



KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
DECEMBER 2019
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

To: Each Member of Kilkenny County Council

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

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Yulefest ReCreate Workshops:

17th December

Christmas stories and songs for children Callan Library at 4.00 p.m.
Urlingford Library at 6.30 p.m.

21st December

- Graignamanagh Library 11am,
- Thomastown Library 10.30 & 11.30am

28th December

Kilkenny County Council, through its Local Enterprise Office, is staging a unique careers event showcasing 640 jobs on offer from 22 leading companies located across the City and County in Kilkenny's Medieval Mile Museum.

31st January

Closing date for receipt of applications for grants under the Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020.

6th February, 2020

Closing date for receipt of submissions for refurbishment of Alms House, No. 2, St. Mary's Lane, Kilkenny

7th February 2020

Closing date for receipt of applications under the Community Water Development Fund.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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CORPORATE

Pride of Place 2019

Kilkenny County Council was honoured to have hosted the 17th Annual All-Ireland Pride of Place Gala Awards Ceremony. Hundreds of unsung heroes from across the Island of Ireland descended on the Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny, on Saturday 30th November, 2019 for the Awards Ceremony. This was a hugely successful event showcasing Kilkenny on the National Stage and the Council were delighted to host the Event. Dubbed the 'Oscars of the Community Sector' the Pride of Place awards is an annual competition organised by Co-Operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance.

Kilkenny was represented by four groups:

Kilmacow: *Winners of Community Wellbeing Category.*

Ballyhale Development Association: *Runners Up in Category One - Population 0-300*

Inistioge: *Cois Abhann Community Centre*

Kilmacow: *Pride of Place Group.*

Congratulations to the Kilmacow Pride of Place Group and Ballyhale Development Association on their success in the Competition.



Ballyhale Development Association



Kilmacow Group

ROADS

Non National Roads

The majority of the works are now complete on Non National roads. Approximately €14 million has been spent on the upkeep of the network and local improvements around the City and County in 2019. The works covered are

Road Restoration (Blacktop) - €6.9 million spent on 74 projects surfacing 59km of local and regional roads.

Surface Dressing (Tar & Chip) - €1.8 million spent on 65 projects surface dressing 78km of local and regional roads.

Discretionary works - €2.6 million spent on 97 projects (Footpath repairs, Footpath extensions, Additional public lighting, Improvements in villages etc)

Drainage Works - €660k spent on 45 projects improving localised flooding issues

Low cost accident schemes - €318k spent on 11 no schemes providing safety works around the County

Bridge Rehabilitation - €200k spent on 11 no bridges.

Surfacing Public Lanes (CIR) - €570k spent surfacing 14 no lanes

Surfacing Private lanes (LIS) - €290k spent surfacing 9 no lanes

Pavement Schemes

N25. The N25 pavement scheme over two sections totalling approximately 4.5km, Gaulstown to Graiguenakill and Luffany to the Rhu Glenn is complete. Total cost €2.5m

N76. Kilkenny to Callan Road pavement scheme is advancing through detailed design and contract preparation. A number of sections will be overlaid between Brownstown and the Callan Bypass totalling 6km at a cost of €3 million in 2020.

Kilkenny Ring Road. 8 no roundabouts are to be resurfaced. They are currently advancing through detailed design and contract preparation. Tenders are expected to be ready in Q4 2019.



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Kilkenny Minor Schemes:

Several schemes are progressing through various stages in conjunction with TII on the national road network.

- The N24 Tower Road Junction improvement scheme received planning approval in April 2019. The CPO is published and gone to an Bord Pleanála for adjudication.
- The preparation of design and planning documents for the N77 Ballyragget to Ballinaslee Improvement Scheme are ongoing.
- N24 Carrick Road Improvement Scheme- A preferred route for the scheme has been published.

Kilkenny Major Schemes:

The New Ross bypass is almost complete. The scheme target opening date is Q1 2020.

The Phase 1 Concept and Feasibility on the N25 Glenmore to Waterford Improvement Scheme is finalised. This is a major scheme of approx. 10km linking the soon to be opened New Ross By-Pass and the existing Waterford By-Pass.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme. Kilkenny will be the lead authority on this scheme. We are currently out to tender for consultants on this project

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure

Construction of the scheme commenced in March 2019. Works are progressing well and are on programme to finish by the planned completion date of September 2020. The Circular Road is currently closed to facilitate construction of a new bridge over the River Breaghagh. These works are expected to be completed in February 2020, allowing the Circular Road to reopen.

Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge

Kilkenny County Council applied for planning permission to An Bord Pleanála for the Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge on the 9th August 2019. An oral hearing will be organised by an Bord Pleanála in early 2020.

PLANNING

Summary	Total to November		% Change
	2018	2019	
Planning Applications Received	792	888	+ 11%
Planning Applications Granted	629	693	+ 9%
Planning Applications Refused	57	65	+ 12%
Complaints Received	95	105	+ 10.5%
Warning Letters Issued	99	120	+ 21%

There is a 11% increase in planning applications up to end of November, year on year with corresponding increases in numbers granted and refused.

FORWARD PLANNING

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) approved by the Regional assembly on the 29th November. The RSES will become operable from the 31st Jan 2020.

City & County Development Plan

The formal process of progressing the City and County will recommence in Jan 2020. Work on various plans and strategies required for the new plan continues to progress. Masterplans have commenced for Loughmacask & Fairgreen and St Canice's Hospital. A masterplan for lands between Belmont Road and Abbey Road will commence early in the new year. These will be subject to their own public consultation events early in 2020.

Work on the retail strategy, housing needs demands assessment, renewable energy strategy, Strategic Environmental Assessment Appropriate Assessment and other constituents of the new City and County Development Plan continues in the background.



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Graigenamanagh Local Area Plan

The joint Local Area Plan for Graigenamanagh and Tinnahinch continues. The preparation of a report on the pre-draft consultation is nearing completion and it is anticipated that a draft plan will be published in early 2020 (February). At that stage the statutory public consultation will commence for a minimum period of 6 weeks

Vacant Sites

There are now 28 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. A total of 13 of these were liable for the 3% levy. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.

Work has commenced on adding sites to the Register for 2020. A total of 87 sites were assessed for inclusion. Of these, 18 met the criteria, and notices were issued to the relevant landowners in late November, giving notice that their sites are being considered for inclusion on the Register. The owners have 28 days to respond.

An article was published in the Kilkenny People on the 20th November outlining some information on the Vacant Sites Register and its effectiveness to date.

The number of cancelled entries due to site activation now stands at 10 sites.

CONSERVATION GRANTS FOR 2020

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020

A nationwide funding of €2,500,000 as part of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020. The fund has been allocated by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to provide assistance to owners of protected structures, proposed protected structures and structures in Architectural Conservation Areas, or within the Amenity of a National Monument in carrying out conservation works.

The funding for the grant ranges between €2,500 and €15,000, with grant allocations not exceeding 50% of the overall cost of each conservation project.

Historic Structures Fund 2020

As part of the *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027*, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has announced the Historic Structures Fund for 2020 with a total (countrywide) fund available of €1,824,000. This Historic Structures Fund will be on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the benefit of communities and the public.

The Historic Structures Fund will have two Streams:

Stream 1 will offer grants from €15,000 up to €50,000 and is aimed at essential repairs and smaller capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures.

Stream 2 will offer a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures, where a clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated.

Closing date for both grants is Thursday, 31st January 2020

Record of Protected Structures

A select review of buildings on the Record of Protected Structures has commenced in Upper Bridge Street, Callan. This review complements work to date on the Callan Residential Occupancy Pilot Project and is an objective of the Callan Local Area Plan.

Taking in Charge

The following estates will be put before members for initiation of Taking In Charge at the December 2019 meeting:

- Kingscourt, Callan; and
- Ard Glas, Ban Ard, Tuar Na mBlath, An Grianan, An Cuainin at Abbeylands Ferrybank Kilkenny.



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The following estates will be put before members at the December 2019 meeting to conclude the statutory Taking In Charge process:

- Inis Alainn, Fiddown;
- Chapel View, Stoneyford; and
- Hunters Wood, Newmarket.

Works have been completed on the following estates and we are awaiting the payment of bond claims

- Brookfield, Ballyhale; and
- Bellfield, Ferrybank.

Works are scheduled to commence in Q1 2020 at the following estates:

- Banagher Court, Piltown;
- The Greens, Ballyfoyle;
- Clonkil, Callan; and
- Friars Hill, Graiguenamanagh

Pocket Park, located beside the Harristown Roundabout.

The works include a general cleanup, new entrance points, footways, a central paved meeting area, incorporating age friendly seating and significant soft landscaping which provides for pollinator friendly planting. The works are being funded under the 2019 Anti-Dumping Initiative and it is expected that the Park will be officially opened for the public to enjoy before Christmas.



ENVIRONMENT

Waste Enforcement Prosecutions

On foot of a successful prosecution brought by the Council, a local person was convicted for the illegal disposal of waste in a manner that was likely to cause environmental pollution at Wetlands on March 26th. At a recent court sitting



Judge Geraldine Carthy imposed a three-month prison sentence which she suspended on condition that the defendant engage with the Probation Services and also ordered that the defendant's pay costs of €2,700.

The offence was under section 32(1) of the Waste Management Act.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

Significant progress was made on the cleanup and enhancement of a prominent green area in Graiguenamanagh with the development of a

Ballyragget Landfill Remediation Project

Despite poor weather over the month of November, works on this 6-acre €1.4million project progressed well and remain on target for a completion date in Quarter 1 of next year. During the month of November, the gas collection system and the installation of the LLDPE liner was substantially completed along with significant progress installing the sub-surface drainage system and the placement of the subsoil layer. Over the next two months works will be focused on the topsoil layer placement, the reinstatement of a native boundary hedgerow, fencing and the removal of the haulage access tracks.



Aerial view looking North



Aerial viewing looking South

Grant Announcement

In November, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment announced the successful recipients of the Community



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Environment Action Fund 2019 (Local Agenda 21). In Kilkenny, the fund was €21,850 and was split between 19 successful applicants. All projects related to either biodiversity or climate change projects. Successful applicants included 4 tidy town groups, 4 school educators, 1 community development group, 1 scout group and 9 schools.

Greening of Festivals Programme

Kilkenny County Council supported the work of Savour Kilkenny and Ballykeefe Amphitheatre this year to improve their environmental performance. Recent analysis of waste statistics indicate that the Ballykeefe music venue halved the volume of rubbish going to landfill in 2019 using 2018 as a baseline figure. A work programme is currently being drafted to support their continued greening initiatives in 2020 and the Council is currently planning to expand their support to additional community events who have expressed a desire to adopt a green charter as part of their event plan.



An Environmental/Art Collaboration

This December a unique project is underway in Kilkenny City. The City is soon to receive a piece of street art to illustrate the Council's commitment to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The project is a collaboration between the Arts Office and the Environment Section and weather permitting, the artwork will be complete before Christmas, the artist Dan from Dan Leo Design is currently at work on the mural which is located at the Closh on the Gaol Road. Below is a sneak preview of the artwork.



KCLR Campaign with Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils

- Stuff only your Turkey this Christmas

This December saw a Christmas waste prevention campaign on KCLR Live. Sponsored by the Southern Region Waste Management Office, Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils worked together to remind the public to avoid the excess of Christmas, to plan and prevent the generation of waste. Thanks to Chairperson Cllr Peter 'Chap' Cleere in his involvement with the campaign as he and his family went live on air to discuss how they were going to adapt to decrease waste and be mindful over the festive season.

2020 Funding For Communities, Water & Wildlife.

The Community Water Development Fund 2020 was launched at the inaugural 'Rivers Trusts and Catchment Partnerships Conference' on Saturday 30th November 2019.

The fund is open to all community and voluntary groups who want to get involved in the protection and restoration of a healthy water environment in their local area. The fund is also open to Rivers Trusts and Catchment Partnerships. There is a move towards the formation of such groups in Ireland, whereby local groups are becoming more actively involved in the management of a local water body and the wider catchment area. Improvements in the water environment delivers multiple benefits for health and well-being, wildlife and the local economy.

The Community Water Development Fund is administered by the Local Authority Waters Programme on behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The closing date for applications submitted by post or email is Friday, 7th February 2020 at 5.00 pm.

A new development for 2020 provides for online applications via www.lawaters.ie The deadline for online applications is extended to Tuesday, 11th February 2020 at 8.00 pm. To encourage applications via the new online facility a draw will



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take place, for online applicants only, with one lucky group receiving a prize of €500.

Examples of the types of projects include:

- Capital projects, such as: river and lake restoration; habitat conservation and restoration; natural flood mitigation measures.
- Public awareness and education; local events such as biodiversity days; surveys, training and workshops; ecology surveys; etc.
- Local amenity benefits, such as: beach clean-ups; improving amenity areas; bird watching facilities; etc.

Grants awarded will range from up to €5,000; up to €10,000 and up to €25,000. The total fund is capped at €225,000 for 2020.

RMCEI Plan (*Recommended Minimum Criteria Environmental Inspection Plan*)

RMCEI	Number of Inspections undertaken up to the end of November 2019
WFD Monitoring, op & surveys, samples taken	421
Additional BOD sampling for Water Services	569
Ambient Monitoring	198
Other SW/GW protection inspections	88
Inspections of existing planning permissions	580
Ground water quality (Planning inspections)	156
Bring bank surveillance	172
Bring bank inspections	148
Inspections under solid fuel Regs	34
WCP AR Validation	30
Inspections under the tyre Regs – Retailers	22
Routine Litter Patrols – City	200
Routine Litter Patrols – County	229

PARKS

Woodstock Gardens

All funding has now been successfully drawn down on the Woodstock Loop Walks funded by the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. The footpaths which span 3.5 km are very popular with walkers including those accessing Woodstock gardens from the village of Inistioge and those travelling the section which covers the way marked trail of South Leinster Way. An application for funding has been made to the Department of Rural and Community Development to continue these type of trail works into a second phase further along the South Leinster Way which would see the development of the walks as far as the waterfall at the Red House. More funding of €17,634 has been awarded under the same ORIS grant scheme to prepare a communications and marketing strategy for Woodstock gardens in 2020. This will further promote the gardens as a tourist destination of significance in the south east.

Enhancement works have also recently commenced in the conservatory which houses the tea room. This work is being carried out over the winter months when the facility is closed. The works involve lifting the stone floor which has always been problematic to keep clean in a food venue and also hard to heat. This will be replaced instead with a tiled floor in the Victorian style. The stone floor which has been lifted will be used outside to create a terraced seating area overlooking the Terraced Flower Garden. Piping will be installed to facilitate future underfloor heating in the tea room to provide more comfort to customers and will help to lengthen the period in which the tea rooms can remain open into the Winter months. As part of these works the conservatory will also be painted, a new statement centre piece light will be hung and Victorian period plants and planters will be provided within the tea room prior to opening in 2020.



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The floor of the conservatory partially relocated into an outdoor seating area



Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

Work is well underway on the construction of the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park. The path network is now dug out with the terraced area for the playground being constructed currently. The playground equipment will be the last element to be added in the Spring with the aim to have the facility open for Easter 2020.

The park is being jointly funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government (50%), Kilkenny County Council (25%), and Waterford City and County Council (25%). The project represents a practical manifestation of the two Local Authorities in the area working together for the benefit of Ferrybank, and the wider Waterford City area.

The construction of the park will create a much needed central amenity facility for Ferrybank, incorporating a children's playground, walking route, teenager meeting point, and playing pitch.



Preparing the shuttering for a climbing wall and terraced seating area in the proposed playground

Tree Planting

The Parks section is planning a programme of tree planting in the City and County commencing in December to commemorate a number of special anniversaries. The planting programme is the beginning of our commitment to increase tree planting county wide to assist in addressing Climate Change. The trees will all be native and or pollinator friendly and will be semi mature at planting.

The anniversaries to be marked are as follows:

- 120 years of Local Government with sites at Ballyragget, Castlecomer, Piltown, Callan and Kilkenny City
- 40 years of the Rotary Club. Forty trees to be planted in Loughboy Neighbourhood Park
- 30 years of the Kilkenny Civic Trust. 30 Trees to be planted in Loughboy Neighbourhood Park
- 20 years of Woodstock Gardens Restoration Project. 20 specimen trees will be planted in the arboretum to replace storm losses from pervious stormy years
- 25 Years of the Kilkenny Cat Laughs. 25 trees will be planted in Lintown Hall to recreate the avenue of Lime trees which were previously vandalised.



Amenity Grants

The Parks Department administers the amenity grants scheme, which is available to voluntary community organisations from all over the County. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and community involvement in the upkeep, maintenance and enjoyment of public amenities. Over 163 groups



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received grant assistance in 2019 amounting to a total of €127k in funding with close to 100% of this drawn down to date in December. The range of works funded includes landscaping, grass and meadow maintenance and development of open spaces, the provision of street and outdoor furniture and small-scale improvement works. These works will help to continue to contribute to the overall amenity of County Kilkenny, and help enhance the County's reputation as a quality place to live. An increase in the total budget of €13k approved in this years adopted budget will bring the total fund up to €140k for 2020. This increase in funding will further assist community groups in towns and villages maintain and upkeep their local neighbourhoods.

South East Greenway

Works have commenced on the initial stages of the South East Greenway which runs from Ferrybank in Waterford to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot just after the tunnel is exited. The route covers a distance of 24km in total. To enable the detail designs to be completed for the project the track has been cleared of scrub vegetation allowing access for the first time in years. Site surveys are now being carried out along with bore hole investigations at sites where underpasses may be required for certain farming operations. In tandem with this process a team from Wexford and Kilkenny County Council are meeting with landowners along the entire route to discuss accommodation works.



Walking the track following vegetation clearance in November

TOURISM

Kilkenny Festive Traditions Celebrated in a New Cookbook

Visit Kilkenny launches new Christmas Cookery Book
Some of Kilkenny's finest food producers and top restaurants have joined forces in creating a 'festive' cookbook. Entitled 'Kilkenny Christmas Traditions', the book celebrates the very best of Christmas culinary fare and traditions in the county.

The 52 page book is available online at <https://visitkilkenny.ie/christmas-cookbook/> and contains thirty easy to create recipes from festive starters, mains, sides to deserts, all using ingredients from Kilkenny food producers or recipes straight from the kitchen of some of the County's best restaurants.

Among the contributors to the book are the Yew Restaurant in Lyrath; The Lady Eleanor Restaurant at Butlers House; Goatsbridge Trout Farm; Ryeland House Cookery School; Rive Gauche Restaurant and Edward Hayden's School of Cookery, among others.

Feel free to send the link <https://visitkilkenny.ie/christmas-cookbook/> to those near and far who might like some inspiration or just to feel a bit closer to home at Christmas!



Election of New Chair for Kilkenny Tourism CLG

At the recent board meeting of Kilkenny Tourism CLG held on 13/11/19, Colin Ahern, General Manager of the Ormonde Hotel was elected to the position of Chair to replace Naoise Nunn.

Colin brings a wealth of experience having previously held the position, and Naoise Nunn was presented with a small token in recognition of his voluntary input as Chairman.



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TTG Travel Experience, Rimini, Italy

Kilkenny Tourism was represented by Grace Quinn at the TTG Travel Experience in Rimini recently, to promote Kilkenny as a destination to International visitors. TTG Travel Experience is an international **B2B** exhibition for tourism. It is one of the largest fairs in this field in Italy, and is now established among the elite of European expos.

This is the Italian Marketplace for Travel & Hospitality. Three exhibitions are held simultaneously:

TTG Travel Experience SIA Hospitality Design SUN Beach & Outdoor Style

This year Rimini's TTG reported the participation of **73,821 professional visitors & 2,850 exhibitors**.

Following attendance at the fair a presentation was given to the Board of Kilkenny Tourism CLG on the merits of attending and future opportunities.



Tourism Festival Grants: Closing Date 13th December 2019

The Tourism Festival Grants scheme for 2020 was published earlier this month, with a closing date for applications of 13th December 2019. The closing date was chosen so as to enable members to consider the grant allocations as early as possible in 2020, which in turn brings some degree of certainty to festival promoters and allows them to make early financial decisions.

Regional Tourism Collaboration

One aspect of our existing Work Programme is the development of regional collaboration to develop

links with our neighbouring counties allowing the region to present a coherent offer to international visitors. Tangible evidence of this collaboration is the development of the Kilkenny Greenway project which received funding earlier in 2019, and saw the pooling of resources between Kilkenny Waterford and Wexford.

The Tourism Officers in the South East have been networking throughout 2019. Four themes, drivers of distinction, have emerged in workshops facilitated by Fáilte Ireland and the South East Development Office:

- Active Outdoor
- Castles and Gardens
- Fine Food inspired by Nature
- Living history, extraordinary culture

Media spotlight on Kilkenny

We continue to avail of opportunities for media profile – digital, print or broadcast, and recent work undertaken by TL Marketing for Kilkenny Tourism illustrates the point:

The Hard Shoulder with Ivan Yates on Newstalk:

<https://www.newstalk.com/podcasts/highlights-from-the-hard-shoulder/what-to-do-in-kilkenny>

Food Blog, Gourmet Grazing:

<https://gourmetgrazing.ie/a-weekend-in-kilkenny/>

Interview Katia from properfood.ie did with

Cake Face on a recent press trip to Kilkenny

<http://www.properfood.ie/laura-gannon-cakeface-patisserie/>

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2019 – Measure 1 awards

The Department of Community and Rural Development recently announced over €1.8 million in national funding for 109 projects under Measure 1 of the 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

The scheme is part of the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration and Development programme, and provides funding for the development and maintenance of outdoor amenities such as trails, walkways, cycle ways



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and blueways, and Kilkenny County Council secured €82,400 for five projects:

	Grant	Total Cost
Kilkenny Outdoor Activity Trail Marketing Material	€18,400	€23,000
Freshford Loop Walk Surface Upgrade	€12,000	€15,000
Lingaun Valley Website and Marketing Material	€18,400	€23,000
Tory Hill Loop Walk Surface Upgrade	€16,000	€20,000
Woodstock Promotion and Communications Plan	€17,600	€22,000



Kilkenny County Council, through its Local Enterprise Office, is staging a unique careers event showcasing 640 jobs on offer from 22 leading companies located across the City and County in Kilkenny's Medieval Mile Museum on December 28th next. A range of local businesses including State Street, Cartoon Saloon & Lighthouse Studios, VHI, Bank of Ireland, CF Pharma, The Carne Group and the Asgard Group will be joined by rapidly growing local companies such as the Modubuild, Beotanics, Loanitt, Prochem, AB Agri, Entegro and Security Risk Advisors.

Businesses are seeking to fill positions across a huge range of jobs including: IT professionals, Customer Care and Sales, Engineering, Technical, Financial, Administration, Network Planners, Technicians, HR, Accounting, Facilities and Production. #careerskilkenny is all about promoting high-quality jobs currently on offer from a wide range of locally based companies whilst also highlighting Kilkenny as a great place to live and work.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Kilkenny crowned overall winner at Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Town Awards



Kilkenny was named Ireland's most enterprising town at this year's [Bank of Ireland](#) National Enterprise Town Awards, taking home the trophy for Regional, National and Overall Winner and a cash prize of €33,000. The annual awards, now in their fourth year, bring business, community groups and local authorities together, in each town, to showcase the spirit of enterprise in their local area. This year almost 70 towns and urban villages were nominated for the awards.

Hundreds of local job opportunities at #careerskilkenny this Christmas

LEO Key Statistics for 2019

€644,960 approved to 26 businesses linked to the creation of 104 over a 3 year period.

345 entrepreneurs have received one-to-one mentoring to assist them in relation to issues within their business;

930 participants attended 35 core training programmes from financial training to management development programmes;



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262 entrepreneurs attended Business Advisory Sessions with LEO staff to discuss starting a business or growing an existing business.

151 participants attended 6 Start Your Own Business programmes which explores all the aspects encountered when starting up a new business;

26 Trading Online Vouchers were approved totalling €36,035 in order to assist businesses to trade on-line;

12 businesses were approved Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants in order to assist them access overseas markets, value €20,496.

8 businesses were assisted to make applications for the St. Canice's Credit Union Smart Options Loan Scheme and Microfinance Ireland Fund;

5 businesses participated on Lean for Micro in order to assist them to look at their competitiveness and innovation specifically in relation to Brexit;

5 businesses have been transferred to/from Enterprise Ireland in order to avail of relevant supports;

28 businesses are currently participating in the Growth Mentor programme.

Schemes Completed in 2019 to-date

16 Units at Friary Walk, Callan (Cluid AHB).

4 Apartments Love Lane, Castlecomer (*Co-operative Housing*).

54 units Ballybough Street, KK (*Respond Housing*).

1 house at St Mary's Group Housing Scheme, Hebron, Kilkenny.

Schemes Under Construction Due for Completion in 2019

4 units at Blackstaff, Callan.

Schemes under Construction at 30th November 2019:

38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan

27 units Walkin Street, KK (*Oaklee Housing*)

15 units Nuncio Road, KK (*Respond Housing*)

17 Units at Breagagh Place, Main Street, Piltown

33 units at Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer

6 Units at New Road and Chapel Street, Mooncoin

22 units at Station Avenue, Ballyraggett

4 units (*Group home*) at Cloghabrody, Thomastown

Schemes at Tender Stage

18 units at 'Broguemaker', Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny

5 units at Grennan Villa, Thomastown (*Camphill*)

Schemes at Detailed Design Stage

6 units at Golf Links Road, (*Mulhalls Shop*) Kilkenny

2 Units at Shanganny, Jeninstown

2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat

2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh

Schemes at Planning Stage:

Development of 86 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, KK – closing date for submissions was Friday 27th September 2019 to An Bord Pleanála.

25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

This is the second year into the Rebuilding Ireland housing delivery programme. The Minister for Housing notified Kilkenny County Council of its revised delivery targets i.e. 599 units for the period 2018 to 2021 and a specific target of 190 units for 2019.

	Targets 2018-2021	2019 Targets
Build		114
Acquisition		46
Leasing		30
Sub-Total	599	190
HAP/RAS		184
All Streams		374



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27 Units under construction at Walkin Street, Kilkenny (Construction Stages)



Year	Number on Housing List
November 2019	1,997
December 2018	2,067
December 2017	2,180
December 2016	2,059 (Statutory Assessment 2016)
December 2015	2,744

Private Grants

Minister for Housing by letter dated 11th May notified Kilkenny County Council that it's allocations for the three grants is €1,922,638 in 2019. Kilkenny County Council is required to fund €384,528 i.e. 20%.

The Council had advertised the 'Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme' for a restricted period in previous years but no restriction applies for 2020 The Council approved 367 private grants amounting to a €2.5m and paid out €1.7m. The position on all three grants at end November is as follows:

November Monthly Statistics	
Number awaiting social housing support at 30 th November, 2019 (Gross Need)	1,997
Number of assessment interviews carried out in November:	21
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in November (offers made):	9
Number of HAP tenancies to 30 th November:	872
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in November:	3
Anti-social behaviour cases in November:	62
New Homeless Presentations in November:	16
Maintenance Calls for November 2019	701
Maintenance Calls year to date	4,978
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (Annuity/Construction)	20
Amount of Loans Approved to 30 th November, 2019	€2,747,780

Grants Approved 30th November, 2019		
Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	123	€1,388,658
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	30	€125,303
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	229	€1,096,516
Total	382	€2,610,476
Grants Paid out to 30th November 2019		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	75	€842,008
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	17	€83,333
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	219	€972,868
Total	311	€1,898,209

Housing List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 30th November is 1,997 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:



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Housing Loan Activity at 30th November, 2019

	Annuity/ RI Home Loan	Reconstruction Loan	Caravan Loan
Received	39	1	1
Approved	18	1	1
Amount Approved	2,731,620	10,000	6,160
No. Paid	17	1	1
Amount Paid	2,752,495	10,000	6,160

Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations for the months of 2019 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2016, 2017 and 2018 are set out below. There were 225 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations to 30/11/2019.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	37	29	37	25
February	30	26	32	12
March	18	26	21	16
April	26	25	18	16
May	34	28	29	20
June	31	24	20	14
July	31	34	15	30
August	32	27	26	28
September	27	24	19	26
October	30	27	27	22
November	32	29	23	16
December	21	19	6	
	349	318	273	225

New Rent Scheme and Rent Review 2020

Members are reminded of the pending rent review to be carried out in early 2020 for all our tenants. It is hoped to have the new rents in place by April 2020.

Kilkenny County Council has harmonised both Rent schemes for 2020 to remove the current anomalies and inequity for current tenants in receipt of the same social welfare payments.

The main changes are:

- Minimum rents set at €28.00
- Single OAP in receipt of state pension calculated at minimum rent
- Two OAP's in household each in receipt of state pension calculated at minimum rent subject to max rent of €45 (*harmonisation clause*)
- Non Return of rent forms: increase current weekly rent by €100 instead of 25% penalty

COMMUNITY

Healthy Ireland

Kilkenny LCDC has been awarded €245,548 to fund three Healthy Ireland actions that include: 'Healthy Inclusive Communities', 'Supporting Outreach and Engagement with Lone parents and building collaborations to respond to needs', and 'Regional implementation of agreed policy priority programmes (5 counties)' and one CMHF action: 'Social Prescribing', along with an action to employ a Healthy Kilkenny Coordinator, a Community Engagement Action and a CMHF Small Grants Action.

The Kilkenny Children and Young People Services committee

The Kilkenny Children and Young People Services committee (CYPSC) have been awarded a full allocation of Grant Agreement from Healthy Ireland of €127,957 for 2010-2021, covering all the projects were applied for. The Fund is administered by Kilkenny County Council and supports interagency projects designed to support Children & Young People in conjunction with TUSLA, HSE, KCETB and voluntary sector organisations delivering services to children & young people.

ARTS

The Lit Festival 2019

Our Rhyme Rag Ensemble writers attended The Lit Festival 2019 on Saturday 16th November in Waterford. The Lit Festival of Reading and



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Writing is a festival for young people by young people. Participants are invited to plunge into a book, fall in love with the world of words and take to arms with a pen in hand.

Our writers participated in workshops facilitated by writers Erin Fornoff, Dave Rudden, Anthea West and a #WeAreThePoets masterclass with Laureate na nÓg Sarah Crossan.



Kilkenny & Waterford Young Writers at the Lit Festival

School Subsidy

Following on from our school subsidy for Barnstorm Theatre Company's early Spring production, aimed at primary school children, we decided to offer support to schools, particularly to smaller county-based schools, towards transport costs for their Winter production **The Bockety World of Henry & Bucket**. This delightful play for children aged 4 and older, looks at friendship through a day in the life of two friends who live in a bockety world of discarded objects. Seven schools availed of this support with 302 children enjoying their theatre visit.

Artists CPD Outreach Programme Blackstack Studio

To further support Kilkenny's artistic community and artist's development, the Arts Office partnered with Blackstack Print Studio to run a programme offering CPD opportunities in printmaking.

Maeve Coulter facilitated two courses for us in November and December.

These workshops were suitable for beginners or those with experience who wanted to refresh their intaglio printmaking skills.

Open Circle

Open Circle Arts in Collaboration with Deirdre Harte, Textile Artist and lecturer in the National College of Art and Design, were successful in their application for a Creative Ireland Grant for Phase II of the Social Fabric Project. The project runs from October to the end of February and is engaging with a group of women from Danesfort at their community centre and will continue after Christmas with groups at the Open Circle arts space. The workshops create a space in the lives of all who take part to meet new people, chat, laugh, debate and create.



Social fabric Phase 2 with Deirdre Harte

Siamsa

The final Siamsa workshop for the year took place over the 30th November and 1st December. The children joined Peter Baxter from Create School and learned how to make their own animated video, using their favourite Lego character. All children get to bring home a copy of their videos.

Adult Intermediate Creative Writing Workshops with John MacKenna

Our Intermediate Creative Writing Workshops with John MacKenna finished on the 26th November. This eight-week course looked at several aspects of writing i.e. description, character, landscape, making a story and experiencing the self. Our tutor, John MacKenna, is the author of nineteen books, a dozen stage plays and a number of radio plays.

Participant feedback: *"Great guidance but mindful of giving complete freedom to each writer. A wonderful learning opportunity."*



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Music Generation Launch

The launch of Music Generation Kilkenny took place on Thursday the 28th of November at Springhill Court Hotel. The Launch of represented a wonderful and exciting time in the musical landscape of Co. Kilkenny for our children and young people.

The launch included wonderful performances from children from St. Brendan's NS Muckalee and the Presentation Primary School Castelcomer



St. Brendan's NS Muckalee and Presentation Primary School Castlecomer



with Science Foundation Ireland, South Eastern Science Festival, WIT & London Science Museum. 327 people attended 13 events in libraries with events such as Bubbly Science, Bright Sparks Electricity Workshops, Lego Robotics and London Science Museums Glorious Blood.



Battle of Wits Transitions Year Quiz

Battle of Wits is a table quiz tournament for Transition Year students, designed to engage teenagers with literacy. 12 out of 16 Post primary schools in Kilkenny participated, and joined us in Loughboy Library on 18th November for the Kilkenny county final.

First place went to Loreto Secondary school, who fought off tough competition to secure the 2019 title. Second went to Kilkenny College and third to Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan. Loreto and Kilkenny College go forward in early December to represent Kilkenny at the regional final, against 2 teams from Carlow, Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath, Leitrim & Roscommon.

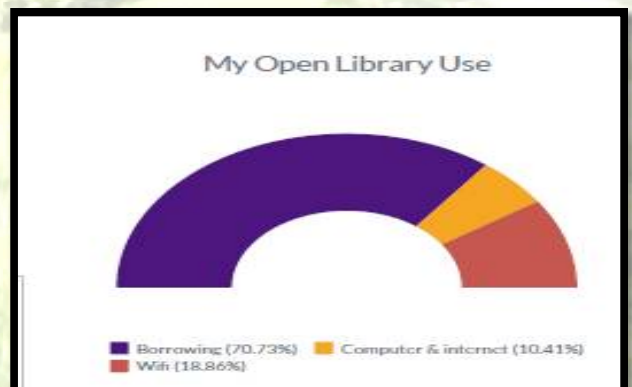
This is just one of the initiatives in Kilkenny County Council's Right to Read Action Plan for Literacy, led by our library service.

LIBRARY SERVICES



National Science Week

National Science Week took place in November, and we ran events in five libraries in partnership





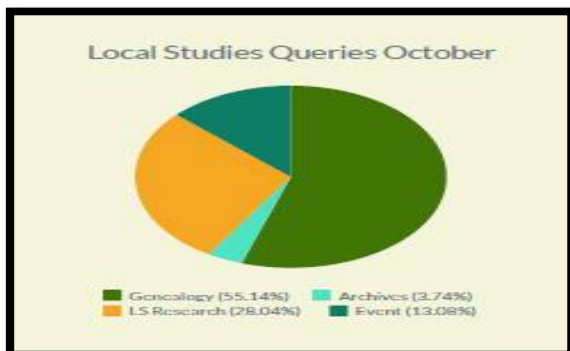
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HERITAGE

Record Number of Field Names Gathered by Volunteers

A total of 1,889 field names and 122 landmarks from 85 townlands across Co. Kilkenny were recorded by 25 volunteers in 2019. This is the highest number of townlands surveyed and field names recorded in the ten-year long history of the Kilkenny Field Names Recording Project. This brings the total number of field names recorded since 2009 to 11,700.

The names will be uploaded to the County Council GIS and available to the public. The project was co-funded by the Heritage Office and the Heritage Council.

Thousands of Primary School Children engage with Kilkenny's Heritage

3,948 pupils from 44 Primary Schools in Co. Kilkenny took part in heritage workshops in 2019. This equates to a participation rate of 56% of all primary schools in the county. The free workshops which focussed on heritage, culture & creativity were provided by the Heritage Office,

in partnership with the Heritage Council "Heritage in Schools" programme, and were funded under the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme. Feedback from the schools was excellent.

Kilkenny County Council Pollinator Report 2019

Kilkenny County Council has undertaken a comprehensive programme of work in 2019 to support pollinators. Over 55 actions were undertaken by various Dept's including undertaking habitat surveys, planting pollinator plants, adding new grant criteria, publicising pollinators at festivals etc.

For the full report

<https://kilkennyheritage.ie/natural-heritage/pollinators/>

South East Regional Pollinator Awards

The Regional Local Authority Pollinator Awards with Mr. Patrick O' Donovan T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in attendance were presented to Tullahought Tidy Towns and Keep Kilkenny Beautiful at the awards ceremony at Terryglas, Co. Tipperary on 25th November.

ALMS HOUSE

Part 8 Planning for the refurbishment of Alms House at No. 2 St. Mary's Lane, Kilkenny for use as offices will be advertised on Friday, 13th December, 2019.

Closing date for receipt of submissions is Thursday, 6th February, 2020.

Planning Report will be prepared for Members shortly after that.



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FINANCE REPORT – DECEMBER 2019

The expenditure by service division to the end of November is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €82.6m compared with the annual budget of €79.7m.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2019	Budget Full Year 2019
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	18,326	16,468
Road Transport & Safety	24,148	22,328
Water Services	6,399	6,674
Development Management	8,861	9,718
Environmental Services	11,436	11,169
Recreation & Amenity	6,197	6,251
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	497	640
Miscellaneous Services	6,753	6,452
OVERALL TOTAL	82,617	79,700

The bank overdraft facility was utilized for 96 days in the eleven month period to the end of November 2019. The maximum overdrawn balance was €5,703k.

Kilkenny County Council collection figures for the main income groups for the end of November 2019 are consistent with the corresponding period for last year and we are expecting to meet our targets for 2019. The appeals on commercial properties to the Valuation Tribunal will have a negative impact on arrears at the end of 2019. Following the revaluation of all commercial properties in Kilkenny in 2017 by the Valuation Office, 196 property owners appealed their valuations to the Valuation Tribunal. The total value of the rate demand under appeal is €4.5m representing 23% of the annual rate demand. A total of 113 appeals representing 42% of the rate demand appealed have been processed to date resulting in a reduction in annual rates income of almost €500k. If this trend continues the estimated loss in annual rates income could exceed €1.1m. Appeal decisions are backdated to the 1st of January 2018. It could take a number of months yet before all appeals are dealt with.

An additional term loan of €5m will be required in Quarter 1 2020 to provide finance for capital projects that are ongoing at the moment. This item is included on the agenda for the December Council meeting. The approval of both the Elected Members and the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government will be required.