

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

MARCH 2024 ISSUE

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Amenity Grants

Closing date for receipt of fully completed applications is 29th March, 2024.

Application forms are available from the Parks Department or can be downloaded from www.kilkennycoco.ie

National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland's most popular, well recognized and successful anti-litter initiative. Taking place during the whole month of April.

Mayfair Library Update

The Mayfair Library is scheduled to open at the end of April 2024

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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 **LAUNCH OF ST. PATRICKS DAY FESTIVAL AND TRADFEST 2024**

ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

- The Display of Preferred Transport Solution was completed in January 2024.
- All Public Display Material including Brochure is available to view online at the top of the front page on the Project Website at <https://n24waterford2cahir.ie/>.
- Details of the Public Display of the Preferred Transport Solution and key findings will be recorded within the Phase 2 Option Selection Report.
- Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is Q2 2024.

MINOR PROJECTS

(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

The project is substantially completed and open to traffic. Landscaping and snagging works are continuing on the project.



Overhead drone footage of the compacted grade separated junction.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Construction of the scheme commenced on Tuesday 6th February 2024 with an expected 12-month time frame. The completion of this project will realise an improvement scheme objective identified within the City & County Development Plan 2021-2027.



N24 Carrick Road

Simultaneous applications to An Bord Pleanála for 177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory

Purchase Order Approval was made on the 25th November 2022. An Bord Pleanála's decision on the scheme is expected towards the end of Q1 2024.

OTHER

Pavement Schemes.

The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme is on-going. The PAAR report was approved by TII in December 2023. Design work and the preparation of tender documentation are on-going with a view to issuing a tender for the works during 2024.

The overall cost of the scheme is expected to be in excess of €4m with varying sources of TII funding necessary to deliver the scheme.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Inaugural Climate Action Plan Adopted

The Elected Representatives adopted the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 at the Council Plenary on 19th February. The Plan sets out how Kilkenny County Council will respond to the climate crisis by improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and embedding climate resilience across the organisation. It also addresses how the Council will adopt a leadership role in the county by supporting local communities, businesses and other stakeholders to take climate action.

Welcoming the Plan, Cathaoirleach Cllr Michael Doyle said *'This Plan creates a pathway for Kilkenny County Council to reach our climate targets and respond to the challenges that climate change poses to the county. We look forward to working with all stakeholders in its delivery'*.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021, all local authorities are required to prepare a local authority Climate Action Plan. The Plan, which contains 95 actions, was adopted following extensive consultation, gathering scientific data, and deliberations by the Elected Representatives and Staff of Kilkenny County Council over the past 12 months.

The Plan's Vision is that Kilkenny County Council will be *"A climate resilient organisation that inspires and supports the County's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, sustainable and carbon neutral economy by 2050"*.

According to Lar Power, Chief Executive “We will continue to build on, and scale up, the achievements of the Council across all services in delivering climate action. The scale of the task ahead is significant, but we are committed to it.”

Some of the key actions planned, or in hand, are:

- €511,00 for community grants in 2024 through the Community Climate Action Fund
- €30M investment by the OPW in Flood Relief Schemes in County Kilkenny
- €3.5M investment in converting all 12,000 Public Lights to energy efficient LED lights
- €3M investment in retrofitting local authority buildings
- Establishment of Kilkenny City Decarbonisation Zone, as a test bed for climate action

Dearbhala Ledwidge, Climate Action Coordinator, says “Thanks to the public, stakeholders, staff and Elected Representatives who inputted to the development of the Plan. Every Service Area in the Council will commence implementing actions straightaway and we will keep the public informed of progress through regular reporting and monitoring.”

The Draft Plan is available [here](#). The adopted Plan will be published in the coming weeks and available to view on www.kilkennycoco.ie



Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted by Elected Representatives at the Council Plenary on 19th Feb 2024.

Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP)

The Community Climate Action Programme closed for applications on Wednesday 28th February. Overall it was hugely successful and a very welcomed programme with Kilkenny Communities looking to take climate action in their local areas and seeking the funding to enable and empower them in doing so. This programme has an allocation of €511,000 and requests for funding in excess of €1.8million were received, so it is very competitive. Eligible applications will now proceed to the evaluation panel for assessment before being issued to the Department of Environment Climate and Communications for final approval. It is expected that letters of offer for successful projects will be issued in August 2024.

ISO 50001 Energy Management System Recertification

The Council was subject to a 2-day intensive audit of its ISO 50001 energy management system on 5th and 6th March. An energy management system helps organisations better manage their energy use, thus improving productivity. It involves developing and implementing an energy policy, setting achievable targets for energy use, and designing action plans to reach them and measure progress. The National Climate Action Plan requires all public sector bodies with an energy spend greater than €2 million per annum to achieve ISO 50001 certification. Certification is also a requirement to avail of the SEAI Pathfinder Funding. We are pleased to confirm that following audit the Council has been recommended for recertification under ISO 50001.

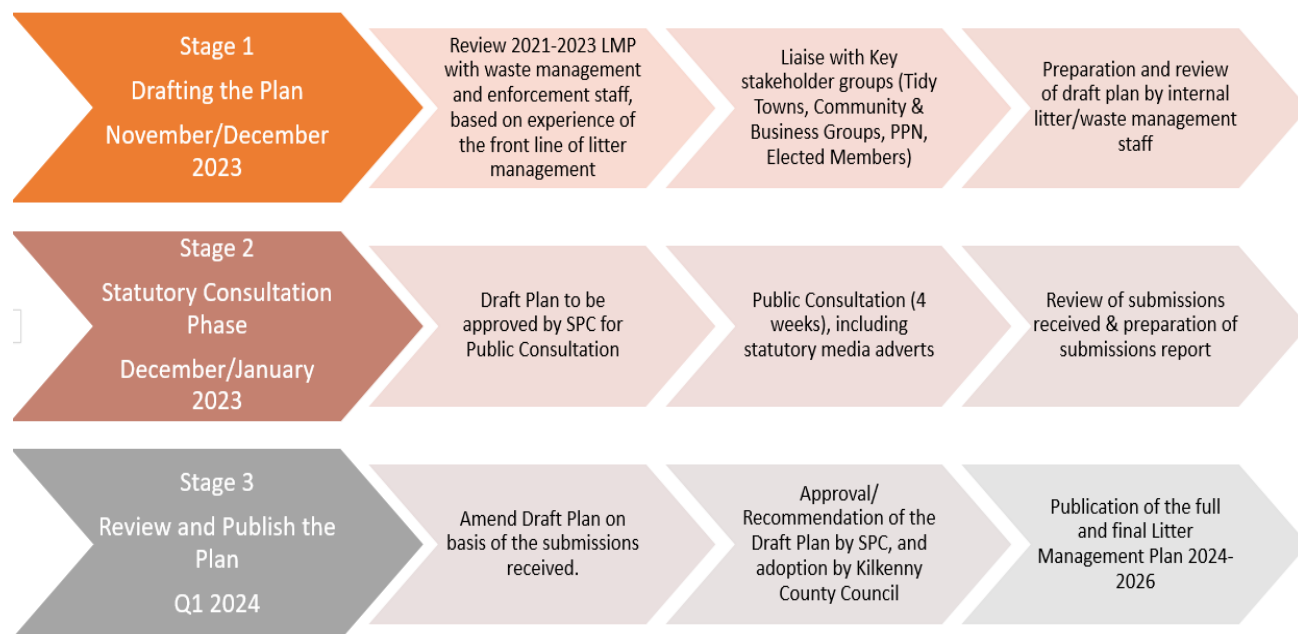
The Auditor in his report noted in particular that:

- The Energy Committee have now been fully integrated into the Climate Action Committee and this is working very well with ongoing meetings and communications to achieve targets.
- The planned HVO trial in the machinery yard to replace heavy fleet diesel fuel as a trial is now well underway, as are many more projects including the PLEEP for public lighting. The 'Reduce your Use' initiative for a number of buildings and Green Procurement initiatives to name but a few.
- LEED GOLD has been achieved for the Brewhouse Building refurbishment in the Abbey Quarter project in Kilkenny and is likely to be awarded for the Mayfair building project.
- The Council continues to work with and manage very effectively a detailed risk and opportunities register which outlines all potential options across all Significant Energy Users (SEUs.)
- Communication and engagement both internally and externally with respect to energy efficiency and Climate Action was demonstrated to be very effectively managed.
- Implementation of actions for energy performance improvement are clearly demonstrated and there is clear evidence of continual energy improvement.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Litter Management Plan

A draft Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 is now in place. See the below timeline for the remainder of the process. The draft plan was brought before SPC 4 on 7th February last and was placed on consult.ie on Monday 19th February for a 4 week public consultation period.



Green Schools

The Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) continues to support 92 schools as part of the An Taisce Green Schools Programme to renew or attain a flag. Green schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues into the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of the school. Green schools is a holistic, long-term programme and has a two-year cycle in relation to preparation, assessment and attainment of a particular flag.

The EAO is continuing to assist schools around the County to renew their membership as part of the Green Schools programme under their respective themes- Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship. Deadline for the applications for School Flags is March 15th, 2024. The EAO has assessed 11 schools for their application for a Green Flag since the 1st February.



National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland's most popular, well recognized and successful anti-litter initiative. Taking place during the whole month of April and now in its 25th year, the campaign encourages every sector of society to actively participate and take responsibility for litter, by actually conducting clean ups in their own local environment. National Spring Clean traditionally takes place throughout the month of April.

National Spring Clean has been operated by An Taisce since 1999 in partnership with the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government and Local Authorities.

All community and voluntary groups are being encouraged to participate and register with An Taisce via [About National Spring Clean - National Spring Clean](#). Groups can request additional supplies from the EAO via the Environmental Section.

National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 - 2030

Ireland is moving away from the traditional linear 'take-make-use-dispose' model towards a 'circular economy' regenerative growth model where resources are reused or recycled as much as possible, and the generation of waste is minimized. The transition to a circular economy is essential to reduce pressure on natural resources, aid in achieving climate targets, support Sustainable Development Goals and create sustainable growth and jobs.

The transition to a circular economy requires a collaborative national response across all sectors of the economy through the lifecycle of products and materials.

This Plan covers the period 2024 - 2030. Annual Workplans will be developed for each sector/pillar which will coincide with a strategic multi annual workplan which will be developed by a National Coordinating Group for Waste and the Circular Economy (NCGWCE).

This committee will consist of the Local Gov Sector, DECC and the EPA so it will afford an opportunity for each sector to prioritize separate policy areas/documents. For example, the Climate Action Plan (LG), the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap (DECC) and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA). [National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 - mywaste My Waste](#)

WASTE

Enforcement - Waste

Following on from successful District Court prosecutions on 6th March 2024 Kilkenny County Council were awarded costs against two defendants of €4,395.37 & €8,790.75.

The first defendant was convicted in respect of three offences, namely:

- section 39(1) Waste Management Act 1996 as amended
- Section 24(1) Air Pollution Act 1987 as amended (offence date of 2.1.23)
- Regulation 4(1) Waste Management (Prohibition of the Waste Disposal by Burning) Regulations 2009

Each offence carried a €2,000 penalty therefore €6,000 in total plus costs. The second defendant was convicted of two offences under sections 32(1)(b) and 39(1) WMA. Each offence above was fined at €4,000 per offence therefore €8,000 plus costs

RMCEI Return 2023 & Plan 2024

The Environment Section of Kilkenny submitted its Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) return for 2023 to the EPA on the 29th February 2024. Each Local Authority RMCEI return is reviewed by the EPA and scored accordingly. The return to the EPA also includes the number of RMCEI inspections to be carried out by the Environment Section in 2024.

Bring Banks Usage

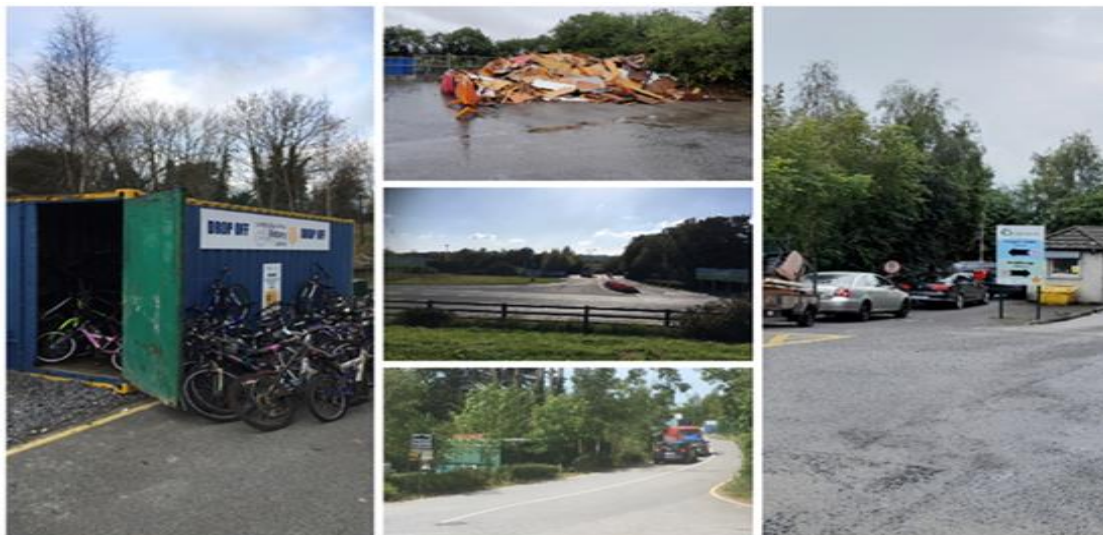
The Council provides and manages 45 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 353 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres to date in 2024. This represents a 0.5% increase from the same time period last year. Loughboy shopping centre (13 tonnes collected), Aldi Kilkenny city (12 tonnes collected) and Lidl Johnswell Road (11 tonnes collected) were the busiest locations in the City and Graiguenamanagh (9 tonnes collected) is the busiest location 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.



Dunmore Civic Amenity Site

Approximately 5,000 customers visited Dunmore in the month of February 2024. As a result, 7.36 tonnes of cardboard, 5.1 tonnes of plastic, 9.66 tonnes of paper 1.2 tonnes of food waste (going for anaerobic digestion), 59.6 tonnes of green garden waste (going for aerobic composting) and 12.3 tonnes of WEEE (Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment) were deposited at the facility for recycling in this period. There were 119 tonnes of municipal household waste deposited at the facility to be transferred for incineration and a further 73 tonnes of dry bulk waste to be transferred for further segregation with a possible 60 – 70% of this material being recycled.

As part of the continuous aftercare of the closed landfill situated adjacent to the CAS, 227 tonnes of Leachate were transported off site for treatment at the Purcellsinch waste water treatment plant. The 2023 Environmental Performance Report for Dunmore was compiled in February 2024 for submission to the EPA. This report is used by the EPA to gather data under the legally binding PRTR (Pollutant Release and Transfer Register), Large Combustion Plant and Waste Statistics regulations. The data is used by several teams in the EPA for a range of purposes. The report provides statistics across all activities carried out at Dunmore in relation to the CAS and Landfill site.



Enforcement – Air Noise Water

The Environment Section was recently successful in taking a prosecution under the Local Government Water Pollution Act 1977 and the defendant received a penalty of €1,000 for the offence. The defendant was convicted in respect of the following offence:

- Section 3 Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 as amended

Subject to subsection (5), a person shall not cause or permit any polluting matter to enter waters.

Water

The major change for 2024 is the number of farm inspections to be carried out in County Kilkenny will increase from 80 in 2023 to 241 in 2024. The figure of 241 will also include inspections related to farming complaints from members of the public & inspections related to agricultural planning applications.

Air Quality

The Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council will start the process of sampling smokeless coal from fuel merchants in the county in the coming week for testing. The sampling and testing is to ensure smokeless fuel on the market is in compliance with the new Solid Fuel Regulations. This sampling and testing is granted aided by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

Noise Action Plan Round 4

Kilkenny County Council is currently in the process of creating Round 4 of the Noise Action Plan. The Environment Section is currently in consultation with other sections in the council on selecting priority sites for inclusion in Round 4 of the Noise Action Plan. Links to EPA Noise Mapping in County Kilkenny can be located using the following link <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Environment Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for February 2024 is 102 compared to 63 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints ranged from littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

Burial Grounds

The closing date for the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2024 was Friday 1st March, 2024. There have been over 50 applications received. Each application will be assessed by the Environment Section in the coming weeks. The grant may contribute towards the cost of:

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

Community Monuments Fund

The Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council have submitted Community Monument Fund Applications for Stream 1,2 & 3 projects in 2024.

The Community Monuments Fund has 3 Streams:

Stream 1 will offer grants up to €100,000 aimed at essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archaeological monuments

Stream 2 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports that are aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.

Stream 3 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation (*including virtual/online*) at archaeological monuments.

Stream 1 CMF application are as follows:

- Grangefertagh Historic Church and Graveyard (Stage 2)
- Tubrid Historic Church and Graveyard
- Rathpatrick Church & Graveyard

Stream 2 CMF application are as follows:

- Kellymount Historic Church and Graveyard
- Clara Historic Church and Graveyard
- Castleinch Historic Church and Graveyard

Stream 3 CMF application are as follows:

- Garryduff Graveyard
- Cloghabrody Graveyard

Animal Welfare

Kilkenny County Council recently held its fourteenth meeting of the Animal Welfare Standards Committee. This Committee meets on a quarterly basis. The role of the Committee is to promote responsible animal ownership, improve animal welfare, reduce the number of horses and dogs to sustainable levels and change behaviour.

JJ Tobin Veterinary Officer continues to carry out monthly inspections at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. No horses have been impounded to date so far this year.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Playgrounds

Repairs were carried out in a number of playgrounds across the City and County during the month of February namely, Talbots Court, Fairgreen Callan, Rose Hill, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Paulstown, Bennettsbridge and Mooncoin. While a number of major play components were also replaced/enhanced in Ballyhale, this work also included the installation of Tiger Mulch soft surfacing. Further significant replacements are also planned for Graiguenamanagh in March.



New multi-play component In Ballyhale

Also, following a competitive tendering process contracts have been awarded for the painting of the timber elements of play equipment within 12no. of our playgrounds. This work involves the application of specialist wood preservatives and sealants and it is expected, subject to weather, to be completed over the next few months. The work, when complete will not only improve the appearance of the play areas but also increase the longevity of same, playgrounds listed for painting below:

▪ Johnstown	▪ Paulstown	▪ Ballyhale	▪ Fr. McGrath
▪ Kells	▪ Graiguenamanagh	▪ Rosehill	▪ Kilmacow
▪ Talbot's Court	▪ Fiddown	▪ Garringreen	▪ Mooncoin

In addition to the above, Parks staff continue to carry out weekly inspections of equipment and surfacing across our 35no. Playgrounds, and 6no. Multi-use Games Areas to ensure that same are fit for purpose and well presented.

Amenity Grants

Applications for funding under the 2024 Amenity Grant Scheme are now being accepted. All applicants under the 2023 Scheme have been notified, notice of the Scheme was also advertised in the Kilkenny People Newspaper and details are also available on the Kilkenny County Council Website and in the Council's 2024 Grant Booklet. Closing date for receipt of fully completed applications is 29th March, 2024. Application forms are available from the Parks Department or can be downloaded from www.kilkennycoco.ie

National Tree Week

National Tree Week running from 3rd to 10th March, 2024 is an annual celebration of all the benefits that trees and forests deliver to biodiversity and to help combat the effects of climate change. The Parks Section applied to the Tree Council of Ireland, who are partnered with Coillte, for an allocation of trees under their tree giveaway scheme. 300 native saplings, consisting of oak, alder, birch, scots pine and rowan, were secured and were allocated to a number of community groups who requested same or were planted directly by the Parks Section.



South East Greenway

Lot 5a Ferrybank to Curraghmore

Glas Civil Engineering Ltd., commenced works on Lot 5A (c.5.5km section from Ferrybank to Curraghmore) last November. Works are progressing to programme and the anticipated contract completion date remains the end of 2024, see image of recent progress beside the Rhu Glen Hotel.



Technical Consultants

The Project Team has re-run the tender for the provision of Technical Services for a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team, to complete all remaining phases of the Greenway, , utilising the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Framework, and the return date for tender submissions is set for late March. It is expected to have a consultancy appointed in May.

Acquisition of lands from CIE

Legal contracts are now finalised and issued for signing to conclude the acquisition of the lands along the abandoned rail corridor from CIE.

Charter for South East Greenway Accommodation Works

A new Charter for South East Greenway Accommodation Works was prepared and signed-off by the three local authorities. This Charter was developed to provide appropriate and consistent boundary treatment and accommodation works with adjoining landowners. It also sets out in a single document the criteria applied when determining the appropriate treatment at agricultural crossing points along the Greenway.

Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link:

The Tender Assessment and Recommendation Report for Technical Consultancy Services to identify and progress a route to planning has been approved by TII. A contract appointing RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd. was signed in February and the contract period to deliver the services requirements prescribed under the contract is 49 months.

Outdoor Recreation Instructure Scheme (ORIS)

Jenkinstown Wood Enhancement Scheme

A new 1.2km trail has been developed around the Deerpark area within close proximity to the carpark and amenity area. The surface finish along this new trail is such to make same more accessible and inclusive for all and incorporates 4no. age friendly benches at strategic locations along the trail. The existing longer walk, the Jenkinstown Loop Walk, has received c.2km of upgrades in the form of trail reconstruction and drainages provision. This element of the works was part funded by our project partners Coillte.



Under the ORIS significant enhancements have also been completed at the carpark amenity area with the provision of paved pathways and hardstanding picnic areas which incorporate 5no. new picnic benches, some of which are wheelchair friendly. The objectives of this intervention are twofold a) to improve the appearance and usability of this amenity space and b) make the space accessible to wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility. The remaining elements of the project, which includes the installation of new trailhead signage, interpretative signs, waymakers and soft landscaping will be completed in the coming months in time for peak season.



Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme

Prices have been sought, under the Coillte Works Framework, with respect to the above contract and the submission deadline for same is mid-March.

The works will include carpark and entrance enhancements, significant upgrading of the existing Green Loop to include 2.1km's of trail rehabilitation to facilitate universal access with a particular focus on wheelchair users. Other works include improvements to the Red Loop, the provision of universal and age friendly accessible amenity spaces, delineated disabled and age friendly car parking spaces. The wheelchair accessible toilet (Dry loo) which was installed last year under this scheme will be opened to the public in tandem with the completion of the overall project which includes an access path to same.

It is acknowledged that both this project and the Jenkinstown Wood project are being undertaken with the support and assistance of Coillte.

Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme

The closing date for tender submissions for the above contract was the 15th February and a total of 7no. submissions were received. The tender assessment report has now been completed and a letter of intent to award the contract has been issued. It is anticipated that the appointment process will be completed in mid-March with works commencing in Q2 2024.

The completed project will see the replacement of the existing 1.2m wide timber boardwalk with a c.3.0m wide boardwalk made entirely from recycled composite materials. Funding for this project was secured under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme in the amount of €500,000 which will be supplemented from the Council's own funds.

Sports Capital Programme

Works to construct the new all-weather Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park are progressing well, despite the inclement weather, and are anticipated to be completed by mid Q2 2024. Funding to deliver this project includes grant funding secured under the Sports Capital Programme, specific development contributions and the Council's own funds.



Progress of new MUGA in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

Funding was also secured under the Sports Capital Programme for the new Kilkenny Countryside Park, which provided for the installation of the double sided ball wall also included for the supply and installation of outdoor woodland exercise equipment and this final phase of the works under this application was completed recently.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total at End February		
	2023	2024	Change
Planning Applications Received	125	123	-2
Planning Applications Granted	78	120	+42
Planning Applications Refused	21	10	-11
Complaints Received	13	24	+9
Warning Letters Issued	6	32	+26
Enforcements Notices Issued	6	8	+2
Cases Closed	9	18	+9

Forward Planning

Masterplans

Abbey Quarter

A variation to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 (CDP) is required to incorporate the Abbey Quarter Masterplan User Guide into the CDP. Work will commence on this in Q1 2024. The Variation will require approval by the Elected Members. The publication can be accessed at:

<https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/abbey-quarter-brewery-site/review-of-abbey-quarter-masterplan-2023/>

St Canice's Campus

A draft Masterplan has been completed and the necessary environmental reports are currently being prepared. It is anticipated that the draft Masterplan and environmental documents will be presented to the Kilkenny City Municipal District members in early 2024, before being placed on public display for a round of public consultation. The environmental documents are currently being finalised to allow publication.

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Masterplans are also being prepared for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. Three public meetings, one for each town have taken place. The feedback/inputs from these meetings have been incorporated into the draft Masterplans. The draft Masterplans for Ballyragget and Paulstown will be presented to Elected Members at the March Castlecomer MD meeting and the draft Masterplan for Kilmacow will be presented at the April Piltown MD meeting, prior to the draft Masterplans being placed on public display for a 4 week period. Walk in public meetings will also be

scheduled for each settlement during the public display period.

Local Area Plans

Tenders have been advertised for the preparation of a new Local Area Plan (LAP) for Ferrybank/Belview. Tender responses are currently being assessed. It is expected that Consultants will be appointed in Q1 2024 with a new LAP in place by Q1 2025.

The tender documents provides for an issues paper and public consultation, along with the preparation of environmental reports and publication of the draft plan, the statutory public consultation and the final document for approval by the Council.

Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for Co. Kilkenny

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd, have been appointed to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny. An induction meeting was held with the Consultants and the Council on 8th February. They are at the initial stages of gathering data and drawing up a format for the document. A draft document for public consultation will be ready within by the end of Q2 2024.

Taking in Charge

The following estates have been advertised for taking in charge:

- TC141 Ayrfield, Kilkenny
- TC170 Larchfield, Kilkenny

Active Land Management

There are 37 sites on the Derelict Sites Register at present. A site on Bridge Street in Freshford was recently added to the Register. Sites on Patrick Street and Evan's Lane in Kilkenny and on Bridge Street in Ballyragget were cancelled from the Register following works by the owners. A site in Vicar Street, Kilkenny was served notice of intent to enter the site on the Register. All sites subject to the derelict sites levy will be served with payment demands of 7% of the site's market value in Q1 2024. The CPO process has been initiated in respect of 3 derelict sites (*in Callan, Thomastown and Mooncoin*).

A Draft Annual Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was published on the 31st January 2024. Submissions on the maps are now invited. Submissions can be made either on inclusions or exclusions to the land in scope, and also, landowners can request a rezoning of their land.

There are 23 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled sites due to site activation or improvement is now 24. The Vacant site levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) from 2025, but any outstanding levies will remain due to the Council. The payment demands for 2023 are being readied to issue at present.

Conservation

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

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: 16 projects were forwarded to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) for approval. The DHLGH will now assess and revert with their decision by the end of March/beginning of April.

Historic Structures Fund: 4 applications were forwarded to the DHLGH for assessment. Woodstock House was chosen as the Local Authority structure forwarded for funding. The DHLGH will now assess and revert with their decision by the end of March / beginning of April. The DHLGH may decide to support or reject forwarded Kilkenny projects under the HSF.

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

- February 2024..... 43
- February 2023..... 31
- February 2022..... 67
- February 2021..... 37

Disability Access Applications Received:

- February 2024..... 8
- February 2023..... 6
- February 2022..... 13
- February 2021..... 6

International Protection

The following premises were notified to the Planning Authority in accordance with the Regulations:

Notification Received 2023	Name of Premises	Received From
8 th June	Kilkenny Inn, Vicar Street, Kilkenny	Bury Architects, Mayo
14 th July	MacGabhinns Hostel, Vicar Street, Kilkenny	Specialised Accommodation Services Ireland Ltd

25 th September	Kilkenny Hostel, Parliament Street, Kilkenny	Banandel Limited
27 th September	Riverview House, Dublin Road, Kilkenny R95 X978	White Sand Consultancy Limited

Town Regeneration Office

Butts Area Regeneration - A public meeting was held in St. Canice’s Hall on Thursday, 29th February with a view to establishing a Butts Town Team. The meeting was well attended (40 approx.) with plenty of residents interested in sitting on the Town Team. It is proposed to hold a second meeting in March to formalise the structure and for the Town Team to elect their executive Board. The first meeting of the Task Force, which includes service providers in the area and other agencies is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 5th March.



Town Centre First

The DRCD announced a suite of supports under Town Centre First. The Council nominated Graiguenamanagh as the next town to benefit from a Town Centre First Plan and Minister Humphries announced Department approval on 28th February. The Council have advertised for Expressions of Interest for funding to the value of €50,000 under the Project Development Measure. The Council can nominate up to 3 towns to receive funding to the value of €10,000. This funding is to cover costs relating to capacity building training and health check process.



Careers Kilkenny 2024

Kilkenny County Council staged an extensive Careers Event on Saturday, February 3rd at St. Canices Cathedral. 750 people attended the event, visiting stands from a range of local employers including Tirlán, State Street, Abbott, Connollys Red Mills, Bank of Ireland, Security Risk Advisors and CF Pharma. The event included a presentation from key note speaker Dermot Whelan on managing stress and work life balance and a number of CV and interview preparation workshops.



Student Enterprise Programme County Final – 29th February 2024

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny have announced that teenage entrepreneurs from Presentation Secondary School, and Coláiste Abhainn Rí will represent Kilkenny at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Finals on Thursday 9th May in Mullingar Park Hotel.

The students all took part in the Kilkenny County Final on Thursday 29th February, which was held at Lyrath Hotel. Over 1,000 students from 11 schools took part in the annual programme locally with 110 students making it to the County Final.



In the Junior Category, the student representing Kilkenny at the National Finals are Robbie Lyons from Berry Burst at Coláiste Abhainn Rí. The company makes homemade jams in 5 delicious flavours. Muireann Bibby and Tom Carey from Gloine Mara at Coláiste Abhainn Rí will be representing the County at the Finals in the Intermediate Category. This company create beautiful handcrafted canvas art gifts from the sea.

In the Senior Category of the competition, Kilkenny will be represented on May 9th by Niamh Brett, Danica Tervit Kruger, and Hazel Maher from The Little Lost Collection at Presentation Secondary School. The Little Lost Collection is a story book collection created to educate children on the animal welfare situation in Ireland and teach them why it is important to adopt pets.

In the "My Entrepreneurial Journey" competition two Coláiste Abhainn Rí students won in their categories, Meabh Moylan of Tastalious Ltd. in the junior category and Jamie Power from Pollin8 in the intermediate category.

Productivity 2024



Small business owners from across the South East attended the Productivity24-South East LEAN Conference on Tuesday 20th February in Newpark Hotel Kilkenny for a transformative half-day conference dedicated to the world of productivity and LEAN Thinking. The event was tailored for owner-managers of small companies and promises to equip attendees with invaluable insights and practical strategies to harness the full potential of LEAN Principles to increase efficiency in the business. Productivity-24 was hosted by the Local Enterprise Offices in Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford.

The event was moderated by Aine Kerr and featured speakers including John O'Shanahan from LEAN BPI, Stuart Nelson from Jigsaw, Robert Hernan from Enterprise Ireland, LEAN Experts Richie Dawson from LI4 and Pat Lynch from SETU.

Economic Monitor

The Q4 to year end 2023 economic monitor is now published on [Economic Dashboard - Kilkenny County Council \(kilkennycoco.ie\)](https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/Economic-Dashboard)

Further update re Careers Kilkenny 2024

Feedback has been sought from Employers who exhibited at Careers Kilkenny 2024 on February 3rd. Positive feedback related to the venue, the skillset and variety of attendees, the speaker (Dermot Whelan) and the clinics run by Optimize Recruitment. Abbott confirmed that their careers portal had seen a 500% increase in traffic as a direct result of the event.

Digital Update

Digital Strategy Consultants Ltd. has been appointed to complete an internal digital audit of assets, services and processes within Kilkenny County Council which is the first step in preparing a 3-year Digital Strategy for Kilkenny. 'Digital Champions' have been nominated from each service area, who have an understanding and knowledge of services and data processes within their section. The consultation process will take the form of an online meeting or telephone conversation with the consultant. The overall key focus is to identify and support improvements and actions to information processes, develop digital services and technologies to enhance customer services. An Action Plan will be developed as part of the Digital Strategy.

The first 'Generative AI Skills for Job Initiative' takes place in We Do Workspaces, Kilkenny on Wednesday 20th March (one day certified training course). This is a Microsoft Philanthropies Ireland funded initiative in partnership with LinkedIn and delivered by Fast Track into Technology (FIT).

Night Time Economy

The third stakeholder night time economy stakeholder forum took place in the Ormonde Hotel on Monday 12th February. This facilitated workshop focused on the agreement of actions to be included in the Action Plan. A Night Walk and workshops also took place with two groups from Ossory Youth on Friday 16th February. The consultation phase of the pilot has now concluded and all of the research and feedback has been collated. The Action Plan and stakeholder consultation report are currently being drafted and will be sent to the Night Time Economy Forum members for their input. The draft Action Plan will be presented to members of the Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism and Planning & Development SPC on the 4th April for their approval.

A funding application has been made by the Tourism Officer and the Night Time Economy Advisor to the Rural Innovation & Development Fund for the establishment of a night market at Savour Festival this year. A night market has also been incorporated into St. Patrick's Festival programming on Saturday 16th March from 6-9pm

TOURISM

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. At the February monthly meeting the Members approved supports for a wide -ranging calendar of festivals to take place in Kilkenny City and County throughout the year:

Event Name	Date of event	Visitor Numbers	2024 Grant
Kilkenny Tradfest	15th-18th March	10,215	€6,000
The Kilkenny Cats laugh Comedy Festival	30th May - 3rd June 2024	5,000	€12,000
St. Brigids Day Festival	2nd to 4th February 2024	2,000	€2,000
Smithwicks Kilkenny Roots Festival	3rd- 6th May	10,000	€12,000
Savour Kilkenny Food Festival	24th- 28th October	60,000	€20,000
Kilkenomics	7-10th November	11,500	€7,000
Stormfest	10- 17 August 2024	840	€2,000
Kilkenny Animated	4-6th October	700	€7,000
AKA Fringe Festival	10-18th August	5,000	€6,000
Marble City music Festival	May 16th-18th and Nov 3rd(TBC) 28th-30th Nov	3,890	€7,000
TOWN OF BOOKS FESTIVAL	TBC	10,000	€3,000
Song of the Scythe : National Scything Festival	23-25th August	120	€1,000
Castlecomer WellieRace	1st Jan 2025	7-8K	€3,000
			€88,000

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

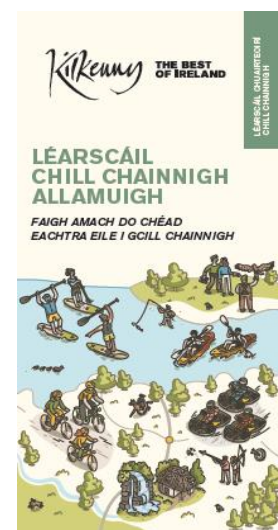
Kilkenny Tourism continued its work in preparing Kilkenny’s marketing and PR plans for 2024. To support the destination for the shoulder season, Kilkenny Tourism extended its “Kilkenny Gifts You” promotion to continue to support the sector to attract visitors to Kilkenny for the early part of the year. The campaign is performing very well for accommodation providers who have agreed to keep it running until the end of March 2024.

Work will commence in the coming weeks on our “Outdoor Kilkenny” promotion with a new digital campaign the new Outdoor Kilkenny map that features many Outdoor Recreational activities in the County.

Kilkenny’s marketing and PR campaign remains strong and in comparison to last year, our audience reach continues to grow.

The coming months will feature upcoming festivals and events throughout the City and County including St. Patrick’s Day celebrations and Tradfest, together with itineraries for trips to Kilkenny over the Easter break.

The theme of this year’s Fáilte Ireland Industry Briefing was ‘Driving Sustainable Development.’ The national Virtual Industry Briefing session was held on Wednesday 21st February where all objectives for 2024 and key national initiatives for the year ahead were shared. The industry briefing covered 2024 Outlook, new Digital that Deliver programme, Tourism Careers and new consumer motivations research. The plans focus on maximising tourism businesses assets while continuing to drive domestic demand for 2024.



Kilkenny Tourism
LÉARSCÁIL CHILL CHAINNIGH

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet & Community Calendar

The 2024 Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet which is in its 7th Edition was launched in the Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle on the 8th February, 2024 by the Cathaoirleach. This popular booklet gives Communities details of relevant community grants with contact details and other information on programmes. It is a one stop shop of information for the citizens of Kilkenny. This booklet is available in an online version on the Council's website.



The first Community Calendar was also launched on the night. This calendar showcases some of the exceptional work and projects carried out by our local Community Groups in conjunction with the Community Department of Kilkenny County Council.



Kilkenny County Council Community Awards 2024

The annual Kilkenny County Council Community Awards were held in the Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle on Thursday 8th February, 2024. This annual event celebrates the work carried out by

community groups throughout the County. The Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle welcomed all the community groups and acknowledged their dedication and commitment to their towns and villages throughout the County over the previous twelve months.

There were a number of awards given out in the following categories:

- Nominee Awards for Pride of Place were given to Callan Energy, Freshford.ie, St. Canices Community Action. Freshford.ie won 'Runners Up' in the Prize in the Pride of Place Competition held in Armagh in November.
- Tidy Town Awards were given to Listerlin, Tullahought, Inistioge, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful.
- Tidy Estate Awards were given to the following groups:

Large Estates Category

- 1st Lakeside Residents Association Hebron Road, Kilkenny
- 2nd Bellfield Residents Association, Ferrybank, Kilkenny.
- 3rd Glenvale, Ballyragget, Kilkenny.

Medium Estates Category

- 1st Millroad Residents Association, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny
- 2nd Parkmore Terrace Residents Association, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny.
- 3rd The Belfry Residents Association, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

Small Estates Category

- 1st Fr. Raftice Place Residents Association, Moneenroe, Co. Kilkenny.
- 2nd Ard Aoibheann Residents Association, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny.
- 3rd Old School Crescent Residents Association, Moneenroe, Co. Kilkenny.



Mayor of Kilkenny Joe Malone and Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle pictured with award recipients



Age Friendly Ireland Programme Managers Residential Meeting.

On the 22nd and 23rd February 2024, the Age Friendly Programme Managers came together for the yearly residential meeting to discuss our Age Friendly Work Plan for the year. The two-day session reviewed the key objectives for the year ahead and how improvements can be made to grow and develop the programme further throughout Ireland. On day two it was all about collaborations with guest speakers. Meadhbh Haiceid, Libraries Development LGMA spoke about Libraries Ireland and Ireland Reads, Clare McNally spoke about Adult Literacy for Life, Orlaith Carmody who is the Age Friendly Business Principle Advisors spoke about the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme and Kathleen Goulding from the Central Statistics Office gave an overview of Key Statistics on Ageing in Ireland.



Attendees of the Age Friendly Ireland Programme Managers Residential Meeting.

Healthy Ireland

The Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) proudly hosted a visit from Minister of State for Public Health, Wellbeing & the National Drugs Strategy, Deputy Hildegard Naughton, T.D. on the 22nd February, 2024 at the Newpark Family Resource Centre, Kilkenny City to highlight the impactful work supported through Healthy Ireland funding. Under the warm welcome of Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael Doyle and Mayor of Kilkenny Municipal District, Cllr Joe Malone, attendees were greeted to an inspiring showcase of community-driven health initiatives. Minister Hildegard Naughton highlighted the diverse range of initiatives under the Healthy Ireland Programme 2023-2025, addressing the needs of targeted communities, young people, individuals living with disabilities, the Travelling Community and One-Parent Families. Among the showcased initiatives were adult cycling programs, the first “Cycle to School Bus” with St. John’s Primary School, Social Farming Placements, tailored physical activity initiatives for individuals with disabilities, and youth exercise interventions in North Kilkenny.

A new innovative initiative 'Urban Action Against Cancer Prevention' was launched by Minister Naughton at Newpark Marsh Park. This European intersectoral initiative promotes physical activity for adults and senior citizens in urban green spaces as a tool for cancer prevention. The Urban Outdoor Physical Activity Programmes led by local physiotherapists, will commence in March at Marsh Park & the James Green in Kilkenny, benefiting adults over 50, including people living with cancer and cancer survivors.



Timea Ledenyine, Janette Boran, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach, Mary Dolan, Cois Nore; Seamus Nugent, KRSP; Gráinne Gallagher, UL, Dr Bill Cuddihy, Cois Nore; Minister Hildegard Naughton, T.D., Mary Mullholland, Fran Theron, Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists; Dr Emer Guinan, TCD, Theresa McGinn, Kilkenny Physiotherapy & Katherine Peacock

Kilkenny PPN update

Membership of PPN Kilkenny continued to grow and stands at 464. The membership registration form is on the Kilkenny PPN website and eligible groups in Kilkenny can register at any time.

One Social Inclusion working group meeting, a series of 3 Community Climate Action workshops and an information webinar around the Adult literacy Strategy and Collaboration & Innovation Fund were held in February.

Kilkenny PPN commenced the process for the development of the Kilkenny PPN 5-year Strategic Plan. The Strategy will guide the priorities, vision and work plans of PPN Kilkenny in the years to come. It will ensure that the voices of all member groups are heard and that its influence will be increased in policy decisions at Local Government level.

PPN Kilkenny continued to have an active presence with its regularly updated website, social media and weekly Newsletter distributed to members.

ARTS

Arts Act Grants and Tyrone Guthrie Residency Bursary

The Arts Act Grants have been assessed and a total of 24 applicants were awarded the grant coming to a total of €25,000. The Tyrone Guthrie Residency Bursary was also assessed and one artist was awarded a two-week residency and 4 artists awarded one-week residency.

Arts Bursaries

Kilkenny Arts Office is currently offering three different bursaries, supporting Kilkenny Artists across artforms. Applications are currently open for Creative Futures Academy Bursary, Drama League of Ireland Summer School Bursary & Theatre Forum's 'The Gathering' Bursary. Creative Futures Academy bursaries offer artists seeking to gain new formal qualifications and skills to expand their practice. Drama League of Ireland Summer School Bursary offer individuals involved in amateur dramatics a week-long residential stay during July 20th -27th at University of Limerick. Theatre Forum's 'The Gathering' Bursary offers a professional theatre / performing arts practitioner to attend the Theatre Forum Gathering in Sligo on 28th and 29th May 2024.

Rhyme Rag - Youth Arts

Rhyme Rag workshops have begun with writers Anna Jordan and Jessica Traynor working with 4th year students in two schools in the County. Colaiste Abhainn Rí and CBS Kilkenny are each engaging in three poetry workshops over the coming weeks. Their poems will be submitted to Rhyme Rag editor Colm Keegan for selection and the successful poems will be published on our Rhyme Rag Instagram account.

The Art of Change - Youth Arts

Recruitment has begun for The Art of Change which will run in Ossory Youth and Foróige The Drum. A database mailout and social media campaign will recruit young people to join existing groups in the Youth Centres. A programme of workshops has been devised that involves professional artists and climate action organisations such as the Rediscovery Centre and Education for Sustainability.



Creative Ireland

The response to the Open call for the Cruinniú na nÓg and Kilkenny Creative Ireland round of grants for 2024 was very successful. Under the Cruinniú na nÓg scheme we received a total of 17 applications. The successful applications were: 1 internal application from our Library services and 10 external applications for the 2024 festival. There was a total of 52 applications submitted under the Creative Ireland scheme, with 26 successful projects for 2024.

Creative Kilkenny has also submitted an additional request for funding from Creative Ireland in collaboration with our Age Friendly Officer, the HSE and Local retirement homes for the 'Live Music in Retirement homes grant'. If successful, it will support the provision of events within 5 of our retirement homes in Kilkenny.

Community Climate Action

As part of our Community Arts and Climate Action 2024 programme we are delivering a project called *Waste Not Want Not*. This programme is a natural progression and development of our 2023 programme, where we worked with individuals to upcycle and re-purpose waste denim, saving it from landfill and giving new life. The project is supporting individuals and local communities to understand and appreciate the personal power they have to undertake actions that will help to alleviate and the support the Climate crisis.

The project is focused on meeting people where they are at ensuring that activities encourage discussion, the sharing of ideas, peer learning and practical and creative solutions to over consumption. The project is part funded by the LAPN, KCC Arts Office and the Arts Council of Ireland and sees us partnering with the SVP and other local businesses, enabling us to work together to utilise their waste streams. Our initial phase of workshops commenced in February and will continue across the year.

Arts Office Kilkenny County Council

WASTE NOT WANT NOT

SEWING MACHINE BASICS

Are you interested in **upcycling and re-using fabrics and textiles**, then these workshops are just what you need...

This four-week series will explore the fundamentals of using a sewing machine and build your confidence and capacity

- Start by familiarising yourself with the machine's components
 - Learn how to ensure proper tension for smooth stitching
 - Explore and practice different stitches and types of seams
 - Learn how to create button holes and install zips
 - Make your own bias binding

By the end, you'll be confident to upcycle waste fabrics and make basic alterations

NB - You must have your own sewing machine to book a place on these workshops

Thomastown Community Hall Dates: February 28th - March 20th Times: 7pm - 9pm each Wednesday evening	St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall Dates: March 1st, 15th, 22nd & 29th Times: 10am - 12 noon each Friday morning
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Book your place now by emailing diane.seale@kilkennycoco.ie. SPACES ARE LIMITED & EARLY BOOKING ADVISED. PARTICIPANTS MUST COMMIT TO ALL 4 WORKSHOPS. Subsidised cost - €40

arts council of ireland funding the arts | Kilkenny County Council | Kilkenny County Council | Kilkenny County Council | VINCENT'S

HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation.

The following information gives the up to date progress for 2024 under the various support services.

HOMELESS SERVICES

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY Feb 2024	
Homeless Presentations	47
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	43
Emergency Service	2
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	2
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	126
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	2
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	128
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	0
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ 29th February	40
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	2
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	1
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	30
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	12

Homeless Prevention Measures

The Government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie. Further details are available on www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants or who may wish to in the coming months should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at February 29 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,494
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at February 29 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	674
Number of Social Housing Applications received in February	74
Number of applications incomplete/awaiting further information/clarification	29
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	13
Number of applications assessed during February	61
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at February 29 th	65

HAP Summary Year to date 2024	
Total active HAP tenancies	566
New HAP tenancies set up	6
HAP allocated Social Housing	27
Closed HAP tenancies	27
HAP Rent Review amendments	20
HAP Other tenancy amendments	81
HAP calls received	200

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy Management Team deal with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants. Below is a summary of activity in February and to date this year:

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in February (offers made):.....	7
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to February (offers made):.....	22
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in February:	29
Maintenance Calls for February	574
Maintenance Calls year to date	1,384

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges the Local Authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

Funding for all Housing Grants schemes will be allocated in March 2024. Pending this allocation, all local authorities may commit up to 65% of their 2023 allocation to allow works to advance under each scheme.

The amount of **€1,991,076**, comprising of €1,592,861 (80%) grant and €398,215 (20%) KCC contribution was allocated for 2023. This amount was paid out in full to 285 applicants across Kilkenny City and County.

Grants Approved & Committed up to 29 th February 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	113	€1,156,376
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€19,770
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	108	€504,119
Total	227	€1,680,265

Grants Paid out up to 29 th February 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	11	€9,656
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	1	€3,700
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	18	€83,517
Total	30	€96,873

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows local authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 29th January, 2024. Changes to the scheme are as follows:

- **Minimum Income Requirements:** The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000 per annum. (*At least 50% of which must come from a reckonable primary source of income*).
- **Primary Sources of Income:** In addition to employment and the State Pension (*Contributory and Non-Contributory*) being considered as primary sources of income, the Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (*Contributory and Non-Contributory Pension*), Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance are now also considered primary sources of income.
- **Time Receiving Social Housing Supports:** The period of time tenants will be required to be in receipt of social housing support to be considered eligible under the scheme remains at 10 consecutive years. However, in the case of joint tenancies only one tenant is now required to have been in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.
- **Income Included/Not Included as a Secondary Income for Assessment:** Changes have been made to income that can be considered and not considered as secondary income when assessing for discount.

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January - 29 th February, 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	7	4	€0	3	€447,326
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	7	4	€0	3	€447,326

Housing Capital

Scheme	Project Name	Construction Status	Projected Substantial Completion	Total Units
Part V + Turnkey	Marnellsmeadows, Callan Road, Kilkenny	On-site	Q1 2025	22
Part V + Turnkey	Castleoaks Kilkenny City	On-site	Q4 2024	30
Direct Build Construction	Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny		Q4 2024	88
Part V + Turnkey	Abbeymeadows, Abbeygate, Ferrybank	On-site	Q1 2025	15
Direct Build Renewal	Cloghscregg, Thomastown	On-site	Q2 2024	1
AHB Turnkey	Barrack St, Goresbridge - Circle Housing	On-site	Q1 2024	4
AHB Turnkey	70-71 Patrick Street, Kilkenny - Clanmil	On-site	Q3 2024	4
AHB Direct Build	8/9 Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer - Kilkenny Voluntary Housing Association		Q3 2024	3
				167

Affordable Homes

The first Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme will launch in the coming weeks. Kilkenny County Council in collaboration with CAIRN will be advertising a scheme of 35 three bedroom homes at Nyne Park, Kilkenny City shortly. House types, house prices and date of opening of online application portal will be announced as part of this advertising. The Scheme will be advertised publicly via the local Print Media, the Council's Website and all our Social Media channels.

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT

Local Authority Integration Team

The White Paper to End Direct Provision and to establish a New International Protection Support Service sets out the current national policy for the reception of International Protection (IP) Applicants. A cornerstone of this policy is the guiding principle of 'integration from day one'. In line with this principle, the Local Integration Model was developed as a collaboration between: the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY); the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH); the City and County Management Association (CCMA) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). The overarching aim of the model is to empower individuals within the target groups to ultimately live independently in the community. The model centres on a new national network of Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) to be located in each Local Authority.

The target cohorts under the remit of the LAITs are:

1. Applicants for International Protection (IP Applicants) - currently 143 resident in IPAS accommodation centres in Kilkenny.
2. Those with Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status - 10 granted status in Kilkenny.
3. Programme Refugees - 152 Syrians completed their IRPP programme in Kilkenny in 2020.
4. Beneficiaries of Temporary Accommodation (BOTPs) - 1,748 Ukrainians per CSO Statistics. In Kilkenny we have 100 residents in 2 Council managed properties, 629 residents in 14 commercial accommodations and 224 residents living in 66 Offer A Home or pledged accommodations.

The following key enablers have been identified:

- (i) Initial orientation to life in Ireland.
- (ii) Support in acquiring English language proficiency.
- (iii) Support in finding suitable employment.
- (iv) Provision of support payments (*for those not in paid employment*).
- (v) Support to access education and/or training.

Following the scheme announcement the Affordable Housing Team will run a series of clinics to allow any interested parties to meet with the Team to discuss any queries they may have. Dates and times of clinics to be published once scheme launch is finalised. Anyway interested in attending a clinic will be requested to contact the Team to book a time slot by contacting affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie.

We are finalising works with a view to launch a second scheme by April. In partnership with Glenveagh, a scheme of 10 three bedroom homes at Cluain Glasan, Granges Road will soon be advertised.

For more details on the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme please check out the Kilkenny County Council Information Webpage at <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/housing/local-authority-affordable-purchase-scheme/>. It is advisable that those interested in the scheme review the information carefully where they will find general information on the scheme along with eligibility criteria, how to apply, the documentation required to accompany an application etc.

We expect that there will be high demand for these homes. We strongly recommend that applicants have Mortgage Approval in Principle in place at time of application as eligible applicants will be required to demonstrate they have all the necessary funds in place. Purchasers can use a mortgage from any of the main lending institutions, to finance their purchase or if refused by 2 banks/building societies, they can then apply for the Local Authority Home Loan.

Under the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme, Kilkenny County Council will make homes available at a reduced price for eligible applicants who are seeking to purchase a newly built home but need additional funds to bridge the gap between their mortgage and deposit to cover the full price of the home. In return, Kilkenny County Council will take a percentage Equity Share in the Affordable Home. Purchasers will enter into an Affordable Dwelling Purchase Agreement with Kilkenny County Council. The purchaser can redeem or 'buy out' this Equity Share at a time of their choosing but there is no obligation to do so. If the purchaser chooses not to redeem the Equity Share while living in the home, the Council can do so when the property is sold, transferred, after the death of the owner or after 40 years.

Inquiries to affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie

- (vi) Support to access health care in line with needs.
- (vii) Support for cultural, social and political participation.
- (viii) Support in living with and/or overcoming identified vulnerabilities.

The LAIT can play a role in outlining the responsibility the local authority has in integration and the coordination/engagement model with the agencies that will support those individuals when a new centre opens. However it's clear that their role is integration, which does not influence whether a new centre opens within area, the profile of those being accommodated and the community engagement prior to that centre opening.

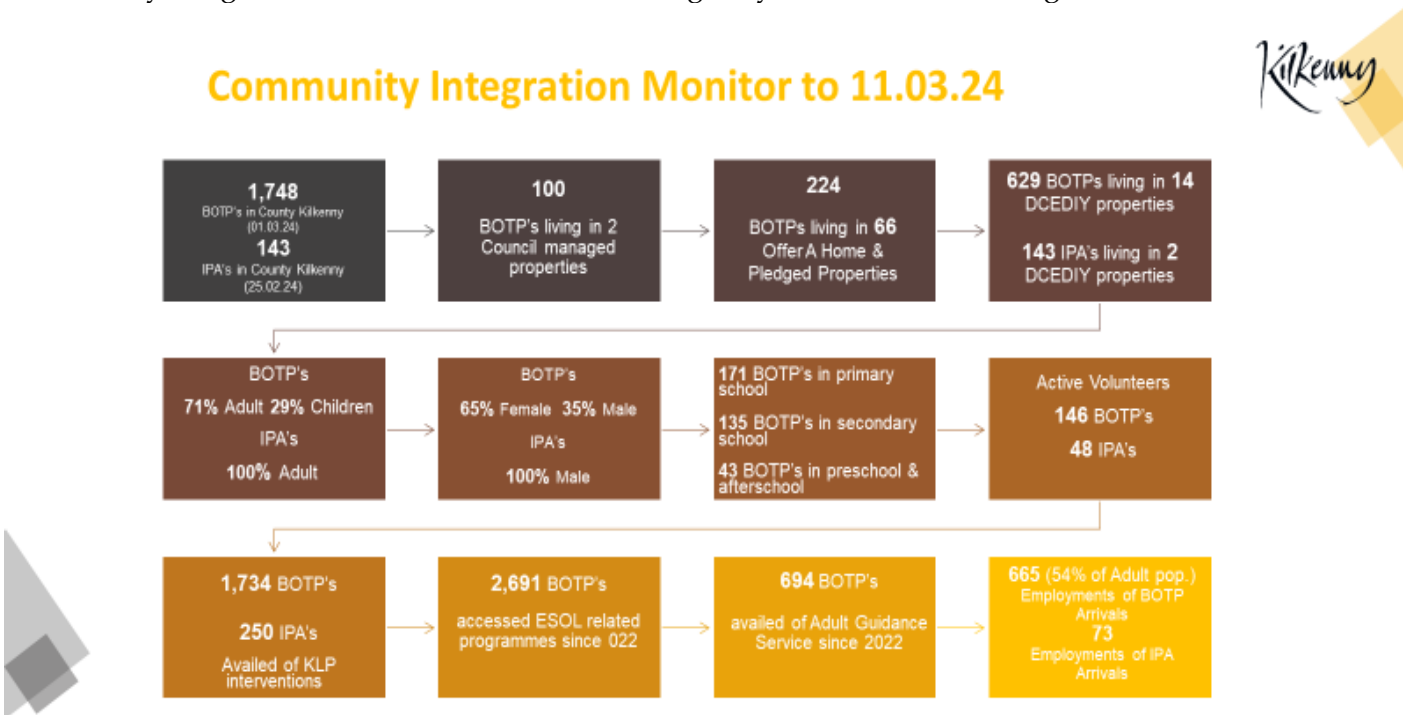
The role of the LAIT begins when International Protection Applicants arrive within the County. The LAITs are not responsible for communicating with stakeholder groups and Elected Members ahead of any new centre opening. They have no influence or control of these centres, who is due to be accommodated in them, or where they are located. This is the responsibility of DCEDIY.

The LAIT team, consisting of a Integration Co-ordinator and 2 Integration Support Workers, commenced with Kilkenny County Council in February 2024. To date, the LAIT have connected with residents in both Council managed properties and 2 IPAS Centres. The team are currently in the process of meeting residents in all properties to establish needs.

Currently, there is considerable variation in the provision of integration supports depending on the location, the type of accommodation and the availability and accessibility of supports and services in the locality.

The Ukrainian Community Forum which has evolved through COVID and the Ukrainian crisis will be renamed the 'Community Integration Forum' with new terms of reference to ensure wrap around supports from all agencies for all the above cohorts. The Team are currently in the process of meeting with all agencies to establish all services being provided and developing a Directory of Services to provide information and to eliminate duplication of services.

The role of the LAIT is primarily focused on providing information and signposting to relevant stakeholders/key agencies that support. The LAITs will be a key coordination function between the individuals, the relevant stakeholders and agencies that support and will use the structure of the Community Integration Forum to escalate and manage any issues that are arising.



Offer A Home Programme

A refresh campaign was run in November 2023 to revitalise the campaign started in November 2022. The campaign was extended to include both occupied and shared properties and was supported jointly by the Local Government Sector and the Irish Red Cross.

Kilkenny County Council's experience with the Offer of a Home Scheme has been very positive in that it has provided accommodation for 190 registered Ukrainians. The Scheme has received 90% positive feedback from both owners and Ukrainian residents. The 'Offer a Home' programme is being managed by Local Authorities on behalf of Government. A Government tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to those fleeing the Ukraine

The 'Offer a Home' programme is currently seeking property owners who have a house, apartment or holiday home that is not currently being used to offer it to people and families from Ukraine who need a safe place to stay for short-term accommodation. When owners commit to a pledge of their vacant property, suitability is determined by Kilkenny County Council. When Ukrainian residents commence residing at the property, a licence agreement is signed by both the owner and resident for a period of six months. The conditions attached to the pledge of a property are set out in the Licence Agreement.

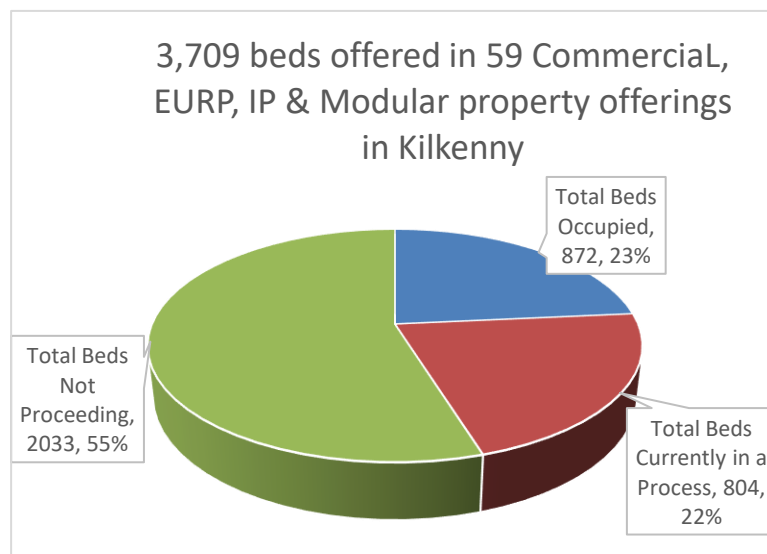
For existing Licence Holders who have committed to the Offer of a Home Scheme, all licences can only be extended to 4th March 2024 in line with the Temporary Directive for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (*Ukrainians*). Further details are available on the 'Offer a Home' programme on www.offerahome.ie or contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

	March 2024
Number of Properties Offered	99
Number of Properties Assessed as suitable	68
Number of Allocated Properties	56
Number of Registered Ukrainians in Occupied Properties	190

Accommodation Update

The table below provides an update on the number of properties offered by owners in Kilkenny to DECDIY to provide accommodation for Ukrainian/IP use through commercial applications, under the Emergency Ukrainian Refurbishment Programme (ERUP), through IPAS for IP accommodation and Expressions of Interest for modular sites. There is considerable workload for all Departments within Kilkenny County Council (Ukrainian Unit, Planning, Environment, Fire, Conservation and Building Control) to ensure regulatory compliance and in line with the Planning exemptions S.I. 306 for Ukrainian use and S.I. 376 for International Protection use.

Total Number of Properties Offered to DCEDIY by Private Sector	Total Number of Beds Offered	Total Beds Currently Occupied	Total Beds Undergoing Regulatory Compliance by Kilkenny County Council	Total Beds Not Proceeding
59	3,709	872	804	2,033



FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Urlingford Fire Brigade have moved into their new fire station. It is hoped that we will have the official opening in the coming months. The design of the new HQ fire Station for Kilkenny City is progressing well. Submission for the Part 8 planning is scheduled for July 2024 and to go before the full Council meeting in September 2024.

All major construction projects, including major refurbishment projects at Fire Stations require capital funding from the NDFEM. Ongoing day-to-day maintenance of Fire Stations is funded from the Fire Authorities own revenue budget.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

- 19 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.
- Ukrainian Response Unit - Fire Safety Certificate compliance.
- The Fire Authority technical staff have been involved in the newly established Kilkenny County Council's Ukrainian Response Unit.
- A large number of risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and fire safety certification applications to ensure minimum standards.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.
- 2 Fire Safety Notices were served under Section 20 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, where the fire safety remedial works has been completed such notices can be subsequently withdrawn.
- 4 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 15 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place in 2024.

Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended 157 incidents to date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards, domestic fires, ambulance assists, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

A competition for the recruitment of firefighters is underway. The closing date for the applications for retained fire fighters for Kilkenny City, Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown, Callan and Graiguenamanagh was the 16th February, 2024. A total of 67 applicants have applied. Shortlisting has taken place and the next step of the recruitment process is the suitability tests which will be held on the 19/20/21 March 2024.

Fire Appliances

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in all seven (7) Fire Stations throughout the County.

There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation i.e. Standard Class B Pumping Fire Appliance (normal fire appliance), Emergency Tenders, Combined Aerial and Pumping Appliances, Water Tankers, Incident Command vehicle and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles with off road capabilities.

Kilkenny County Council Fire and Rescue Service have received Capital Grant Aid for the replacement of Freshford Class B Fire Appliance in 2023 and expect to replace that Class B Appliance during 2025. Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service will also receive a new fire appliance for Urlingford Fire Brigade in May 2024. We will continue with a replacement programme and refurbishment programme as capital funding is made available.

Primary School Programme

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service continue to deliver the National Directorate Fire and Emergency Management Primary Schools Programme. It is targeted at all 3rd Class Primary School children. The fire authority has delivered this programme from inception in 2006 and every year subsequently (*except during the recent pandemic*). Over 20,000 pupils have participated in the Primary Schools Programme to date. The fire authority has provided training and refresher training for a number of firefighters in each brigade to assist them to deliver this Programme to all school children in 3rd classes in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools.

Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service are obliged under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that our Fire-fighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties.

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed Instructor courses in order that they in turn can instruct and direct delivery of training sessions / courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. Local Station, Fire Authority, Region, National and International*) and through a variety of arrangements.

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service recently ran a Compartment Behaviour Training Course in Hackettstown Fire Training Centre. The aim of this 5-day course is to provide the learners (*trainee firefighters*), who have completed the 10-day Using Breathing Apparatus (*Initial Wearer*) course, with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus in compartment fires.

This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms.

Photos from the course show entry techniques into a hot and smoke filled compartment fire.

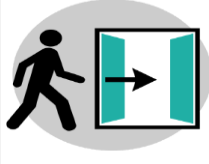


Kilkenny County Councils' Fire and Rescue Service ran a very successful Skills Training on Risk Management (STORM) course in Thomastown Fire Station. This is a two-day skill building workshop in understanding self-harm and suicide. Participants were trained to reduce the immediate risk of a self-harm, suicide and increase the support for a person at risk. The workshop provided opportunities to learn what a person at risk may need from others in order to keep safe and get more help.

LIBRARY



30,374 Items borrowed



17,259 Visitors



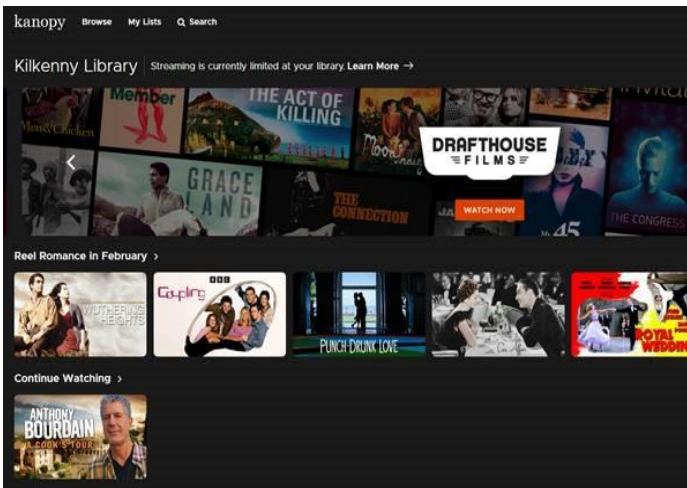
1,375 New Members

Kanopy

Kilkenny County Council Library Services are trialling a new springtime streaming service called *Kanopy*, which will provide library members with access to hundreds of fantastic online movies and documentaries for free. An assortment of family-friendly titles will ensure wholesome entertaining nights-in, while *Kanopy Kids* is not only enjoyable but supports early literacy.

With an easy-to-use interface that can be streamed on a range of devices including laptops, desktops, TVs, tablets or phones, and a wealth of titles carefully selected from all the major studios, *Kanopy* is a visual feast for film fans.

Find out more about this new service on the Online Library section of our website.



Kilkenny Library Development Plan 2024-2028

Kilkenny County Council Library Service are inviting everyone to have their say and help make sure that our library service continues to meet the needs of our communities by completing our development plan survey.

Your input is vital in guiding this process, and we welcome responses from everyone - both library users and people who do not use the library.



The survey can be accessed in all of our library branches or at kilkennylibrary.ie

Mayfair Library Update

The Mayfair Library is scheduled to open at the end of April 2024 - works continue on snagging lists, stocking shelves, implementation of ICT systems and health and safety systems as well as furniture and fitout schedules.



Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online
198	198	0
Offsite	Live	Numbers
4	190	2540

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included a children's slime workshop in City Library, a creative writing group in Loughboy Library, a colour and style workshop in Castlecomer Library, CoderDojo classes in Thomastown Library, chess clubs in Urlingford Library, an art exhibition in Callan Library, Valentine's stories and crafts in Graiguenamanagh Library, a word games afternoon in Ferrybank Library and a number of community book clubs which were supported by library staff.



Throughout the month of February, our library branches hosted 198 events with a total of 2,540 attendees both in our branches and on visits to local creches, schools and community groups.



3,053 eAudiobooks borrowed



1,296 eBooks borrowed



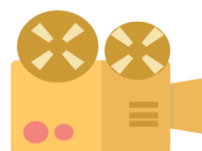
112 eComics Borrowed



153 Online Courses sessions



1,374 eMagazines borrowed



Digital Engagement

Our staff prepared, recorded, edited and published 307 posts and videos on our social media platforms in February. Our engagements for the month were 2,267 and our videos and reels had 3,166 views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to 6,002 email accounts.

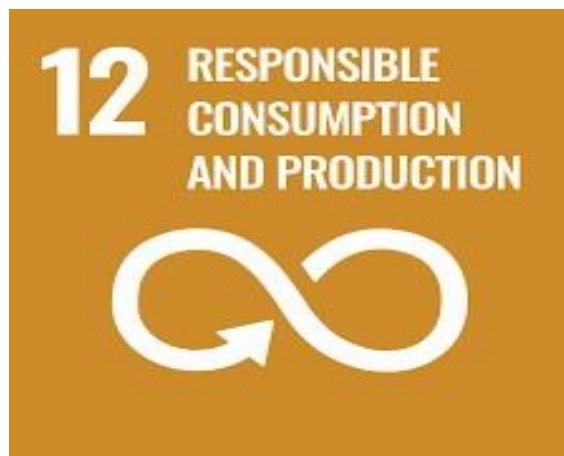
Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in February:

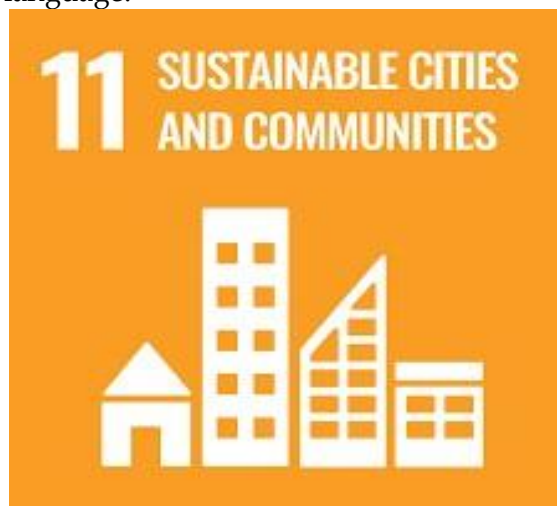
SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

City Library hosted a repair café where a volunteer was on hand to teach participants how to mend and repair clothes.



SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Loughboy and Ferrybank Libraries held regular Ciorcal Comhrá Gaeilge which aim to bring people together and promote the Irish language.



FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of February is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €12.316m compared with the annual budget of €111.134m.

Table 1	Actual YTD February 2023	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	3,191	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	1,874	29,958
Water Services	1,108	7,699
Development Management	1,210	14,720
Environmental Services	1,095	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	634	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	66	690
Miscellaneous Services	1,039	6,331
CMC for distribution	2,099	
OVERALL TOTAL	12,316	111,134

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the two-month period to the end of February 2024. The draft Financial Statements for 2023 are finalised and will be presented to Council at the March meeting. The revised Capital Programme will be presented at the March Council meeting.

The annual rate invoices for 2024 were sent to all rate payers in February. In previous years, Commercial Rates were payable in two moieties, with the first 50% (*plus any arrears due*) being due on issue of the demand, and the second 50% falling due on the 1st of July. Commercial Rates are now payable in full from 1st January 2024.

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

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal.....	149 cases
Appeal Withdrawn.....	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9 cases
Appeals outstanding.....	5 cases

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

Commercial Rates Vacancy

The commercial rates vacancy is 50% for 2024 as agreed at the Annual Budget Meeting. A 50% vacancy strike off will be applied to eligible commercial rate accounts for 2023 where the customer formally applies, provides proof of vacancy and clears any outstanding rate arrears, where applicable.

Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant Scheme

As part of Budget 2024, the Government signed off on a package of €257m for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium Enterprises. This rollout will be managed through the Local Authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). Eligible businesses will receive a once-off grant which will be based on the value of their Commercial Rates bill in 2023.

The milestones and timelines are as follows:

- Social Media Communications in relation to ICOB occurred in **late February or early March**.
- A letter detailing how to apply for the grant will be sent to ratepayers starting **12th March**.
- The ICOB Portal will be accessible to businesses from **14th March**.
- Local Authorities can commence processing grants from week **8th April**.
- Payments to businesses can begin on **22nd April**.

Kilkenny County Council have set up a small project team comprising of staff from the Finance and IS Departments and the Local Enterprise Office to promote and administer the scheme.