students will represent Kilkenny in the National Finals; Ruth O'Sullivan of Shake It Up Ltd. in the junior category and Darragh Lyons from Energelz in the intermediate category.

Summary of 2023 Awards to Businesses

- €30,124 in direct financial assistance was approved for 4 manufacture /export service businesses located throughout the County.
- €13,875 in Business Expansion Grant assistance.
- €15,000 awarded in a feasibility study grant.
- 2 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded to support them in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 4 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 1 Business is availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 5 businesses have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €10,505 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- Intellectual Property (IP) Start Grant has been approved to support a client's company in obtaining expert IP advisory and support services in relation to Trademarks.
- 1 Green for Micro Grant awarded. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 2 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 372 people participated in focused small business training, including 23 people

participating on the Starting Your Business programme.

- 116 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Tourism

Kilkennys’ Tourism Team are planning for the Easter and Summer Seasons ahead and continue with plans to welcome visitors to Kilkenny to enjoy all the City and County has to offer.

SPRING		SUMMER	
Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week Jan 27th - 5th February visitkilkenny.ie/restaurant-week	Abhainn Rí Festival 20th-23rd July facebook.com/AbhainnRiCallan	St. Patricks Day Festival March 15-19th stpatriksfestivalkilkenny.com	Alternative Kilkenny Arts Fringe Festival 4th - 13th August akafringe.com
Kilkenny Tradfest March 16th-19th kilkennytradfest.com	Kilkenny Arts Festival Jan 27th - 5th February kilkennyarts.ie	Kilkenny County Fleadh Cheoil 21st - 23rd April facebook.com/KilkennyFleadh	Graiguenamanagh Town of Books 18th- 20th August grauguenamanaghtownofbooks.ie
Kilkenny Roots Festival 29th April - 1st May kilkennyroots.com	Keep Her Lit 18th - 20th August keepherlitfestival.ie	Kilkenny Cats Laugh 1st - 5th June thecatlaughs.com	Iverk 26th August www.iverkshow.ie

AUTUMN		WINTER	
Rás na mBan 6-10th September rasnamban.com	Kilkenny Animated 29th Sept - 1st Oct kilkennyanimated.com	Kilkenomics Nov 2nd to 5th kilkenomics.com	Yulefest Kilkenny Nov - Dec 2023 yulefestkilkenny.ie
Savour Kilkenny Friday 27th to 30th Oct savourkilkenny.com	Hughes Farm Pumpkin Festival 13- 31st October hughesfarming.ie	Castlecomer Wellie Race 1st Jan 2024 wellierace.com	

EVENTS CALENDAR 2023

Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

Kilkenny THE BEST OF IRELAND

For more information visit our website
visitkilkenny.ie

The events calendar for the year highlights all Kilkenny County Council supported festivals and at a glance, shows visitors that the County is a year-round destination with something to experience whenever they plan a visit.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in delivering Kilkennys marketing and PR plan for 2023. This Summer 2023 will keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors’ mind for a summer break this year with lots to see and do for families.

March’s marketing efforts showcased and promoted all our wonderful St. Patricks Day events and the Tradfest activity that worked seamlessly into the activity in Kilkenny City and County over the extended bank holiday weekend. The “Outdoor Kilkenny” campaign was launched in March and kicked off the season with digital promotion.

March activity also included:

- March Website visits - Up 70% from last year
- Events page - 2,652 page visits
- St. Patrick’s Festival event page - 855 visits
- Hotels page - 848
- B&Bs page - 608

Faillte Ireland Partnership

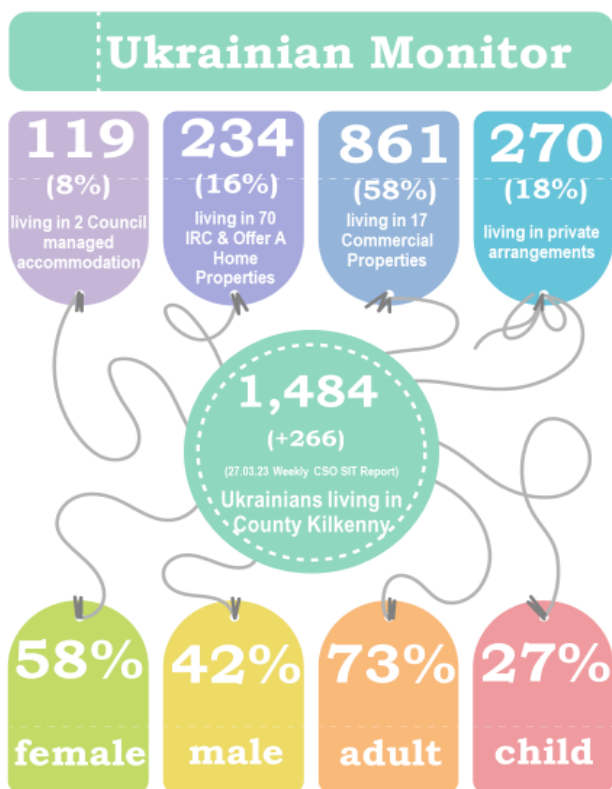
Kilkenny County Council continue to work closely with Failte Ireland to continue to develop and deliver exceptional visitor experiences and activity in Kilkenny. We are currently working with Failte Ireland to finalise and begin implementation of the five year Destination Experience Development Plan for Kilkenny City and County.

All local marketing campaigns will also be closely aligned with the national domestic “Keep Discovering” campaign to ensure maximum exposure for Kilkenny to all potential visitors to the County.



UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT



‘Offer A Home, Offer Hope’

The ‘Offer a Home’ programme is seeking unoccupied properties for people and families from Ukraine who need a safe place to stay. A Government tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Further details are available on the ‘Offer a Home’ programme on www.offerahome.ie. See statistics below in relation to activity in County Kilkenny at end of March 2023:

Number of Properties Offered.....	56
Number of Properties Assessed as suitable.....	36
Number of Allocated Properties.....	29
Number of Registered Tenants in Occupied Properties	100
Number of Properties that require Minor Works.....	9
Number of Properties – unsuitable/require Major Works.....	9
Number of Properties Withdrawn	6

Healthy Ireland for Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support

Kilkenny County Council committed to a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Health to promote the health and wellbeing of Ukrainian Refugees residing in Kilkenny.



374 participants have taken part in 23 events in Castlecomer Discovery Park, Kilkenny Castle Park, Upper Court Manor and St. John of God Convent. The Cloud Walkers Adventure Team Building Days at the Castlecomer Discovery Park proved to be the most popular event.

Festival In a Van, Sunday 12th March

The Festival in a Van hosted a shared music session with Irish and Ukrainian artists at both Upper Court Manor, Freshford and St. John of God Convent, Kilkenny. The Ukrainian residents enjoyed the music and craic at each session. The Savage Jim Breen Band played for the first part of the session and a well known Ukrainian artist, Marina sang for the second part of the session. Thirty five residents in total from Upper Court Manor, Freshford and Clone Manor, Ballyragget attended the event. Forty-one residents attended the event at the St. John of God Convent with some Ukrainians participating in playing instruments and singing.

HOUSING

New Homeless Prevention Measures

As a result of the decision to lift the “Eviction Ban” Government have announced a suite of measures to prevent homelessness for households impacted directly by the activation of a notice to quit or notice of termination.

These measures include:

The Tenant In-Situ Acquisition Scheme - Social Housing Tenants HAP/RAS

Where a Valid Notice to Quit has been served and the person or household is eligible for social housing supports

Kilkenny County Council will assess the person's position on the social housing list, provide advice on the Housing Needs Assessment process and on the level of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) that they may be eligible to receive. In some cases,

Kilkenny County Council will assess if they can acquire the property in which the tenant currently resides, if it is being offered for sale, under the tenant in situ scheme.

The Tenant In-Situ Acquisition Scheme - Non Social Housing Tenants

Where a Valid Notice to Quit has been served and the person or household is not eligible for social housing supports

Kilkenny County Council can provide advice and direct the person to the appropriate service, including supports to help with home purchase (www.firsthomescheme.ie, www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie)

We are aware that the Government is examining the implementation of a “First Refusal Scheme” for tenants to purchase their homes, as well as a cost rental in-situ scheme, where the Housing Agency will be resourced to purchase homes for rental to tenants in-situ. Kilkenny County Council will direct persons affected to the most appropriate service.

We would like to assure all potentially impacted that emergency accommodation will be a last resort only, where no other alternative can be identified.

A dedicated email address NTOEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie has been set up to respond to queries and should be used by tenants who may have received a notice of termination or by landlords who have issued notices of termination to their tenants and who may wish to sell their property to the Council. Full contact details are now provided on our website.

The primary role of the Housing Department is to prevent homelessness. Every effort will be made to secure appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the assessed housing need of any household impacted by an active notice of termination of tenancy. All decisions will be based on need not preference and the acquisition of properties will only be considered when no other alternative is available. Kilkenny County Council has been approved to purchase 25 properties under the Tenant In-Situ Purchase Scheme. The Department have confirmed that this number may be increased subject to demand.

Croí Cónaithe, Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant

Announcements have also indicated that the Government intend to revise the terms and conditions of the Croí Conaithe/Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant Scheme. It is expected that the amount of the grant, the age of the property and the requirement for owner occupancy will be amended. These changes will not come into effect until a new grant scheme is formally announced. Applications submitted before a new scheme is implemented will be given the option to wait for the new scheme to be activated or to proceed on the terms of the current grant scheme. Any queries in relation to this grant scheme can be submitted by email to vacanthomes@kilkennycoco.ie.

Homeless Services

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY MARCH 2023	
Homeless Presentations	35
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	17
Emergency Service	8
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	10
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	117
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	117
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	5
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ March 31st	34
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	4
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	3
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	29
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	12

Social Housing Assessment

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY MARCH 2023	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 st (Gross Need)	1,583
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 st (Net Need)	775
No. of Social Housing Applications received in March	99
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	67
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	40
No. of applications assessed during March	23
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ March 31 st	99

Tenancy Management

The Tenancy Management Section deals with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants.

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in March (offers made):	28
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to date (offers made):	223
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in March:	30
Maintenance Calls for March:	502
Maintenance Calls year to date	1,678

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served.

Housing Grants

The number of applications received to-date exceed the total number processed for the year 2022 and we continue to monitor expenditure closely in relation to all grant schemes. Priority will be given to adaptation grants required to facilitate hospital discharges.

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31 st March 2023		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	69	€752,667
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	8	€34,947
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	101	€523,180
Total	178	€1,310,794

Grants Paid Out up to 31 st March 2023		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	16	€148,748
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	2	€8,349
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	52	€257,886
Total	70	€414,983

Housing Capital

The Housing Capital Delivery Team continue to develop new projects for commencement to achieve and exceed the targets included for Kilkenny under Housing For All. We are actively pursuing land purchases to bring more projects to design and planning stage.

Opportunities to activate vacant and brownfield sites are being considered at a number of locations.

The CALF Scheme for AHB delivery has been reviewed and a number of new AHB projects are now being brought forward for consideration.

The Team also intends to progress affordable housing options including affordable purchase, serviced sites and CPO projects.

The current Building Programme includes:

Units On Site

- 98 units for delivery in 2023
- 88 units for delivery in 2024

Units in the Pipeline *(with funding approval)*

- 124 for delivery in 2024
- 40 for delivery in 2025



12 houses at The Crescent, Belmont, Ferrybank under Construction



9 units at Old Creamery Kilmacow nearing completion



Construction at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

A site has been identified for a new Fire Station for Kilkenny City. Negotiations with the owners of the site are at an advanced stage at present.

The construction of a new Fire Station for Urlingford is due to be completed in June 2023.



Fire Safety Certificates

- 37 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to-date.
- 25 applications were received for the same period last year.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 5 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 8 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place so far this year.

Community Fire Safety

Fire Service Personnel call to houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A Home fire Safety Visit (HFSV) is usually carried out by two uniformed operational Fire Service Personnel.

The primary aim of these HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning and they know how to react quickly and safely.

Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended 136 incidents to date in 2023. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards,

domestic fires, automatic fire alarm activations chimney fires and an increasing number of ambulance assists in recent weeks.

Fire Service Training



Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Mary Hilda Kavanagh and Cllr. Michael McCarthy taking time out to visit our crews at BA Refresher training

Breathing apparatus wearers undertake a two-day refresher course every two years. These courses reflect the breathing apparatus operational requirements of our Firefighters. This includes training on the safe working practices, equipment use and maintenance, set duration, operational testing to enable a firefighter to safely enter a building on fire, use of guidelines, distress signal and entry control procedures.



Breathing Apparatus training in Freshford



Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick meets the new Recruits and Instructors on the QQI Fire Fighting Skills Course in Hacketstown Fire Training Centre. The four new recruit Firefighters underwent a full-time 3-week Firefighting Skills course. Having successfully completed the course, they recently took up their places on the run with their respective brigades (2 - Callan Fire Brigade, 1 - Kilkenny City Fire Brigade and 1 - Graiguenamanagh Fire Brigade).

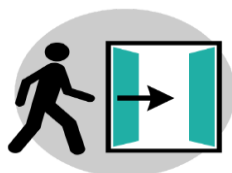


Thomastown Fire Brigade carried out a Road Traffic Collision demonstration for transition year students of Colaiste Cois Siuire, Mooncoin.

LIBRARY



30,078 Items borrowed



17,175 Visitors



1,265 Members

Citizen Science Kit



Kilkenny County Council Library Service is one of 10 library services nationwide involved in a pilot programme with the Heritage Council to offer access to a range of specialised equipment to members of the public.

The Citizen Science Kit initiative is designed primarily to enable local groups and members of the public to conduct their own studies on wildlife and assist people in contributing to the preservation of our biodiversity both locally and nationally. The Kits offer manuals, guides and equipment to assist people. The kit can be borrowed from Loughboy library by adults for up to 3 weeks.

Seachtain na Gaelige

For Seachtain na Gaelige we ran Beginners Irish Conversational classes in Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown libraries, funded by the KCETB. Both sessions were booked out and ran to great success. Ferrybank and Loughboy libraries also continued to run their Ciorcal Comhrá groups encouraging people of all levels to come and converse as Gaelige. Our mobile library staff have commenced a series of outreach community programmes, bringing the library service to a wider audience.

Residents and staff of Tinnypark, Archersrath and Crosspatrick nursing homes have recently enjoyed *picture bingo games* as Gaelige. Friends and family gathered with them on the day. In total, over fifty residents took part. Plans are underway to facilitate Poetry Workshops, to mark National Poetry Day on April 27th also. There was very positive feedback and it is hoped that more nursing homes will get involved with these outreach events over time.



World Book Day



For World Book Day this year we ran lots of events throughout our libraries. We had the BFG visit Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown libraries. The local schools were very excited when they saw a giant in the hall. Helena Duggan discussed her latest book in the City library, Jelly Bean Julie visited Urlingford library for a storytelling session and Carol Ann Treacy came for an author visit in Castlecomer library. Ferrybank library also ran a book quiz with book bingo. Lots of fun had by all for these events.

Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online	Offsite
251	242	0	12
Live	Numbers		
130	3649		

This month we had lots of activities and events across our libraries. These included a Knitting Workshop in City Library, flower arranging in Thomastown Library, chess classes in Urlingford Library and a talk from Dr. Ann-Marie Eustace Ryan in both City and Thomastown Libraries on Gut Health and the power of the microbiome as part of our Healthy Ireland Programme.

Loughboy Library ran a 4-Week 'Grow Your Own' Course, funded by the KCETB. This also included an off-site visit as well as on-site learning. Writer Mary O' Donnell facilitating the first Poetry as Commemoration workshop in City Library. A fruitful and creative afternoon for all with more workshops coming in the future. We hosted class visits in our libraries across the county and our mobile van drove the length and breadth of the county visiting communities, schools and creches. Ferrybank Library's Lego workshop have been busy assembling a model of the library using their creativity and building skills.



Mayfair Library Update



- Curtain walling installed on West extension.
- M&E containment ongoing.
- Underfloor heating pipes installed.
- Internal plastering to ground floor commenced.
- Removal of concrete floor in children's area complete.

Online Services Usage



2,869 eAudiobooks borrowed



215 Class sessions



791 eMagazines borrowed



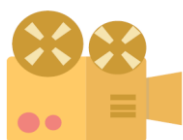
1,291 eBooks borrowed



283 Online Courses sessions



836 Songs accessed



**Digital
Engagement**

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **454** posts on our social media platforms in March. Our video views for were **10,664**.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of March is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €19.5m compared with the annual budget of €98.75m.

Table 1	Actual YTD March 2023	Budget Full Year 2023
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	5,386	22,698
Road Transport & Safety	4,237	27,560
Water Services	1,774	7,736
Development Management	2,332	11,754
Environmental Services	2,408	13,520
Recreation & Amenity	1,535	8,091
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	109	692
Miscellaneous Services	1,733	6,698
OVERALL TOTAL	19,514	98,749

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the three-month period to the end of March 2023. The draft unaudited financial statements for 2022 were finalised and presented to Council at the March Plenary Council Meeting. The Local Government Auditor has commenced the Audit for 2022. The annual rate demands for 2023 were sent to all rate payers in February.

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 193 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:-

<i>Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal</i>	<i>149 cases</i>
<i>Appeal Withdrawn</i>	<i>34 cases</i>
<i>Increase in Revaluation on Appeal</i>	<i>1 case</i>
<i>No change to Revaluation on Appeal</i>	<i>10 cases</i>
<i>Appeals outstanding</i>	<i>3 cases</i>

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

Commercial Rates Vacancy

The commercial rates vacancy remains at 90% for 2023. A 90% vacancy strike off will be applied to eligible commercial rate accounts for 2023 where the customer formally applies, provides proof of vacancy and clears any outstanding rate arrears, where applicable.

Rates Incentive Grant Scheme 2023

The 2023 "Rates Incentive Grants Scheme" is available to all Rate payers subject to certain terms and conditions. As approved at Kilkenny County Council's 2023 Budget Meeting, Rate payers can avail of a grant of 5.8% of the value of their 2023 Rate Demand (excluding arrears) to a maximum value of €250. The terms and conditions of the 2023 "Rates Incentive Grants Scheme" are as follows. There are two payment options:

Option 1 - Pay in 2 Moieties

Pay your first moiety & arrears, plus any outstanding Property Entry Level (PEL), before the end of May 2023. Pay your second moiety before the end of October 2023 at the latest, and deduct 5.8% up to the maximum from your 2023 Demand.

Option 2 - Monthly Payment Plan

Pay your Rates & Arrears plus any outstanding PEL, in full in equal consecutive monthly instalments by standing order/ direct debit or by other consecutive monthly arrangement before the end of October 2023 and deduct 5.8% up to the maximum from your 2023 Rate Demand. **Your monthly payment plan must commence prior to 31st May 2023.**

NOTE: Terms & conditions may vary subject to Rates Waiver 2023 eligibility. Please contact the Rates Office on 056-7794209 or e-mail rates@kilkennycoco.ie should you have any queries. Please quote your customer number and/or LAID number as detailed on your Rate Demand.