

# Kilkenny *Connects*

Winter  
2024



**New Elected Members 2024-2029- Page 2**



**Celebrate International Womens Day 2024 - Page 12**



**Affordable Housing -What you need to know - Page 13**



**New Fire Station for Urlingford- Page 15**

## Mayfair City Library, Watergate, Kilkenny City

See full story on page 4



## MAYFAIR CITY LIBRARY Officially Opened

Minister Heather Humphreys officially opened the new Mayfair City Library in April 2024. This facility, previously home to the Mayfair Ballroom, has been transformed into a major public facility with more than 1,800 square metres of community library space available over two floors.

The project was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Kilkenny County Council representing an investment of just under €7.2m.

The Mayfair library reflects what a 21st Century library should be with comfortable seating and browsing areas, dedicated community exhibition space, programming and events throughout the year, public internet access, printing and scanning facilities, makerspace with 3D printing and scanning, sewing machines and more.

See full story on page 4



## Kilkenny County Council is **Going Green** and we'd like **YOU** to join us.

**T**his special **Kilkenny Going Green** feature gives you a snapshot of climate actions which communities, businesses and the County Council are undertaking, as well as ideas for how you can get involved. **Every climate action counts.**

See full story on page 8





Launch of Team Up To Clean Up 2024

## Welcome from our Chief Executive



Lar Power, Chief Executive

As we reflect on 2024, I am proud of all the remarkable achievements and ongoing projects of Kilkenny County Council. This year has been a testament to our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all the residents and making Kilkenny a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

This year we successfully ran the Local Election for Kilkenny ensuring a smooth and transparent process. We also maintained and updated the electoral register for the Referendum held in March and the General Election held in November. We welcomed new elected members who bring fresh perspectives and renewed energy to our Council and we congratulate the members who retained their seats. Their dedication to serving the Community is already making a positive impact.

2024 was a successful year for Kilkenny County Council and as a Council we achieved great outcomes across many areas. Our Revenue Expenditure (day to day running costs) for 2024 will outturn in the order of €115m. This led to service and improvements across the areas of Housing, Roads, Water Services, Development Management, Environmental Services, Recreation and Amenity and Agriculture and Food.

Addressing the housing needs remains a top priority for us. In 2024 we have made significant progress by delivering a number of new homes across the County. We have also implemented and made great progress with the Affordable Housing Campaign and we will continue this in to 2025.

A highlight of 2024 was the opening of the Mayfair Library here in Kilkenny City. It was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphreys. This state-of-the-art library is about more than books. It is a community hub that offers a range of services and programmes for all ages. We are excited to see it become a cornerstone of learning and engagement in Kilkenny.

We have successfully hosted a number of festivals this year and officially launched our new festival "Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble- Discover the spells cast on society during the Kilkenny Witch Trials". These celebrations not only bring joy and entertainment but also strengthen our community bonds and give us the opportunity to showcase our rich cultural heritage.

We continue to lead by example with our environmental efforts. We have a Climate Action Team in place and a Climate Action Plan implemented during 2024. This year we launched several initiatives aimed at reducing our carbon footprint and promoting sustainability. From expanding our public lighting energy efficiency project to enhancing green spaces, we are committed to protecting our environment for future generations.

Recognising the importance of a thriving night time economy we have developed a comprehensive plan to boost evening and nighttime activities in Kilkenny. This initiative aims to create a safe, vibrant and inclusive environment that supports local businesses and offers a diverse entertainment options for residents and visitors.

To learn more about what is happening with Kilkenny County Council you can do so by following us on our social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn as well as checking out the information in this newsletter. Its is packed from cover to cover with some of the great work that has been carried out by Kilkenny County Council.

As we look ahead I am confident that Kilkenny County Council will continue to build on these successes. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to our dedicated staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. I would like to thank the Elected Members for their civic leadership and support. Together, we are making Kilkenny an even better place to call home.

## Kilkenny County Council's Environment Section Key Initiatives and Successes

After a successful 2023 with 500 groups, 5,000 volunteers, and over 24 tonnes of rubbish collected, "Team Up to Clean Up" was back for its second year. This time, the initiative expanded to include green schools countywide, aiming to mobilise communities to clean up local areas. The event promoted environmental responsibility, community spirit, and teamwork among students.

The event took place from 20th to the 22nd of September. For more information about "Team Up to Clean Up," visit [cleanup.kilkenny.ie](http://cleanup.kilkenny.ie) or [kilkennycoco.ie](http://kilkennycoco.ie).

In 2024 Kilkenny secured an impressive 4th place out of 40 towns and cities in the latest Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey. This achievement highlights the City's significant efforts in reducing litter and enhancing cleanliness.

The annual IBAL survey assesses litter levels across Ireland, considering factors like street and public area cleanliness. Kilkenny's high ranking is due to the collaborative efforts of community groups, Kilkenny County Council, and local businesses.



Ferrybank Community Group receiving their award with Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council Lar power, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy and members of the Community Section of Kilkenny County Council



Inistioge Village Group receiving their award with Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council Lar power, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy and members of the Community Section of Kilkenny County Council

## Meet your Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Michael McCarthy



At the Annual General Meeting held on Friday, June 21, 2024, in the Council Chamber at County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny, Fianna Fáil Councillor

Michael McCarthy was elected as the new Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council. Councillor McCarthy expressed his pride in assuming the role of Kilkenny's first citizen.

Councillor Michael McCarthy has been a dedicated member of Kilkenny County Council since 2014. He has also served as Cathaoirleach of the Castlecomer Municipal District.

Michael had the following to say about his role

"Since being elected Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council I am acutely aware of the trust bestowed on me to act as First Citizen of the City and County in the best interests of every man, woman and child north, south, east and west of our great County.

My priority for the City is to progress

the Ring Road and Stage 2 and 3 of the Central Access Scheme. The economic growth of our scheduled towns and villages should not be held up by insufficient and inadequate water supply and it is my intention to leave no stone unturned with Uisce Eireann to resolve these issues.

I am also conscious that on each occasion I wear my Chain of Office, whether in ceremonial or dutiful role, that I represent Kilkenny to the best of my ability locally, nationally and also with our diaspora further afield.

It is a great honour and privilege and my door remains open to all."

## Pride of Place Competition 2024

Sponsored by IPB Insurance, the Pride of Place competition was launched 22 years ago through a Co-operation Ireland programme to recognise the invaluable contributions of volunteers and those involved in local community development.

Over the years, it has grown into the largest competition celebrating community development achievements across the island of Ireland.

Two community groups from Kilkenny were honoured at the prestigious Pride of Place community awards on Saturday, November 2nd, during a gala ceremony in Monaghan.

Ferrybank Community was awarded runner-up in the Community Well-Being Initiative category, while Inistioge village was runner-up in the Areas with a Population of 0-300 category.

The awards, hosted by RTE's Brendan McArdle, took place in front of 400 community volunteers from across the island at the Hillgrove Hotel. The event was delivered in partnership with Monaghan County Council.



Members of Kilkenny County Council Tourism Section and Members of the Kilkenny Welcome Team 2024 taken outside the Kilkenny Volunteer Centre

## Kilkenny Welcomes Back Its "Welcome Team".

Kilkenny County Council relaunched the 'Kilkenny Welcome Team' initiative in partnership with Kilkenny Volunteer Centre and Fáilte Ireland. Twenty volunteers greeted visitors and provided them with information throughout the summer.

This initiative, first introduced in 2021, places volunteers at key locations in Kilkenny City. They offer details on local attractions, facilities, and transport.

All volunteers are trained in public safety and will engage with visitors only when approached.



Kilkenny County Council Elected Representatives for 2024/2025. Front Row (L-R): Cllr. Michael Delaney, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick Cllr. Deirdre Cullen, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and Cllr. Fidelis Doherty

Back Row (L-R): Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Joe Sheridan, Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery, Cllr. John Connan, Cllr. Ger Frisby, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Cllr. Joe Lyons, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Maurice Shortall, Cllr. Seán Ó hAргáin Cllr. Stephanie Doherty, Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Tomás Breathnach.

## Election Day 2024

**Newly Elected Representatives take their seats in Kilkenny County Council**

On 7th of June the Local Elections took place. A total of 50 candidates campaigned for the 24 seats across the County of Kilkenny.

Local Electoral Areas:

Callan/Thomastown - 6 seats (9 Candidates)

Castlecomer - 6 seats (9 Candidates)

Kilkenny - 7 seats (20 Candidates)

Piltown - 5 seats (12 Candidates)

Kilkenny County Council held the Annual General Meeting for the election of the First Citizen and Cathaoirleach for the 2024/2025 term in June 2024. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers in County Hall and saw the election of Cllr. Michael McCarthy as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council. Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere was elected as Leas-Cathaoirleach.

See page 16 for a full listing of your Kilkenny County Council Elected Members.



The completed N24 Tower Road Junction

## N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme is Officially Opened

The N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme reached a significant milestone on 1st May, 2024, with its official opening by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Michael Doyle, in the presence of Cllr. Ger Frisby, Chairman of Piltown Municipal District, and the Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council.

It marked the culmination of a 12-month construction period aimed at enhancing road safety and connectivity on the N24.



Interior and reading area in the Mayfair Library

Continued from page 1:

### Mayfair City Library Welcomes the Community!

The facility will operate as a "My Open Library" space available for use to registered users for up to 98 hours per week making it an accessible space for study and contemplation at the times that suit people the most.

The facilities at the new Mayfair library will allow for the continued expansion of library services in Kilkenny representing an investment in our communities and citizens.

Kilkenny County Council will continue to invest in the Kilkenny Library Service with the construction of a new library building in Thomastown and the proposed development of a new facility in Callan town centre. This investment will improve the quality and usage of libraries across Kilkenny.

In an era where information is abundant yet often access remains unequal the importance of public libraries has never been greater.

Opening the doors to the Mayfair facility makes available a fantastic library to every citizen of the County for generations to come.



Kilkenny County Council staff Members- Jannette Boran Healthy Ireland Coordinator, Majella Keating Creative Communities Engagement Officer, Alison McGrath, Lianne Kelly, Catherine Byrne Murphy, Community Section Kilkenny County Council, Leighann Ryan Culleton, CYPSC Coordinator

## Play Day 2024: Celebrating Community and Fun

Kilkenny County Council, in collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, hosted National Play Day on Saturday, July 13th, 2024, at Kilkenny Castle Park. The event, held from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., was a great success, thanks to the families who participated and enjoyed the activities.

Feedback from the workshops was overwhelmingly positive, and planning for next year's event is already underway. Alongside partners Healthy Ireland and the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), the event highlighted the importance of family fun time.

Play is crucial for children's development, encouraging adventure and discovery. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for families to engage in a variety of activities in the beautiful setting of Kilkenny Castle Park.

National Play Day celebrates the essential role of play in children's physical, emotional, and cognitive growth.



Stephen Barham, Gary Meany, Liam Dowling, Sinead Brennan, Michelle Colclough, Luke Kinchella, Teri Kruger, Dylan Kinchella, Brendan Coady, Stephen Buckley, Paul O'Carroll.

## Civil Defence Officers Association Annual Conference 2024 Takes Place in Kilkenny

The Civil Defence Officers Association held its Annual Conference and Trade Show in Kilkenny on Wednesday 6th and Thursday 7th of November 2024. The conference took place in Hotel Kilkenny where professionals from across the field were able to come together.

Founded in 1951, Civil Defence is a voluntary organisation supporting emergency services. Its core areas are emergency response, medical response, search and rescue, community assistance, and radiation monitoring.

The 2023 Civil Defence Act clarified roles for future growth. Managed by local Civil Defence Officers, volunteers join through local authorities and assist in various operations.

Volunteers have shown dedication during emergencies like Storm Ophelia, Storm Emma, COVID-19, and supporting Ukrainian refugees. They also help in missing person searches.

The international symbol for Civil Defence signifies a global commitment to disaster relief.

## Affordable Housing

Kilkenny County Council is proud to administer the Affordable Purchase Scheme which helps eligible buyers purchase a newly built home at a reduced price in return for the Council taking a % Equity Share in the Affordable Home. We currently have a limited number of Affordable Homes available at 2 locations at: Nyne Park, Kilkenny City / Abbey Meadows, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny.

- Kilmacow – 13 X 3 bedroom homes
- Abbey Hill, Thomastown – 14 X 3 bedroom homes
- Abbey Meadows, Ferrybank Phase 2

### COST RENTAL

Cost Rental housing offers affordable long-term, secure rented accommodation. It is aimed at people who have a net household income of €66,000 or below in Dublin or €59,000 or below in the rest of the country.

The rent you pay is based on the cost of building, managing, and maintaining the homes. The rent for Cost Rental homes is at least 25% below regular market rents in the area.

Cost Rental homes are delivered by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), The Land Development Agency (LDA) and local authorities and are registered with the Residential Tenancies Board.

### How does the scheme work in a nutshell?

The local authority will provide minimum 5% of the cost of your new home, in return for the same percentage of equity share in the property. For example, if you buy the home at a 20% discount, the local authority will own a 20% stake in your property.

### Can I buy back the local authority's equity share?

You must repay the local authority's stake after 40 years or if you decide to sell your home, but you can also pay it back any time before this. You can buy back the full amount in one payment or in different instalments. However, the minimum repayment is €10,000.

### Who can apply for the scheme?

You must be a first-time buyer or fresh start applicant who is over the age of 18 and have the right to live in Ireland.

### How can I apply?

The application process is managed by Kilkenny County Council 'Affordable Housing Team' email: [affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie)

### Find Your Dream Home

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>



Image of living room from the affordable housing project

### The Kilkenny App is Here!

This innovative App, developed in partnership with Visit Kilkenny and the Night Time Economy, serves as a central digital hub for all events happening in Kilkenny. It offers valuable information for both residents and tourists, along with a live calendar of upcoming events.

Businesses and organisations interested in adding their events to the App can register at the [kilkennyapp.com](http://kilkennyapp.com).

Download The Kilkenny App now from the [Apple App Store](https://apps.apple.com) or [Google Play Store](https://play.google.com)!



Stevie Mulrooney performs Ireland's Call at the St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny 2024

## Celebrate with Kilkenny: Council's Festival Roundup

Kilkenny County Council are delighted to organise the St Patrick's Festival Kilkenny, Kilkenny Day and Yulefest Kilkenny every year to complement the many Festivals that happen in Kilkenny every year. It gives us great pride to see so many people come and enjoy our festivals.

St. Patrick's Day Festival 2024 saw an estimated 80,000 people visit Kilkenny City over the 4-day festival with an estimate of 40,000+ people coming out to watch the Parade. There were over 70 events with 24 of those ticketed. We had performances from 5 American bands and 67 parade entries. St. Patrick's Day Festival Kilkenny celebrates Irish Music, Culture and Creativity.

Yulefest every year sees thousands of visitors come to Kilkenny City for the markets and events that are organised. Yulefest launched on Saturday 30th of November 2024 with the main man himself paying a visit to Kilkenny to check on all the good boys and girls. Featured events include the Yulefest Christmas Market, live local music, the Medieval Mile Run and the Yulefest Movie Night, and so much more. For more information check out <https://yulefestkilkenny.ie/>

In addition, the Council supports other events through its Festivals and Events Grants Assistance Scheme. For more information [https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your\\_council/online-services/apply-for-it/](https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your_council/online-services/apply-for-it/)



View of Kilkenny Castle from the Nore River, Kilkenny City

## Kilkenny's Commitment to Cleanliness and Sustainability Recognised

Kilkenny once again demonstrated its commitment to cleanliness, environmental awareness, and sustainability, ranking 4th out of 40 towns and cities in the latest IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter) report. This outstanding achievement was a testament to the collaborative efforts of Kilkenny County Council's City Area Office, local community members, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, and local businesses.

The first national litter survey by the business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) since the introduction of the Government's Deposit Return Scheme revealed a decrease in cans and plastic bottles on the streets, contributing to an overall improvement in litter levels. There was an increase in the number of sites deemed clean across the country, with a significant reduction in those judged to be 'heavily littered'.



SunSmart dispenser at Kilkenny Countryside Park in Dunmore

## Kilkenny County Council Launches 2024 Sun Smart Campaign

Kilkenny County Council were delighted this year to announce the launch of the National Cancer Control Programme's "Sun Smart" campaign. The aim of this initiative is to educate the public on protecting their skin from harmful UV rays.

The campaign is featured at Newpark Marsh Eco Park, Kilkenny Countryside Park in Dunmore, and along the Waterway in Graiguenamanagh. Each location will have a SunSmart dispenser with tips and resources for sun safety.

### Why Being Sun Smart Matters:

**Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland, with over 11,000 cases annually.**

**UV rays are strongest from April to September, even on cloudy days.**

#### SunSmart Steps:

Slip on long-sleeved clothing.

Slap on sunscreen (SPF 30+ for adults, 50+ for children).

Slap on a wide-brimmed hat.

Seek shade, especially for children.

Slide on UV-protection sunglasses.

For more tips, visit SunSmart hub and follow #SunSmart on social media.



Newly developed walkway around the Deerpark Area

## Jenkinstown Wood Enhancement Scheme

A new 1.2 km trail was developed around the Deerpark area, conveniently located near the carpark and amenity area. The surface finish of this trail was designed to be more accessible and inclusive for everyone, incorporating four age-friendly benches at strategic locations.

The existing Jenkinstown Loop Walk received approximately 2km of upgrades, including trail reconstruction and drainage improvements. This part of the project was partially funded by our partners at Coillte. Significant

enhancements were also completed at the carpark amenity area under the ORIS initiative. These improvements included paved pathways and hardstanding picnic areas with five new picnic benches, some of which are wheelchair-friendly. The objectives of these interventions were to improve the appearance and usability of the amenity space and to make it accessible to wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility.

This new walkway is now open and available for all to use and to enjoy.



Mia Griffin at the launch of Rás na mBan 2024 outside Kilkenny Castle

## Rás na mBan 2024

This year, Kilkenny hosted 22 teams from 9 nations, marking the event as one of the most challenging and welcoming autumn stage races.

The 2024 edition, the 18th under the Rás na mBan title and the 37th annual international stage race for women in Ireland, spans five days and six stages, covering over 400km. From September 4th to 8th, the race was once again headquartered in Kilkenny, showcasing the breathtaking landscapes of County Kilkenny, with stages extending into Laois and Wexford in Leinster.

Congratulations is extended to Kilkenny native Mia Griffin on her victory from all in Kilkenny County Council.

## 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 was managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE).

Eligible businesses receive a once-off grant which is based on the value of their Commercial Rates bill in 2023.

A total of 2,450 grants were paid out up to 31st October 2024 with a value of €4,394,000.

The scheme closed on 27th September 2024 and the online portal closed on 25th October.



Laura Murphy, Sean McKeown, John Mulcahy, Catherine Myers, Conor Sweeney, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Doyle, Chief Executive Lar Power, Catherine O'Connor, Patrick Dillon Keane, Martina Comerford, Aileen McGrath

## #CareersKilkenny2024

#CareersKilkenny2024 took place on Saturday, February 3rd, at St. Canice's Cathedral.

Organised by Kilkenny County Council, the event aimed to showcase the diverse range of high-quality jobs available in Kilkenny City and County, both now and in the future. It also highlighted the benefits of living and working in Kilkenny. Attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with representatives from top local companies, who were available to answer questions about the roles and opportunities on offer.



Launch of the Night Time Economy Plan: Conor Sweeney (Night Time Economy Advisor for Kilkenny City), Chief Executive Lar Power, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Doyle, Aileen McGrath (Head of Enterprise), Paul Kelly (CEO of Fáilte Ireland).



Breda Maher (Community Climate Action Officer), Sean McKeown (Director of Services), Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Doyle, Dearbhala Ledwidge (Climate Action Coordinator), Chief Executive Lar Power, Darragh Mahon (Clerical Officer), Ronan Ryan (Climate Action Officer)

## Kilkenny County Council's First Climate Action Plan

Continued from page 1:

The Elected Representatives of Kilkenny County Council adopted the Council's first Climate Action Plan in February 2024 following extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The Plan includes 95 actions which the Council will take to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions, prepare its operations and services for climate change, and support climate action in the county.

Kilkenny County Council must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 51% and improve its energy efficiency by 50% by 2030, and become a net zero organisation by 2050.

Follow us on our journey to meet our targets and implement the Plan

## Kilkenny County Council Unveils Pilot Night Time Economy Action Plan for Kilkenny City

Kilkenny County Council launched the Kilkenny City pilot Night Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025. The plan was published in tandem with the launch of Fáilte Ireland's Destination Experience Development Plan at St Canice's Cathedral. The appointment of a Night Time Economy Advisor and the establishment of a Night Time Economy Stakeholder Forum, along with the development of a bespoke action plan, followed Kilkenny City's successful designation as a pilot area for the night time economy for two years by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Kilkenny City was designated as a pilot city from October 2023 to September 2025. The other 8 towns and cities that participated in the pilot were Dublin City, Cork City, Galway City, Limerick City, Drogheda, Sligo, Buncrana, and Longford Town.

Under the Night Time Economy Diversification Fund, Kilkenny County Council sought proposals from local businesses, community groups, event organisers, collaborators, and individuals to develop projects that would support the growth and diversity of the night time economy in Kilkenny City. It was designed to support applicants in trying new and exciting concepts after 6pm between Sunday and Thursday.

The pilot Night Time Economy Action Plan for Kilkenny City can be downloaded at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/economic-development/night-time-economy.html>

## REMOTE WORKING HUB OPENS IN URLINGFORD

In April 2024, Minister Heather Humphreys visited Urlingford to officially open "EXIT 4," a newly provided remote working hub. This facility, strategically located just off the M8 Dublin-Cork corridor, formed part of Ireland's National Hub Network supported by government funding to revive rural Ireland by providing people with the opportunity to live and work locally.

Urlingford Town Team was central to the delivery of the EXIT 4 working hub and the redevelopment of the town's community centre.

EXIT 4 remote working hub facilities are now open. Flexible plans are available to meet the needs of clients. For enquiries and to make a booking, go to [Exit4Urlingford.ie](https://Exit4Urlingford.ie)



Minister Heather Humphreys, Members of Kilkenny County Council and Members of the Urlingford Town Team at the official opening of the EXIT 4 remote working hub



The bus and bus shelters now in place across Kilkenny City

## Did You Know?

- The active travel programme aims to provide safe, attractive alternatives to car travel for shorter journeys within Kilkenny City and County.
- A shift to active travel, where possible, will improve overall health and wellbeing, meet growing mobility needs and will help Kilkenny achieve the carbon emission reduction targets set out in the Climate Action Plan.
- Many of the journeys in Kilkenny City at peak times are care journeys where adults or carers accompany children, young people and vulnerable adults to education and activities. A safer environment reduces the need for care journeys.
- Kilkenny County Council has invested €3million in 2023 and 2024 on active travel schemes, with 25 projects across the county in various stages of design, planning or construction.



Minister O'Brien at launch of Cost Rental at Cluain Glasan Kilkenny. Photos includes Clúid, Glenveagh & Kilkenny County Council staff including Chief Executive Lar Power along with An Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle and Mayor Joe Malone & Deputy John McGuinness and Elected Representatives

## Building a Better Future: Kilkenny's 2024 Housing Projects

In May 2024 we were delighted to welcome Minister Darragh O'Brien to Kilkenny to officially open the Affordable Homes at Cluain Glasan and Nyne Park. These developments will provide over 320 new homes, including private, affordable, and social housing.

Nyne Park offers 35 affordable homes below market prices, with Kilkenny County Council taking an equity share. Cluain Glasan introduced 25 Cost Rental homes, the first in Kilkenny, for families needing stable, long-term rentals.

Kilkenny County Council continue to increase housing options for low and middle-income families. More information was available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>.

## New 42-Unit Housing Scheme in Thomastown

Kilkenny County Council has started building a 42-unit housing scheme at Abbeyhill, Thomastown. This project, near the Primary Care Centre, will offer social and affordable housing, with 1 to 4-bedroom units. Ormonde Construction Ltd. is the contractor, aiming for completion by early 2026. The development is part of the Housing for All programme and promises to enhance the community.



Seated:- Gemma O'Rourke (van Dijk Architects), Eimear Cody (Kilkenny County Council), John Holohan (Ormonde Construction), Brian Dunlop (Brian Dunlop Architects), Middle Row (L to R) : Michelle McKeever (McGahon Surveyors), Niall Patterson (Hayes Higgins Partnership), Fiona Muldowney (Brian Dunlop Architects), Paddy Tyrrell (Ormonde Construction), Corwun O'Brien (Malone O'Regan) Back Row (L to R):- Paddy Crotty, Tom Doherty (Kilkenny County Council), Richard Cleere (Ormonde Construction), Phillip O'Morchoe (Brian Dunlop Architects)



Actors from the reenactment of the burning of petronella at the launch of "Toil and Trouble"

## KILKENNY'S TOIL AND TROUBLE

Experience the Chilling Tale of Ireland's First Witchcraft Trial at 'KILKENNY'S TOIL AND TROUBLE' Festival.

Kilkenny County Council unveiled the launch of Kilkenny's newest festival, "KILKENNY'S TOIL AND TROUBLE – Discover the spells cast on society during the Kilkenny Witch Trials" on Friday 13th September 2024. Held from 28th October to 3rd November, 2024, this event invited visitors to step back in time to 1324 and uncover the chilling tale of Ireland's first Witchcraft Trial.

Attendees delved into the story of Alice Kyteler, accused of witchcraft and heresy by Bishop Richard Ledrede, and explored the tragic fate of Petronella de Meath, the first person in Ireland executed for witchcraft. The festival marked the 700th anniversary of these events, highlighting societal fears, power struggles, and personal stories from the trial.

The festival balanced historical education and entertainment, with activities for the whole family. The launch featured the unveiling of the festival's website [kilkenny.ie/toil\\_and\\_trouble](https://kilkenny.ie/toil_and_trouble), providing information on all events with imagery by Oscar nominated Cartoon Saloon.



"Kilkenny City Library" John's Quay Kilkenny

## Exciting New Vision: John's Quay/John Street Urban Design Strategy 2024

Development of the John's Quay/John Street Urban Design Strategy has been underway over the last number of months. The project is funded under the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE). THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027. Engagement with the public through a comprehensive consultation process has been key to the development of this

strategy. A survey on the area was made available for completion between the 5th and 26th September, 2024.

A series of workshops were held with key stakeholders and the general public on Monday 16th September and Monday 14th October in the Carnegie Library, John's Quay.

The consultation process was aimed at finding ways to enhance the quality of life in the area by improving public spaces, supporting local businesses and preserving

the cultural and historical identity of the community.

Feedback received from the surveys and the workshops will inform the Urban Design Strategy. The timeframe for completion of the Strategy is November to December 2024.



Bridge lift over Breaghagh

## Active Travel Progress on Coote's Lane

Stunning aerial shots captured the impressive bridge lift over the Breaghagh at the bottom of Coote's Lane. This bridge, a significant addition to the area, completed the vital connection from Coote's Lane to the Ring Road. It not only provides attractive, looped walking options for residents of the nearby estates but also serves as a convenient off-road path to school for students attending St. Patrick's De La Salle and St. John of God schools.

In addition to the bridge, other recent enhancements to the lane have made it even more appealing. The planting of a native hedgerow and heritage apple trees has added a touch of natural beauty, while a vibrant mural inspired by Cartoon Saloon's Wolfwalkers brings a splash of colour and creativity to the area.

The bridge itself is a marvel of engineering. Donnelly Civil Engineering Ltd. successfully installed the 16.5 metre span steel bridge, a robust 12-tonne structure designed by Kilgallen and Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd. This project not only showcases the technical expertise involved but also highlights the community's commitment to improving local infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.



Kilkenny City and Kilkenny Castle lit up for Christmas as part of Yulefest Kilkenny

## Kilkenny Crowned "Cultural Destination" at 2024 World Luxury Travel Awards

Kilkenny was honoured with the prestigious title of "Cultural Destination" at the 2024 World Luxury Travel Awards. This accolade celebrates Kilkenny's exceptional dedication to providing unparalleled luxury experiences to visitors worldwide.

The World Luxury Travel Awards, renowned for recognising excellence in the luxury travel sector, acknowledged Kilkenny for its unique blend of rich history, vibrant culture, and modern luxury. From its stunning medieval architecture to its world-class accommodations and gourmet dining, Kilkenny offers an exquisite escape for visitors.

Kilkenny's charm lies in its seamless blend of the old and the new. Visitors can explore the historic Kilkenny Castle, stroll through picturesque streets lined with boutique shops, and indulge in the finest local cuisine. The City's vibrant festivals, arts, and animation scene, coupled with its luxurious accommodations, ensure a memorable stay for all who visit.

This award not only highlights Kilkenny's status as a premier luxury destination but also sets a new benchmark for excellence in the travel industry. As Kilkenny continues to evolve and innovate, it remains committed to offering unparalleled luxury experiences that captivate and inspire.

The award was presented at a grand ceremony hosted at Galgorm, Co Antrim, on October 19, 2024. Valerie O'Sullivan, Vice Chairperson of Kilkenny Tourism, accepted the award on behalf of the entire Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Kilkenny. She expressed her delight and gratitude, emphasising the hard work and passion of everyone involved in making Kilkenny a top luxury destination.

Kilkenny is celebrated for its ability to blend contemporary experiences with historical sites. It is one of only four regions in Europe recognised by the World Craft Council for its exceptional standard of craft and design.

Kilkenny's commitment to excellence in hospitality and continuous efforts to enhance the visitor experience have truly paid off. As the City continues to innovate and evolve, it remains dedicated to providing luxury experiences that captivate and inspire travelers from around the globe.



Retailers on Lady Desart Bridge, Kilkenny City #ShopKilkenny

## Shop Kilkenny

### Medieval Mile Video Showcases Kilkenny Retail

Kilkenny retailers and the County Council have launched a video to boost footfall and highlight the City's retail and visitor attractions along Ireland's Medieval Mile. This route connects St. Canice's Cathedral and Kilkenny Castle, offering a blend of history and modern shopping and dining experiences. The video features family-owned boutiques, cafes, restaurants, and more, emphasising Kilkenny's rich medieval heritage and vibrant retail scene.

Watch the video here - Come See Come Shop on Ireland's Medieval Mile (youtube.com)

To find out what's happening with Shop Kilkenny you can do so by following Instagram @shop\_kilkenny, or on Facebook @shopkilkenny and don't forget to follow and share using the hashtag #ShopKilkenny.



#SHOPKILKENNY logo outside Kilkenny Castle



Kilkenny County Council Mobile Library Bus

# The Wheels on the Library Bus go Round and Round

Kilkenny County Council library service was delighted to be awarded funding of €180,000 towards the purchase of a new mobile library vehicle. This funding was confirmed by Minister Heather Humphreys as part of a €25m investment in public libraries under the Department of Rural and Community Development Libraries Capital Programme.

The primary aim of the mobile library was to deliver an equitable service for all Kilkenny library users, minimising the barriers of distance and access.

The new vehicle was designed to be an inviting, welcoming space with a wide and varied selection of stock for all ages, potential access to digital technologies, and increased outreach and engagement.

Covering the length and breadth of the county with over 60 stops, the mobile provides a valuable service to primary schools, childcare facilities, nursing homes, communities, and those who were housebound. The mobile library service was a well-used resource within the Kilkenny County Council library network, with over 4,900 people signed up to use the service and 26,000 items issued since September 2023.

## AMENITY GRANTS SCHEME 2024

In 2024, 175 applicants were awarded a total of €140,000 in funding under the Amenity Grant scheme. This support enabled groups across the County to maintain their outdoor recreational spaces. Typical projects involved tree planting, grass cutting, flower planting, and other amenity enhancements.

Successful applicants were required to submit documentation, including receipts and photographs of completed projects, by 27th September 2024 to claim their grants. The processing of these grants is underway.

If you wish to learn more about amenity grants see [https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/parks/amenity\\_grant\\_scheme/](https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/parks/amenity_grant_scheme/)

## Kilkenny Women and Local Politics Event Marks International Womens Day 2024

On Thursday, March 7th, Kilkenny County Council, in association with "See Her Elected", hosted a seminar at County Hall to mark International Women's Day 2024. The event highlighted the work of County Councillors and pathways for women into Local Government.

The seminar featured panel discussions with female politicians from Kilkenny, including Councillors Deirdre Cullen, Fidelis Doherty, Maria Dollard, and Kathleen Funchion T.D., as well as an interview with Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh on her 50 years of public service. A second panel discussed diverse pathways into politics with women from various communities in County Kilkenny.

Chief Executive Lar Power delivered the opening address, and Director of Services, Mary Mulholland, closed the event. Dr. Michelle Maher from See Her Elected also spoke about the organisation's work in supporting women in rural constituencies.



Participants at the Kilkenny Women and Local Politics Event which was organised by Kilkenny County Council to mark International Womens Day 2024.



A group photograph of all participants and attendees at Kilkenny Women and Politics Event



Mary Mulholland, Director of Services, speaking at the Kilkenny Women and Politics Event

# Kilkenny Going Green: What Does it Mean?

As part of Kilkenny County Council's commitment to climate action, the Council has developed a Kilkenny Going Green brand to represent and help highlight positive climate action. Each of the six icons in the logo represents a different aspect of climate and sustainability action.

**Buildings:** Energy efficient homes, public buildings and businesses produce less emissions and use less energy.

**Tree:** Trees absorb and store carbon dioxide, absorb rainfall, cool urban spaces and support biodiversity, thereby helping to shield us from

extreme climate events.

**Lightbulb:** The bulb with a leaf filament symbolises renewable energy and the journey we will go on to reduce our energy consumption and move away from fossil fuels.

**Bicycle:** The bicycle represents active and sustainable travel. By travelling more sustainably we will reduce air pollution and noise, and thereby improve human health and protect nature.

**Bus:** By replacing car journeys with public

transport we can reduce traffic congestion and carbon dioxide emissions thereby improving air quality.

**Person:** Putting people at the centre of climate action is key to avoiding the worst impacts of climate on all.



Our Vision. Photo courtesy, Paul Lanigan



Official Logo for Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Project

## Kilkenny Green Case Studies

To highlight and encourage the ongoing transformation of business in County Kilkenny, Kilkenny County Council through the Local Enterprise Office has created a series of short videos showcasing the efforts, challenges and successes in the sustainability journey that businesses face.

The videos were created on-site with four local businesses of varying size and type to demonstrate the success that can be achieved through continuous monitoring, small steps in the right direction and ongoing commitment to change. The participating businesses were:

- Murphy Jewellers, High Street, Kilkenny
- Peter Walsh & Sons, Three Castles, Co. Kilkenny
- Connolly's Red Mills, Goresbridge, Co. Kilkenny
- Nicholas Mosse, Bennettsbridge, Co.

Kilkenny

While all businesses face different challenges due to their size, energy usage, location and other factors; the common factor across the participating businesses was their willingness to adapt, and their ability to identify the initiatives that would work for them.

The videos were launched on International Day of Climate Action (24th October 2024) and are available to view on the Kilkenny County Council website at <https://www.youtube.com/@kilkennycoco>



Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Members of Kilkenny County Council and representatives of participating businesses taking part in the Kilkenny Green Case Studies

## Lighting the Way

Did you know that there are over 12,000 street lights lighting up the towns and villages of Co. Kilkenny?

These lights use 34% of all the energy consumed by Kilkenny County Council. They also generate 41% of the Council's greenhouse gas emissions. The Council is working to change all public lights to more energy efficient LED lights, through the National Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project. LED lights use about half the energy of traditional public lights and last longer. Changing to LED lights is better for the climate, it cuts energy use in half, reduces CO2 emissions and saves public money.



New fitted LED lights outside houses



### Celebrating Sustainability: Highlights from Repair to Care Day on International Repair Day

Repair to Care Day ran on International Repair Day October 19th in St. Canices Neighbourhood Hall. It was a day filled with joy, creativity, and community spirit with artists and participants coming together for a day of textile and clothing mending, learning, sharing and inspiration. The event was buzzing with attendees repairing clothes, learning new skills, and engaging in talks, demonstrations, and hands-on sessions. This interactive event was all about inspiring positive changes that benefit people and the planet and learning how our everyday choices can help tackle climate change.

An inspiring reading of an essay written by award winning Irish writer Lynn Buckle, beautifully read by Alice Bennett took place, along with a presentation by Claire Downey's Making Fashion Circular gave us much to think about. Bernadette Roberts, Ann Maher, Lisa Hodge, Aoife Lyons, Jacqui Kelliher, Lisa Hodge, Sandra McAllister, and Amanda from Carlow offered an incredible array of skills – from crochet hacking and embroidery to upcycling, leather repair, and various other mending and repair techniques.

Our collaborative Community Embroidery Sampler was a huge success which was laid out on stunning free-standing embroidery frame designed and crafted by Tadhg McSweeney. Thanks also to Michelle McMahon, whose printed designs filled embroidery

hoops. Special thanks to Carrie Lynam and Lisa Hodge for their stunning call-to-action banners that formed the backdrop of the day, crafted on coffee sacks donated by Coffee House Lane. These banners set the tone for our collective focus on sustainability and creativity.

We hope participants will continue to use their new skills to keep their clothes and textiles in use for as long as possible – repairing, sharing, and recycling more to help prevent waste.

Another impact of climate change that many people in our County are unfortunately too familiar with is increased flooding. To reduce the risk that flooding poses to our county we are working to deliver a number of flood relief schemes, funded by the Office of Public Works, in our villages and towns.

We also want to help people to make behavioural changes and live more sustainable lifestyles. Home Energy Saving Kits are available to homeowners through our library branches, and we are also supporting several educational initiatives to promote reduction of waste, particularly food waste, and to encourage recycling and reduction of single use plastics.

## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Kilkenny County Council is continuously seeking new employees to join the organisation to be part of the team that provides Kilkenny with all the services/projects detailed in this newsletter.

### EXAMPLE OF POSITIONS:

Executive Engineers, Assistant Engineers  
Executive Planners, Assistant Planners.

Executive Technician, Technician Grade 1,  
Technician Grade II

Community Wardens, Pay Station Attendant,  
Drivers, General Operatives, Foreman,  
Craftsman.

Information Systems Analysts, Cyber Security  
Officer, Information Systems Project Lead.

Retained Fire Fighters, Station Officers, Sub  
Station Officer.

Library Staff Officer, Senior Library Assistant,  
Library Assistant, Branch Librarian.

Clerical/ Administration Staff - AND MANY  
MORE

All Vacancies are advertised on:  
Kilkenny County Council Website and [www.localgovernmentjobs.ie](http://www.localgovernmentjobs.ie)

### Employee Benefits

Examples of some of the current Employee  
Benefits may include:

- Allocation of 30 Days Annual Leave per annum (pro-rata) (Grade 4 and above).
- The Council's Blended Working Policy.
- A range of Family Friendly Policies.
- Availability of an Optical Benefit Scheme.
- Availability of a Cycle to Work Scheme.
- Kilkenny County Council is an Accredited Employer (by Engineers Ireland) for Continuous Professional Development.
- A range of Learning and Developmental Opportunities.
- Paid Maternity and Paternity Leave.

## Safe Routes to Schools in Kilkenny City

This scheme consists of 11 new crossings and improved footpaths, cycle paths and junctions on the Granges and Freshford Roads. The scheme will improve infrastructure and slow traffic on the routes to school, creating a safer environment for the large number of children and young people attending Loreto and St. Canice's Schools. The interventions were based on survey findings, audits and consultation with the school communities. Students have consistently cited safety as the main barriers to active travel and this scheme aims to encourage independent journeys for all, particularly for children and young people, reducing the demand for care journeys. Other schools in Kilkenny on the Safe Routes to School Programme are the three schools in Graiguenamanagh and St. John of God and St. Patrick's De La Salle in Kilkenny City.



New cycle track built outside Loreto Secondary School



New cycle tracks built outside Loreto Secondary School

Did you know?

Kilkenny County Council host two civic festivals each year: St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny and Yulefest Kilkenny. In addition, the Council supports many more events through its Festivals and Events Grants Assistance Scheme.

## ENGAGE WITH US

### Stay Connected

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County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny, R95 A39T

Kilkennycoco.ie | info@kilkennycoco.ie | 056 779 4000

### Social Media

We are widely available across social media for various departments.

- @KilkennyCoCo
- @leokilkenny
- @careerskilkenny
- @shop\_kilkenny
- @investkilkenny
- @shopkilkenny
- @tastekilkenny
- @KilkennyCoCo
- @LocalEnterpriseOfficeKilkenny
- @careerskilkenny
- @kilkennylibrary
- @KilkennyDay
- @kilkenny.heritage
- @kkccoenvironment
- @dunmorerecycling
- @kilkennylibrary
- @kilkennynotices
- @LEOKilkenny
- @investkilkenny
- @LoveKilkenny
- @shopkilkenny1
- @KKArts Office
- @kilkennylibrary
- Invest Kilkenny
- Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny
- Careers Kilkenny

Register for Kilkenny Alerts →

Kilkenny County Council has a FREE text message and email alert service which issues alerts relating to water supply, weather warnings, road works, etc.

You can register by going to our website at [alerts.kilkennycoco.ie](http://alerts.kilkennycoco.ie) Registration requires that you supply your mobile number and email address so that Kilkenny Alerts can deliver alerts to you.

### JOIN OUR ONLINE CONSULTATION PORTAL:

Using this site you can participate in public consultations. Use the Consultations at [consult.kilkenny.ie](http://consult.kilkenny.ie) to view or search for open and upcoming consultations.

Some consultations require you to register before you can make a submission. The registration process is a one-time process and your account can be used for all of the Council's online public consultations. This will enable you to record your submissions across multiple consultations and save the progress of partially completed submissions to complete at a later date.

Other than required by law, your personal information such as contact details collected as part of the consultation process is protected by data protection. They will remain confidential and will not be published or shared with third parties.



## POWER UP GRANT

As part of Budget 2025, the Government has announced a new €4,000 grant called Power Up, to assist businesses in hospitality and retail sectors. This rollout will be managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE).

To date 580 businesses have applied for the grant



Minister Darragh O'Brien with A/Director of Services Fiona Deegan and Members of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service at the Official Opening of the new Urlingford Firestation

## Building for the Future: Urlingford's Modern Fire Station

The new Urlingford Fire Station was officially opened on Wednesday, May 29th, 2024, by Minister Darragh O'Brien of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The project was funded with €1.7 million as part of the national investment plan.

The old fire station in Urlingford, which had been in operation since the early 1970s, required replacement due to its limitations in meeting the demands of a modern fire and rescue service. The

new Fire Station is, located adjacent to Urlingford Garda Station and across the road from the existing station. The new firestation contains a two-bay station with a training yard, lecture room, and staff facilities. Specific training installations include a drill tower, an underground water tank, and a breathing apparatus compressor room.

A professional fire and rescue service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial

role in making our communities safer, whether by preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or by responding swiftly and effectively to incidents and emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The majority of fire deaths continue to occur in domestic premises. Kilkenny County Council encourages residents to fit and maintain a working smoke alarm in their homes to enhance safety



# Kilkenny County Council Elected Members

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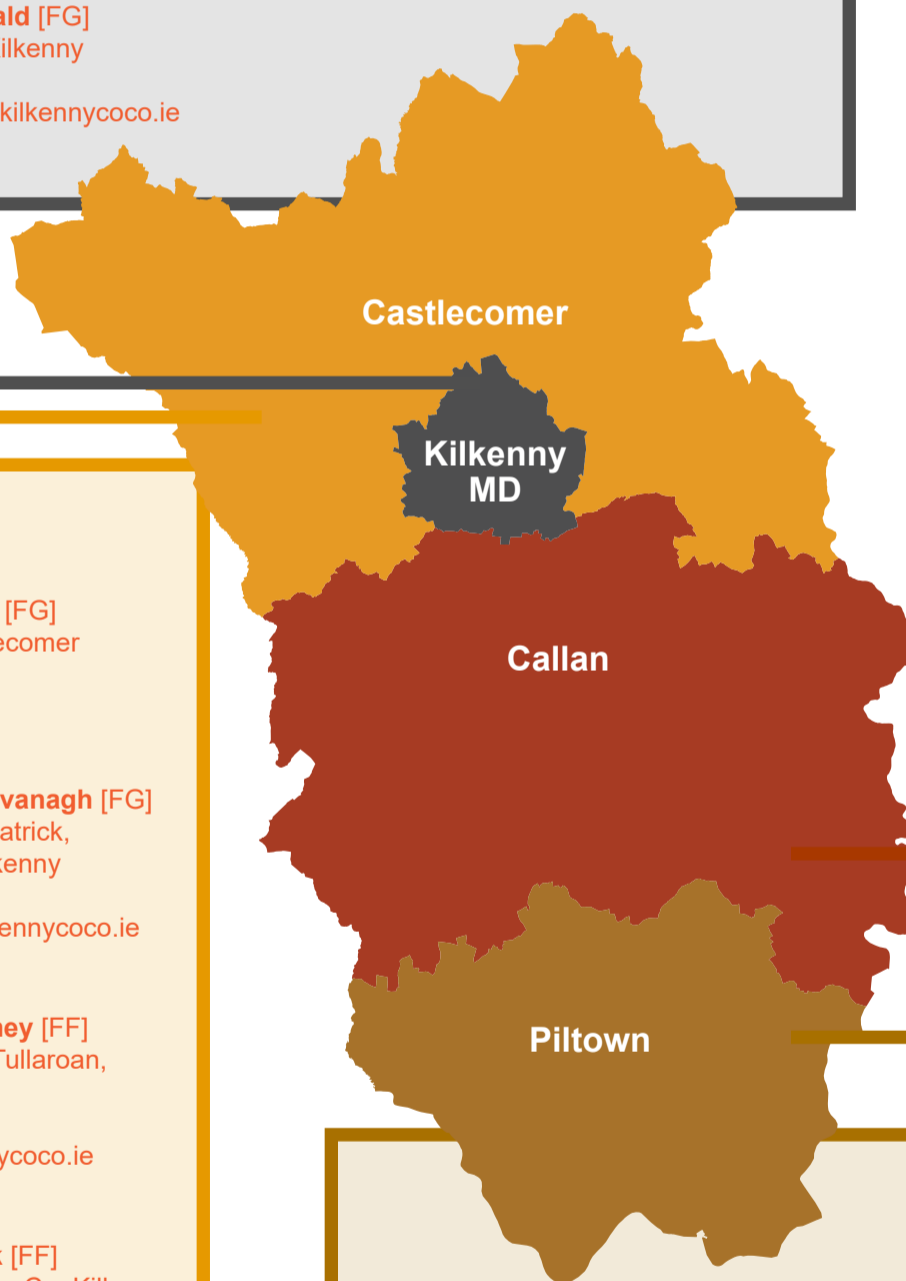
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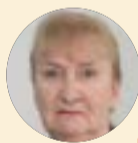
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