



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

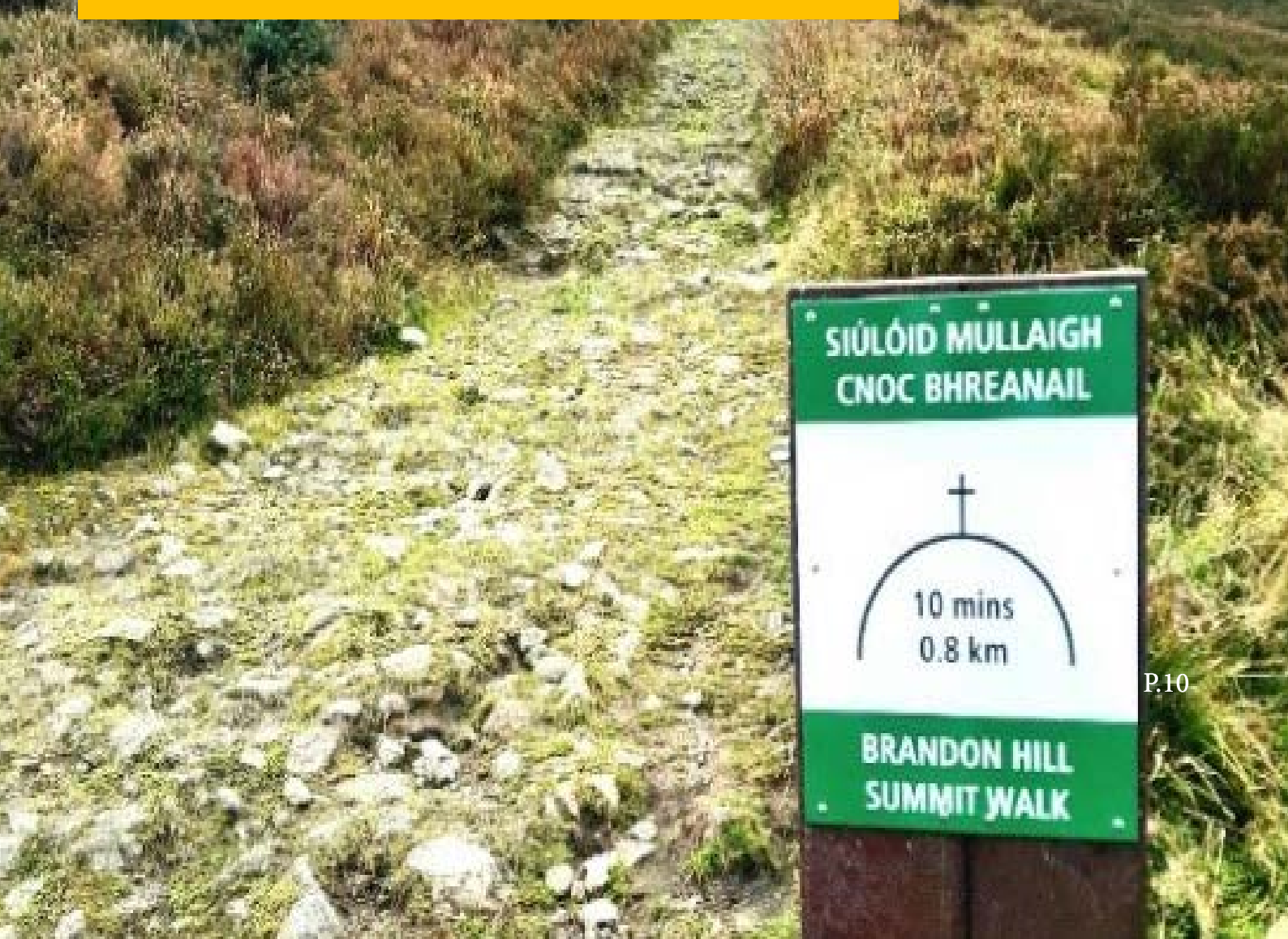
JUNE 2022 ISSUE



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

ELECTED MEMBERS OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Monthly Management Report to Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council for consideration at the June 2022 Monthly Meeting.



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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

Speed Limits

Submission can be made up until the 10th June, 2022 for the proposed draft Speed Limit Review.

Household Electrical Collection Days.

WEEE Ireland is coming to Kilkenny to five locations across the County this May and June. These will be the only collections for 2022.



CORPORATE

Elected Members bid farewell to Colette Byrne, Chief Executive at May Monthly Meeting



ROADS

Major projects (Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

The public consultation No 2 on Alternatives & Options is now completed and the Design Team is starting to work through the submissions received.

Minor Projects (Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

Approval to proceed to tender has been requested from TII. The plan is to see the project started in Q4 2022 with a 12/15 month construction period. An allocation of €3m was received for 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

An allocation of €500K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to preparation of contract documents and potentially provide for land acquisition. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N24 Carrick Road:

An allocation of €150K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to statutory approvals stage (177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Approval which is likely to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in July 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

Other Projects

Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

Consultants are continuing to work on the SAR report (Strategic Assessment Report) for above project. The Draft Report will be ready in Q2 2022 for submission to the Department for consideration to proceed with the design and planning.

Poulanassy Waterfall



Poulanassy Waterfall is located 2km west of Mullinavat. It is a quiet, picturesque location that is popular with the local community and visitors. At busy times, the number of visitors resulted in hazardous parking on both sides of the local road, which blocked the road to larger vehicles and led to Gardaí attending to remove cars that were obstructing the road. The situation was also hazardous for pedestrians on the road accessing the waterfall trail. The trail was little more than a dirt track down a steep embankment.

To address these hazards, it was decided in 2018 to prepare proposals for dedicated parking facilities with 35 no. car park spaces, thereby removing on-road parking improving the safety of public road users, and to enhance the accessibility to the natural amenity of Poulanassy Waterfall.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Funding in the amount of €175,000 was allocated to this job, comprising €140,000 of ORIS funding and €35,000 match funding from the Council. Climate Adaption & Resilience Works Allocations 2021 funding in the amount of €65,000 was used to address the flooding and drainage aspects of the project.

The Poulanassy Waterfall Visitor Car Park and Walking Trail was officially opened by An Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty on 27th May 2022.

PLANNING

Visits to the Planning Office continue to be by pre-booked appointment. Appointment can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie

Planning Summary	TOTAL (May 2022)	TOTAL (MAY 2022)
Planning Applications Received	104	75
Planning Applications Granted	83	69
Planning Applications Refused	3	8
Complaints Received	57	42
Warning Letters Issued	53	50
Enforcements Notices Issued	11	19
Cases Closed	44	49

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan

The Council awaits the outcome of the Draft Direction forwarded to the Office of the Planning Regulator in December 2021, who in turn made a recommendation to the Minister on the matter. The final decision of the Minister is still pending.

Masterplans:

Abbey Quarter

A brief for the Abbey Quarter Masterplan Review was prepared and published on etenders in May. The closing date for receipt of tenders is the 24th June.

The preparation of the Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus is ongoing. Loci consultants are assisting the Project Steering Committee in the drafting of the Masterplan. Several workshops were held during December 2021 and January 2022 to progress design concepts around land use and movement. Following consultation with the HSE on these concepts, a plan will be drafted. Once a draft plan is available, it will be presented to the Council and HSE before it is placed on public display.

Loughmacask

The preparation of a draft masterplan for Loughmacask is nearing completion. The completion of the environmental reports has delayed the final draft before the Council commence public consultation. The concepts included in the Draft Masterplan were presented to the Kilkenny Municipal District meeting in May. Once the environmental assessments are progressed and the draft Masterplan is amended accordingly, the draft plan and associated environmental documentation will be placed on public display for comment.

Taking in Charge

- Margaretsfield, Callan Road – taking in charge process now complete.
- Works are continuing on various other estates:
- College Park, Callan Road
- Rioch Court
- The Greens, Thomastown
- Kiln Lane, Callan
- Castlehyde, New Ross
- Whitehall, Paulstown
- Ogenty, Gowran
- Arbourmount, Ferrybank
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank

Active Land Management

- There are 13 sites on the Derelict Sites (DS) Register at present. Seven Section 8(2) notices have been issued since May, giving notice of the intent to enter sites on the DS Register. Owners now have an opportunity to make representations.
- There are 29 sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 18 sites.
- The 2021 levy is now due and payment demands were issued during February and early March. Measures are now being taken to pursue the non-payment of levies.

For 2022, the emphasis will be on the activation of sites currently on the Register, the pursuit of levies due and ongoing monitoring.

PLANNING

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 etc.

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

Conservation grant funded projects, by way of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund are ongoing.

A Draft Conservation Plan for the Abbey Quarter will go to public consultation in the coming weeks.

Building Control

- Valid commencement notices submitted - 165 for the first 5 months of 2022.
- Compared to 175 valid commencement notices submitted for the first 5 months of 2021.
- May 2022 is the first month that the number of notices received has decreased on last year, i.e. 24 notices in May 2022 compared to 43 in May 2021.

Building Control

	Total (May 2022)	Total (May 2021)	Total (May 2020)	Total (May 2019)
Number of Valid Commencement Notices received from Start of Year to End of Month	165	175	143	135
No. Valid Disability Access Applications Received Start of Year to End of Month	41	27	33	28

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Energy

Public Lighting Energy Enhancement Project Eastern Region (PLEEP ER)

Public lighting is the largest consumer of electricity in Kilkenny County Council, using 33% of the total electricity used with the consequential emission of 1,300 tonnes of CO₂ per annum. The PLEEP project, led by Kilkenny County Council, is to replace the existing lamps with energy efficient LED lighting designed and installed to the latest standards. In Kilkenny approximately 5,500 lanterns have already been replaced in earlier projects and the remaining 5,500 lanterns will be changed under this new Contract (total 80,000 across the Region). The target is that the new lanterns will save between 55-70% of the energy usage.

Following the tender process, the most economically advantageous tender has been identified and due diligence is being completed prior to award of the Works Contract. The target is to award the Contract by the end of Q2/ early Q3 of this year.

Flood Relief

Flooding is a key climate change risk facing the Kilkenny region. Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events and storm surges, which increases the risk of pluvial and fluvial flooding in vulnerable areas. Extreme rainfall and weather events can also place additional pressure on the urban drainage network and water supply which can result in network flooding and water shortages. Together with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and neighbouring local authorities, Kilkenny County Council is actively working to implement projects and programmes that align with the EU Floods Directive and Water Framework Directive, which call for member states to undertake strategic flood risk assessments and to favour nature-based solutions such as integrated wetlands, green infrastructure, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to be used for adaptation and mitigation responses to achieve flood resilience.

A number of key projects have commenced including the Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Scheme and the Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme. These 2 projects have been identified by the OPW out of the 6 schemes in County Kilkenny to receive the initial tranche of funding.

Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Scheme

The Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Scheme is currently at Options Development Stage. A Public Consultation event is planned for July/August to invite in the members of the public to view the

options and afford them the opportunity to comment on the options proposed. Kilkenny County Council are awaiting An Bord Pleanála's decision on the Site Investigation Application. This was made under Section 177 AE(5) and was lodged in August 2021. A Landscape Architect has been a recent addition to the team with a Conservation Specialist to join the team for the project. The key focus for these roles will be the built cultural heritage of Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch and the importance of high-quality public realm.

The Invasive Species Treatment Contract has been awarded for 2022 and will commence in June on site. This is year 2 of a multiple annual treatment programme.

Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme

A preferred option brought forward, which consists of a range of interventions along the watercourse reach. The general intent of the preferred option is to enhance the flow capacity and level of defence through Ballyhale, so that the design flows can be conveyed through the village without causing property flooding. The Standard of protection is to 1 -in 100-year flood. A total of 20 residential properties and 8 businesses will be protected by this scheme. The project estimate is circa €1.4 million to build the preferred option. This has increased significantly from the original estimate of €450,000.

The project has advanced into Stage 2 – Planning & CPO. CPO mapping has commenced for the project with landowner consultations due to commence. A planning application is scheduled to be lodged with An Bord Pleanála by the end of Q4 2022 for this scheme.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) RMCEI Air Noise & Water Elements

The table below provides an update of the progress based on available information to hand at the end of May 2022. In terms of routine inspections, it is noted that 76% of the 58 Planned Domestic Wastewater Treatment System (DWWTS) under the National Inspection Plan 2022-2027 have already been completed in 2022. Additionally, the locations for the 80 remaining Farm Inspection in 2022 are currently being identified based upon a Catchment Assessment in line with recent training organised by LAWPRO. This approach seeks to better target farm inspection resources within catchments based upon pollution impact potential related to agricultural pressures.

ENVIRONMENT

Air Noise Water Incl. Planning (Planning Referrals)	Planned	Update May 2022	
Subtotal 6.4 Routine Water/ Wastewater Inspections	1,586	456	29%
Subtotal 6.5 Non-Routine Water/ Wastewater Inspections	51	4	8%
Subtotal 6.6 Routine Air/Noise Inspections	70	0	0%
Subtotal 6.7 Non-Routine Air/Noise Inspections	38	1	3%
Subtotal 6.9 Planning (Environmental) Inspections (Routine)	1,150	300	17%
Total	2,895	761	26%

Environment Complaints

All complaints are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints being received & logged by Environment staff for investigation for the first five months of 2022 is 422 compared with 642 for the same period last year (i.e. down circa 34%). The nature of these complaints ranges from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. However, the vast majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping.

Waste Recycling & Collection

Bring Centre

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County and a total of 910 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres in the first 5 months of 2022. This represents an 22% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down to society reopening after Covid 19. LIDL Loughboy (58 tonnes collected YTD), Newpark Shopping Centre (56.4 tonnes collected YTD) and Graiguenamanagh (43.7 tonnes collected YTD) are 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. Kilkenny County Council is looking to increase the number of recycling centres in the County this year and is currently in discussions with the Tidy Town committees with regard to suitable locations in towns and villages across the County.

Kilkenny County Council has recently awarded the contract for textile recycling to Textile Recycling Limited (TRL) for the next 2 years following a tender process. The new clothes banks have been installed at all our bring centre locations in the County and operating without any issues.



New Textile Banks in Shamrock Grove, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny

Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre

Good weather and plenty of growth saw a rise in Green Waste coming into Dunmore for disposal. 63 Tonnes of Green Waste from domestic gardens around the County left Dunmore during the month of May for composting. The green garden waste is taken to the Bord na Mona composting facility in Kilberry, Co. Kildare where it is processed for composting.

Aftercare of the closed Landfill at Dunmore is ongoing and May saw the completion of liner integrity testing of the leachate holding lagoons. This testing is carried out as part of the site's licence compliance obligations and the results showed that there are no defects in the lagoon liner and therefore no impact on the status of the surrounding environment.

ENVIRONMENT



WEEE Ireland Collections

WEEE Ireland collections commenced their household electrical waste collections in May and they continue into June. Reports from WEEE Ireland indicate that the first four dates were well supported by the community and their visits to Kilkenny have been so far worthwhile.



Historic Landfills

A consultant is currently being procured to undertake and conclude the Risk Assessment process and the submission of Certificate of Authorisation applications on 7 sites at Ardreagh (Urlingford), Ballykeoghan (Kilmacow), Caherlesk (Dunamaggin), Dungarvan, Grannagh, Mallardstown (Callan) and Sheastown (Bennettsbridge). It is anticipated that this work will be concluded by the end of 2022.

Approval has been sought from the EPA regarding the Certificate of Authorisation Applications submitted for sites at: Sevenhouses (Newlands), Skehana (Castlecomer), Thorpes (Ballyragget) and Oldcourt (Inistioge). Monitoring will also be undertaken in 2022 at these locations.

Council's Waste Prevention Programme

Voice Ireland Visited Kilkenny

The Return for Change campaign visited Kilkenny City on the 19th of May. Its aim was to raise awareness of the imminent national Deposit and Return Scheme for beverage bottles and aluminium cans. The scheme will see an additional charge on the item at the point of purchase with the charge redeemable when returned to a reverse vending machine. undertaken in 2022 at these locations.

County Hall Acorn Nursery

Following on from a staff forest bathing experience last autumn which connected the themes of wellness, climate action and nature, an acorn nursery has been established on the grounds of County Hall. This container will nurture the acorns for a period of 18 months until they reach the sapling stage, at this point, the oak saplings will be offered to staff that have adequate ground to home a native oak tree.



This initiative was announced by former Chief Executive, Ms. Colette Byrne at her last Council meeting in May. It is a community clean up event for the County, starting with a pilot event in Kilkenny City in October 2022 and a whole County clean up day coinciding with the new St Brigid's bank holiday in February 2023. This project is financially supported by PRL, Dawn Meats, Glanbia Co-op/Glanbia PLC and the John O Shea Trust along with the waste management sponsor, Panda.

ENVIRONMENT

Kilkenny Men's Shed

Under the Council's Waste Prevention Grant the Environment Section is collaborating with Caitriona Corr, Cycling Officer, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Civil Defence and the Kilkenny City Men's Shed to repair and service donated bicycles, to enable them to be passed on to our Ukrainian residents. In one month, 22 bicycles were dispatched and the scheme will continue into the summer.



Animal Welfare

Monthly inspections continue at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. Up to end of May this year, 142 dogs have been dealt with in the Carlow/ Kilkenny dog shelter, with 102 of these dogs rehomed by the shelter and by charities. There were 3 dogs remaining at the shelter at the end of April. There were no horses impounded to date this year.

Burial Grounds

Medieval Churches Receive Community Monuments Funding

Kilkenny County Council has secured €196,200 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to help conserve and protect three medieval churches and graveyards (Grangefertagh, Clomantagh, Dunkitt) under the Community Monuments fund 2022. The projects will be managed by the Environment Section and Heritage Office and will help protect them from the impacts of climate change and keep them safe for current and future generations to access and appreciate.



The bell tower at Clomantagh Church will be repaired

Clomantagh Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €85,000 for urgent works to stabilise and conserve the 13thC church ruin including its distinctive double bell-tower, walls, doors and windows of the church.

Dunkitt Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €85,000 for urgent works to stabilise and conserve the late 12th/early 13th C church and the adjacent graveyard boundary wall.



The bell tower at Clomantagh Church will be repaired

Grangefertagh Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €26,200 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the medieval church and graveyard which will provide a vision, policies and actions to help protect and conserve the site for future generations.

The Dunkitt and Clomantagh projects are due to go out to tender in June through e-tenders, with a view to awarding contract and commencing works by the end of July, 2022. Grangefertagh will be tendered in July, with a view to awarding contract and commencing surveys in September, 2022.

Graveyards – Columbarium Wall Garden

The following estimated timelines provides an update for the completion of the Columbarium Wall Garden project at St. Kieran's Cemetery in 2022:

- Contract Award: July 2022
- Contract Duration: 6 Months (4-month lead in time for Columbarium Wall Units);
- Completion: December 2022.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Partnership Projects

On Wednesday the 25th May the new Men's Shed workshop and the close-by Abbey Hall Recreational Amenity Area were officially opened by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty with a big crowd turning out at both venues to mark the occasion.

Both projects were delivered in collaboration between the Council, Kilkenny Leader Partnership and local community with a total investment of €320,000.

The completion of the Abbey Hall amenity works has removed what was essentially a derelict site from the Main Street and brought it back into public use for the enjoyment of the community and has proven very popular with locals.

The Men's Shed project saw the transformation of the disused toilet block on the Convent Road into a very attractive Men's Shed workshop. The works also included hard and soft landscaping improvements to the Health Centre and Library forecourt to the rear of the building. The net result makes for a much improved streetscape and community facility that provides a much-needed shared space for men to come together to enjoy each other's company and to share ideas and skills.



Woodstock Waterfall Loop Walk

Registrations for the 2022 An Taisce's National Spring clean are now closed. This year saw over 100 groups registered on the national registration for County Kilkenny. The Environment Section provide support to groups who are completing litter picks in their own local area by supplying litter picking supplies and assistance with litter removal after litter picking. Events will continue throughout the summer.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, officially opened the Woodstock Waterfall Loop Walk on 25th May. Under this project significant removal of the invasive cherry laurel was undertaken within the woodland to allow for the restoration of 2.7kms of original Victorian Estate pathways.

These new pathways now open up access from Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum to the Brownsford Stream Waterfall. This new addition trail network also complements the previously restored Woodstock Loop Walk and Ladies Loop Walk, linking the village to the Gardens. In total, circa. 8.0 kms of Victorian Pathways have been improved since 2018 with an investment of over €615,000.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) – 2022 Application Call

In mid-February, The Department of Rural & Community Development announced a call for new applications under ORIS. The scheme is open to all Local Authorities and a number of other State Agencies. Funding is allocated via a competitive process based on the quality of the applications put forward. Therefore, we are endeavoring to ensure that the highest quality applications are put forward.

The funding applications are divided into following four categories:

Measure 1:

Grant available €30,000 and Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 7 applications, (Increased by €10,000/ application on previous years).

Measure 2:

Grant available €200,000 and Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 3 applications.

Measure 3:

Grant available €500,000 and Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 1 application.

Project Development:

Grant available €50,000 and Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 2 applications, (*An increase on 1 application last year*).

(10% Match funding must be provided by the Local Authority)

A full list of the Measure 1 and Project Development Applications was provided in the May Chief Executive Report. The deadline for the submission of the Measure 2 & 3 applications was the 25th May 2022 and the following applications were put forward:

Measure 2 Application Submission 2022

Project Name	Description	Grant Sought	Estimated Total Cost
Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme	Millennium Forest is sited on a very level parcel of land to the south of Kilkenny City. Proposed enhancement works to the Green Loop to include 2.1km's of trail rehabilitation to facilitate universal access with a particular focus on wheelchair users, improvement and provision of universal and age friendly accessible amenity spaces with dedicated car parking. General trail improvement, c.500lin.m, to Red Loop the longer loop walk. The installation of wheelchair accessible toilet (Dry loo). Carpark, entrance and signage improvements to promote awareness, improve safety and enhance offering.	€200,000	€227,223
Jeninstown Wood – Walking Trail Rehabilitation Scheme	Works include the rehabilitation of the existing two loop walks, the creation of a new fully accessible loop walk, with age friendly seating and upgraded signage along all trails. Upgrading of picnic amenity space with age friendly and accessible seating, a new access ramp to provide connectivity to the carpark, landscaping and general signage upgrade.	€200,000	€227,658,
Newpark Fen – Trail Enhancement Scheme	Newpark Marsh is a natural heritage area in Kilkenny City. It offers unique opportunities to view many different species of birds as well as a wide range of fauna in the City. Proposals include for the upgrade of existing paths, improvements to public seating and signage. All works will be carried out to have minimal impact on this sensitive environment.	€125,883	€139,870

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - 2022 Funded Schemes

Works are progressing on all 7 Measure 1 projects. A summary of progress to-date will be provided in the July Chief Executive's Report

With respect to the Measure 2 and Measure 3 projects a progress report is provided below:

Measure 2 - Castlecomer Discovery Park

A Memorandum of Understanding and Licencing Agreement was put in place between Coillte and Kilkenny County Council to facilitate the Council undertaking works on Coillte lands that form part of the Castlecomer Discovery Park.

Phase One of the trail rehabilitation works within the Park were completed in mid-May. In total c.1km, though the very popular Elf Village and Obstacle course / zipwire platform were rehabilitated and surface dressed. The works were undertaken by the Council's own staff at a cost of c.€50,000.



Phase 2 of the works, which will see the reconstruction of the Ardra Loop Walk (Purple Walk), are expected to commence over the coming weeks. The works will provide for c.1.8km of trail rehabilitation that will include drainage, surfacing, signage and seating along with the provision of age friendly accessible amenity areas.

Measure 2 - Woodstock Gardens

Work has commenced on improving access for all to the Gardens. A new pathway has been created from the carpark to the playground and significant surface restoration works are ongoing to make the existing pathways including the Monkey Puzzle and Noble Fir Avenues more attractive and accessible for people with mobility issues.

Plans have also been prepared to provide dedicated disabled and age friendly parking areas at key access points within the carpark and it is expected that same will be installed in the coming weeks.



Staff are also actively sourcing suitable accessible play equipment which will be installed in the playground in conjunction with a new sensory area.

The above, along with other planned works for this year will make Woodstock Gardens a very inclusive amenity to be enjoyed by all.

Measure 3 - Kilkenny Countryside Park

Advance works to rehabilitate the Mass Path from Dunmore Carpark and the widening of the access road to the proposed Bleach Road carpark was completed earlier this year.

We are currently working with design consultants, Mitchell + Associates on the detail design and tender documents. It is anticipated that the works tender will be advertised in Q3 with works commencing on site later this year.

South East Greenway

Work continues on the preparation of the detailed design and tender documents for Lot 5a (Ferrybank to Luffany) and Lot 5b (Luffany to Aylwardstown). The detailed design for Lot 6 (Glenmore to Aylwardstown) and Lot 4 (New Ross to Mount Elliott) are also progressing. It is intended that Tender Documents for Lots 5a will be advertised by the end of June, with Lots 6 & 5b planned to follow soon after.

Age friendly seating has now been fitted across the three Lots under construction, New Ross to Glenmore and Ferrybank, at various designated seating areas along the route, along with a sample information lectern. The construction compound located at Ferrybank has been reinstated & restored with all stone & construction materials removed. A number of bridges were sand blasted and painted.

Landowner agreements on the accommodation works for Lots 4 – 7 continues to move forward.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore from South East Greenway

On foot of the initial landowner and public engagement evenings on the emerging routes to connect both villages to the Greenway, the preferred route for each village was confirmed. A presentation of the route selection process and preferred route will be given to the Piltown Municipal District at the June meeting. The Appropriate Assessment Screening for each preferred route will be concluded in June and subject to the outcome of same it is anticipated that the planning process for each route will commence in Q3 this year.

Parks & Playgrounds

Tender documents are being prepared for a number of playground and amenity projects around the County. In Freshford the Parks Department are assisting the local community with the preparation of tender documents for the development of an outdoor activity hub, which includes a children's playground adjacent to the GAA pitch in the village. Funding has been approved under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The scheme will provide an access road, car parking spaces and outdoor activity equipment including play equipment aimed at children. The local community also intend to develop a sensory garden at the site also.



Location of Freshford Activity Hub

Two Multi Use Games Areas have received funding under the Sports Capital Programme and tender documents will issue to prospective contractors soon. The Multi Use Games Area at Newpark will be upgraded to repair the surface and surround fencing of this now 11 year old amenity. In Ferrybank, a new Multi Use Games Area will be provided to add to the amenity offering already in the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park.



Around the County on-going maintenance continues in our playgrounds and parks to maintain them to a high standard. Piltown is playground zip line and sand pit was refurbished and reopened to the public.

To support the Ukrainian residents currently accommodated in the St. John of God's Convent, Kilkenny, the Parks Department assisted the Housing Section by providing some play equipment for entertaining the younger children. In addition, some raised garden beds were provided in the old convent garden for residents to grow vegetables and herbs. Permission was granted by the St John of God Sisters.



Garden beds planted by Ukrainian residents at the St John of God's Convent - Beetroots, cabbages, onion sets and lettuces have all been planted



Play equipment and playground markings were provide to entertain children outdoors at the St John of God's Convent

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Woodstock Gardens

Early summer in the gardens has been busy with an abundance of jobs to be completed before the busy tourist season. The Winter Garden has been the focus of much of the attention with topiary planting needing pruning to maintain the formal shapes typical of the Winter Garden. The replanting of the walled garden herbaceous border is now underway. The removal of the box hedging which is unfortunately infested with box blight like so many box plants (*Buxus sempervirens*) in formal gardens all around Europe. New planting of herbaceous plants typical of the Victorian era will be planted to refresh the planting scheme.

Amenity Grants

The 2022 Amenity Grants Scheme was brought before the Elected Members at the May meeting of the Council. 172 applicants were awarded grants totalling €140,000. This will be distributed to groups across the County to enable them to maintain their own outdoor recreational spaces. The range of works typically involve tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund

In conjunction with the Heritage Office, the Parks Section applied for funding under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund for invasive species control in both Silaire Wood and Woodstock Gardens. This builds on the actions set out in the management plans for invasive species prepared last year with assistance from the same fund. €20,190 was awarded to Woodstock Gardens for the purchase of a flail to control invasive Laurel growth and to hire in contractors to assist in cutting and mulching the dominant shrub. €6,810 was awarded to Silaire Woods for the pulling of Himalayan Balsam. The timing of pulling the Himalayan balsam is key and works need to commence immediately to hand pull the weed prior to the plant flowering and going to seed. The seeds are dispersed by wind and water on the river's edge and colonise the river bank where they set seed. Himalayan Balsam is a significant issue on the River Barrow having totally colonised many sections of river bank. Working groups are beginning to gather in towns in Carlow and Kilkenny to 'balsam bash' in an effort to control the plant.



COMMUNITY

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Scheme was announced on Friday, 27th May, 2022. There are some slight changes to the scheme of 2021. Funding is 90%. Highlights of the scheme are:

- Maximum grant is €500,000 - only 1 application can be submitted for this amount
- €250,000 – up to 5 applications may be submitted
- €50,000 – up to 2 applications (for project development)
- €50,000 – 1 application – Marketing Scheme Measure (New for 2022)

A new element to the scheme is the Building Acquisition Measure, whereby the Council can submit applications to purchase up to 2 vacant/derelict buildings for community use. Total value €400,000. This element is 100% funded.

Kilkenny County Council will advertise for expressions of interest. Expression of interest forms available on request from: community@kilkennycoco.ie.

Street Scap Enhancement Measure 2022

The recently announced Street Scap Enhancement Measure 2022 will focus on buildings identified in one nominated town in County Kilkenny. This scheme focuses on improving the visual appearance of urban streetscapes, increases pride and confidence in our towns and villages, making them more attractive places to live, work and do business. The scheme will be advertised in June 2022.

Pride of Place

Nomination applications for the 2022 National Pride of Place Awards were submitted on the 10th of June. The three groups representing Kilkenny include; Graiguenamanagh Barrow Valley Activities Hub (Community Toursim), The Thomastown Recreational Park Amenity (Community Well Being) and Mullinavat (Village). Judging will take place over the summer.

CLÁR

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population. The funding works in conjunction with local/ Agency and other Departmental funding programmes and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

The CLAR Programme allocation has increased from €5.5m to €7 million in 2022. Kilkenny County Council received 12 applications under Measure 1. Developing Community Facilities & Amenities from Community/Sports groups throughout the County. The indicative timeline for announcement of successful projects is expected to be July 2022.

- Full details of the scheme are available on the Department's website, link:
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/01125e-town-and-village-renewal-scheme/>

Bike Week 2022

Bike Week took place from 14th May to 22nd May. A packed calendar of events took place that included everything from an exciting new beginner Sportive to a family-focused festival for cycling enthusiasts.

Bike Week events were delivered by Kilkenny County Council, Cycling Irleand, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, Kilkenny Cycling and Walking Campaign and the local cycling clubs. Some of the events that took place were:

- Callan Sportive which ran their first ever 40K Sportive over a gentle, scenic route, this route was chosen with beginners in mind and a 13K option was added for those who wanted a gentle spin and whom were beginning/returning to cycling after a break from it. There was also a number of community bike rides during Bike Week. They included beginner options, tours of local villages and coffee stops on route. Local cycling clubs, Kell's Angels, Marble City Cyclers and Deenside Wheelers invited new cyclists to join them over the week, with routes selected for new cyclists.

COMMUNITY

- Bike Maintenance Workshops were held in Stoneyford and Kilmacow Community Centres. Bike engineers from the Bicycle Engineering Academy visited St. Kieran's and Loreto Secondary Schools and delivered workshops to over 60 students. Workplaces attended a Bike Breakfast to find out about promoting cycling in the workplace and to share ideas with other companies. A number of primary schools took part in the primary schools escorted trips on routes around their schools. Over 150 children took part in these escorted school cycles.
- Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership launched their Learn to Cycle for people with a disability during Bike Week 2022 and 18 people have signed up to the programme to date. They also ran a 6 week Couch to 40Km cycling programme which finished up during Bike Week. 11 participants took part in this programme. Local group 'The Pedallers' supported participants on the programme alongside an experience cycle tutor. These cyclists had the option of participating in the Sportive ran by Callan Cycling Club which ran on Sunday 15th May.
- Cycle Champions is a leadership programme that upskills transition year students to deliver cycle training in a local primary school. The programme was developed by Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with Cycling Ireland and empowers young people to become actively involved, the primary children improved their cycling skills and played lots of fun cycling games. An important part of this programme is peer support networks for young people who would like to include cycling in their everyday journeys. The programme was delivered by 60 secondary school students and delivered to over 400 primary school pupils.

Bike Fest

Kilkenny County Council and Cycling Ireland came together to on 22nd May to bring Bike Fest to the City. This was a family focused festival with lots of cycling and related activities on offer. The event was held in the grounds of County Hall, the grounds were transformed into an outdoor playground and a celebration of sustainability for the whole community. Bike Fest launched with a Slow Roll through the City that was attended by all ages and abilities.

delighted with the partnership and County Hall proved to be an amazing safe venue for off road cycling activities.

Bike Buffet

A leisurely Friday cycle or Bike Buffet was held to wind down Bike Week. The cycle left The Parade at 6.00 pm, followed quiet rural routes and returned to the city for refreshments. This concluded a very successful Bike Week 2022 and we hope to build on this for 2023.



LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Student Enterprise Programme Awards

Students from County Kilkenny had great success at the 2022 Student Enterprise Programme National Finals, with national winners in Junior and Intermediate Categories and also in the My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition. The finals were held physically for the first time in three years at the Helix in Dublin on Wednesday 18th May with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar and students and teachers in attendance from all over the country.

At the plenary meeting of Kilkenny County Council on Monday 23rd May, the winning students along with their teachers and family members were formally congratulated by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Fidelis Doherty. Ciara Ryan from St. Brigid's College, Callan received the overall award in the Junior category from An Tanaiste Leo Varadkar. Her enterprise business "Sew Stylish" creates uniquely designed multifunctional hair scrunchies with a discrete zip pocket that can be used to store money, lip gloss or keys, but can also still be used to tie your hair up.

In the Intermediate category, twin brothers Adam and Liam Doyle, from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan with their painting service business "Twin Painters Ltd" won third prize overall along with the "Best Poster Award". Ned O'Meara, from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan received the overall national winner in the Intermediate category of "My Entrepreneurial Journey" and Saoirse Walsh was runner-up in the Junior Category of "My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition".



Ideas Kilkenny Competition

The final of the inaugural IDEAS Kilkenny competition, an initiative of the Local Enterprise Office was held on Tuesday 31st May. This initiative was launched in March 2022 during Local Enterprise Week and the competition attracted entrepreneurs from right across the County with an array of tech related business ideas. The competition involved a series of business workshops and one-to-one mentoring culminating in the finale, whereby finalists pitched towards an investment fund worth €10,000 (€6,000 in the Start-up Category and €4,000 in the Pre-Start Category).

At the Awards ceremony, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fidelis Doherty presented the awards. In the pre-start-up category, Richie Walsh t/a Maximo Ltd was announced the overall winner. Richie is currently in the process of developing a digital fintech platform which helps people easily contribute to a pension.



In the Start-up category, Cait Mackey Maher, Yellow Deer Design; a greeting card, print and design business was announced the winner. Cait is expanding her business and developing a subscription-based model for her bespoke, personalised greeting cards and designs.



LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Digital Start – Support for Small Business

Applications are open for the Local Enterprise Office pilot scheme Digital Start. This initiative is designed to help businesses prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the business.

Digital Start will provide strategic intervention for businesses to work with third party consultants to:

- assist them identify where they are on their digital business journey,
- develop a digital adaptation plan based on their identified need,
- implement their digital adaptation plan

This is a free programme, offering up to 4 days business specific advice and technical support and is available to businesses with up to 50 employees operating in the manufacturing or internationally traded service sectors.

Summary of Awards

- €318,470 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 13 manufacture /export service businesses located throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 39 jobs over the next three years.
- €224,885 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 8 existing businesses with forecasted new job creation of 35 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.
- €35,610 in Priming Grant (Start-up assistance) to 1 new business.
- €27,975 awarded in feasibility study grants to 3 businesses.
- €30,000 in Grad Start funding to 1 business
- 5 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded totalling €9,820. This scheme supports businesses to explore their export market opportunities.
- 11 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 5 Business have commenced the LEO Building Better Business LEAN programme.
- This program is about building a stable, secure, and sustainable business that is agile enough to face economic challenges. This programme is centred on the belief that waste exists in all processes and while it is a practical, hands on programme but not focusing on the obvious ways of looking at problems and opportunities. It is about finding ways to do things faster, better, and together as a team.
- 13 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €25,979 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 10 Green for Micro supports awarded totalling €22,426. 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.

Management Development Training

During May, 5 businesses commenced the Begin to Export Programme - the overall aim of this programme is the development of a Strategic Export Plan. This plan will contain the necessary steps, each company needs to undertake, to ensure successful market entry for a new export market of their choice.

A further 3 businesses have also commenced our Small Business Management Development Programme in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office Carlow. The aim of the Management Development Programme is to provide the owner/ manager with the management, leadership, business skills and knowledge to achieve sustainability and growth in their business.

Both of these integrated learning and mentor programmes are designed to make an impact on the owner manager and their business growth strategies.

LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM

The Cats have found a home!

May saw the close of the Catwalk Art Trail culminating in an auction of the pieces of Art at Butler House on May 5th.

The original remit of bringing businesses and local communities together, as well as providing creative work for mainly local artists, and giving local businesses the knock-on benefits of visitors being attracted to Kilkenny was achieved by the project.

The project has a positive impact on the community:

- On the day of the official launch (Kilkenny Day - 10th October 21) some 5,000 people followed the Catwalk with queues to be able to see and take selfies with the cats all day long
- An estimated 18,000 members of the local community followed some or all of the trail.
- The Kilkenny Catwalk has brought an estimated €750,000 in additional tourism spend into the City over the duration of the trail (based on 25,000 outside visitors to the City who came specifically to follow the trail spending on average 30 euro per person).
- The project has provided the community with a fun, healthy activity for all ages to enjoy and engage with outdoors while adhering to physical distancing requirements regardless of restrictions.
- It has provided local artists with valuable paid work during an extremely difficult time for them and additionally exposure of their work to those following in social and traditional media.
- It has also provided local businesses who engaged with the project and their neighbours on the trail with a constant stream of footfall during the shoulder tourism season and in a period where local community businesses needed support most.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

May marketing activity was themed around the Great Outdoors: Parks, Gardens & Outdoor Activity. The Target Market being Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers. Blogs included 'Family Friendly places to stay this Summer in Kilkenny', 'Awesome Things to do in Kilkenny this Summer' and the Irish Open.

The Visit Kilkenny events page heavily promoted the programme of activity for the Roots Festivals that ran from 29th April to 2nd May. It also showcased the Kilkenny Cat Laughs - June 2nd - 6th and the upcoming Irish Open 30th June to 3rd July, 2022.

Planning continues for Horizon Irish Open 2022

Kilkenny County Council in partnership with the European Tour, Mount Juliet and Failte Ireland continue to work together to maximise the opportunity for Kilkenny's exposure as a tourism destination in the run up to and during the 2022 Horizon Irish Open. Local activation will commence in the coming weeks with the dressing of the streets of the City as well as surrounding towns and villages close to the event.

There will be a "Kilkenny" stand at Mount Juliet for the duration of the competition in order to display many of Kilkenny's wonderful "Made" and "Taste" products showcasing the "Kilkenny the Best of Ireland" brand as well as reinforcing to all guests during the week to come back and visit Kilkenny again in the future.

Vision For Abbey Quarter Well On Its Way

The official opening of the public realm surrounding the Brewhouse building on the Abbey Quarter, namely Horse Barrack Lane and The Brewhouse Square by Minister Darragh O'Brien Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage took place on May 16th. On the day, as well as official proceedings, staff of Kilkenny County Council and members of the public were invited to tour the area.



The official opening of the newly refurbished Tea Houses took place on May 30th by Minister Malcolm Noonan, Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform again accompanied with a public viewing.



HOUSING

Housing Capital Report

Current Housing Projects On Site

Scheme	Project Name	Approved Housing Body	Projected Substantial Completion	Units
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Milton Lodge, Johnswell Road, KK (Phase 2)	SOS Kilkenny Housing CLG	30/06/2022	1
AHB CALF Turnkey		Respond	30/06/2022	17
CALF Part V	Nuncio Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	Respond	30/06/2022	5
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Grennan Villa, Thomastown	Camphill Communities of Ireland	30/06/2022	5
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City		17/06/2022	58
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Kingsriver, Ennisnag	Kingsriver Housing Association Limited	28/06/2022	2
AHB CALF Construction	Orchard Close, New Orchard, Kilkenny	Cluid Housing	31/07/2022	21
CALF Part V	Orchard Close, New Orchard, Kilkenny	Cluid Housing	31/07/2022	2
CAS CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Tinnypark, Callan Road, Kilkenny	SOS Kilkenny HA	31/08/2022	6
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	30/09/2022	12
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	New Road, Mooncoin		17/11/2022	4
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Chapel Street, Mooncoin		17/11/2022	2
SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE	Inchacarron, Mullinavat		31/01/2023	2
SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE	Graiguenamanagh - Old Fire Station		31/01/2023	2
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Main Street, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny		24/03/2023	4
SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Legan Grange & Legan Court, Ladywell, Thomastown, Co Kilkenny		30/03/2023	25
CAS CONSTRUCTION	19/21 Blackmill Street, Kilkenny	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	31/03/2023	12
SHIP CONSTRUCTION	10 Golf Links Road, Kilkenny		31/03/2023	6
SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE	Haggardsgreen, Callan		31/03/2023	1
				187

SHIP = Kilkenny County Council Direct Build / CAS or CALF = Approved Housing Body Project

HOUSING



Works on Legan Grange, Thomastown ongoing



Work Progressing on 2 units in Graiguenamagh – infill scheme – ICF construction

HOUSING

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY MAY 2022	
Homeless Presentations	44
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	13
Emergency Service	4
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	27
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1st day of month	104
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	105
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	4
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported accommodation	32
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	5
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	3
Households (singles / couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	18
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	7

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY MAY 2022	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at May 31st (Gross Need)	1,660
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at May 31st (Net Need)	741
No. of Social Housing Applications received as at May 31st	94
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	72
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	33
No. of applications assessed during May	28
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at May 31st	78

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO MAY 31ST 2022	
Number of active HAP tenancies to May 31st 2022	761
New HAP tenancies set up	43
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	23
Closed HAP Tenancies	59
HAP Rent Reviews	89
Other tenancy amendments	187
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	1,512
HAP Calls Received April	491

HOUSING

Monthly Statistics

May 2022	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of May (offers made):	
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in April:	5
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in April:	54
Maintenance Calls for April:	506
Maintenance Calls year to date	2,760

Housing Loan Activity 1st January 2022 to 31st May, 2022					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amt approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home		2	€197,500	3	€548,000
Local Auauthority Home Loan	28	1	€90,000	0	€0
Caravan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	28	3	€287,500	3	€548,000

Grants Approved & Committed up to May 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	110	€1,094,034
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	13	€52,257
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	88	€526,950
Total	211	€1,673,241

Grants Paid out up to 31st May 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	42	€386,341
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,803
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	30	€166,170
Total	78	€575,314

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Cathaoirleach Fidelis Doherty and John Staunton of McStan Construction signed the Contract for the construction of the new fire station in Urlingford. Construction is to commence in early June 2022.



Contracts for the provision of a new fire engine for Urlingford were recently signed with Emergency One. A request for tenders for the supply of a second hand fire was placed on etenders.

Fire Safety Certificates

- 44 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.
- 48 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.
- 13 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 1 Dangerous Substance licence applications was received and assessed to date
- 34 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place so far this year.

Community Fire Safety

Engagement with agencies / groups such as Age Friendly Counties Programme (Kilkenny), An Garda Síochána, Muintir na Tíre, the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), ICA, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Active Retirement Groups, St Vincent De-Paul, HSE, Local Community Alert Groups, Local Text Alert Groups and Twilight is key to improving and continuing to deliver fire safety awareness in our communities.



Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service at the launch of Protecting Assisting Senior Services Programme by the Twilight Community Group. Brigades carried out a number of fire safety presentations e.g. Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSVs) are a significant element of our Community Fire Safety Strategy. Fire service personnel call to houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A 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.

Resumption of the Primary Schools Fire safety programme is well underway and a number of schools have been visited recently. Callan Fire Brigade held a road safety demonstration at Colaiste Abhainn Ri, Callan during their Open Day.

Training

Training on new anti-ventilation equipment and techniques is taking place with all our Fire Brigades.

Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended to over 333 incidents to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions including fatalities, public road hazards, automatic fire alarm activations, chimney fires, Ambulance assists.

ARTS

Literature

New selection of poetry uploaded to the Arts Office Poetry Phone

Edward Hayden, chef, food writer, lecturer, columnist and radio/television personality, was tasked with choosing a new selection of poems for the Arts Office Poetry Phone from our 2019 and 2020 published Poetry Broadsheets and our Rhymerag.net platform. These beautiful poems have now been uploaded to the Poetry Phone. Anyone can free phone the Poetry Phone at 1800 272 994 and select 0 to 9 or you can listen to the poems and find out a bit about the poets on the Arts Office blog at <http://kilkennyartsoffice.ie/kilkenny-arts-office-poetry-phone-a-new-selection-by-edward-hayden/>.

Lee Shanahan – A Human Voice

Lee Shanahan was selected as the emerging artist from our Kilkenny Emerging Artist open call. An Irish figurative painter, his work is focused on human interaction in the contemporary environment and his work is exhibiting in this year's first exhibition in the Emerging Curator Development Programme, curated by Sinéad Keogh. The official launch was on 26th May in MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre and will run from 26.5.22 to 25.6.22 (Thursday, Friday & Saturdays 10am -5pm).

<http://kilkennyartsoffice.ie/exhibition-announcement-lee.../>

Knitted Together

Our Knitted Together 2022 project has only started and already we have had some fabulous blankets donated. Check out this link <https://fb.watch/d3lQe8DPcz/> Our Maker Meet up Hubs in Ferrybank, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Kilkenny City are all working away on squares to make blankets plus we have newbie crafters in Johns Green House learning to crochet and make squares too!

The project also includes the Men's Sheds who are currently making 'dresser' stools. Following the making of the stools some of the participants will make covers and cushions for the stools which will really complement the stools.

Our partnership with Kilkenny Education Centre was hugely successful and ran across the month of May not just teaching teachers how to knit and crochet, but also how to pass this skill onto their students. The teachers were shown how to include exercises to improve the children's fine motor skills and manual dexterity. All aspects of the course were also connected back to the primary school curriculum. As a result, the schools involved are planning knitting clubs for the children starting in September.

School Subsidies

361 primary school children will attend Barnstorm Theatre Company's new play 'Swansong' with the support of the Arts Office's school subsidy. The subsidy is provided annually as the Arts Office feels that the experience of attending high-quality professional theatre should be a part of all children's education and understand the expense and effort for both parents and schools in bringing pupils to productions in Kilkenny city or county, particularly for smaller county-based schools.

Literature Programme: Your Voice Matters Final Session

Your Voice Matters consisted of a series of workshops and surveys to understand what kind of supports would most benefit Kilkenny writers going into the future. With poet, creative coach, and facilitator Anne Tannam, we hosted a number of online and in person workshops in 2021, and chatted with a number of our writers and facilitators to hear their experiences, insights and ideas about our programmes and activities. On the 9th June a final workshop 'Building Resilience' will take place with Anne Tannam providing some tools and tips to stay committed to their writing practices.

Kilkenny Arts Office's Writers Map Launch

Writers Map is a visual guide that highlights all the various opportunities provided by the Arts Office for writers at every stage of their careers. The launch will take place at MacDonagh Junction at 6pm 9th June. Anne Tannam will launch the event and there will be an Open Mic Session, providing an opportunity for Kilkenny writers to showcase their writing and to network with each other.

Pilot Programmes Currently in Development

- Artists in residence in two key Youth Centres in the City - Ossory Youth & The Drum. This programme is being piloted in response to the impact of Covid on the Arts Office's work with young people. This is where our biggest challenge has lain since 2020. So we are re-igniting our working relationship with the young people by resuming our relationship with Ossory Youth and initiating a new partnership with the Drum thought this pilot programme.
- TAP – Teacher / Artist Partnership Training has taken place in Kilkenny for a number of years now, and to complement this training programme the Arts Office is partnering with Kilkenny Education Centre to run a pilot Artist in Residence programme for Primary Schools this autumn.

LIBRARY

May 2022



22,529
Items borrowed



11,615
visitors



896
Members

Bealtaine at Your Library

We celebrated Bealtaine again this year, with a wide range of events for all - including flower arranging, Alzheimer's Tea day, Creative writing, mindfulness and poetry, a self-publishing talk, along with all of our regular crafts, writing, book clubs and conversation groups. 307 adults attended events in the library over the month.



The beginners sewing machine class at Ferrybank Library was a great success, with participants making cushion covers, pin cushions, and zipped toiletry bags. Sewing machines were provided by the library service, and tutor Joanne was funded by Kilkenny Carlow ETB Community Education. We are looking forward to welcoming Joanne back for more classes in Ferrybank and Urlingford in the autumn.



Bealtaine Living Earth Festival



As part of Bealtaine living Earth Festival run by Calmast, Dave's Jungle visited Castlecomer Library recently, taking 88 children on a journey of discovery through the reptile and arachnid world. Our goal is to spark an interest in nature that instils respect for these misunderstood animals. Dave also encouraged students to do their bit for conservation, with simple tips and tricks.



3,672
books
borrowed



47
members
registered



36
Schools
visited



18 Early
Learning
Centres visited

Mayfair Library update



- Works to Extension on west side of the building have been completed to ground slab level. (pre cast concrete slabs installed)
- Foundation slab to the extension to the east of the building has been poured and blockwork has been completed in this area.
- Internal Foundations to existing building are poured and are ready for structural steel



Online Services usage:



2,009

eAudiobooks borrowed
▼ 7% on 2021



4,569

eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 16% on 2021



1,025

eBooks borrowed
▼ 28% on 2021



290

Online Course sessions
▼ 76% on 2021



640

eMagazines borrowed
▼ 28% on 2021



664

Songs accessed
▼ 13% on 2021



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **371** posts on our social media platforms in May. Our video views for the month were **1176**.

FINANCE

The expenditure by Service Division to the end of May is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €35.3m compared with the annual budget of €93.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD May 2022	Budget Full Year 2022
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	9,414	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	8,395	26,590
Water Services	2,984	7,255
Development Management	3,621	10,502
Environmental Services	4,067	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	3,005	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	218	680
Miscellaneous Services	3,547	7,390
Overall Total	35,251	93,871

Finance Update

Inflation is having a significant impact on the cost of delivering all services and on the delivery of the capital programme. This issue will be kept under review as we go through the year. Car parking income is 10% below budget level for the year. The budget income figure was based on pre covid-19 income levels. The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the five month period to the end of May. The audit by the Local Government Auditor for 2021 is ongoing.

Budget 2023

Given the current inflationary pressures it will be necessary to commence the preparation of the 2023 budget earlier than previous years. It is intended to have a workshop with the Elected Members in mid-July to review the challenges being faced by the Council.

Rates Revaluation

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

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal	150 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	7 cases
Appeals outstanding	6 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €841k.

Targeted Rates Waiver Quarter 1, 2022

On 12th October, 2021 a targeted commercial rates waiver to support certain sectors was agreed by Government, for the final quarter of 2021. An extension of this waiver for a further period of three months, for the first quarter of 2022, was agreed by Government in December, 2021.

The extended waiver took the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The terms and conditions relating to eligibility and administration of the extended waiver remained the same as those outlined in Circular Fin 20/2021 "Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver Final Quarter 2021".

The broad categories of businesses the credit in lieu of rates applied to were as follows:

- Hospitality, including restaurants and cafes;
- Leisure;
- Miscellaneous entertainment;
- Certain tourism related categories; and
- Airports.

The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2022 for eligible categories of business. The waiver (Jan to March) was applied to eligible rate accounts by the Rates Section as a credit in lieu of rates in the value of €748,378 in March and eligible businesses were notified by letter.

