

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

MARCH 2022 ISSUE



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## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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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

### **Amenity Grants**

Closing date for receipt of completed applications for the 2022 Amenity Grants Scheme is 25<sup>th</sup> March.

### **River Basin Management Planning (RBMP)**

The draft RBMP is available for public consultation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

### **CLÁR**

Kilkenny County Council will be advertising the scheme for receipt of applications before end March 2022.

### **Paint Scheme 2022**

Closing date for receipt of applications for the above scheme is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

### **Estate Management Grant**

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is the 25<sup>th</sup> of March.

### **Community Events Grants Scheme**

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is the 30<sup>th</sup> of March.

### **IDEAS Kilkenny' Competition**

Closing date for entries is Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

### **Tidy Towns**

The first Tidy Towns Forum will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April in Kells.

### **Green Schools Assessments**

Schools are busy preparing to renew their green flag with the deadline for submitted applications being the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

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## ROADS

### MAJOR PROJECTS

*(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)*

#### **N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme**

With funding now secured to bring the scheme to a preferred route option, a revised timetable of works will be prepared and circulated in the coming weeks.

#### **N25 Glenmore (New Ross Bypass) to Waterford Scheme**

With no funding allocation for 2022, detailed design works will not progress in 2022 on this scheme.

### MINOR PROJECTS

*(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)*

#### **N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)**

The scheme will go out to tender towards the end of Q1 2022 with a view to construction commencing towards the end of Q2 2022. An allocation of €3m was received for 2022 to allow the scheme to proceed to construction. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

#### **N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee**

Statutory approvals have been secured for this scheme. An allocation of €500K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to preparation of contract documents and potentially provide for some 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 which is likely to be submitted in April 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

### Other Projects

#### **Kilkenny Ring Road Extension**

Roadplan consulting are continuing to work on the SAR report (Strategic Assessment Report) for this project. This report will be ready in Q2 2022 for submission to the Department for consideration to proceed with the design and planning.

## PLANNING

### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total February	
	2021	2022
Planning Applications Received	73	67
Planning Applications Granted	54	59
Planning Applications Refused	9	9
Complaints Received	17	15
Warning Letters Issued	21	6
Enforcements Notices Issued	1	9
Cases Closed	13	19

The Planning Department is open for business. Visits to the Planning Office continue to be by pre-booked appointment.

### FORWARD PLANNING

#### **City & County Development Plan:**

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has made a further recommendation to the Minister following the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Ministerial Direction on the City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 submitted last December. The Minister is now considering the OPR recommendation and the Council awaits the outcome of his deliberations.

#### **Masterplans:**

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.

Work is continuing on the preparation of a masterplan for Loughmacask. An initial draft Loughmacask Masterplan was prepared and was internally reviewed. The environmental authorities are now being consulted in relation to environmental assessments associated with the draft Masterplan. Once the environmental assessments are progressed, and the iterative process of modifying the draft Masterplan is finalised, all the documentation will be presented to Members prior to public display. The

preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence following public display of the two other draft Masterplans.

### Taking in Charge

The following schedule of estates has been prioritised for Taking in Charge in the coming year and has been advised to Elected Members at MD Meetings in early 2022:

- Seville Rise, Margaretsfield, Kilkenny  
*initiation stage completed*
- Filbuckstown, Mooncoin
- Arbourmount, Ferrybank
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank
- The Paddocks, Gowran
- Whitehall, Paulstown
- Ogenty, Gowran
- Rioch Court, Kilkenny
- Internal Road Network, Kilkenny Retail Park, Springhill
- College Park, Kilkenny
- Kiln Lane, Callan
- The Greens, Thomastown
- Castlehyde, New Ross

Substantial works are completed on water/wastewater infrastructure at Abhainn Ri, Kilmanagh.

Works are also continuing at Greenoaks, The Fairways, Ferrybank; Parc na Gowan, Kilkenny; An Choill Rua, Paulstown; Friarshill, Graiguenamanagh; Clonkill, Callan; Dunan, Thomastown.

### Vacant Sites

There are now 29 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 18 sites. The most recent cancelled sites were both in the City (VSR18-12) on the Bohernatounish Road and on the Waterford Road (VSR18-15).

The 2021 levy is now due and payment demands were issued in the past few weeks. Owners now have the right of appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

### Conservation

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

An advisory service on conservation matters is delivered to the public and Council staff, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also progressed on the following:

The **Historic Structures Fund** provides an opportunity for home owners to apply for funding for large scale repair works to protected structures. The national budget for the fund has increased from €3 million in 2021 to €4million in 2022. A total of 11 grant applications were submitted for the HSF in Kilkenny. Following assessment:

- Four applications were approved under Stream 1 (*including the Old Ennisnag Bridge as the Local authority application*)
- One application was approved under the Vernacular stream.
- One application was approved under Stream 2.

The **Built Heritage Investment Scheme** encourages applications for repairs to the historic fabric of protected structures. A total of 21 applications have been received by Kilkenny County Council for works to architectural heritage and following assessment, 17 projects have received grant approval. The works include thatch, render, roof and roof features repair. The total funding approved for structures in County Kilkenny is €156,800 in 2022.

**Historic Towns Initiative 2022:** Following a successful application, €10,000 has been secured from the Heritage Council. This funding is specifically for the appointment of a conservation architect to work with owners of a minimum of three buildings located in Upper Bridge Street, Callan. This will provide the basis for returning vacant residential floorspace back into use in the street.

A **Heritage Stewardship Fund** application is currently being compiled by the Conservation Officer. The grant application will focus on the Early Medieval Town Houses in Kilkenny and follows collaboration between the Conservation Office and the Built Heritage Unit and National Monument Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

### Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices – Received Start of Year to End of February

2022	2021	2020	2019
68	37	67	41

Valid Disability Access Applications – Received Start of Year to End of February

2022	2021	2020	2019
13	6	14	16

### Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)

The Council have been informed by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) that they do not intend to hold an Oral Hearing in connection with the SID planning application they have received from Springfield Renewables Limited for the construction of 21 wind turbines and ancillary works at Castlebanny, Co. Kilkenny (Case reference: PA10.309306.) The applicant lodged further information (FI) last November following an FI request from ABP. There is no confirmed date as to when ABP will make their decision on this SID planning application.

## PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

### Parks and Playgrounds

The Parks Team undertook training in playground inspections in February and are now fully qualified to carry out playground inspections of all playgrounds in our charge. These inspections are required under our playground insurance cover and are in addition to the in-house weekly and annual independent inspections that must be undertaken. This is important to ensure the playgrounds are maintained to a high standard and any defects identified and remedied in a timely manner.

Repairs are being carried out in a number of playgrounds across the County, namely Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh, Coon, Paulstown and Thomastown. New equipment was recently added to the playground in Kells thanks to a grant secured from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. A further application has been made under this fund for 2022 with plans to update Assumption Place playground in the City. In Slieverue new gym equipment and a kids outdoor activity trail is being added to the Linear Park which has become a popular walking route for local people.

### Woodstock Gardens and Wider Estate

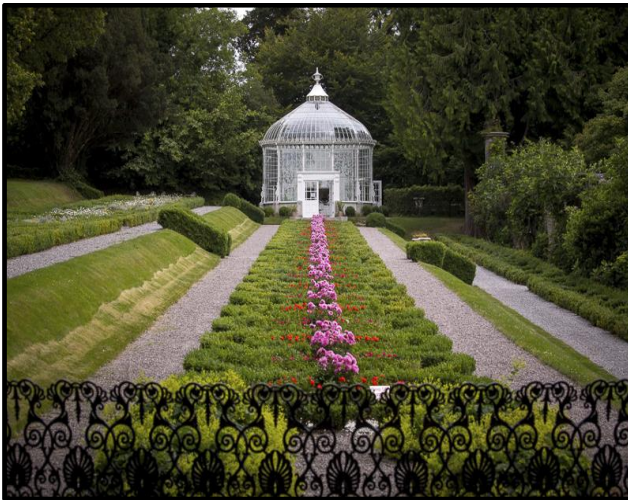
The remaining paths in the vicinity of the Waterfall at Woodstock rising up the steep slope have now been completed providing a dramatic

walking route for walkers. The next phase of path upgrade to be funded by the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure (ORIS) Fund will commence shortly in the gardens, upgrading the paths to ensure access for all. A Trail Inspector from Sport Ireland recently visited the gardens and complimented the staff on the great condition of the trails which are currently registered with them, namely the Woodstock Loop and Ladies Loop Walk.



We will now be seeking to add the Waterfall Loop to the Trail Register which will ensure promotion on the Sport Ireland National Trails website. [Ireland's Trails | Sport Ireland](#)

Further investigation of the structure and ruins of the former Woodstock House building will have to be undertaken before any action to remove tree growth is undertaken. The 1740's building is being compromised by seedling trees which have taken root in the mortar in the walls and are causing problems to the structure of the building as they grow. The building is also home to bats and owls so timing of any interventions will have to take this into account.

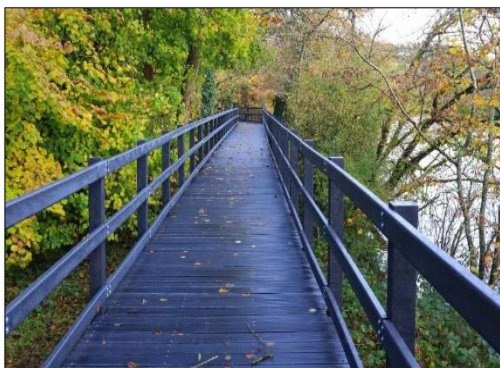


*The Flower Terraces at Woodstock in full bloom last summer and the Conservatory house tea rooms which will reopen for the 2022 tourism season soon.*

Woodstock Gardens will be seeking seasonal staff to operate the Tea Rooms for the coming tourism season. Advertisements have been placed in local press and on line.

### **Silaire Wood**

An extensive programme of tree surgery has now been completed in Silaire Wood, removing dead and dangerous trees overhanging the main path network and in particular the boardwalk. The boardwalk was damaged in the summer of 2021 by a falling 800 year old oak tree. The majority of the trees reduced or removed were ash which sadly are in decline nationally due to ash dieback. All resulting wood has been left on the forest floor for invertebrates and new planting will take place later in the year following the preparation of a woodland plan for the site.



### **South East Greenway**

#### *Construction:*

Construction of the section of the Greenway from New Ross to Glenmore is now substantially complete. Existing railway bridges were shot blasted and repainted. In Ferrybank the 90m

access ramp connecting the Abbey Road with the Greenway is almost complete and the public lighting along this section has been erected.

#### *Planning & Detail Design:*

Landowner agreements on the accommodation works for the remainder of the Greenway continues to progress. Works continue on the preparation of the detailed design and tender documents for the New Ross to Mount Elliott section and the Ferrybank to Aylwardstown sections.

A Part 8 Planning Application is currently being finalised for the development of a temporary construction compound and access at Rathinure to facilitate construction. This access will facilitate construction of the longest section of the Greenway where the majority of agricultural crossings are located from the Ferrybank environs to Aylwardstown.



*Image of completed section near Shanbogh New Ross with River Barrow vistas*

#### *Links to Slieverue and Glenmore:*

Two public information evenings will be held in early March in Slieverue and Glenmore outlining the emerging preferred routes to connect both villages to the Greenway. Proposals will be put on display and submissions invited in order to inform the next stage of the route selection process.

### **Amenity Grants**

The 2022 Amenity Grants Scheme is now open. Closing date for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> March. The fund for 2022 is €140,000 and will be distributed to groups across the County. The range of works involved tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Climate Action Plan Guidelines

One of the main requirements of Local Authorities under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act adopted in 2021 is the preparation of Climate Action Plans setting out how they will reduce the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with the delivery of their services by an average of 7% per annum and by 51% overall by 2030. The Climate Action Region Offices (CAROs) are working with the CCMA and with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to agree the scope of the Climate Action Plans and to develop appropriate guidance for the sector.

It is expected that towards the last quarter of 2022 the Minister will sign the Order requesting local authorities to commence the preparation of their Climate Action Plan for the next five years. In the interim, the Council will be commencing the process and working with the 3CEA in ensuring that the required baseline data is captured and accurately assessed.

### Climate Action Consultation

A key finding of the Climate Conversations Report carried out last year is that local authorities are ideally placed to provide leadership on climate action but need to be adequately resourced in order to be fully effective. The CAROs on behalf of the 31 Local Authorities nationally submitted a business case to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) for additional resources to deliver on a number of strategic goals on climate action.

Kilkenny County Council have received sanction from the DECC for the position of Climate Action Officer and are currently in process of recruiting to fill this position. The Climate Action Officer will have responsibility for co-ordinating the preparation and implementation of the Climate Action Plan and will be involved in overseeing and promoting climate action initiatives for the Council.

It is expected that further resources will be approved by DECC in the coming months, including a Community Climate Action Officer to work closely with local communities, in particular in developing applications under the Community

Climate Action Fund to be launched in the coming weeks.

### Community Climate Action Fund

Minister Ryan has announced a National Community Climate Action Fund of €60m in 2 phases over the 3 years - €30m for each phase of 18-months. There are 2 strands:

**Strand 1** - Action: Building Low Carbon Communities: €24m will be provided to Local Authorities to support communities build low carbon communities. Examples of projects to be funded include:- community EV charging points; small renewable energy projects; community EVs; cycle parking; repair hubs; and community biodiversity gardens; and

**Strand 2** - Education: Climate Education, Capacity Building and Learning by Doing: €6 million to build community capacity building run by Pobal valued at €5m and €1m already allocated to Creative Climate Action for the Creative Climate Projects announced earlier this year.

### Decarbonisation Zones

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act adopted in 2021 sets out an ambitious role for local authorities in helping Ireland transition to a carbon neutral economy.

The Council nominated a potential Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) for consideration by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (DHPLG) in the Breagagh Valley area of Kilkenny City Centre. The overall objective of the DZ is to agree actions setting out how to achieve a minimum average reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 7% per annum and a total 51% reduction by 2030. The nominated DZ includes a range of urban and urban fringe areas with a variety of uses and zonings under the City and County Development Plan. The Council subject to DHPLG acceptance will form an Implementation Working Group of key staff and relevant stakeholders, including the Three Counties Energy Agency (3CEA) to develop an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Working Group will develop a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures to address low carbon

energy, GHG emissions and climate needs to contribute to climate action targets. The DZ will be included in the Climate Action Plan to be prepared by the Council in 2022. Feedback is still awaited from DHPLG on their assessment of the DZ nominated by each local authority (LA).

### **Decarbonising the LA fleet**

Kilkenny County Council have been invited by the LGMA & Eastern and Midland CARO to participate on a working group to support local authorities in the decarbonisation of their fleet. The initial objective of this project (Phase 1) is to develop a scoping document for the process of developing a guideline for local authorities to reduce carbon emissions from their fleet while maintaining and increasing service delivery in line with increasing population trends. Existing practices and strategies in Irish Local Government will be examined. It will also carry out a preliminary assessment of models of good practice in the private and semi-state sectors and in other jurisdictions. A report on the Phase 1 work with recommendations for further detailed work (Phase 2) will be prepared for the consideration of the CCMA - Climate Action, Transport and Networks (CATN) Committee. The report arising from this project will work to inform a coordinated approach to decarbonizing the national local authority fleet and driving fleet efficiency across all of local government. This work will deal with the broader aspects of local authority fleet, complimentary to the work of the CCMA CCTN EV Charging Point Working Group.

### **Energy**

The NSAI carried out a surveillance audit of Kilkenny County Council's Energy Management System on the 4th of March, 2022. The result of the audit was extremely positive and the auditor has recommended continued registration of ISO50001 without any non-conformance findings. The auditor acknowledged the large amount of progressive work within the Council and the effective outline plan towards 2030 taking into account the difficulties and challenges presented, especially by the building stock.

### **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 2 months of 2022 is 204 compared with 275 for the same period last year. 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.

### **National Environmental Management Information System**

In 2021, Kilkenny County Council put forward a proposal for an Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) project to develop a national reporting system for the RMCEI and statistical return. This project has now been taken on board by the LGMA and a National Environmental Management Information System. The NEMIS system has been approved with Phase 1 of the project planned to be available to Local Authority Staff in 2022. The system when up and running and fully operational will have a complaints management system built in which can follow cases from initial complaint right through to inspection, enforcement actions and prosecution if necessary.

The system will have a mobile workforce element whereby the local authority staff member can use a tablet or phone to complete their inspection on site. Environment Section is working closely with the LGMA and software developers since the initiation of the project.

### **RMCEI - Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections Plan 2022**

The RMCEI plan for 2022 and statistical return for 2021 has recently been submitted to the EPA by Kilkenny County Council. Our Statistical return covers all of the inspections that were carried out and complaints responded to by Environment Staff in 2021. The table below gives an overview of what is planned for 2022:



## Summary of Resource Requirements for 2022

### Summary of Inspections to Complete and Resources Required for the Year Ahead

Inspection Type	No. of Inspections Planned for the Year Ahead	Total Time for all Inspections (days)
Total Routine Inspections -	4,069	1009.96
Total Non-Routine Inspections end of year -	774	182.4
Outstanding Enforcement Action & Complaints to be Closed out -	264	88.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,107</b>	<b>1,281</b>

## WASTE RECYCLING & COLLECTION

### Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County and a total of 373 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres in the first 2 months of 2022. This represents a 16% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down to society reopening after Covid 19. Loughboy Shopping Centre (with 23.6 tonnes collected YTD), LIDL Loughboy (with 22.74 tonnes collected YTD) and LIDL Thomastown (14.17 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 committee's with regard to suitable locations in towns and villages across the County.



Photo of Bring Banks in Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny

### Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

Approximately 12,500 customers visited Dunmore in January and February, 2022. As a result, 16.5tonnes of cardboard, 11.8tonnes of plastic, 23.9tonnes of paper and 38tonnes of WEEE (Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment) were deposited at the facility in this period. There was 470 tonnes of Municipal Household Waste also deposited at the facility.

This year the Dunmore facility has started assisting with the Re-cycle the Bicycle Project, an EPA funded project under its Waste Prevention Programme. The scheme sought donations of children's bicycles from staff in different business organisations in Kilkenny City and suitable bicycles that presented for recycling in Dunmore Waste and Recycling Centre were also reviewed for suitability. 30 bikes are now being serviced and repaired and they will be presented to St. Canice's Co-Ed School. The bikes will be used as part of the Transition Year Champions Pilot Project. This programme trains the students to become cycle trainers and to deliver "Sprocket Rocket" cycle training to Junior and Senior Infants over a 6-week period.

The *“Re-cycle the Bicycle Project”* is a joint collaboration between the Environmental Awareness Officer and our Cycling Officer, Caitriona Corr which is proving to be successful so far. As there is an abundance of bikes suitable for reuse being presented for recycling, the project may explore further opportunities in the future.

The bicycles are being repaired and serviced and will be used as part of the Transition Year Champions Pilot Project. This along with the ongoing Rotary Bikes to Africa project will result in approximately 800 bikes a year being upgraded and reused via Dunmore.



The annual county wide Christmas tree drop off locations were in operation again in January 2022. Organised through the Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre approximately 14 Tonnes of trees were collected from 10 sites around the County with another 8 tonnes of trees taken to the Dunmore Civic Amenity Site. These Christmas trees are all taken to Bord na Mona’s composting site in Kilberry, Co. Kildare for shredding and in turn composting.

## COUNCILS WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

### National Spring Clean

The An Taisce registration for the National Spring Clean is open and Kilkenny has in excess of 70 registrations to date. The Environment Section will 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 between now and September.

### Tidy Towns

Four Tidy Town groups were invited to attend the Council Community Awards Evening in the Parade Tower on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February last to acknowledge their success in the national Tidy Towns competition. Kilkenny City, “Keep Kilkenny Beautiful” Inistioge, Tullahought and Listerlin were presented with garden vouchers to continue their work in supporting pollinators.

The first Tidy Towns Forum will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April in Kells. The forum will consist of a small presentation followed by a tour of the village to see the numerous projects which the community has undertaken in recent years.

### Green Schools Assessments

Schools are busy preparing to renew their green flag with the deadline for submitted applications being the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. The Environmental Awareness Officer is completing both virtual and outdoor assessments. In person assessment was completed in February, visiting Kilkenny City Vocational School who are completing their Global Citizen, Litter and Waste Flag.



### **Energy in Focus Week**

Kilkenny and Carlow Local Authorities are hosting an “Energy in Focus” Week between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of March on KCLR Live. The week will feature an energy themed segment at 11.20am daily and advertising that highlights the availability of Home Energy Kits in local branches. This collaboration project highlights the Local Authorities commitment to its Climate Change Adaption Strategy.

### **Graveyard Grants**

The Graveyard Grants Scheme 2022 was recently advertised and the closing date for receipt of applications was Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022. There have been 51 applications received this year. This is the highest number of applications received for the graveyard grant scheme and is a 42% increase on 2021 applications. Each application will be assessed by the Environment Section.

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

### **Columbarium Wall – St Kieran’s Cemetery**

The Columbarium Wall Garden project at St. Kieran’s Cemetery has progressed through the Part 8 planning process. No submissions were received during the consultation stage and a report was subsequently prepared and issued to Elected Members at the February 21<sup>st</sup> Plenary Council Meeting, along with a recommendation to proceed with the project. The Part 8 was approved by the Elected Members by resolution. The indicative timeline for delivering the project is now as follows:

- Tender: March 2022;
- Contract Award: April 2022;
- Contract Duration: 6 Months (4-month lead in time for Columbarium Wall Units);
- Completion: October 2022.

The Estimated Budget for the project in 2022 is €90,000. This estimate covers garden completion including the initial provision of 2 Columbarium Wall Units (40 Niches) with civil works completed for future units which will be provided in the future as demand arises.

### **Community Monuments Fund 2022**

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage’s Community Monuments Fund invests in archaeological heritage and helps owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public.

Kilkenny has over 140 Historical Burial Grounds vested and in the care of the Local Authority. These locations typically have national monuments in the form of buildings and church ruins in various states of disrepair. The Community Monuments Fund provides a mechanism for Local Authorities and community groups to apply for much needed funding for these important sites. The core aims of the Fund are the conservation, maintenance, protection and presentation of archaeological monuments. It will:

- **enable** conservation works to be carried out on monuments which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support;
- **build** resilience in our monuments to enable them to withstand the effects of Climate Change; and
- **encourage** access to monuments and improve their presentation.

A number of applications have recently been submitted to the Department in 2022 and we await approval of funding.

## Historic Landfill Sites

There are 14 Historic Landfill sites in County Kilkenny. Two sites at Ballyragget and Gowran have been remediated and these locations are subject to ongoing annual monitoring in accordance with the EPA granted Certificate of Authorisation.

The required Risk Assessments have been completed at 4 other sites at Sevenhouses (Newlands), Skehana (Castlecomer), Thorpes (Ballyragget) and Oldcourt (Inistioge). Applications for Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) have also been submitted to the EPA for these sites and we are awaiting approval for these. Except for the required monitoring, no further expenditure is anticipated in 2022. The cost of monitoring this year has been secured for these sites in the approved allocation. However, once the CoA applications are granted it should be noted that ongoing monitoring costs in line with the CoA will revert to Kilkenny County Council. A risk assessment has been completed for the Talbotsinch landfill on the Freshford Road in Kilkenny. The EPA has advised that this site will not require a Certificate of Authorisation.

The main focus of our activities in 2022 will be the completion of the Risk Assessment process and the submission of Certificate of Authorisation applications on the remaining 7 sites at Ardreagh (Urlingford), Ballykeoghan (Kilmacow), Caherlesk (Dunamaggin), Dungarvan, Grannagh, Mallardstown (Callan) and Sheastown (Bennettsbridge). The following table provides a summary of the approved grant allocations for 2022:

Site Code	Site Name	Allocation 2022	2022 Objective
S22-02580	Oldcourt	€1,500	SW monitoring
S22-02595	Seven Houses	€2,500	Groundwater monitoring
S22-02582	Skehana	€2,500	Groundwater monitoring
S22-02584	Thorpe's	€1,500	SW monitoring
S22-02590	Ardreagh	€17,921	Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02597	Ballykeoghan	€9,288	Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02591	Caherlesk	€12,146	Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02578	Dungarvan	€19,142	Complete Tier 2, undertake Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02594	Grannagh	€17,864	Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02602	Mallardstown	€17,325	Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
S22-02592	Sheanstown	€25,288	Complete Tier 2, undertake Tier 3 Risk Assessment and CoA application fee
<b>Total</b>		<b>€126,974</b>	

## Casual Trading Bye-Laws Review

Kilkenny County Council, at its meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022, adopted the Bye-Laws of Kilkenny County Council for the regulation of all Casual Trading within the Municipal Districts of Castlecomer, Callan-Thomastown and Piltown. These Bye-Laws came into force on the 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.

## Animal Welfare Standards Committee

The Animal Welfare Standards Committee had its seventh meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.

JJ Tobin Veterinary Officer continues to carry out monthly inspections at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. To date this year, 58 dogs have been dealt with in the Carlow/Kilkenny dog shelter.

There were no horses impounded to date this year. There was one non-seizure on 20<sup>th</sup> January, by Kilkenny Gardaí when they were called out to the Callan Road, Kilkenny.

## **River Basin Management Planning (RBMP)**

The draft RBMP is available for public consultation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. It sets out the proposed measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in over 4,800 water bodies throughout the country to good status. The consultation document is available for viewing at <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/2bda0-public-consultation-on-the-draft-river-basin-management-plan-for-ireland-2022-2027/>. In addition, a virtual consultation room can be accessed at [LAWPRO Virtual Consultation Room \(drbmp-vcr.ie\)](#).

Two virtual consultation meetings on the draft Plan were held in Kilkenny in February. The first meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and focused on the catchment areas of the Rivers Nore and Barrow while the second held on 24<sup>th</sup> February focused on the River Suir catchment area.

## **Submission to the Draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027**

The public consultation for the draft RBMP published by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) concludes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The members of Kilkenny County Council met on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to consider the Draft Plan. The Members of Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committee 4 on Environmental Protection, Climate Action & Energy (SPC4) also discussed the Draft Plan at their meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 and again on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. As a result of these deliberations it has been agreed that the following submission be made on behalf of Kilkenny County Council to the draft RBMP:

### **Water Quality**

Good water quality is a challenge for all. The members recognise that Ireland does well when compared with many other European countries, but we need to challenge ourselves to do better. The usefulness of national rankings is questioned as different areas have different issues.

### **Water Services**

While not directly related to the Draft Plan, many of the Members' concerns centred on Irish Water, its engagement with the Elected Members and its progress regarding capital schemes in County Kilkenny. It is noted that the lack of progress in delivering infrastructure is hindering housing developments in many parts of County Kilkenny. The need to protect drinking water supplies at source is recognised.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture is the biggest pressure on water quality in County Kilkenny and concern was expressed at this, especially given the importance of the sector to the local economy. That said it is agreed that we need to be careful not to demonise farmers. They have been advised over the years to increase productivity and many have gone into serious debt to do so. It is now evident that better policy coherence between Government Departments (*in particular* DAFM/DHLGH/DECC) is required to combat potential conflicts in policy and advice.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and the Marine (DAFM) has a "one size fits all" policy, which is no longer fit for purpose. Locally-specific advice is required for all farmers and not just those who can avail of the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) service in priority areas for action. ASSAP was commended for its benefits and the new learning pathways it brings to the many environmental challenges of farming. Environmental schemes should be available to more farmers so they can better balance the demands of productivity and sustainability and they should be bespoke to allow for differing local conditions.

With a new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and obligations under COP26, there is a whole new set of targets arising for farmers and they will need additional support, which should build on the existing ASSAP model.

There is growing awareness at farm level that farmers have a huge role to play but they cannot farm without presenting challenges to the environment. They keep improving farm practices, but farmers are in danger of being more isolated and scapegoated despite great support from the public. These challenges are not new, and it is essential to ensure farmer buy-in. The conversion to dairy farming in recent years is noted as presenting a particular challenge, but that rate is now levelling off. The drought conditions in 2018 presented a steep learning curve for spreading of fertiliser and its impact on local streams and rivers experiencing low flows.

## **Enforcement**

The low rate of enforcement was mentioned and the difficulties in securing a successful prosecution using current legislation. Compliance needs to be taken seriously and pollution incidents resolved expeditiously. The onus of proof lies on the Local Authority, and it can be costly and time consuming to take an enforcement case, with no guarantee of a successful outcome. Local Authority resources are inadequate to meet this demand and regular training of staff is required to ensure they are familiar with the most recent methodologies.

## **Abstraction**

Water abstraction from rivers and streams needs controls as no-one appears to be currently responsible. While many abstractions can be small and intermittent, collectively they may impact on water quality and demonstrate poor practice to others. An example was given of a farmer abstracting water from a small local stream to clean the road after muck was trafficked onto it. From a road safety point of view, it is essential that the road is maintained and cleaned. Quarrying can result in lowering groundwater levels through abstraction and this can adversely impact on water levels, as well as the quality of water in local rivers and streams. This can have serious impacts on local communities and can be difficult for environment staff to address through enforcement.

## **Flooding**

The issue of flooding was raised and the impact that this can have on both agricultural land and infrastructure. More funding is needed to ensure that rivers can flow freely and hence minimise the adverse effects of flooding. Problems with fish passes are also noted.

### Waterways Ambassador Course

One of the Elected Members recently completed a waterways ambassador course through the Graiguenamanagh Outdoor Activities Hub and this type of awareness raising training should be encouraged and considered for all.

### Resolution of Complaints

Despite this being recognised as an issue for some time, there are still problems with knowing who to go to when works are required on a river such as dredging. Clear pathways are needed for members of the public and all agencies, so they know where to direct people.

### Septic Tank Grants

The grant scheme is welcomed but it is noted that it is almost impossible to qualify for it as the qualification standard is too rigid.

### Co-ordination of Response

The members recommended that Kilkenny should liaise with the other counties along the Barrow, Suir and Nore rivers to co-ordinate implementation of measures and resolution of issues.

## **COMMUNITY**

### **Town & Village**

Under the initial announcement on 25<sup>th</sup> February by Minister Heather Humphries, Kilkenny were awarded €1,135,785 under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021 as follows:

<b>Piltown</b>	Refurbishment of Garda Station in Piltown as remote working hub and garda station	€500,000
<b>Gowran</b>	Intergenerational Outdoor Activity Hub	€250,000
<b>Urlingford</b>	Remote working hub	€250,000
<b>Graiguenamanagh</b>	enhancement of Barrow Activities Hub	€92,243
<b>Kilmanagh</b>	Redevelopment of former school for community use	€43,542

Under a further announcement on 4<sup>th</sup> March, Johnstown were allocated €42,075 for a public realm plan bringing the total allocated to Kilkenny to €1,177,860.

## 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 depopulation. 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. The 2022 programme will be delivered through 3 separate Measures as follows:

**Measure 1:** Developing Community Facilities & Amenities

**Measure 2:** Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport

**Measure 3:** 'Our Islands' – Not relevant for County Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council will be advertising the scheme for receipt of applications before end March 2022.

### CLÁR Eligible Electoral Districts

<i>Coolaghmore</i>	<i>Tullahought</i>	<i>Jerpoint West</i>	<i>Balleen</i>
<i>Killamery</i>	<i>Attanagh</i>	<i>Listerlin</i>	<i>Ballyconra</i>
<i>Kilmaganny</i>	<i>Clogharinka</i>	<i>Tiscoffin</i>	<i>Baunmore</i>
<i>Kilmanagh</i>	<i>Kilmacar</i>	<i>Castlebanny</i>	<i>Clomantagh</i>
<i>Scotsborough</i>	<i>Mothell</i>	<i>Castlegannon</i>	<i>Galmoy</i>
<i>Boolyglass</i>	<i>Muckalee</i>	<i>Kilkeasy</i>	<i>Glashare</i>
<i>Muckalee</i>	<i>Brownsford</i>	<i>Pleberstown</i>	<i>Lisdowney</i>
<i>Tubbrid</i>	<i>Dysartmoon</i>	<i>Ullard</i>	

### Paint Scheme 2022

This vision of the scheme is to assist with the cost of painting the front façade of buildings and traditional signage throughout the County. The scheme will offer a grant of €450 or 50% of the cost of the work – whichever is the lesser – to each 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 before the end of March, 2022. The closing date for receipt of applications for the above scheme is Friday 6th May, 2022.

### Kilkenny County Councils Community Awards Night

Kilkenny County Council's Annual Community Awards Night was held in the Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle on Wednesday 23rd of February. This award ceremony recognised and acknowledged the contribution of local communities from across the County for their endless dedication to projects and to their towns and villages. Awards were presented as follows:

Pride of Place – Kilkenny Older People's Council, KCAT Callan and Windgap village

Tidy Towns – Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, Inistioge, Tullahought and Listerlin Tidy Towns,

Tidy Estates:

Large Estates – Newpark Lower Kilkenny, Chapelfield Urlingford & Glenvale Ballyragget

Medium Estates – Mill Road Inistioge, De la Salle Place Kilkenny & Brandon Park Graiguenamanagh

Small Estates – St. Patrick's Close Mullinavat, Glendine Court Kilkenny & Fr. Raftice Place, Moneenroe

### Launch of the Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet

The Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet was also launched on the 23rd of February in the Parade Tower. This is the Council's 5th Edition of the Community Grants booklet, which is available to view online where you can access grant details on mobile phone, home computer and other remote devices.

### The Kilkenny County Council Estate Management Grant

The Kilkenny County Council Estate Management grant is now advertised and the closing date for applications is the 25<sup>th</sup> of March.

### Community Events Grants Scheme

The Kilkenny County Council Events Grants Scheme is now advertised and the closing date for applications is the 30<sup>th</sup> of March.

## HERITAGE

### Community Monuments Fund applications submitted

3 applications were submitted to the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Community Monuments Fund for €226,200 for works at the medieval churches at Clomantagh, Dunkitt, and Grangefertagh. If successful the projects will be managed by the Environment Section, and supported by the Heritage Office. Details of the successful projects will be announced by the Dept in due course.

<https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2021/11/community-monuments-fund-2022/>



*Clomantagh Church, one of 3 applications submitted to CMF*

### Applications made to Local Biodiversity Action Fund

6 projects were submitted to the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund seeking the max allocation of €48,000. The projects will support delivery of the National Biodiversity Action Plan at local level. They include 4 biodiversity projects managed by the Heritage Office (Identifying Biodiversity Corridors, Pollinators, Barn Owls, & Swifts), and 2 invasive species management projects at Woodstock and Silaire Wood managed by the Parks Department 15% match funding will be provided by the Heritage Office and Parks Department. Details of the successful projects will be announced by the NPWS in due course.

### Local Authority views sought on Draft National Biodiversity Action Plan

The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has invited Local Authorities to provide initial feedback on the draft National Biodiversity Action Plan by 21<sup>st</sup> March. Local Authorities have a significant role to play in its implementation. The Heritage Office will liaise with relevant Department to co-ordinate the Council's response. The draft Plan will then go to public consultation in April with further dialogue facilitated through the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Biodiversity Conference, 7-9<sup>th</sup> of June in Dublin Castle.

### Don't Mow - Let it Grow (and save petrol!)

A gentle reminder to reduce the number of times you mow your lawn this year. Not only will you save money and help climate action, you'll also help our bees, butterflies and other insects which need the nectar from native wildflowers like clover, birdsfoot trefoil and dandelions that grow in our in our lawns.

To find out more contact the Heritage Office or see <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/grasscutting.pdf>



### Heritage and Biodiversity Actions for Climate - Webinar Series

The Local Authority Heritage Officer Network ran a series of 4 one-hour webinars with case studies of local authority heritage projects which support climate action. There was an average attendance of 150 including local authority staff, public sector organisations, NGO's and community groups. The Kilkenny Heritage Officer delivered a presentation on the Kilkenny Pollinator Programme and the role it plays in supporting climate action. Watch back the webinars <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2022/02/heritage-and-biodiversity-actions-for-climate-webinar-series/>



## Decade of Centenaries 2022

The Heritage Office manages the Kilkenny Decade of Centenaries programme and grant scheme, which received an allocation of €50,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Applications were invited from groups and individuals to commemorate events/people/life in County Kilkenny in 1922. 11 applications were received and details of the successful projects will be announced shortly. <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2022/01/kilkenny-county-council-decade-of-centenaries-grant-scheme-2022/>

## New National Heritage Plan Launched

The new national Heritage Plan (Heritage 2030) was launched by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in February. It provides a framework for built, natural and cultural heritage delivery over the next decade. An implementation plan, and a new National Heritage Forum and working groups are to be established by the DHLGH and the Heritage Council in the coming months. Local Authorities have been identified as key partners in the delivery of the plan.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/778b8-heritage-ireland-2030/>



## County Heritage Plan funding secured

The Heritage Office made 2 successful grant applications to the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Grant programme and received funding of €36,000 for a number of projects including a heritage awareness and public engagement programme and an audit of thatched structures in County Kilkenny. 25% match funding will be provided by the Council.

## United Nations World Wetlands Day

To raise the awareness about Kilkenny's wetlands for World Wetlands Day (2<sup>nd</sup> February) and encourage people to visit them, the Heritage Office ran an awareness campaign on local media, highlighting that they provide us with water, are home to wildlife, and help slow down flooding and climate impacts.



**Newpark Marsh, one of Kilkenny's many wetlands providing amenity, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration**

Details of the campaign were registered as part of the international world wetlands day programme

[https://www.worldwetlandsday.org/display-event?p\\_p\\_id=eventDisplay&eventEntryId=955210&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldwetlandsday.org%2Fevents%23event955210](https://www.worldwetlandsday.org/display-event?p_p_id=eventDisplay&eventEntryId=955210&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldwetlandsday.org%2Fevents%23event955210)

### Showcase 2022

Businesses from County Kilkenny had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2022 in the RDS in Dublin recently. Start-up businesses Yellow Deer Designs and David Oliver Bespoke were exhibiting at the Local Enterprise Showcase for the first time, which saw over 4,000 buyers from retailers across the globe attend the four-day event in Dublin from 27<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Kilkenny businesses also exhibiting at Showcase 2022 included Fred O'Mahony Woodturning, Irish Linen Shirts, Cushendale Woollen Mills, Jerpoint Glass, Kilkenny Silver, Kilkenny Crystal and Nicholas Mosse.

Yellow Deer Designs recently established by Cáit Mackey Maher is an Irish greeting card, print and bespoke illustration business based in Hugginstown, Co Kilkenny, while 'David Oliver Bespoke', a luxury handmade furniture design company was established by David Carpendale after his return from Australia in 2021. At Showcase 2022, David Oliver Bespoke craftsmanship was acknowledged with a Highly Commended Award for his Magill Accent Chair. He along with another Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny supported client Fred O'Mahony Woodturning, also based in South Kilkenny were featured on RTE's nationwide programme. Awards were also presented to Irish Linen Shirts, based in Inistioge, Co Kilkenny who received the Fashion Category Award for their Irish Linen Shirt Dress, whilst Cushendale Woollen Mills received the Home Category Award for their Silare Mohair Throw.



### 'IDEAS Kilkenny' Competition

The inaugural 'IDEAS Kilkenny' competition was launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> February with a call for entries. The competition is open to people in Kilkenny with a Tech related business idea or in the early stages of trading (less than 18 months). The initiative involves a series of business workshops and one-to-one mentoring culminating in a Final comprising of an investor ready pitch for an investment fund worth €10,000 (€6,000 in the Start-up Category and €4,000 in the Ideas Category). Applicants are invited to submit their entries via an online application form on [www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny](http://www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny). Closing date for entries is Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Participants will then be supported to refine and finalise their business proposal and the winners will be announced at the end of May 2022 following a competitive pitch process.



At the launch of the 'IDEAS Kilkenny' competition, from left to right: Fiona Deegan, Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny; Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Kilkenny County Council; John Duggan, Co-Founder and Director, Loanitt and Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, Kilkenny County Council.

## SAVE THE DATE - STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME VIRTUAL COUNTY FINAL



**Save The Date!**  
**STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME**  
**Kilkenny County Final**

View **LIVE EVENT** on Youtube & Facebook  
**Friday 25th March @ 10am**  
via either of the clickable links below

 @StudentEnterpriseProgramme

 youtube.com/StudentEnterpriseIE

**Anthony Gorman, Guest Speaker** **#MakingItHappen**



### Green for Micro - Support for Small Business

Applications are open for the Local Enterprise Office Green for Micro programme. The Green for Micro programme is designed to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. This is a FREE programme, offering two days business specific advice and technical support and is available to businesses with up to ten employees. With climate change, changing regulations, rising resource costs and changing customer expectations adopting an eco-friendlier approach is the best way forward for business and this green for micro programme can assist businesses to get started on their green journey. Further information is available on:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Financial-Supports/Green-for-Micro/>

### Green for Micro Webinar Series

To support businesses, consider green issue for their businesses the Local Enterprise Office have designed a series of Green for business webinars, taking place as follows:

- March 10<sup>th</sup>: Green for your Business Webinar Series - Greening Your Business, an Easy way
- April 7<sup>th</sup>: Green for Hospitality - Putting your Best Green Foot Forward: Key steps to reduce food waste and your footprint
- May 5<sup>th</sup>: Green for Packaging

Webinars can be booked online at [www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny](http://www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny)

### TOURISM

We continue to support the tourism and hospitality sector as we look forward to kicking off the tourism season for 2022. Work continues to support the tourism and hospitality sector developing and delivering on Capital Projects to enhance the visitor experience to Kilkenny and to provide supports to many sectors following two extremely difficult years for the industry.

### Kilkenny County Council Festival Grant Scheme

Kilkenny County Council has provided funding for festival organisers to aid with the development and promotion of festivals with a significant tourism impact for Kilkenny. Elected Members approved supports for a wide-ranging calendar of festivals to take place in Kilkenny City and County throughout the year.

Castlecomer Wellie Race	Jan-23	€ 3,000.00
Kilkenny TradFest	March 17th - 21st	€ 6,000.00
Smithwicks Kilkenny Roots Festival	April 29th - May 2nd	€ 10,000.00
Kilkenny County Fleadh Cheoil	April 22nd - 24th	€ 1,000.00
The Kilkenny Cat Laughs Comedy Festival	June 2nd - 6th	€ 10,000.00
Keep Her Lit ~ Inistioge	August 5th - 7th	€ 2,500.00
Alternative Kilkenny Arts Fringe Festival	August 5th - 14th	€ 5,000.00
Iverk Show	August 27th	€ 2,000.00
Kilkenny Animated	Sept 30th - Oct 2nd	€ 6,000.00
Kilkenny Pumpkin Picking (in Kells)	October 15th - 30th	€ 2,000.00
Savour	October 27th - 31st	€ 20,000.00
Abhainn Ri Festival	Oct 28th - Nov 1st	€ 2,100.00
Kilkenomics	November 3rd - 6th	€ 5,000.00
Graiguenamanagh Town of Books	TBC	€ 3,000.00
		€ 77,600.00

### Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week



Taste Kilkenny in collaboration with Kilkenny Tourism hosted a wonderful #tastekilkenny Restaurant Week from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of February. An initiative of Kilkenny County Council and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week offered visitors and local foodies alike a meaningful opportunity to experience some of the County's most sought-after restaurants and a flavour of local produce on local menus. For 10 'dining- packed' days, over 30 participating establishments showcased some of their best loved and most popular dishes at discounted prices.

### Food Producer "Local Hero Buyers Awards"

The launch of Restaurant Week also saw the local Taste Kilkenny Food Producers Network announce their local heroes buyers awards at an event in Butler House on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. Restaurants, cafés and food retailers are the life blood of local food producers - they are our 'Hero Buyers'. Their continued support is paramount to the continued success of so many of Kilkenny's local food producers and the awards night is a thank you to those local supporters of local product.

2022 is the fourth year of the Hero Buyers Awards. This year Taste Kilkenny Food Producers presented three awards made by Mark Campden of The Bridge Pottery and presented by Local Food Ambassador Helen Carroll, of RTE's Ear to The Ground fame, to honour the Hero Buyers' inspirational dedication to the purchase and use of local food.

## Kilkenny Catwalk Children's Art Competition

February saw the unveiling of many budding artists Catwalk Cats who were encouraged to enter the Catwalk Children's Art Competition since Christmas. Kilkenny Catwalk encouraged young artists nationwide to design and colour their own version of Cartoon Saloon's Pangur Ban with fabulous results. The beautiful works of art are currently being displayed along the Riverside Park in Kilkenny for the coming months.



## Kilkenny Tourism and [visitkilkenny.ie](http://www.visitkilkenny.ie)

Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in preparing Kilkenny's Marketing and PR Plans for 2022. Spring's 2022 campaign continues to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind for a staycation this year. By showcasing Kilkenny's wonderful outdoor activity offering alongside all that the City and County has to offer for families, we are aiming for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destinations for their 2022 break away. ' Check out [www.visitkilkenny.ie](http://www.visitkilkenny.ie) for further details and information.

February marketing activity included:

- Valentine & Midterm Blogs
- E-newsletter & Competition
- Press Releases
- Kilkenny Tourism organised and hosted 5 Press Trips to showcase #tastekilkenny restaurant week
  - TheTaste.ie - Anthony Nolan
  - Irish Independent - Tanya Sweeney
  - The Herald - Tom Sweeney
  - Examiner - Vickie Maye
  - Eat Drink Run Fun - Rory Carrick
  - Sunday World - Deirdre Reynolds

Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Kilkenny Tourism will continue to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to closely align our local campaigns for 2022 with the national domestic "Keep Discovering" campaign going forward.



# HOUSING

## Housing Capital

### Current Projected New Build Housing Delivery for 2022

Scheme	Project Name	No. of Units	Approved Body	Housing	Projected Substantial Completion Date
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Grennan Villa, Thomastown	5	Camphill Communities of Ireland		Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Kingsriver, Ennisnag	2	Kingsriver Housing Association Limited		Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Fiennes Court, William Street	7	Good Shepherd Services		Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny	12	Good Shepherd Services Ltd		Q4 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Tinnypark, Callan Road, Kilkenny	6	SOS		Q4 2022
SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	2			Complete
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City	8			Complete [expected allocation April 22]
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Limegrove, Ferrybank	10			Complete
SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE	Shanganny, Jenkinstown	2			Q1 2022
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City	52			Q2 2022
AHB CALF Turnkey	Nuncio Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	22	Respond		Q3 2022
AHB CALF Construction	Orchard Close, New Orchard, Kilkenny	23	Cluid Housing		Q3 2022
		151			

### Other Units 'Under Construction' as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)
- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)

### Due to start on site in March 2022

- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (KCC direct build)

**Tender Stage**

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



*Keys for Pennefeather Court*



*Works at Pennefeather Green*



*Demolition works at Golf Links Road Site*

## Affordable Housing

6 newly built houses at Limegrove, Ferrybank have been made available for purchase under the Incremental Purchase Scheme.

The purchase price of €229k per unit is based on the actual development costs. Successful applicants can expect a discount of between 40% and 60% on the purchase price. This will reduce the price to between €91,600 and €137,400. There are two types of household that can be considered for inclusion in the incremental purchase scheme:

- (a) Households that have been assessed by Kilkenny Local Authorities as being eligible for and in need of social housing support
- (b) Households who are already in receipt of social housing support from Kilkenny Council, i.e. existing Local Authority or Approved Housing Body tenants and households accommodated under RAS (Rental Accommodation Scheme), HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) Scheme and Long Term Social Housing Leasing Scheme

## Conflict in Ukraine - Humanitarian Crisis & Refugees

The Government, its Departments and Agencies are closely monitoring the situation in Ukraine together with Ireland's EU and other international partners and are providing political and practical support. Visa requirements between Ukraine and Ireland have been lifted. This applies as an emergency measure to all those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and travelling to Ireland.

Kilkenny County Council will play its part in supporting all Government initiatives to support those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. We are providing assistance to Ukrainian families who have recently arrived in Kilkenny to register with IPAS (International Protection Accommodation Services). IPAS will respond to the accommodation needs of the families. Kilkenny County Council will provide emergency accommodation until the family's accommodation needs are met by IPAS.

<b>HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2022</b>	
<b>Homeless Presentations</b>	34
<b>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</b>	
Prevention & Interventions	13
Emergency Service	3
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	18
<b>HAP Place Finder Service</b>	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 <sup>st</sup> day of month	101
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	2
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	103
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	9
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B accommodation</b>	3
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B accommodation with families</b>	3
<b>Households (singles / couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)</b>	19
<b>Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)</b>	7



<b>SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2022</b>	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at February 28 <sup>th</sup> (Gross Need)	1,633
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at February 28 <sup>th</sup> (Net Need)	712
No. of Social Housing Applications received at February 28 <sup>th</sup>	113
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	63
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	50
No. of applications assessed during February	45
No. of applications awaiting assessment at February 28 <sup>th</sup>	54

<b>HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO FEBRUARY 28<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>	
Number of active HAP tenancies to February 28 <sup>th</sup> 2022	770
New HAP tenancies set up	17
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	8
Closed HAP Tenancies	27
HAP Rent Reviews	43
Other tenancy amendments	54
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	550
HAP Calls Received February	300

## Monthly Statistics

<b>February 2022</b>	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of February (offers made):	13
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in February:	8
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in February:	53
Maintenance Calls for February:	567
Maintenance Calls year to date:	1192

## Housing Loans

Housing Loan Activity 1st January 2022 to 28th February 2022					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amt approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan		1	€135,000	1	€213,000
Local Authority Home Loan	13	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>€135,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>€213,000</b>

## Housing Grants

Grants Approved & Committed up to 28th February 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	87	€886,038
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,508
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	46	€312,928
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>€1,221,474</b>

Grants Paid out up to 28th February 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	24	€236,496
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	4	€14,968
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	15	€99,045
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>€350,508</b>

## FIRE SERVICES

### Capital Projects

Assessment of the tenders for the construction of a new fire station for Urlingford has taken place. Approval to accept the tender is being assessed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

### Fire Safety Certificates

18 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.

6 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.

6 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.

1 Dangerous Substance licence applications were received and assessed to date.

15 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried in January 2022.

### Community Fire Safety

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. They use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice is given, fire safety leaflets handed out and smoke detectors may be provided and fitted, where necessary. They also discuss the occupant's response should a fire occur in their home. The fire fighters leave the occupier with further advice and information, to also make available to other members of the household. 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 underway and a number of schools have been visited recently.

### Training

Compartment Fire Behaviour Training for our latest firefighters took place in Hackettstown Fire Training Centre. The QQI standards for using

Breathing Apparatus are at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications and a component certificate is awarded on successful completion of the course. LASNTG is the accredited provider and ensures that the courses are managed in accordance with the quality assurance requirements of QQI.

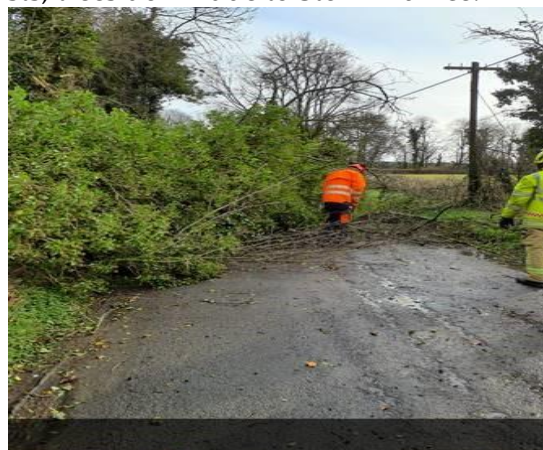


*Compartment Fire Behaviour Course Training*

Cardiac First Responder- advanced refresher training also took place in all the fire stations. This training is provided by our own inhouse instructors.

### Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended over 144 incidents to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards, automatic fire alarm activations, chimney fires, Ambulance assists, trees down due to Storm Eunice.



*Fire Personnel attending trees down during Storm Eunice*

### Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026

Kilkenny County Council are required to adopt a Fire and Emergency Operations Plan. This plan for 2022 to 2026 was put out for public consultation and comment. The plan was discussed and recommended for approval by Community and Culture SPC in February and is now brought forward to the full Council for consideration at its March meeting.

## Literature

### Poetry Phone

The Kilkenny Arts Office Poetry Phone got a mention in the Irish Times magazine What's Hot slot last weekend. Anyone can free-phone the Poetry Phone 1800 272 994 and press 0 to 9 to listen to a selection of beautiful poetry written by Kilkenny poets and published over the years in the Arts Office Poetry Broadsheet.

### Broadsheet Poetry Workshops

Our Broadsheet Poetry Workshops took place online on 12<sup>th</sup> February. They were well received and here are some of the comments

*I really enjoyed the workshop and was glad I did it. Elaine has a lovely manner and comes across as very warm and open and is a good listener with regard to our thoughts on the reading and writing of the poems we discussed.*

*This was a very worthwhile workshop and thanks to Elaine and the Kilkenny Arts Office for facilitating it. It was nice to meet a new poet and to have the opportunity to engage with and share some ideas and work with her and others in the group.*

*Zoom worked well. Elaine was a great facilitator. Still like the in-person classes, as the informal conversation before and after class is enjoyable. (Zoom is so convenient though.)*

### Emerging Curating Development Programme

Following interview Sinead Keogh has been recruited as the 2022 Emerging Curator Development Programme. Sinead is a multimedia performance installation Artist and Curator with a MFA from NCAD (National College of Art and Design) in Dublin. Keogh is also the Founder, Director and Curator of Soul Noir: Festival of the Dark Arts, a Dublin based festival for Gothic and alternative arts (2017 – present). In Keogh's curatorial practice, the aim is to enlighten and empower audiences and awaken them to countercultural, underground and alternative voices that are not often heard in the mainstream arts scene. The engagement with artists is represented in a genuine, authentic manner while balancing a larger system of expanded programming and community engagement as means of breaking down barriers with larger audiences. A strong vibration of feminism is also present in this curatorial practice and Sinead is a vocal ally for audiences and creatives who are blind and visually impaired.

## Visual Artists Ireland Partnership - Exploring Budgets Seminar

The Kilkenny Arts Office partnered with Visual Artists Ireland to provide Kilkenny artists with the opportunity to understand how to explore the sometimes-tricky topic of budgeting for Visual Artists. It provided outline information on figuring out budgets for applications for funding. The online event was well attended with 38 participants in total.

## Creative Ireland

Age Friendly an application to Creative Ireland through their Creativity in Older Age grant was successful. We have secured €43,800 to run the project again this year with new developments including an intergenerational aspect in partnership with Kilkenny Education Centre. We are also seeking for this year's project to be even more inclusive and are liaising with the Men's sheds regarding their role in the project.

## Local Live Performance Scheme

As part of Tradfest, locals and visitors to Kilkenny will be spoiled for choice from March 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> with a host of live performances nightly in the magnificent Medieval Mile Museum and daily at the Festival Bandstand located in the City's Canal Square by the banks of the River Nore under the shadow of Kilkenny Castle. Once again, Kilkenny County Council has taken an innovative approach and is capitalising on the City's busy festivals to host a superb range of in-person music events and utilising government resources to provide much needed employment for performers and musicians who were hardest hit by COVID.

The second series is entitled April Sounds when a host of leading and local musicians, actors and spoken word artists will descend on Kilkenny for this three night & day series of concerts which will take place in two of Kilkenny's most historic venues - St. Canice's Cathedral and the Medieval Mile Museum. Concert goers will enjoy performances from Lisa O' Neill, Rónán Ó Snodaigh, Louise Mulcahy, actor Stephen Rea, spoken word artist FeliSpeaks and many more from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> April with proceeds going to the Red Cross and UNICEF to support Ukraine. To enhance the weekend further, we are programming a series of 'pop up' performances from local musicians at Rollercoaster Records, the Canal Square, the Parade and other appropriate locations.

## February 2021



21,439  
Items borrowed



8,498  
visitors



884  
Members

### Ireland Reads

National Ireland Reads day was held on 25th February this year and we held a number of events to promote reading for pleasure and enjoyment.

Our first staff podcast 'Booked Off' kicked off, with Majella, Karen and James discussing book recommendations.

We held an online introduction to Bibliotherapy and Poetry Therapy with Geraldine Campbell, and a storytime and crafts for children.

Local artist Clare Brennan designed Ireland Reads bookmarks for children and Early Learning Centres to colour and enjoy also.



### Reader Pens



Reader Pens have been purchased for each library in Kilkenny. These 'Reader Pens (also known as C-Pens) read words and full lines of text aloud for independent reading. Those with dyslexia, those who have difficulty with reading or pronunciation, those learning languages or those with vision problems will find these pens extremely helpful, as they read text aloud!

### Mobile Library



2,204  
books  
borrowed



21  
Schools  
visited




11  
Early Learning  
Centres visited



2,223  
served

# Mayfair Library update



Mayfair works are ongoing and include pouring of concrete for ground beams and removal of materials from demolition works on site.



## Online Services usage:



**2,068**  
eAudiobooks borrowed  
▼ 2% on 2021



**5,149**  
eNewspapers borrowed  
▼ 18% on 2021



**1,216**  
eBooks borrowed  
▼ 22% on 2021



**520**  
Online Course sessions  
▼ 70% on 2021



**952**  
eMagazines borrowed  
▲ 7% on 2021



**230**  
Songs accessed  
▼ 66% on 2021



## Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **376** posts on our social media platforms in February. Our video views for the month were **5,134**.

## FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of February is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €9.9m compared with the annual budget of €93.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD February 202	Budget Full Year 2022
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	3,466	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	1,787	26,590
Water Services	1,184	7,255
Development Management	790	10,502
Environmental Services	909	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	695	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	67	680
Miscellaneous Services	1,080	7,390
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>9,978</b>	<b>93,871</b>

### Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the two month period to the end of February 2022.

The draft financial statements for 2021 are now finalised will be presented to Council at the April meeting.

The Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage notified Council in January that compensation of €627k will be provided for costs and income losses related to Covid in 2021. This is a provisional allocation and is in line with expectations.

The annual rate demands for 2022 have been sent to all rate payers in February. The rates waiver for quarter 1 2022 will be applied to all eligible accounts in the coming weeks and rate payers will be notified accordingly.

### Rates Revaluation

Following the full revaluation of all commercial properties carried out by the Valuation office in 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 187 appeals have been completed. 147 of the 187 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €840k. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been completed by the Tribunal.