

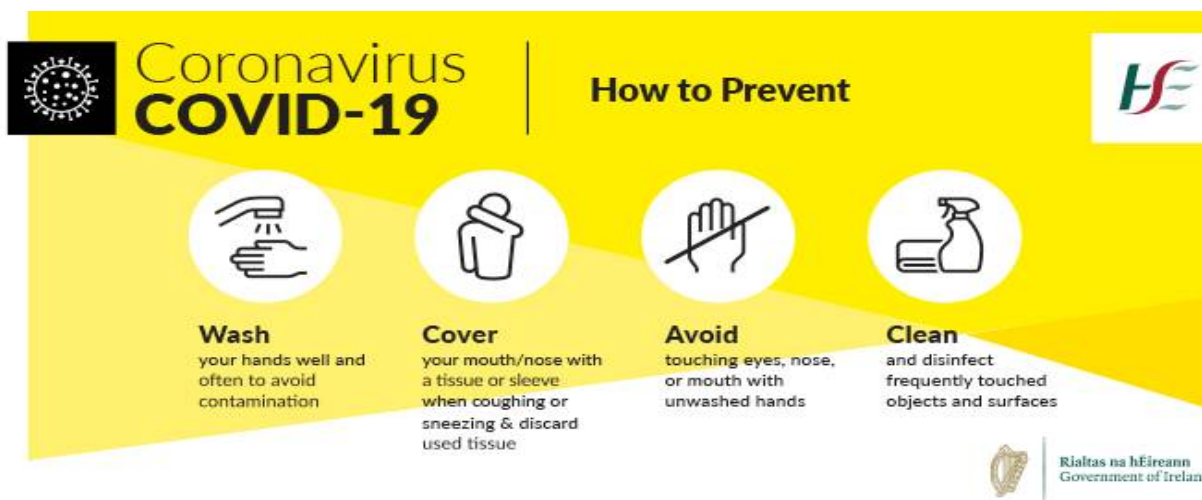


COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

TO: EACH MEMBER OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

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

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 [CORONAVIRUS]
INFLUENZA & OTHER VIRAL ILLNESS**



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

If you have been to one of the affected places and you are not feeling well, check if you have symptoms of coronavirus. These are a cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever (*high temperature*).

If you do have symptoms of coronavirus, phone your GP or local Emergency Department [ED] without delay.

Do not go to your GP or ED. Phone them first. Tell them about your symptoms. Give them the details about your situation. Avoid contact with other people by self-isolating. If you do not have a GP, phone [112](tel:112) or [999](tel:999).

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

If you are feeling well, carry on with your normal routine.

Follow the [advice on how to protect yourself and others from coronavirus](#) and other infections such as [flu](#).

Avoid spending time with people who are ill with a cough, high temperature, or breathing problems.

If you develop [symptoms of coronavirus](#):

- avoid contact with people by self-isolating
- phone your GP or emergency department
- tell them your symptoms and the details of your situation



LET'S BE SAFE – NO HANDSHAKES!



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MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

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

12th & 26th March

Irish Circle in Ferrybank Library

13th & 27th March

French Conversation Group, City Library

20th March

Living with Dementia Talk & Magic Table Demonstration, Loughboy Library

23rd March

Ageing with Confidence 5 week Course Loughboy Library

24th March

Library Outreach Stand at Age Friendly Morning: Castlecomer Community Hall

20th/21st May

Ireland's Buzzing- International Conference on Pollinator Conservation [Limerick].

<https://pollinators.ie/events/conference/>

REPORT AT A GLANCE

CORPORATE:	PAGE 3
ROADS:	PAGE 3
PLANNING:	PAGE 4
ENVIRONMENT:	PAGE 5
PARKS:	PAGE 7
TOURISM:	PAGE 10
LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	PAGE 11
HOUSING:	PAGE 14
HERITAGE:	PAGE 16
LIBRARY SERVICES:	PAGE 17
FINANCE	PAGE 19



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

CORPORATE

At a Special Meeting held on 25th February, 2020 Maria Dollard was co-opted to Kilkenny County Council to fill the vacancy caused by Malcolm Noonan's election as TD.



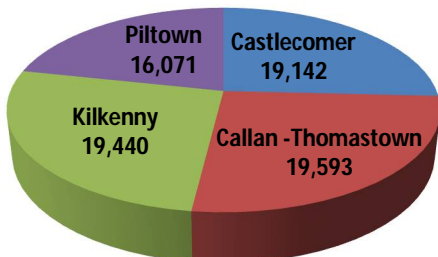
Local Government Awards

Kilkenny County Council won gold at prestigious community awards - Kilkenny County Council selected as winners for contribution to energy reduction initiatives in the region.



Register of Electors 2020/2021

The Register of Electors 2020/2021 came into effect on the 15th February 2020 and is available for inspection at Kilkenny County Councils Offices, Libraries, Garda Station and the Main Post Office. It can also be accessed on checktheregister.ie



Supreme Court

A reception was held in the Medieval Mile Museum to mark the first ever sitting of the

Supreme Court in Kilkenny. The highest court in Ireland sat for the first time in the Kilkenny City Court to deal with two cases and to formally launch the Supreme Court annual report.



Joint Policing Committee

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris and Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn attended the Kilkenny Joint Policing Committee meeting in County Hall.



ROADS

Pavement Schemes

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

Kilkenny Ring Road - 8 roundabouts are to be resurfaced. They are currently advancing through detailed design and contract preparation.

Kilkenny Minor Schemes

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



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

The N24 Tower Road Junction improvement scheme received planning approval in April 2019. The CPO is published and an oral hearing is to take place in March 2020.

Following a public consultation in Ballyragget in February 2020, the preparation of design and planning documents for the N77 Ballyragget to Ballinaslee Improvement Scheme are progressing.

N24 Carrick Road Improvement Scheme - A preferred route for the scheme has been published and we are currently working on environmental and planning reports.

Kilkenny Major Schemes

The New Ross Bypass is now open to traffic, as a result the road between the Glenmore Bypass and New Ross has been declassified to a regional road with an 80km\hr speed limit.

2 days of public consultation is planned for the N25 Glenmore to Waterford Improvement Scheme. The public consultation will take place on the 25th and 26th March in the Rhu Glen Hotel.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme - Kilkenny is the lead authority on this scheme. We expect to appoint consultants in the coming weeks.

OTHER PROJECTS:

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure

Construction of the scheme commenced in March 2019. 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 May 2020 allowing the Circular Road to reopen to traffic.

Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge

We are currently waiting on a decision from An Bord Pleanala following an oral hearing in late January 2020.

PLANNING

Development Management for the Month of February 2020

Planning Summary	Total to February	
	2019	2020
Planning Applications Received	71	72
Planning Applications Granted	55	55
Planning Applications Refused	8	5
Complaints Received	13	4
Warning Letters Issued	37	8
Enforcements Notices Issued	1	1

FORWARD PLANNING

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy became operable from the 31st January 2020. This plan will now be used to guide the review of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan.

City & County Development Plan:

The Review of the Kilkenny City and County Development is required by law to recommence within 13 weeks from the 31st of January and a target date for recommencement has been set for the 30th of March 2020. Work on various plans and strategies required for the new plan are in progress. Masterplans have commenced for Loughmacask, the Fairgreen and St. Canice's HSE Campus. A public consultation meeting for the pre-draft stage of the Loughmacask Masterplan took place on the 20th of January 2020 and was attended by over 60 people. A total of 16 submissions were received. Work on the compilation of a draft strategy is continuing.

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.

It is anticipated that a draft City & County Plan will be ready for publication in June 2020.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH

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TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

MARTA - MARCH 2020

Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan

The preparation of the joint Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch continues. Nine submissions were received to the pre-draft consultation phase. The preparation of a report on the pre-draft consultation is nearing completion. It is anticipated that a draft plan will be published in Q2 2020 following consultation with the Thomastown Municipal District and Carlow County Council and the preparation of the associated environmental reports.

Vacant Sites

A total of 17 sites were added to the Register for 2020. Notices were issued to the relevant landowners in late December, giving notice that their sites are being included on the Register. Three owners have appealed these entries to An Bord Pleanála. We are currently in the process of establishing the market value of these new sites.

There are currently 37 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. A total of 21 of these are now liable for the 7% levy. Payment demands will issue for these 21 sites shortly. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.

The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 11 sites.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Grants

All conservation grants have been assessed and have been forwarded to Department of Culture, Heritage, and Gaeltacht for approval.

Planning Referrals, Section 57 Declarations and Section 5 Declaration continue to be assessed on a weekly basis.

Continued conservation advice given for Kilkenny County Council projects at Inistioge Square refurbishment, Teahouse at Bateman Quay, Bridewell and Sessions House in Thomastown.

Taking in Charge

The Taking In Charge process was initiated during 2019 and it is anticipated that this process will be concluded during 2020:

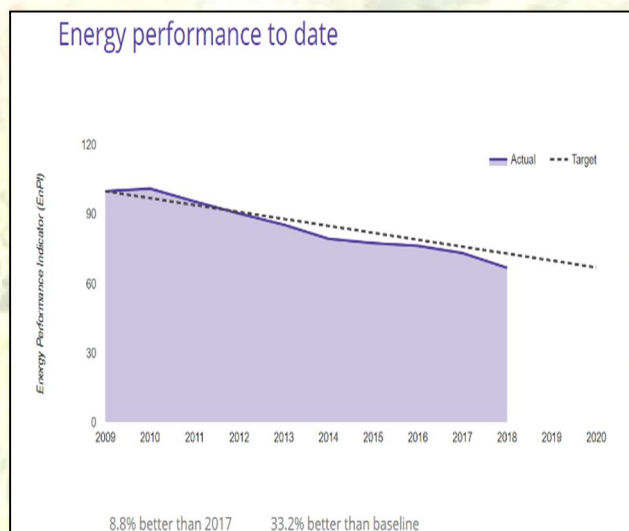
- Ard Glas, Ban Ard, Tuar Na mBlath, An Grianan, An Cuainin at Abbeylands Ferryback Kilkenny.
- Kingscourt, Callan.
- Glenvale, Ballyragget.
- The Greens, Jerpoint West, Thomastown (*The Realignment Section of L8203 Road only*).

The initiation stage of the Taking In Charge process will commence on the following in Q2 2020 upon completion of works:

- Banagher Court Piltown.
- The Green, Ballyfoyle.
- Brookfield, Ballyhale.
- Bellfield, Ferrybank.

ENVIRONMENT

Kilkenny County Council is delighted to announce we have reached our energy usage reduction target for 2020 two years earlier than anticipated.



The Public Sector in Ireland is tasked with reducing their energy consumption by 33% by 2020 from their baseline year. The baseline year



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KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

MARTA - MARCH 2020

for Kilkenny County Council is 2009. Kilkenny County Council reports their energy usage annually to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) which manages the reporting process on behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE). SEAI prepare a report on energy efficiency in the public sector to DCCAE annually. This report entitled "Annual Report 2019 on Public Sector Energy Efficiency Performance" details the entire energy performance of the public sector. Kilkenny County Council is delighted to announce that we are currently at 33.2% and therefore have reached the target for 2020 two years earlier than anticipated.

Kilkenny County Council is currently the 6th best performing local authority in terms of energy efficiency in Ireland. It is envisaged that further developments towards energy management by implementing ISO 50001 within the organisation will help the Council to exceed this target and help to deliver on the next targets towards 2030.

In 2018 Kilkenny County Council were successful in securing grant aid from SEAI to retrofit a further 2,200 streetlights. An additional 1,500 streetlights were retrofitted in 2019 with support from TII and SEAI. To date 6,000 streetlights have been retrofitted, the Council is currently working on a national scheme to retrofit the remaining lights over the next 5 years.



Clara, Co. Kilkenny

Operation THOR

The Council's Environment Enforcement Team along with Revenue and the Road Safety Authority accompanied An Garda Síochána as part of Operation THOR in January and February.

The Environment Enforcement Team stopped over 100 vehicles and inspected their cargo and permit authorisations over the course of two separate days. Six staff from the Environment Office attended at 6 checkpoints, resulting in 15 €500 Fixed Penalty Notices being issued for various offences under the Waste Management legislation.



During the operation the message to the general public was that we are monitoring the authorised and unauthorised movement of waste around the county. The feedback from the public was in the main very positive.

Tidy Towns Meet & Greet

Callan, Freshford and Listerlin Tidy Town groups were visited recently by the Environment Awareness Officer to assist groups to progress in the Tidy Towns competition. Visiting the towns and villages enabled the group to seek advice on local matters like biodiversity and waste enforcement and it provides time to discuss potential projects which would be suitable for their local community.

Tidy Towns Forum

A Tidy Towns adjudicator is set to visit Kells on Monday evening, the 30th of March to provide a presentation at the Spring Tidy Towns Forum. The adjudicator will provide advice regarding the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan, a document which every entrant must submit with their annual tidy towns competition submission. Elected members are most welcome to join us, for further details contact Bernadette, the Environmental Awareness Officer on 056-7794487.



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MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

MARTA - MARCH 2020

Educational Activities

The Green Schools closing date for renewal applications is the 27th of March and approximately 21 schools have confirmed their intention to renew. The interaction between Kilkenny County Council and local schools through the Green School programme is a positive way to promote environmental initiatives. One primary school provided feedback of a recent assessment visit "First of all, a big thank you from all of us for your visit. The children were all delighted. You were very good with them and so positive. It was a good experience for them".

In recent weeks, Eco-Unesco have completed four waste warrior's workshops in secondary schools and four Rubbish Monster Puppet Shows funded through the Community Environment Action Fund. The secondary school workshops act as a kick starter for environmental projects within the school environment.

County Kilkenny Green Charter for Festival and Community Events

The Environment Section is delighted at the public's response to the County Kilkenny Green Charter for Festival and Community Events. The Environmental Awareness Officer was invited onto KCLR Live (4th March) to discuss the Charter. It has had a positive reaction on the Awareness Officers social media face book page achieving a reach of over 4,000 people.

LAWPRO staff feature on RTÉ's Eco Eye

A recent episode of RTÉ's long-running environmental series Eco Eye featured staff from LAWPRO (Local Authority Waters Programme).

The episode is titled 'On the Water Front', which is appropriate given that it focuses on efforts by communities and local authorities to protect and enhance water quality, with examples in both rural and urban areas. LAWPRO is driving a new approach for managing water quality on behalf of local authorities that involves:

- coordinating the activities of the 31 local authorities and relevant State agencies

- applying catchment science to create an understanding of the issues impacting on water quality
- supporting local communities to get involved in the management of their local rivers, lakes and coasts.

A key focus for LAWPRO is raising awareness of water-quality issues at a local level and potential solutions. The opportunity to deliver that message on a national scale allows both LAWPRO and local authorities to highlight ongoing efforts to tackle the causes of declining water quality in Ireland.

PARKS

Playgrounds

With the assistance of a playground refurbishment grant from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs [DCYA] three playgrounds have had new pieces of equipment installed to boost the offering in each. Upgrades to older playgrounds are continuing as funding allows with the emphasis now on replacement of older pieces of equipment and replacement of safety surfacing. The three playgrounds with new equipment added are Thomastown, Castlecomer and Graiguenamangh. A new application will be made to the DCYA in the coming weeks for further funding to continue refurbishments.



A new piece of equipment added to Castlecomer Playground to improve the playground offering which is now 14 years old



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

Tullaroan Playground is now completed by the local community and has been certified by an independent play inspector as being safe for use. The playground will now fall under our inspection and maintenance regime bringing to **29** the number of playgrounds in the County we inspect and maintain.

South East Greenway

Works have now commenced on the enabling contracts on the South East Greenway which runs from Ferrybank in South Kilkenny to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot. The route covers a distance of 24km in total travelling through rural south Kilkenny. 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. Detail site surveys have been carried out along with bore hole investigations at sites where underpasses may be required for certain farming operations. In tandem with these works a team from Wexford and Kilkenny County Council are meeting with landowners along the route to finalise the detail of accommodation works. Upon completion of this phase of work the tender documents will shortly be finalised. Contract documents will then be sent to the Department of Tourism Transport and Sport for final approval following which the project will go to Public Tender for the construction phase. It is anticipated works will commence on site in September 2020 with a completion date being set at December 2021.



Examining one of the old bridge structures along the route of the South East Greenway at Carrickcloney



View of the recently opened Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge from the old railway line at Carrickcloney.

Woodstock Gardens

Works to upgrade paths damaged by heavy winter rain and to improve the surface where trees have fallen has been completed. The stormy weather this winter of 2019-20 has resulted in losses of some trees of significance. The age profile of the planting means the tree collection is more susceptible to winds and storms into the future presenting a need to constantly renew the tree collection to ensure there will always be a stock of young trees developing for future years. Trees of significance in the gardens have now been marked with a special plaque informing visitors of the origin of the tree and the significance of the species globally. The garden is a great resource for students of horticulture whom are always welcomed to learn and study. Recently two students from the GROW project carried out a practical on espalier fruit trees in the gardens.



Students from the GROW project in Waterford learning about espalier fruit trees in Woodstock

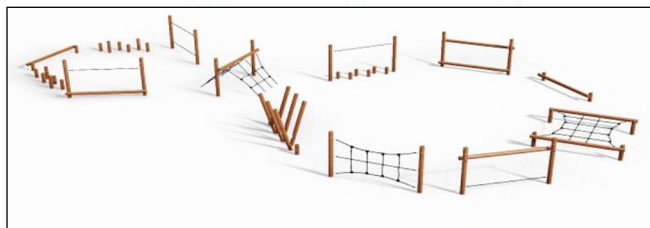
Woodstock now has over 5,000 followers on Facebook. Staff from Kilkenny Civic Trust will assist in running a social media campaign to build



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

further on this and promote Woodstock on line. The sale of season tickets for the gardens is on the rise which allows access to the gardens for an unlimited number of visits per year.

Funding of €14,000 was received from the Sports Capital Grant through the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport for the development of an outdoor exercise trail adjacent to the natural playground in Woodstock. Quotations have now been received for this and work will commence on site shortly.



Above an example of the type of exercise trail to be added to Woodstock shortly

Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

Work is well advanced on the construction of the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park in spite of very inclement weather over the winter months. The path network is now in place along with the terraced area for the seating area and climbing wall being finalised. New paths leading up to the playground have been installed. The tree planting of over 100 semi mature trees is almost complete and the playground equipment is now installed with the facility expected to be 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.



As the site is on elevated ground, there are great views of Ferrybank and Waterford City in the background.



The recently installed playground pieces in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park.

Tree Planting

The Parks Department continues to support tree planting in the County. Recently two significant formal plantings in The Square in Freshford and The Square in Johnstown took place with the addition of new semi mature trees to replace losses from the historic planting layouts. The planting in Johnstown is to commemorate Johnstown village's 250th anniversary. A very special thanks to the crews from the Castlecomer Area office in particular John Shortall and Pat Hurley for their assistance in planting these trees.



Family Festival 24th May 2020 @ Johnstown Kilkenny



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

Amenity Grants

Over 163 groups received grant assistance under the Amenity Grant Scheme in 2019 amounting to a total of €127k in funding. 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 encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. 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. In 2020 there will be more of an emphasis on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner. An increase in the total budget of €13k 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.

TOURISM

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme [ORIS] Grants Announced

Kilkenny County Council will oversee the investment of €432,000 during 2020 on two of the County's most picturesque amenities. The Council has been successful in securing grant aid in the sum of €340,000 for outdoor amenities. The projects are further evidence of Kilkenny County Council's commitment to matching funds to secure investment in outdoor amenities which will serve the local communities but also attract visiting tourists to some of Kilkenny's hidden gems.

This follows a recent announcement by the Department of Rural and Community Development who published details of projects to be funded under the ORIS in collaboration with

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

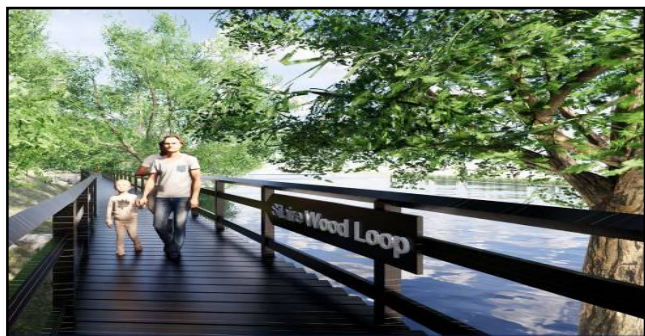
Poulanassy Waterfall is located 2km to the west of Mullinavat Village, and has been allocated €140,000 in grant aid. This will be matched by a contribution by Kilkenny County Council amounting to €35,000. The waterfall is a popular amenity with locals and tourists particularly during the summer months, and a number of issues need to be resolved to allow the amenity to stay open to the public.

Silaire Woods adjoins the River Barrow and is located 1km up-stream from the centre of Graiguenamanagh, and has been allocated €200,000, which will be supplemented by a Kilkenny County Council's contribution of €57,500. The area is located in a high quality natural environment situated in the steep-sided Barrow Valley between Brandon Hill in County Kilkenny and Mount Leinster in County Carlow. The existing Boardwalk, originally erected by the local community, was damaged by a flood in 2015, and was consequently closed to the public on health and safety grounds and the entire 400 linear metres length of boardwalk needs to be renewed, along with associated path and trail renewal for the looped walk.

This intervention will restore the amenity and recreation value for the local community and build on the already existing outdoor activities available locally, which include swimming, canoeing, rowing, fishing, cycling, walking and hiking along the Barrow Way, South Leinster Way and Brandon Hill Trail. It is also noted that both swimming areas which provide for a sandy, low and high diving boards along with the Boat Club and Canoe Club are located just 500m upstream of Silaire Wood with good connectivity via the riverbank walk. This area attracts both national and international visitors and the reopening of the boardwalk and looped walk will significantly add to their experience and aid in the towns development as an outdoor tourism destination.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020



Artists impression of Proposed reinstated walkway at Silaire Woods.

Developed and Emerging Destination Towns Capital Investment Programme 2019

Formal notification of the allocation of grant aid in the sum of €500,000 was received from Fáilte Ireland under the Destination Towns Capital Programme, which will facilitate the development of a suite of visitor wayfinding and orientation measures for Kilkenny City.

The scheme will address visitor orientation with a view to easing the visitor journey within the City. The application for funding was made on the basis of the findings of a report compiled by Placemarque consultants which found that visitors to Kilkenny are not fully aware of what Kilkenny as a city has to offer. Visitors in the main only visit for a few hours as some attractions are hidden, or visitors are not being given the right information in the right way.

At the heart of this proposal is the desire to meet visitor needs by moving the centre of gravity back to the Tholsel/High Town area, changing existing visitor perception and flow. The key part of the project is to create a shared space zone at the Parade/High Street junction to make the route appear a natural continuous flow where pedestrians will be given greater priority. It will include new way finding to ensure the visitor journey is clear, adding walking times to signs to encourage exploration, redesigning existing mapping and defining visitor car parks as an aid to encourage visitors to get out of their cars/transport quickly and feel relaxed that they

can stay all day. The project will plan for improvements in some of the smaller slip ways and routes with introduction of some lighting and public art installations to add some interest and make them feel safe and so encourage visitor exploration.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#MakingItHappen

Local Enterprise Week took place from 2nd – 6th March and brought budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses together across the County. The week provided the opportunity for over 250 attendees to sample the range of supports that are on offer from the Local Enterprise Office across an array of events, workshops and seminars, which included a business start-up seminar, female networking event, social media workshops, a LEAN workshop, a Trading Online Voucher Scheme information seminar and lots more. The highlights were as follows:

Business Start Up Seminar - Learn Network Grow



The week commenced with a Business Start Seminar – ‘Learn Network Grow’ on Monday evening 2nd March with a panel discussion including a diverse array of clients who have availed of a variety of supports from LEO Kilkenny. It also provided an opportunity for over 50 attendees to meet with numerous agencies who have a remit for enterprise development and supports and also to hear and learn from early stage entrepreneurs who are currently ‘Making It Happen’.

Starting Farm Food Business - From Farm to Fork



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

Our second key event took place on Wednesday morning 4th March – ‘starting a Farm Food Business – From Farm to Fork’, organised in conjunction with Teagasc and Kilkenny Leader Partnership.



Speaking to an audience of just close on 100 entrepreneurs, Anne Ging, Chairperson of the Kilkenny Food Strategy Committee and owner of Ballykeefe Distillery, highlighted the details of the Kilkenny Food Strategy, aimed at raising the profile of local food and beverages, fostering greater commercial growth and added value to primary production and to supply more product to the local market.

The seminar also featured a panel discussion hosted by journalist Matt O’Keeffe with food producers at various stages of the development. These included Jimmy Mulhall, Coolanowle Meats; Helen Murphy, Mooncoin Beetroot; Rosemary O’Shea, Tullyhay Farm and Patricia Butler, Butler Family Farm. Eddie O’Neill, Artisan Food Specialist with Teagasc also joined the panel and provided guidance on starting a new food business.

Women in Business Networking Lunch

Another popular event held on Wednesday afternoon was the ‘Women in Business - Meet the Entrepreneur’ Networking Lunch at which there were 40 in attendance in the Hoban Hotel with guest speaker Margaret Hctor. Margaret willingly shared her business journey and provided lots of networking tips on exactly how to network with other entrepreneurs.



Aileen McGrath (LEO) & Margaret Hctor, The Entrepreneurs Academy

Lean for Micro Breakfast Seminar

On Thursday morning 5th March in the Avalon Hotel, Castlecomer a Lean for Micro Breakfast Seminar took place. This panel was MC’d by Edmond Connolly of the South East Regional Skills Forum and the panel consisted of Martin Patterson, Mechanical Modular Solutions; Seamus Scully, ARC Management - a Lean Service provider and Robert Hernan, Senior Lean Advisor with Enterprise Ireland. **The panel shared their experiences of the benefits of LEAN and the cost savings and efficiencies it has brought to the businesses that they have been involved in.**

Loanitt Ltd Selected To Represent Kilkenny In The National Enterprise Awards 2020



A fintech business from Kilkenny City will represent Kilkenny in this year’s National Enterprise Awards 2020. John Duggan, Director, LoanITT Ltd. was presented with the Award on Friday 6th March at a meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning and Development to conclude the end of a very successful Local Enterprise Week programme of events. LoanITT Ltd. will now represent



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

Kilkenny at the 22nd National Enterprise Awards in the Mansion House in Dublin next May.

Green for Micro Breakfast Seminar – 13th February 2020

The South East Local Enterprise Office's, in partnership with 3 Counties Energy Agency (3CEA), have identified a need to work with businesses in the region to assist them in transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy. Low carbon translates into savings in Water, Energy, Waste, Procurement and Transport management. Kilkenny LEO held a breakfast briefing in the Newpark Hotel on the 13th February to showcase to businesses what measures can be put in place to improve the environmental and cost competitiveness of the business.

Rory Williams MD of Countrystyle Foods spoke about making the business more sustainable from a cost competitiveness and marketing point of view. This included information on a number of projects they have completed to save energy at their site including a large LED upgrade and plans they have to make the business more sustainable.

Trudies Kitchen supplies packaged foods to a number of large retails across the southeast. They have a strong focus making their business more sustainable and are part of the Origin Green programme. Trudie Power gave an overview of what they have completed in terms of waste management in achieving zero waste going to landfill, reducing water consumption by up to 50%, route planning for deliveries and implementing a LED retrofit to reduce energy costs.

3CEA

Experts gave a presentation on supports available to SMEs and how to access these supports and grants.

Customs Workshop - Preparing for Brexit – 14th February 2020

A Customer Workshop – 'Preparing for Brexit' took place in Hotel Kilkenny on 14th February providing details on how export and import

customs will impact trade with the UK, how tariffs work and the needs to correctly classify goods. Austin Rutledge, Director of Export – Edge assisted participants to become familiar with the customs compliance requirements on trading with the UK and outside the EU.

LEO Key Statistics for 2020

€80,875 approved to 3 businesses linked to the creation of 94 jobs over a 3 year period - (€77,625 in Business Expansion Grants and €3,250 in Feasibility Study Grants).

378 business owners and employees attended 17 core training programmes including seminars from Financial Training to Management Development Programmes.

747 students from 14 schools currently participating in the Student Enterprise Programme which fosters a spirit of entrepreneurship from an early age.

74 entrepreneurs have received one-to-one mentoring to assist them in relation to issues within their business.

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

37 participants attended 2 Start Your Own Business programmes which explores all the aspects encountered when starting up a new business.

8 Trading Online Vouchers were approved totalling €12,238 in order to assist businesses to implement e-commerce within their business.

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

2 businesses approved Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants in order to assist them access overseas markets totalling €4,900.

1 business assisted to make an application through the Microfinance Ireland Fund.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

This is the third year into the Rebuilding Ireland housing delivery programme. The Minister for Housing notified Kilkenny County Council of its revised delivery targets under Rebuilding Ireland i.e. 599 units for the period 2018 to 2021. No specific target is set for 2020 as yet.

The outcome for 2019 is outlined below against the various targets for 2019. In summary, an overall target of 374 units was to be delivered in 2019 covering all the streams of delivery including RAS and HAP. The units delivered under the various streams for 2019 were 565 i.e. 51% over target.

Rebuilding Ireland Targets

	2019 Targets	2019 Delivered
Build	114	116
Acquisition	46	166
Leasing	30	15
HAP/RAS	184	268
All Streams	374	565

Proposed Housing Delivery 2020

These are estimated figures and are subject to change. The Council is awaiting notification from the Department outlining the 2020 housing delivery target.

Pipeline Delivery 2020	Proposed
CITY	
Nuncio Road, KK	28
Margaretsfield	40
Sub Total	68
COUNTY	
Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan	38
Breaghagh Place, Piltown	17
Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer	33
New Road & Chapel St, Mooncoin	6
Lime Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (Turnkey)	4

Group Home, Cloghabrody, Thomastown	4
Willow Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (Part 5)	3
County Sub Total	105
Total	173

Housing Schemes completed in 2020

Nil

Schemes under Construction at 29th February 2020:

- 38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan,
- 15 units Nuncio Road, KK (*Respond Housing*)
- 17 Units at Breaghagh 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
- 40 units Margaretsfield, Callan Road, KK
- 4 units (*Group home*) at Cloghabrody, Thomastown
- 1 unit at 47 Barrack St, Castlecomer (*Buy and Renew*)
- 1 unit at Old Health Centre, Windgap (*Buy & Renew*)
- 1 unit at Main St, Kilmoganny (*Buy & Renew*)

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, Jenkinstown
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh
- Development of 86 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, KK – An Bord Pleanála approved 17th Jan 2020



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

Schemes at Planning Stage

- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown

February Monthly Stats

Number awaiting social housing support at 29 th February, 2020 (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1983
Number of assessment interviews carried out in February:	28
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in February (<i>offers made</i>):	7
Number of HAP tenancies to 29 th February:	876
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in February:	6
Anti-social behaviour cases in February:	61
New Homeless Presentations in February:	27
Maintenance Calls for February 2020	579
Maintenance Calls year to date	1,228
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (Annuity/Construction)	5
Amount of Loans Approved to 29 th February, 2020	€557,930

Housing List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 29th February is 1,983 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
February 2020	1,983
December 2019	1,988
December 2018	2,067
December 2017	2,180
December 2016	2,059 <i>(Statutory Assessment 2016)</i>
December 2015	2,744

Housing Loan Activity at 29th February, 2020

	Annuity/ RI Home Loan	Reconstruction Loan	Caravan Loan
Received	7	0	0
Approved	5	0	0
Amount Approved	€557,930	0	0
No. Paid	5	0	0
Amt. Paid	€735,700	0	0

Private Grants

Grants Paid 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	12	€135,878.67
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€18,900.00
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	21	€103,784.99
Total	39	€258,563.66

Grants Committed 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	59	€657,571.11
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	20	€70,058.44
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	57	€301,593.68
Total	136	€1,029,223.23

New Rent Scheme and Rent Review 2020

Members are reminded of the pending rent review that is underway for all our tenants. It is intended to have the new rents in place for 4th 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



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations for February 2020 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020 are set out below. There were 27 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations at 29/02/2020.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	37	29	37	27	23
February	30	26	32	14	27
March	18	26	21	16	
April	26	25	18	20	
May	34	28	29	20	
June	31	24	20	16	
July	31	34	15	31	
August	32	27	26	28	
September	27	24	19	26	
October	30	27	27	25	
November	32	29	23	16	
December	21	19	6	17	
	349	318	273	256	

Currently, there are 5 households in Hotel/B&B emergency accommodation - Hotel (4) and 1 in B&B. The Council is working on exit strategies for the remaining households currently in emergency accommodation

The Council has recruited a HAP Place Finder and more recently a Social Care Worker to work closely with households under notice of losing their home. These preventative measures have positively impacted on the number of homeless presentations recorded monthly to the Council.

Scheme of Letting Priorities (Allocation Scheme)

Houses are allocated in accordance with each Council's **Scheme of Letting Priorities**. The Scheme of Letting Priorities (Allocation Scheme) was last updated in 2011. The existing and proposed Schemes of Letting Priorities were presented for discussion at the Housing SPC meetings held on 24th October 2020, 12th December 2019 and 27th February 2020. As

statutorily required a copy of the draft Scheme was also sent to the Minister for Housing for comment.

The adoption of the Scheme of Letting Priorities (Allocation Scheme) is a reserved function of the Council and is recommended by the Housing SPC to have the Scheme adopted at the March Council meeting. All allocations of accommodation to those approved for housing supports will be made in accordance with this revised Scheme of Letting Priorities.

HERITAGE

FREE "Heritage in School" Visits for schools

All primary schools in Co. Kilkenny have been invited to register for free Heritage in Schools visits. The visits will focus on biodiversity, pollinators and creativity, and are co-funded by the Heritage Council, Creative Ireland and the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council. Last year over 6,000 children in Kilkenny received a free visit – the highest of any county in Ireland.

Funding for Wetlands and Ogham Stones

The Heritage Office received €23,000 from the Heritage Council to undertake 2 surveys:

- (i) Audit of wetland sites in Co. Kilkenny (Phase 1). Wetlands play a vital role in climate adaptation and the survey will inform policies in the new County Development Plan.
- (ii) Digital audit of Ogham stones. Ogham is the oldest form of writing in Ireland – made up of a series of strokes carved on stones. The 8 stones to be recorded are from Shankill, Churchclara (2), Lamoge (2), Legan Castle, Fiddaun Upper and Cloghabrody.

The funding was received under the County Heritage Plan Programme and will be matched 25% by the Heritage Office.

Ogham Writing



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Archaeological Landscapes of County Kilkenny

A Preliminary Audit of Archaeological Landscapes of Co. Kilkenny, commissioned by the Heritage Office and Forward Planning has been completed. The audit identified 18 potential landscapes, such as the Lingaun Valley and Tory Hill which are of cultural, economic, social and environmental value. The findings of the audit will be included in the new County Development Plan.



Tory Hill in South Kilkenny, where our prehistoric ancestors buried their dead, where the community still collects bilberries on Fraochán Sunday each July, and visitors walk the beautiful looped trail

2 Civic Memorial Applications

The Civic Memorials and Infrastructure Committee (Heritage, Arts, Architecture and Conservation) assessed 2 applications for memorials & plaques in line with the Council's policy on Civic Memorials & Infrastructure. https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Publications/Council_Publications/Naming-and-Commemorative-Memorial-Policy-adopted-.html

Sign Up Month

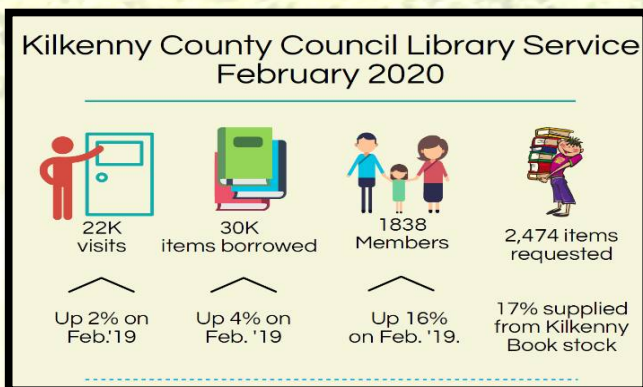
Our annual sign up month ran throughout the month of February, with 1,838 people signing up for membership – an increase of 16% on February 2019. As part of our promotion, all primary schools in Kilkenny were invited to visit the library, and we had over 56 classes through our doors. Along with a promotional window on John Street, staff from Library Headquarters held a pop up stand in MacDonagh Junction for a day, signing up over 50 borrowers. This annual local initiative aims to spread the word on what the library has to offer to all ages, and is strategically significant in relation to the National Library Strategy target membership of 30% of population by 2022

National Library Open Day

The first ever National Library Open Day took place on Saturday 29th February, with our branches inviting both new and old members to visit and have a look at our resources and services, and offering demonstrations of our suite of online services to all. Over 580 people visited our branches on day.



LIBRARY



Healthy Ireland

Over 180 people have attended our Healthy Ireland at your Library events in February. Events organised included walking groups, Healthy Eating storytimes, Grow it Yourself workshops, Mindfulness for exams, Decluttering and a musical memory singalong session. All libraries in Kilkenny hold a collection of recommended books on topics such as healthy eating, wellbeing and mental health, physical activities and parenting. Pictured are some of the walkers from Thomastown Library's Get Fit Smiling event.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT MARTA - MARCH 2020

My Open Library Castlecomer February 2020



My Open Library was used in Castlecomer **308** times

256 Books were borrowed during My Open Library Hours



Library computers were used **53** times

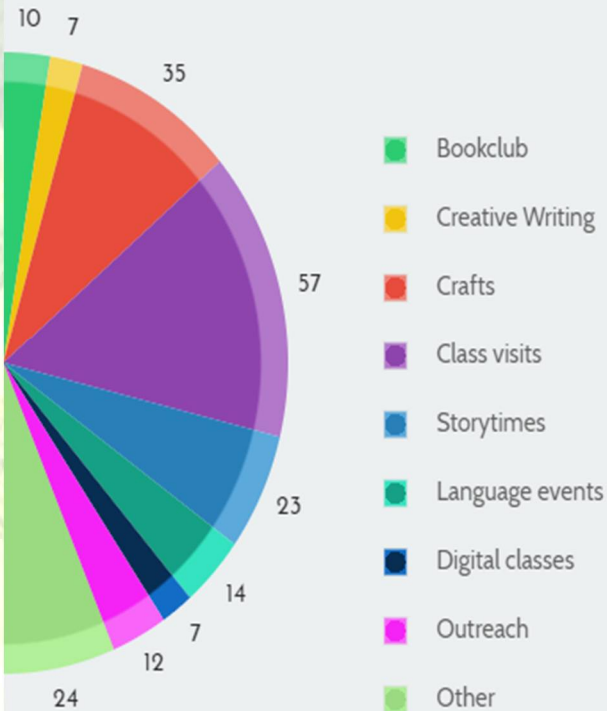
Communicating our work



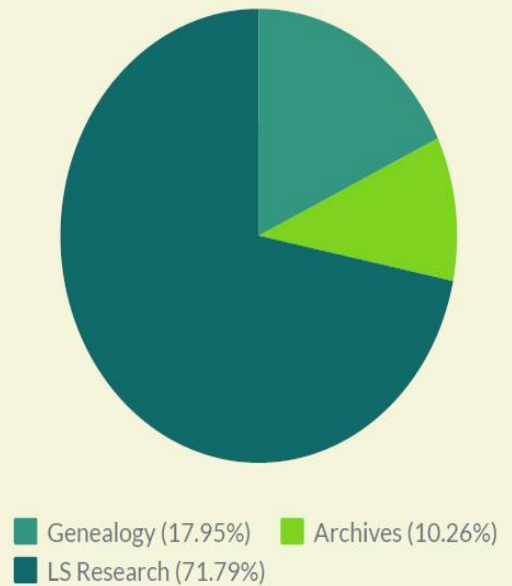
Followers: February 2020

Facebook: 3448
Twitter: 2210
Instagram: 1355
Website Users: 1835

Events held this month in our libraries



Local Studies Queries February





COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MARTA - MARCH 2020

FINANCE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2020

The expenditure by service division to the end of February is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €12.9m compared with the annual budget of €83.6m.

Table 1	Actual YTD February 2020	Budget Full Year 2020
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	3,259	17,623
Road Transport & Safety	2,276	22,688
Water Services	1,154	6,576
Development Management	1,523	10,525
Environmental Services	1,211	11,463
Recreation & Amenity	926	6,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	69	639
Miscellaneous Services	2,453	7,623
OVERALL TOTAL	12,871	83,562

The bank overdraft facility was not required for the year to date February 2020. The unaudited Annual Financial Statement for 2019 has been completed and will be presented to Council at the March meeting. The audited statements will be presented to Council later in the year on completion of the annual audit by the Local Government Auditor.

Rates

Rate Demands were issued to all rateable customers on the 13th February, 2020. The total value of rate demand for 2020 is €20,992,880. Rates are levied in two moieties and customers can avail of a number of different options to pay their demand. Customers can also avail of the Rates Incentive Grant Scheme and receive a reduction of 3% in their rate demand to a maximum of €250 subject to compliance with terms and conditions of the scheme.

Further to Revaluation 2017, 195 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 139 appeals have been completed. 111 of the 139 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. Income lost to date stands at €660,000. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been made by the Tribunal.