



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

APRIL 2026 ISSUE



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CORPORATE	3
PLANNING	5
CAPITAL DELIVERY & PARKS.....	7
COMMUNITY.....	10
LEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM.....	16
HOUSING.....	19
ENVIRONMENT.....	22
LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEGRATION TEAM [LAIT]	29
FIRE SERVICES.....	31
LIBRARY.....	32
ARTS.....	35
HERITAGE	38
FINANCE	40

Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Leas Cathaoirleach Fidelis Doherty, CE Lar Power, and DOS Tim Butler with senior executives from Tourism Ireland in New York.



Photo courtesy of KCLR.

Mayor John Coonan and Cllr. Joe Malone with representatives from our twinned towns, Formigine, Italy and Kilkenney, Minnesota.



CORPORATE SERVICES

JANUARY - MARCH 2026

01

9 NOTICES
OF
MOTION

02

22 PRESS
RELEASES

03

INSTAGRAM STATISTICS

636 POSTS
338,313 POSTS VIEWS
3,295 ENGAGEMENT

04

FACEBOOK STATISTICS

664 POSTS
2,818,268 POSTS VIEWS
104,852 ENGAGEMENT

05

3 OMBUDSMAN
REQUESTS

6 COMPLAINTS
RECEIVED

06

4 GDPR QUERIES

0 GDPR APPEALS

07

4 AIE REQUESTS

0 AIE APPEALS

08

60 FOI REQUESTS

0 FOI APPEALS

09

21 LAMA PROJECTS
SUBMITTED

7 LAMA PROJECTS
SHORTLISTED

2 LAMA AWARDS
RECEIVED



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Kilkenny County Council

PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to March	
	2026	2025
Planning Applications Received	207	185
Planning Applications Granted	187	162
Planning Applications Refused	11	15
Complaints Received	21	21
Warning Letters Issued	15	16
Enforcements Notices Issued	6	13
Cases Closed	11	53
Cases sent for legal prosecution	0	0
Section 5's Received	28	17
Section 5's Decided Upon	24	15

Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2030

A review of the Development Contribution Scheme and a Draft Scheme 2026 to 2030 was out for public consultation until Monday 23rd March 2026. Five submissions were received during the consultation period which will now be considered and a report will be presented to the members for their consideration at the April Council meeting

FORWARD PLANNING

Variation 8A

The Proposed Variation 8A to change the zoning of land in Kilkenny City, to reflect the requirements of the Government's National Planning Framework Implementation Guidelines, commenced public display on 6th March 2026 with submissions invited until the 3rd April 2026. 9 submissions are received to date. A Chief Executives Report will be prepared and it is anticipated that this Variation will go before the April Council Plenary Meeting.

Variation 8B

The proposed Variation 8B is intended to reflect the requirements of the Government's *National Planning Framework Implementation Guidelines*, in relation to the accommodation of growth in the settlements of Callan, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. SEA Scoping commenced with referral to the relevant environmental bodies on 12th March, 2026, with a 4 week period for submissions that ends on 9th April, 2026. The Variation will then be prepared for public consultation in Q2 of 2026.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following Estates:

1. Cluain Glasan, Kilkenny
2. Berkley Terrace, Ferrybank Co Kilkenny
3. Danville Road Industrial Estate Kilkenny

Active Land Management

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The public consultation period finished on 01st April 2026. Seven submissions were received. Decisions on submissions received is due by 30th June 2026.

Conservation

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

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

For the month of March, the Conservation Officer completed reports on the following:

- Planning Referrals 9
- Further Information requests 1
- Clarification of Further Information requests 0
- Section 57 Declarations 3
- Part 8 0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Valid Disability Access Applications Received
March 2026 60	March 2026 30
March 2025 51	March 2025 9
March 2024 75	March 2024 13
March 2023 57	March 2023 3

CAPITAL DELIVERY & PARKS

Town & Village Renewal Scheme

The Dunnamaggin Town & Village Renewal Scheme is now substantially completed and will be opened to the public in April.

The Scheme, a community led project, has transformed a green space in the village centre, locally known as Madge's Garden, into an assessable public realm area that will cater for community events for all, while providing an activity and recreational space for families. The project includes the preservation of an existing derelict outbuilding into a usable space, with a wheelchair accessible toilet and storage space for community groups. The outbuilding has also been equipped with numerous power outlets and a sink with running water. The wider works undertaken included a mixture of hard and soft landscaping designed to encourage people to sit and relax in a casual meeting space.

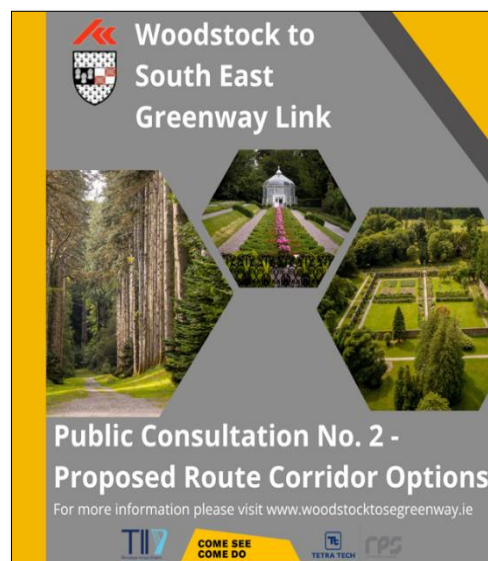


Before & After Images: Woodstock to South East Greenway Link

This project is currently at Phase 2 Options Selection. The purpose of Phase 2 is to develop, examine and assess route corridor options to identify a preferred option for the project. The Study Area has been expanded from Phase 1 to ensure that all viable options are taken into consideration. The assessment of the route corridor options will be taken in accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, the Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways, and the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Project Management and Project Appraisal Guidelines.

A public consultation period regarding the proposed Route Corridor Options will run from the 6th April – 27th April. There will also be an in-person public consultation event, held on Monday 13th April, in Cois Abhann in Inistioge. This event will be open to the public from 2.00 p.m. until 7.00 p.m. and the project team will be in attendance to explain the scheme and answer any questions.

The closing date for submissions on this phase of the consultation is Monday, 27th April, 2026. Details on how to make a submission can be found on the project website: www.woodstocktosegreenway.ie



Grass Maintenance

Our annual grass maintenance programme is now fully operational. In recent years, the Parks Dept. has made significant changes to the grass cutting regime and where possible traditional fortnightly cycles of mowing grass short has been replaced with longer mowing cycles to encourage pollinators. This is particularly important at this time of year as some of our pollinators are emerging from hibernation and the Dandelion is a key source of food for same. These pollinator areas are largely on embankments, wide road verges and in bigger residential areas with large green spaces, with the latter only been achievable with buy-in and support from the various local resident committees, residents and tidy towns groups.



Amenity Grants

A budget of €140,000 was provided for the 2026 Amenity Grant Scheme. The closing date for the submission of applications was the 28th March. There was huge interest again this year, with 184no. applications received, a slight increase on 2025. The applications were evaluated and an award recommendation will go before Council at the April meeting for the consideration of the Elected Members.



The purpose of the scheme is to assist local groups in the management and enhancement of spaces that are freely accessible to the public. The scope of works that can be applied for include tree, shrub and flower planting, grass cutting and general enhancement works. Also eligible under the scheme is the purchase of small gardening equipment and tools for the ongoing maintenance of these areas.

And similar to other years applicants were encouraged to consider measures that would enrich biodiversity as part of the application process.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

Preparations for the 2026 opening of the Tea Room, coffee truck and ice-cream parlour are now complete. Six seasonal staff positions have been filled, which will provide valuable local employment for people from the local area over the coming months. Initially the coffee truck will open for Saturdays and Sundays during the month of April, offering a selection of hot and cold beverages and treats for visitors as they explore the gardens and woodland trails. From May through June, the Tea Room and ice-cream parlour will also open on weekends and bank holidays, providing a wider food and beverage offering to visitors.



Looking further ahead the Tea Room, coffee truck & ice-cream parlour will operate full-time during July and August, in-line with peak visitor numbers. Thereafter, opening times will revert to weekends for September.



Elsewhere in Woodstock, the team has been busy preparing the gardens for the season ahead. The bulbs planted during the autumn are now producing vibrant displays, with impressive colour combinations of muscari, daffodils, tulips, and crocus. Work in the walled garden is also progressing well. Dividing and mulching of the herbaceous borders is currently underway, and the vegetable plot is being dug over in preparation for the growing season.

Restoration work on the pond is also continuing. As the team clears and restores the area, several interesting historical features and structural elements have been uncovered. These discoveries are adding great excitement to the project, and once completed, the restored pond will be a significant enhancement to the gardens, both visually and environmentally.

Playground Upgrades

New play equipment has been installed in the playgrounds in Ballyhale and Freshford in recent weeks, further enhancing the variety of activities available in both, and significant soft resurfacing replacement is also scheduled for Mooncoin Playground in April. This work is part of the continuous investment being made by the Council in maintaining the 37 playgrounds under our charge across the City and County.

National Tree Week - Tree Planting

National Tree Week 2026 ran from March 8th–15th under the theme "*Growing a Greener Future Together*". This year's initiative, delivered in collaboration with the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte, focused on partnership, community action, and sustainability.

There was fantastic public support this year for the initiative, and the Parks Dept. distributed native saplings to over 50 groups, including tidy towns committees, schools, and sports clubs throughout City and County, in total over 600 saplings were planted.



COMMUNITY

Community Projects

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing projects and schemes in the Community Department.

TOWN & VILLAGE SCHEME			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	March Status
Callan 2023	King's River Town & Village Project – Riverbank and amenity area	€247,500	In progress
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	Works 98% complete
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	95% of Works complete
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Surveys being completed, conceptual ideas being finalised
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure 2024	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Part 8 Documentation finalised
Glenmore 2025	Renovate two vacant buildings into community café & shop	€500,000	Funding approved
Johnstown 2025	Public realm enhancements. Development of a public space for activities in the square, Johnstown.	€300,000	Funding approved
Callan 2025	Refurbishment of ground floor of 18 Upper Bridge Street, Callan for general business use and the re-instatement of an original carriageway to improve pedestrian access to this town centre location	€300,000	Funding approved To be Delivered through Housing Capital, collaborative project with Housing accommodation on first floor

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	March Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	Detailed design complete
Glenmore	Develop the Southeast Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Detailed design ongoing
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Final stages of completion and due to open

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES CAPITAL SCHEME			
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	March Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walkway around complex	€40,000	Works in progress, 60% complete
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Works to commence April 2026
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works complete, to be inspected and paid out
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a Community Hub	€27,000	Works commenced
Glenmore Camogie Club 2025	Contribution towards the re-instatement of walkway	€29,000	Not yet commenced
Mullinavat Drama Group 2025	Lighting, Sound, Projector, Screen, Curtains	€11,000	Partially Complete
Marian Hall Kilmacow 2025	Installation of heating, bathrooms, kitchen	€11,000	Works to commence March 2026
Kilkenny Girl Guides 2025	Emergency Lighting & Fire Alarm	€15,000	Works to commence March 2026
Kilkenny SOS Lawn Bowls 2025	Fencing, Lighting, Bicycle Bays, shed	€30,000	Tender process on going
Kilkenny Ambers Women's Refuge 2025	New Playground	€35,000	Work commenced
Freshford Town AFC 2025	Floodlighting for all weather pitch	€32,000	Works commenced
St. Joseph's Athletic Club 2025	Shelter and walking track	€11,000	Works 65% complete
Graiguenamanagh Rowing Club 2025	Storage racking for rowing boats	€15,000	Works in progress
Callan AFC Football Club 2024	Dressing Room upgrade	€36,000	Completed in 2025 Final grant payment due

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	March Status
Galmoy Community Hall 2023	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	No lease finalised as of yet, may have to decommit
Ballyouskill Community Hall 2024	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Can't get lease, have to decommit
Windgap Handball Alley 2024	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Waiting on works to commence
Windgap GAA 2024	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Works 65% complete
Naomh Aodhan Community Centre CLG 2024	Upgrade works on rebuilding and refurbishing of handball alley and ground works	€44,312	50% Complete
St. Brendan's National School, Muckalee 2025	Pitch Development	€65,000	Tender process
Lisdowney GAA 2025	Construction of new MUGA and Ball Wall	€65,000	Evaluation of tenders underway
Coolagh Community Hall Upgrading Project 2025	Hall and Kitchen upgrade	€77,022	Contractor due to commence April 2026
Moin Ruadh National School 2025	Construction of new MUGA with carparking area and sensory garden	€100,000	Funding application approved
Killanaspick Lighting project 2025	Roadway lighting	€22,500	To commence Autumn 2026
Kilmoganny GAA 2025	Lawnmower for community area	€35,424	To be finalised April 2026

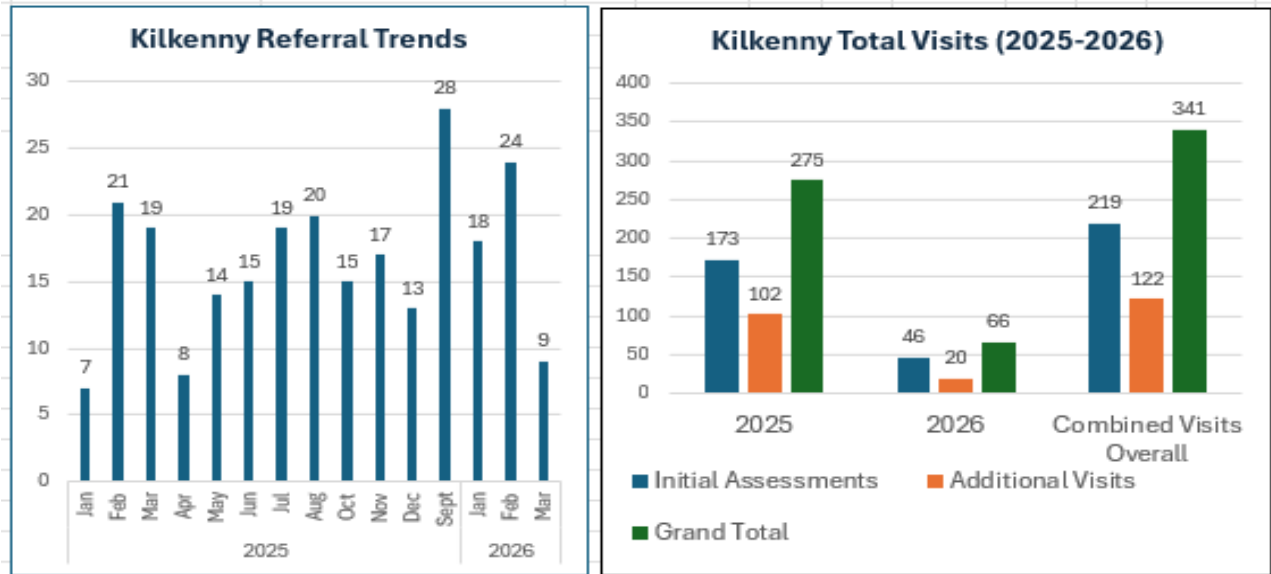
Community Recognition Fund			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	March Status
Christian Youth Centre	Development of existing building to provide community space, meeting rooms	€390,607	Works in progress
Fr. McGrath Centre	Installation of Solar Panels, Painting of building and installation of windows	€100,474	Solar Panel works to commence April 2026
Ballyragget Community Hall	Renovation of CYMS Hall	€173,000	Procurement process ongoing. Extension sought until December 2026

Age Friendly Ambassadors Event

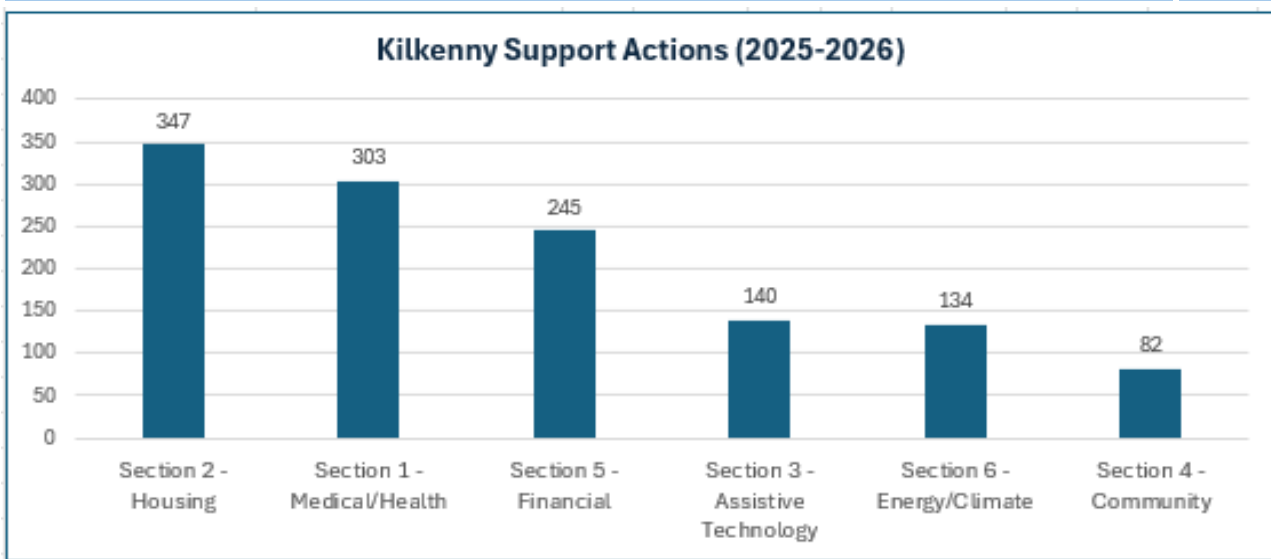
The annual Age Friendly Ambassadors event, this year was held at the Rose Hotel in Tralee on Wednesday the 4th of March, 2026. The event brought together the Ambassadors and representatives from across the country to examine how employers can respond to Ireland's changing demographics. Age Friendly Ireland's nationwide network of Ambassadors, including Francis Brennan, Geraldine Plunkett, Gavin Duffy, and John Spillane, gathered to discuss the theme of Age Friendly Workplaces and the practical steps needed to support longer working lives. The event also showcased several Age Friendly initiatives from around the Country and Kerry Age Friendly provided music and entertainment for the attendees.

Healthy Age Friendly Homes

Outlined below are details of the number of older people in Kilkenny who have been assisted by Healthy Age Friendly Homes to continue to live in their own home with dignity and independence. Since the 1st January, 2025, there were 219 older people across Kilkenny supported through the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme.



Total Number of Participants Awaiting a Visit	60
Total Supports Offered for: Medical/Health; Housing; Assistive Technology; Community; Finance and Energy / Climate (January 2025 – 19 th March, 2026)	1,251



The Local Coordinator conducts home-based assessments and works with the older person to develop a personalised action plan across six domains which can be broken down into the following areas housing, community, health, technology, finance, climate and energy. The list outlined in the infographic below is not exhaustive and is subject to the resources available in the respective county. If you require more details on the support provided, they can be obtained from the Regional Programme Managers or the National Office.



Programme Details

Healthy Age Friendly Homes is a free service which is available to homeowners, private, Approved Housing Body and Local Authority tenants. Local coordinators play a critical role in ensuring older people receive timely and appropriate support and reinforce the Councils commitment to the development of age friendly communities through measurable social benefit. The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme continues to support older people, over 65 years of age, to live in their home for as long as possible. The Programme accepts referrals from a variety of sources such as Self Referrals, Family and Friends, Elected Representatives, Local Authority Staff, Public Health Nurses, GP's and Occupational Therapists and Community Organisations.

Consent from the older person (verbal) must be obtained before the referral is submitted. Once the referral is received, the Local Coordinator will be in touch with the older person to arrange a free home visit.

CLÁR Funding 2026

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Minister Dara Calleary TD has launched the 2026 CLÁR Funding Programme making available grants from €5,000 to €100,000 for small infrastructural projects in designated areas.

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in designated rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population and/or socio-economic disadvantage and geographic remoteness. The programme is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development & the Gaeltacht (DRC DG). Measure 1 – Developing Community Facilities and Amenities is administered by the Local Authority.

Kilkenny County Council invites Expressions of Interest from schools, community and voluntary groups and local development companies that may have a suitable project for consideration under the Scheme. New eligible Electoral areas were announced for funding such as Ballyragget, Castlecomer, Freshford, Goresbridge, Johnstown and Urlingford. Fully completed and signed Expression of Interest (EOI) forms must be submitted on or before 5.00 p.m. Friday, 22nd May, 2026.

Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2026

The LEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. It provides funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities targeted towards disadvantaged areas as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Kilkenny were awarded funding of €170,519 for community and voluntary groups to use towards carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects and the purchase of equipment.

The closing date for submissions was Friday, 27th February 2026. A total of 116 applications were received with a total amount requested of over €338,000. As this grant scheme was oversubscribed, where possible, at least 50% of the requested amount was awarded. Out of the 116 applications, 105 were approved funding by the LCDC on Friday, 27th March, 2026.

Commercial Premises Paint Scheme 2026

The Commercial Premises Paint Scheme 2026 has now opened for applications. Funding has been made available to support the painting of front façades of commercial and business premises, as well as the provision of hand-painted shop signage, throughout Kilkenny City and County. All works are subject to the scheme's terms and conditions.

The scheme was publicly advertised in local newspapers and across social media platforms on 18 March 2026. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is Friday, 17th April 2026. Application Forms and further details are available for download at www.kilkennycoco.ie, and may also be obtained by contacting the relevant Municipal District Office.



Before & after Petals n Blooms, Thomastown, received funding under this scheme in 2025.

Healthy Ireland

Kilkenny One Parent Community Host Easter Activities for Families

Kilkenny One Parent Community (KOPC), supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund are a volunteer-led network of parents who aim to increase the visibility of one parent families in a positive and empowering way throughout Kilkenny. On Saturday the 28th of March KOPC families took part in an Easter craft workshop in Kilkenny. The parents and children designed crafts, made spring flowers and decorated Easter Eggs.



LEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Summary of 2026 Awards to Businesses (Q1 2026)

- €48,898 in direct financial assistance was approved for 3 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €14,000 awarded in Feasibility Study Grant.
- €14,283 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance.
- €20,615 in Business Expansion Grant assistance.
- 1 Businesses has commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 11 businesses have availed of the Digital for Business programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 10 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €92,634 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises.
- 11 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 115 people participated on focused small business training, including 21 people participating on the Starting Your Business Programme.
- 66 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK - AI WORKS FOR BUSINESS – GOOGLE EVENT

Irish small and medium-sized enterprises were invited to take a major step forward in their digital and growth journey with AI Works for Ireland, a flagship National Development Summit which took on March 3rd in The Foundry, at Google Ireland, Barrow Street.

Delivered in partnership between Google and the nationwide network of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) and the Enterprise Europe Network, this landmark event formed a central part of Local Enterprise Week and was designed to equip business owners with the skills, confidence, and strategic insight needed to harness artificial intelligence for sustainable growth.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK - STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME COUNTY FINAL

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny have announced that young entrepreneurs from CBC Kilkenny will represent County Kilkenny this year's senior category at the Student Enterprise Programme National Finals on Thursday 7th May 2026.

Students from 12 schools part in the County Kilkenny Final on Wednesday 4th March which was held at the Lyrath Estate Hotel. The final event was the culmination of months of hard work in schools across the County where students starting and ran mini businesses.



BUSINESS SUPPORT ROADSHOW - FERRYBANK

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in partnership with Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Kilkenny Leader Partnership and Kilkenny Intreo Office held a roadshow in Ferrybank on 11th March.

Attendees had a chance to speak directly with funding and support agencies representatives who answered specific questions, provide advice and help to identify the support and grants that are available to those already in business or with an ambition to start a new business. The roadshow provided an opportunity to connect with a network of support that can help navigate challenges of running a business.



Local Enterprise Development Plan 2026/27

At the March meeting of SPC1, the Local Enterprise Development plan for the upcoming 2 years was adopted. Adopting the LEDP is a requirement of the Service Level agreement with Enterprise Ireland and the plan is roadmap for delivery of enterprise supports and the promotion of entrepreneurship to small and micro businesses.

Civic Festivals – St Patricks Festival Kilkenny

Tricolour bunting and flags rippled across the city for another action-filled St Patrick's Festival Kilkenny, drawing crowds of over 90,000 to the City. Run alongside its sister festival, Kilkenny Tradfest, the weekend saw over 100 free gigs in venues throughout Kilkenny, and 80 family-friendly events over Kilkenny County Council's four-day programme of events.



Parade Highlights, Floats & Community Groups

A fresh spring day brought thousands of people to the City Centre for this year's St Patrick's Parade, which brought together 12 colourful floats and more than 40 walking groups representing the diversity of local community life. Leading the parade was Grand Marshal George Candler, accompanied by the Army Colour Party and the Ballycallan Fife and Drum Band.



Under the 2026 theme 'Together – Le Chéile', some 1,500 participants promenaded proudly through Kilkenny's medieval streets from MacDonagh Junction to the Parade Plaza via John Street, Bateman's Quay and High Street. Among the notable performances were the Global Dance Club, an inclusive community dance group inspired by cultures from around the world, including Cuba, Ireland, Uganda, India, Nigeria and South Africa. Coordinated by the Kilkenny Local Authority Integration Team and supported by Creative Ireland. Kilkenny designer Bridget Ní Dhuinn created striking large-scale puppets representing The Morrigan, a legendary shape-shifting goddess of Irish folklore, as a youthful woman and a snake; just some of her many forms.

Celebrations

The day had began with the traditional shamrock ceremony at James Stephens Barracks which was attended by elected members and our visiting delegations from the US and Italy.



Kilkenny is one of just six locations outside the capital recognised by Fáilte Ireland as an exemplary modern celebration of Irish culture and heritage. St Patrick's Festival Kilkenny continues to go from strength to strength, bringing communities together and welcoming visitors from across Ireland and around the world.

Tourism

Kilkenny County Council, supported by Failte Ireland and working in partnership with our Festivals Working group have prepared a five-year Festival Strategy for Kilkenny City and County.

The Plan will focus on five main themes:

- Leverage Kilkenny's unique world class strengths of Craft and Creativity
- Grow the capacity and capabilities of festivals and events to harness existing and emerging destination development opportunities.
- Develop a compelling Kilkenny Festivals brand and year-round marketing campaign as a world leading sustainable festival destination
- Develop evaluation and accountability measures to capture the cultural, economic and social value and impact of festivals and events.
- Build committed stakeholder collaborations across the festivals ecosystem in Kilkenny and ensure Kilkenny festivals and events commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The plan has been approved by SPC1 at its March meeting and will be published and move to implementation in the coming weeks.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Aligned with our the new strategy, Kilkenny's Digital and on-line marketing and PR campaigns remain strong for Q2 and focuses on showcasing all Festivals and Events happening in Kilkenny for the year. The coming months will feature upcoming festivals and events throughout the city and county including Kilkenny Roots Festival, together with itineraries for trips to Kilkenny over the Easter and summer breaks with a "Golden ticket" competition for entrants to experience all Kilkenny Festivals this year.

Meitheal 2026

Meitheal is Failte Irelands flagship annual trade event which is organised in conjunction with Tourism Ireland to enable Irish Tourism businesses to sell the best of Ireland to top international tourism buyers. It was wonderful to see over 16 Kilkenny based attractions and accommodation providers at the two day face to face event, meeting buyers from over 20 different countries to bring business to Kilkenny. "Team Kilkenny" was out in force and feedback from all was very positive for business and bookings for Kilkenny going forward.

Night Time Economy Festivals Investment Scheme 2026

Kilkenny County Council sought proposals from local businesses, community groups, event organisers, collaborators and individuals to develop projects that will support the growth and diversity of the night time economy in Kilkenny City. This fund aims to support applicants wishing to try new festivals /larger scale events at existing festivals that can support the diversification of Kilkenny's night time economy. Three proposals were awarded funding under this scheme were Castle Mills (€7,500), Mayhem (€5,000) and Labyrinth Event Management (€5000).

HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up-to-date progress for March 2026 under the various support services

HOUSING CAPITAL



Commencement of construction works at property located at 6-9 Upper Patrick Street, Kilkenny City

HOUSING OPERATIONS STATISTICS

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY 2026	March	To
Homeless Presentations	55	169
Prevention & Interventions	37	132
Emergency Service	11	35
Not Eligible/Did not avail of service	7	23
HAP Place Finder Service		
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies at 1 st day of month	45	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1	3
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	5	8
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at last day of month	41	
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	9	21
Notices To Quit (NTQ'S)		
Valid NTQ's received	5	10
Number of NTQ solutions found	6	13
Provision of Emergency Accommodation		Avg per
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at March 31st	34	32
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	7	7
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	7	7
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	45	44
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	22	22

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY 2026	March	To
Number awaiting Social Housing Support (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,247	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support (<i>Net Need</i>)	661	
Number of Social Housing Applications received	61	233
Number of applications incomplete/awaiting further information/clarification	29	85
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	36	95
Number of applications assessed	30	93
Number of applications awaiting assessment	63	63

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY 2026	March	To
Total active HAP tenancies	336	
New HAP tenancies set up	1	4
HAP tenancies allocated social housing	9	25
Closed HAP tenancies	11	28
HAP rent reviews	45	82
HAP other tenancy amendments	37	92

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS 2026	March	To
Local Authority Social Housing offers of allocations	28	58
Approved Housing Body offers of allocations	16	21
RAS offers of allocations	0	2
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations	44	81

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

COMPLAINT TYPE	Number Of Complaints	Number Investigated	Number Ongoing	Number Closed
Drugs related; Violence; Racism; Threats & Intimidation	5	1	3	1
Damage to property, animal related (dog/horse/fowl); Refuse/dumping/hoarding	4	2	2	0
Noise; Parking/boundary issues; Other	25	7	15	3
Total Number To-Date	111	49	53	9

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

MAINTENANCE CALLS 2026	MARCH	TO DATE
Number of maintenance calls	532	1,929
Number of maintenance calls that resulted in a call out	479	1,447

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The housing grants budget is €3,349,286 made up of €2,846,893 (85%) grant funding and €502,393 (15%) Kilkenny County Council contribution for 2026.

GRANTS COMMITTED BUT NOT PAID

Scheme	To Date	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	87	€997,163
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,450
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	136	€955,591
Total	229	€1,975,204

GRANTS PAID OUT IN 2026

Scheme	To Date	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	17	€201,504
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	2	€9,600
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	51	€316,886
Total	70	€527,990

HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 2026

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	6	0	€0	2	€262,600
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	6	0	€0	2	€262,600

VOIDS ACTIVITY 2026

	MARCH	TO DATE
Number of voids completed	7	27
Number of voids in progress		41

RETROFITTING ACTIVITY 2026

	MARCH	TO DATE
Number of units retrofitted	0	12
Number of units in progress		15

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS SUMMARY 2026

	MARCH	TO DATE
Number of inspections completed by Kilkenny County Council staff	57	161
Number of inspections completed by external inspectors	20	20
Total Number of Inspections Completed	77	181

CLIMATE ACTION

Sustainability in the New CBC, Dunningstown Road

The Climate Action Team visited the new CBC Secondary School on the Dunningstown Road to view the sustainability measures incorporated into the new build.

Items include:

- Heat Pump
- Solar Panels
- Green Roof
- Rainwater harvesting system that supplies water to the toilets, reducing the demand for mains water.
- Low temperature radiator design.
- Smart lighting and room-level temperature control.
- Pervious Paving.
- Rain garden and swale that are beneficial during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 342 Bike Parking Spaces



Year 2 Implementation Report on Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP)

The Climate Action Team gave an overview of the Year 2 Implementation Report to the SPC on 1st April, 2026. The reports demonstrate the progress of the 99 actions in the LACAP with input received from all 28 Service Areas. The report includes case studies from Housing, Callan/ Thomastown Area Office (*Active Travel and Nature-based solutions*), Emergency Services and the Arts Office. It also includes an update on the Community Climate Action Programme which will be presented to the Plenary Council on 20th April, 2026.



Report for Elected Members & Stakeholders on Year 2 of the Implementation of the 5 year Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan



Climate Action Steering Committee

The Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Steering Committee held its quarterly meeting on 18th March, 2026. The Steering Committee, comprising of representatives from all services areas in the Council, was established in 2023 with an aim to provide leadership within the Council to help deliver on climate targets. Presentations at the March meeting were provided by Housing, CBC TY Students and the Fire Station who informed the committee about their new electric powered fire vehicle.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

“Borrow, Use, Return” Pilot Scheme for Greener, Waste-Free Celebrations



A new initiative helping communities celebrate sustainably is being launched in County Kilkenny introducing a simple but impactful idea: *Borrow your partyware instead of throwing it away.*

The “Borrow, Use, Return” Pilot Scheme provides reusable party packs through selected community groups, making it easy for residents to host birthdays, events and gatherings without relying on single-use plastics.

Developed by Environmental Awareness Officers across the Southern Waste Region including Kilkenny the initiative is funded by the EPA’s National Waste Prevention Programme and supports the move towards a more circular, low-waste economy. Following strong interest from across the County, a number of local organisations have been selected to act as lending hubs during the six-month pilot.

These include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Aurora Community Hub▪ The Rower Community Hall▪ Graiguenamanagh Tidy Towns▪ Third Kilkenny Thomastown Scout Group▪ St. Kieran’s Community Hall & Town Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ballyragget Development Association & Tidy Towns▪ Droichead Family Resource Centre▪ KACC Canoe Club▪ Freshford Community Café CLG▪ Kilquane Drama Group |
|--|---|

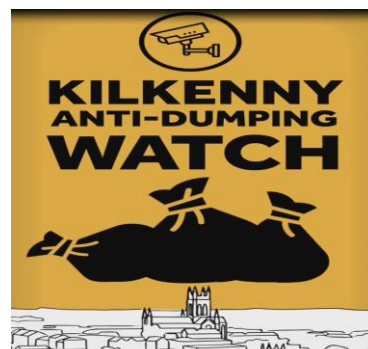
Each pack caters for up to 30 people and includes reusable plates, cups, bowls, cutlery and jugs along with colourful bunting made from upcycled textiles by Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI). Designed for repeated use, the packs help cut waste, reduce costs and keep resources in circulation locally.

New Anti-Dumping & Anti-Fly Tipping Campaign



On the week of the 30th March, the Environment Department launched a new public awareness campaign aimed at tackling illegal dumping, fly-tipping and littering across the City and County. The campaign, which will run over the coming months, features a series of short online videos highlighting well-known locations throughout Kilkenny that have been adversely affected by illegal dumping, fly-tipping and persistent littering.

These videos are designed to bring the issue closer to home by showing the real and visible impact of waste-related offences on local communities, amenities and the natural environment. Illegal dumping littering continues to pose a significant challenge across both urban and rural areas of Kilkenny. These activities not only damage the environment and local biodiversity but also place an unnecessary financial burden on the Council and, ultimately, the taxpayer.



Green Schools Update

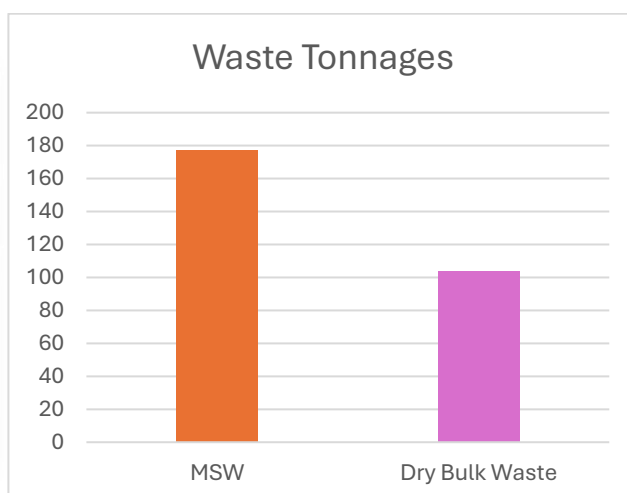
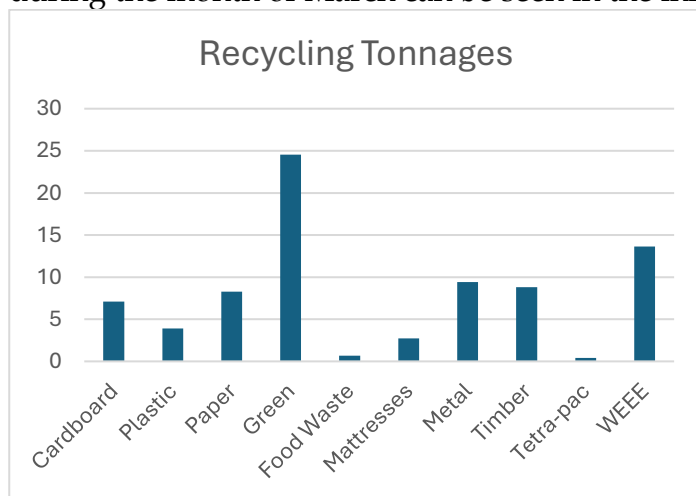


Assessment activity for the Green Schools Programme in Kilkenny is nearing completion, with 18 applications submitted from a cohort of 35 schools scheduled for renewal this cycle, out of a total of 85 Green Schools in the County. Three schools have made formal requests for deferral, which have been acknowledged and will be accommodated in line with programme guidelines. In addition, two schools have sought short assessment extensions; these have been approved, with assessments scheduled to take place within the next two weeks. Overall, progress remains on track, with many participating schools successfully advancing through the assessment process.

WASTE

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

Tonnages of Waste and the various recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of March can be seen in the infographic below.



March saw an increase of approx. 28% in MSW accepted into the site while Dry Bulk Waste tonnages increased by approx. 7% on February's figures. As part of the Landfill Aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24hrs per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m³ of landfill gas per hour. The month of March also saw 104.24 tonnes of landfill Leachate tankered off site for treatment.

Multi Agency Inspection

On the 11th March, staff members from the waste team, with a team member from the Air Quality Team, conducted a multi-agency inspection with members of An Garda Siochana, WERLA, Revenue and Customs on the Kilkenny Waterford border just outside Waterford City.

The aim of the inspections was to inspect and identify any illegal waste transfer and also illegal activities under the air quality regulations, that may be carried out and involved inspections of trucks, vans and the likes that may be carrying waste to view their waste collector permits or to ascertain if there are any illegal activities or transfer of waste being carried out.

These inspections are always a great success and a good example of co-ordination between varying government bodies on the crack down of illegal activities.



A Member of our waste team also attended a meeting of the Garda Eastern Region – Multi Agency Forum for Environmental/Wildlife Crime in Kilkenny which was useful for the continued collaboration with Environment Departments of the Local Authority and An Garda Siochana in highlighting and tackling Environmental waste concerns.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

The target for 2026 is 308 inspections. Kilkenny County council staff has started organizing inspections for 2026 and highlighting sub basins to be nominated for inspections. A new NAIP Agricultural inspector has recently joined the farm inspection team to aid with the completion of the 2026 program. Follow up GAP inspections from 2024/2025 are currently underway. To date, 24 initial GAP Inspections, 32 follow ups and 2 cross reports have been carried out.

Septic Tank Inspections

The target for 2026 is 62 inspections. Kilkenny County council staff has started organizing inspections for 2026 and highlighting households in high priority zones to be nominated for inspections. Kilkenny County Council are currently working on historical advisory notices in the hope to close some out before the 2026 NIP program commences. Kilkenny County Council have started inspections under NIP.

Noise

Kilkenny County Council are in the process of purchasing new noise monitors for 2026

Air

Staff will be monitoring the information received from air monitors. All solid fuel inspections have been identified for quarter 1 of 2026 and inspections are now underway.

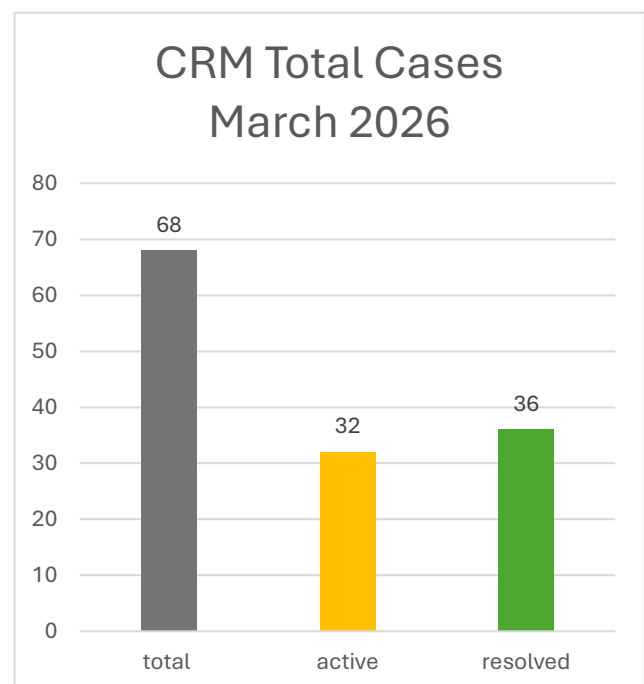
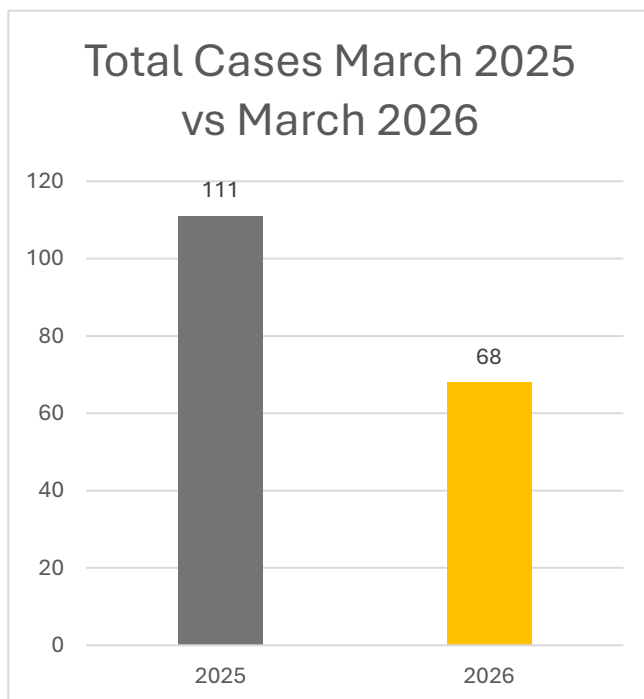
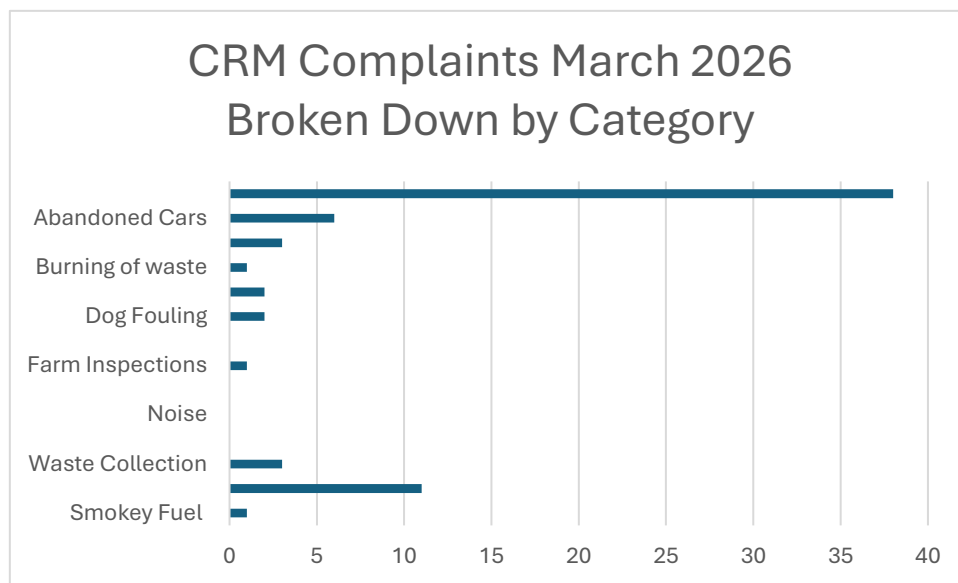
DISCHARGE LICENCES

Kilkenny county Council are in the process of following up with non-compliances for discharge licences from 2025 results

Environmental Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

See detailed breakdown of categories below, along with a comparison to February 2025.



RURAL WATER

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026

Group Water Schemes who have funding approval from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are progressing planned works. It is expected that most works should be completed by year end.

Well Grants - Improvement Works to Private Water Supply

- 42 applications received to end March with funding to the value of €118,542.06 paid out.
- 36 applications received in the same period 2025. Funding to the value of €95,637.24 released.

Subsidies for GWS Operations

Application forms for subsidies to offset operation costs incurred in 2025 will be issued shortly to Group Water Schemes.

Water Quality and Testing

Rural Water are currently tendering for an INAB laboratory to carryout water testing for the current year, 2026. Kilkenny County Council intend to take samples in May/June and September/October 2026.

BIODIVERSITY

The Hare's Corner

Kilkenny County Council was successful in securing a collaboration with the Burrenbeo Trust this year to enable the roll out of the Hares Corner Project in Kilkenny. This initiative supports landowners to create ponds, mini-woodlands and other habitats, boosting local biodiversity through simple, practical actions. To date, 60 participants received heritage apple trees, 30 participants collected woodland tree species and 40 participants collected hedgerow species at the tree collection day in Stoneyford. These collectively will create 60 orchards, create over 430 meters of hedgerow and create 1 acre of woodland cover.

Subject to funding under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2026, it is anticipated that the project will create 20 wildlife ponds across Kilkenny in collaboration with private landowners this summer and funding will enable 20 Plans for Nature to provide long term guidance for biodiversity enhancement on private lands. This project is supported by Kilkenny County Council as it aligns with action 6.5 of the Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 and the tree giveaway day was supported by members of the Kilkenny Biodiversity Working Group.



Tree recipient Mary Hughes with members of the Kilkenny Biodiversity Working Group and Louise Laing of Burrenbeo Trust.

International Women's Day

Creative Ireland funding enabled Michelle McMahon who is a local artist and self-proclaimed eco feminist to provide a talk on International Women's Day 2026. Over 40 women attended Rothe House to listen to Michelle as she described how historically civilizations moved away from our connectivity with nature, often forgetting to nourish it while placing more demands to preform for our benefit.

It was fitting that our Cathaoirleach Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh provided the welcome address, a woman with over 50 years of Local Government leadership. This event was a collaboration between the Biodiversity Office, the Creative Communities Engagement Officer and Michelle McMahon who led on the "Biodiversity on the Block" Creative Ireland project last year, and these art outputs will be on display across Kilkenny this summer as part of National Biodiversity Week. This Creative Ireland event aligned with Action 6.2 of Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.



Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh, with Cllr Maria Dollard, Michelle McMahon and Biodiversity Officer, Bernadette Moloney.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEGRATION TEAM [LAIT]

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continues to play a vital role in supporting the integration of diverse communities across Kilkenny. Their work continues to focus on individuals in the following categories:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) – Ukrainians
- International Protection Applicants (IPAs)
- Programme Refugees
- Those granted Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain Status.

Currently, Kilkenny is home to 336 Ukrainians accommodated in 12 properties contracted by the Department of Justice, Migration & Home Affairs. An additional 184 Ukrainians reside in Offer A Home properties and Irish Red Cross pledged homes, benefiting from the Accommodation Recognition Payment. Alongside them, 194 IPA's are housed in 3 Department contracted properties. Employment figures show encouraging progress: 29% of Ukrainians and 72% of IPAs are now registered as employed.

Throughout March, LAIT continued delivering information, advice and advocacy, including:

- 64 Ukrainians supported through 80 interventions, covering accommodation, education, finance, immigration and signposting to wider stakeholders.
- 53 Ukrainians attended 5 group Induction Sessions upon arrival at the DAC.
- 27 IPAs assisted with 42 interventions, primarily addressing immigration concerns, work permits, and accommodation queries.
- 10 IPAs attended 1 information session on Employment Rights in Ireland, hosted by Migrants Rights Centre Ireland.

Year-to-date, LAIT has provided 463 interventions to 347 individuals, underscoring their commitment to fostering inclusion and stability within the community.

EVENTS:

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continues to work closely with partner agencies. Here's a snapshot of what happened in March, 2026:

St. Patrick's Day - participants from the *Global Dance Club* took part in a vibrant parade performance that celebrated the truly multi-cultural spirit of the group. Dancers from the club's diverse dance group showcased the various styles they have learned throughout the year. Their St. Patrick's Day dance piece beautifully blended traditions from around the world while honouring Irish culture, creating a memorable highlight of the celebration.



International Day on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination- Kilkenny Local Authority marked the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 20th March 2026 by wearing red in the workplace. This collective act served as a clear and purposeful statement of the organisation's commitment to promoting inclusion, respect, and equality for all.



Global Dance – This free 8 week dance program for adults held at St. John’s Community Hall finished yet another successful term in March. New classes will commence on the 9th April, 2026.

Library Event - A successful Information Session on employment rights in Ireland was held on 25th March, 2026 at the Mayfair Library. The event was delivered by the LAIT Team in collaboration with KLP and the Migrant Rights Centre, providing valuable guidance and support to attendees.

Neighbourhood Hall Event - The LAIT Team collaborated with KLP to successfully facilitate the end of Eid Ramadan celebrations.

Weekly Drop-In Clinic – Every Thursday afternoon, LAIT hosts an Open Clinic at the Neighbourhood Hall, offering advice and assistance to those seeking support.

Information Sessions – Ongoing at the Wallslough Designated Accommodation Centre, these sessions help new arrivals navigate integration processes and access accommodation supports.

Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties at 31st March, 2026

31st March, 2026	Number Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	50	171
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	3	13
Total	53	184

Offer of a Home Scheme

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €600 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status. There was a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction sought to mitigate any unintended impact on the private rental sector. It also reflects recent policy changes which aim to ensure that such temporary and timebound supports for people who are Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are proportionate and equitable. A separate programme is run by the Irish Red Cross which is seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. If an owner wishes to pledge a spare room in their house, they can contact the Irish Red Cross at (01) 6424600 or email info@redcross.ie

Accommodation Recognition Payment

Changes to the eligibility criteria for the Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) have been introduced under *Part 3 of the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2026*.

From 3rd March 2026, new applications for properties that have been registered with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) will no longer meet the scheme’s eligibility criteria. This applies to properties registered with the RTB at any time since 4th March, 2022. Tenants in rental properties will also no longer be eligible to make new applications for the scheme.

A notice has now been placed on Gov.ie webpages related to ARP and on the [scheme’s FAQs page](#) informing prospective applicants of the change. Further details on the Offer of a Home Scheme are available on www.offerahome.ie or you may wish to contact Kilkenny County Council’s Integration Team.

FIRE SERVICES



Fire Safety Certificate and Licence applications.

- 33 Fire Safety Certificates Applications
- Public Dance Licences
- Dangerous Substance Licences
- 25 Fire Safety inspections this year.



Community Fire Safety

- 4 Home Fire Safety Visits scheduled
- 60 Primary School Visits scheduled
- Open days - all stations
- Fire safety talks/stands
- Pre Incident plans - All stations



Fire Training

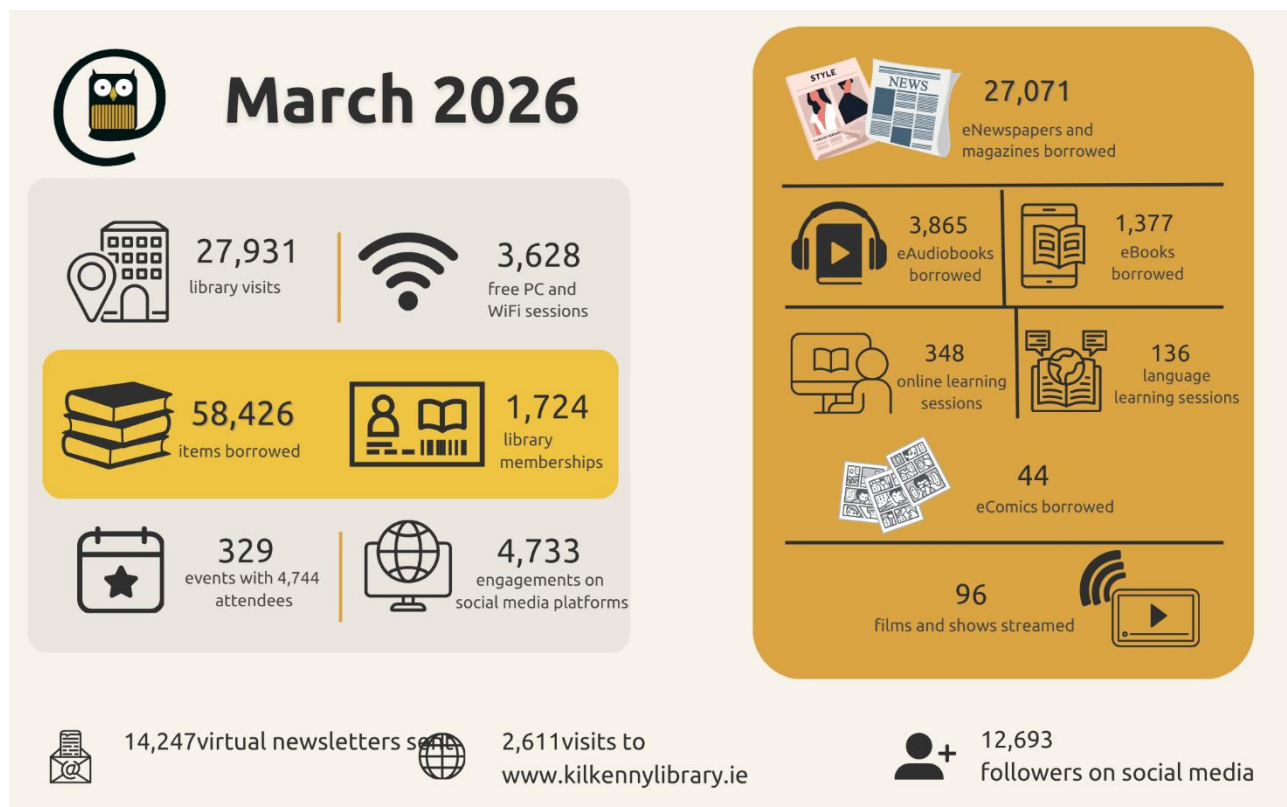
- Fire Fighting Skills
- Brething apparatus
- Weekly Drill training
- QQI Hazardous Materials
- Electric Vehicle Training
- Confined Space Training



Recruitment

- Recruitment is on-going in these stations:
- Freshford
- Urlingford
- Thomastown
- Graigneamanagh





Seachtain na Gaeilge

We had great fun celebrating Seachtain na Gaeilge in our Libraries. Across our branches we enjoyed a fantastic range of events, including:

- *Crafts and Storytelling Sessions* to mark St. Patrick's Day, which were hugely popular with families.
- *Traditional Music Sessions*, bringing great energy and atmosphere into our library spaces.
- *A special performance by the St. Kieran's College Trad Band*, who played beautifully in the Mayfair – thank you to all who helped host this memorable event
- *Bingo as Gaeilge*, which drew enthusiastic participation and plenty of friendly competition
- *Author Visits*, adding an extra layer of engagement and inspiration for readers of all ages.
- *Our Ciorcal Comhrá* were out in force sharing the cúpla focal and encouraging everyone to join in.



Intergenerational Chess

We held the first session of our new Intergenerational Chess Group on Saturday, 28th March in Castlecomer Library. Ruairí from Red King Chess led the session. He showed everyone the chess board, the pieces and how to play short beginner games. This helped all participants start at the same level. We were delighted with the turnout. People came from early primary school age right up to early retirement age. Everyone took part and the group had a friendly, relaxed feel.



Our next session will be on Saturday, 11th April at 11.00 a.m. We hope the group will begin to run itself, with members helping and learning from each other. We also hope to welcome Ruairí back again soon to see how the group is getting on.

World Book Day

Kilkenny County Council Library branches marked World Book Day with a range of engaging events for local schools. Castlecomer Library welcomed pupils from Newtown School for a special World Book Day storytime on 6th March. Urlingford Library also celebrated with a series of storytime sessions, hosting students from Gathabawn and Johnstown.

These events highlighted the libraries' ongoing commitment to promoting reading and a love of books among young readers across the County.



Thomastown Library Old to New



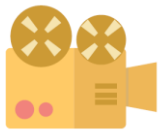
Thomastown Library closed on Tuesday, 10th March to facilitate the move to our new Thomastown Library building. There is a large body of work required to prepare the new library for public opening including fit out, ICT installation, stocking shelves and implementation of Health and Safety systems. It is hoped that the new library will open in April 2026. Thomastown Library has served the people of Thomastown well since its foundation in the 1970s, but we look forward to welcoming you to our new spacious modern library soon.

Interim arrangements include a returns box outside the library from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., the Mobile Library at the Area Office on Mondays 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. & extensions of all loan periods.

Lapsafe Laptop Loans

The **Lapsafe** laptop borrowing service at Mayfair Library continues to demonstrate strong and growing demand, supporting digital access within the library environment. Adult borrowers can access laptops for short-term use within the building, enhancing opportunities for learning, job seeking and digital engagement.

Year-to-date usage stands at 879 sessions, with particularly high uptake in March (365 *uses*), accounting for over 41% of all activity to date. This sustained and increasing use highlights the service's value as a key digital inclusion support within the library.



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **237** posts and videos on our social media platforms in February. Our engagements for the month were **4,773** and our videos and reels had **4,553** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **14,247** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



Library activities this month supported **SDG 4: Quality Education** by promoting literacy, lifelong learning, cultural engagement and digital skills through programmes such as World Book Day events, Seachtain na Gaeilge activities, intergenerational chess and laptop access.



They also advanced **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities** through free, inclusive services and events delivered across branches, helping to remove cultural, social and digital barriers and improve access for diverse communities.

ARTS

Creative Kilkenny



Mother Earth – International Women's Day Celebration – Rothe House

March set the tone for an energising year ahead, opening with the creativity and solidarity of International Women's Day and closing with the colour and community spirit of our St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Mother Earth - International Women's Day celebration, led by Biodiversity Officer Bernadette Moloney and artist Michelle McMahon and supported through Creative Ireland funding, hosted in Rothe House brought together ecofeminist insights, community-led creativity and Kilkenny's ongoing commitment to biodiversity and cultural heritage. The event became a rich celebration of creativity, heritage, empowerment and the powerful relationship between women and the natural world, honouring Ireland's goddess traditions through performance, art, and collective storytelling.



Global Dance Club, St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Creative Kilkenny supported three community-focused cultural projects to participate in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade. Through the LAIT Team, the Global Dance Club group delivered a dynamic parade performance featuring Irish dance, Afrobeats, Bollywood, Somali Dhaanto, Samba and Ukrainian folk styles, while also nurturing emerging leaders from seldom-heard communities.

Young Irish Filmmakers were supported to deliver a hands-on programme with artist Nicole Martin, where young people designed costumes, props and performance elements using natural and recycled materials. Their imaginative, sustainability focused creation formed YIFM's parade contribution.

Kilkenny Pride likewise were enabled to engage young people in a creative, youth-led exploration of Irish folklore with artists Cuan Cusack and Rhys Wallace. Participants produced vibrant costumes inspired by the Man Wolves of Ossory, the Merrow, the Fairy Queen and the Aos Sí, all showcased proudly in this year's parade.

Collectively, these projects highlight Creative Ireland's commitment to enabling inclusive participation, cultural expression, and community visibility across Kilkenny.



Two new policies were approved by the Public Arts Management Group. These include the 'The Public Arts Proposals Policy' and 'Decommissioning of Public Artwork Policy'. These Public Proposals one provide us with a framework for dealing with all public proposals going forward. The Decommissioning policy will support Kilkenny County Council with the management of our public arts into the future and gives us a solid system to make informed decisions.



This years Bookville Festival planning is well underway and we have selected out Bookville Book designer. Local illustrator and artist Blaise Butler will design the content and illustrate this very important element of the festival.



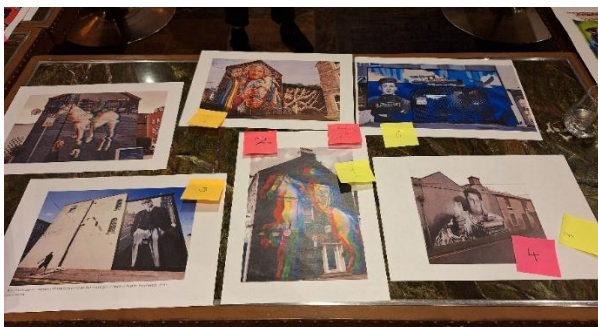
We hosted our first Living Values Living Futures programme SESSION on 25th March. This programme has been designed to strengthen environmental awareness and empower informed action among community groups.

Delivered through sessions led by eco-poet and environmental writer Grace Wells and Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald, a leading advocate for holistic eco literacy education, the programme will introduce accessible, arts-led sustainability learning into community structures. This initial session was exploratory and designed to explore the needs of the local community groups to enable us to tailor make our forthcoming events to suit their needs.

Nore Boardwalk Mural Development

Arts Office is commissioning a mural as part of the construction of the new boardwalk for the Pedestrians & Cycle Link Boardwalk at Greensbridge, Kilkenny City. The site for the mural is the underpass - an existing archway and part of the western approach to Green's Bridge, and link up with the existing pathway at Riverside Gardens.

In order to develop the brief for the Artist we hosted a community engagement session on 2nd March. The session was facilitated by the Arts officer and local artists Carrie Lynam and was designed to enable us to listen and engage in a process that supported the group to express their knowledge of the surrounding area, tell us what consider important to the area, how the space is currently used and to imagine its future. The session was very successful and the information gathered formed the basis for the artists brief. The Brief was shared with six artists with a March 25th deadline.



Mural Community Consultation



A Workshop Programme titled *Sustainable Fashion* for Art of Change ran in Kilkenny Vocational Secondary School during the month of March. Maker, facilitator and textile up cycler Lisa Hodge brought the 4th year group through a number of skill building exercises during the first two workshops, teaching the group basic stitches, mending techniques, embroidery methods, decorative and applique methods.

The group then applied these techniques to an individual piece, a bookmark. For the final sessions they collaborated on by repurposing coffee sacks and scrap fabric into decorative bunting for the school.

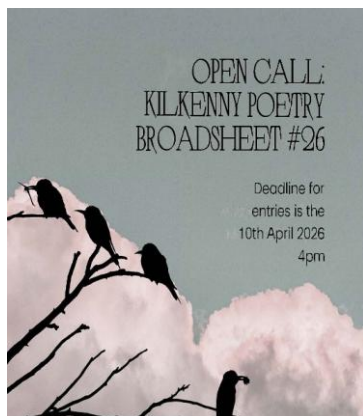
Colaiste Cois Suire completed their *Art and Sustainability* Workshops with artist Sheila Jordan discussing Ash Dieback and its effects on local ecology as well as the human impact. They were brought through the process of making charcoal from fallen trees and environmentally friendly pigments from natural substances and plants grown locally. The group made their own mark making implements and pigments.



Rhyme Rag

Four secondary school groups worked with poets, Janis Woodgate, Alice Bennett and Anna Jordan to explore poetry and craft their own poems. These poems have now been submitted to the Rhyme Rag Editor Enda Coyle Greene . Enda will make a selection for the Spring Rhyme Rag edition.

Poetry Broadsheet



The Broadsheet Poetry Workshop: *Poetry Outdoors* took place at Butler House on 28th March, led by 2026 Broadsheet editor Jane Robinson. Fifteen poets participated in this full-day Workshop, which blended indoor discussion with outdoor creative practice.

Throughout the day, attendees explored ways of engaging with the natural world through poetry—imagining the perspectives of an ordinary garden bird, a rainstorm, or even a single blade of grass—as a means of connecting more deeply with the local ecosystem.

Feedback from Participants included:

- *It was absolutely brilliant, so inspiring and encouraging. Jane Robinson is an excellent teacher and Facilitator.*
- *Really valued having the opportunity to meet other poets, generate new material and share.*

HERITAGE

County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy, 2026-30 Adopted

The County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy 2026-30 was adopted by the Members of Kilkenny County Council on 23rd March, 2026. The Strategy sets out a roadmap in 53 actions to address the vulnerabilities in our heritage.

They focus on:

Recording what is at risk of being forgotten

Providing access to heritage as a shared right

Conserving what matters deeply to people

Maintaining the threads of memory in everyday landscapes

Embedding heritage in decision making across KCC services and in community life

Enhancing awareness of the value, importance & relevance of heritage in our everyday lives

The County Kilkenny Heritage Forum will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the actions of the Strategy which will be launched in the coming weeks.

Local Authority Heritage Officers Training & Development Programme



The Heritage Council held their first session Heritage Officer and Biodiversity Officer Training and Development Programme in Kilkenny in March. The Group were welcomed to Kilkenny by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council.

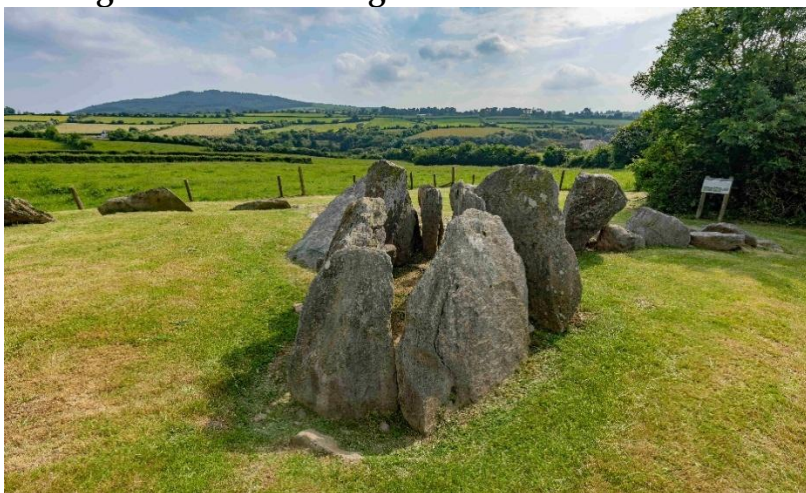
The Heritage Officer was delighted to present to the Group on the work of the Heritage Office and to bring them to see projects we have supported at St. Canice's Cathedral and Freshford.

2027 European Year of the Normans – County Kilkenny Steering Group



The Irish Government has approved cross-government engagement with the trans-European cultural initiative 2027 The Year of the Normans – People of Europe. The year-long commemoration in 2027 aims to celebrate a shared history that has shaped the island of Ireland and Europe. Participation in this initiative aims to commemorate and recognise our Norman history whilst also benefiting tourism and its associated economy. The County Kilkenny 2027 European year of the Normans Steering Group convened for its first meeting in March chaired by Fiona Deegan. The Steering Group is comprised of stakeholders from across the County who will work together over the coming year to develop a Programme of Commemoration for 2027.

Heritage Council Funding Awarded



*Knockroe Passage Tomb
which will feature in upcoming
Monuments, Memories and Maps
Publication*

The Heritage Office has been awarded €40,000 in funding from the Heritage Council under the *County Heritage Plan Grant Scheme*. This funding will support the following initiatives in 2026:

- publication of the *County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy 2026-30*;
- A heritage awareness and engagement campaign to encourage broad public participation in heritage using radio, print and social media;
- publication of *Monuments, Memories and Maps*, the proceedings of a conference which will make important archaeological landscape research freely accessible, supporting learning and appreciation of less well-known aspects of Kilkenny's past.

The *Sacred Sites Project* which will interpret newly recorded data on holy wells and mass paths, making this knowledge available through accessible online resources, story maps, videography and photography.

Irish Walled Towns Network Funding Awarded

The Heritage Office has been awarded funding under two strands of the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network Grants Programme. Under the Capital Funding Scheme, €9,800 has been awarded for the development of a Maintenance Plan for Kilkenny's City Walls. A joint application was submitted by Kilkenny County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Wexford County Council to the Interpretation and Events Scheme for a 2027 *European Year of the Normans Three Sisters Project*. This project which will explore the shared Norman Heritage of the South East will inform our commemorative programme for next year and has been awarded €16,600.

Finding Flemingstown – Lost Medieval Settlement in Kilkenny City Discovered

A new archaeological survey took place in March on the grounds of Kilkenny Castle in an effort to locate the lost medieval settlement known as Flemingstown. Led by the Discovery Programme: Centre for Archaeology and Innovation Ireland in collaboration with the National Monuments Service, the project focussed on the Dukesmeadow, an area of parkland surrounding the castle. Funded by the Castle Studies Trust as part of its 2026 programme, the work is one of eight projects being supported across Ireland and Great Britain. The project has been supported by the Heritage Office who have facilitated public outreach for the project. Flemingstown is believed to have been a purpose-built settlement for Flemish artisans, including weavers and millers who were brought to Kilkenny by the Normans to develop the town. Using geophysical survey techniques, the project identified the settlement's location and layout, further study will now be undertaken to understand its role within Kilkenny's medieval landscape, with results to be shared with the local community over the Summer.

FINANCE

The expenditure by Service Division to the end of March is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €27.4m compared with the annual budget of €129m.

Table 1	Actual YTD March 2026	Budget Full Year 2026
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	7,736	36,921
Road Transport & Safety	4,126	33,045
Water Services	1,111	5,928
Development Management	2,290	16,101
Environmental Services	3,721	19,972
Recreation & Amenity	1,555	10,229
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	72	348
Miscellaneous Services	2,444	6,847
Central Management Charges for Allocation	4,351	
OVERALL TOTAL	27,406	129,391

Rates Invoices 2026

The annual rate invoices for 2026 totalling €25.8 million were issued to 2,883 rate customers in February. This represented an increase of 4% in the 2025 figure. A waiver of 50% of the increase was granted to all customers with a bill of €3,000 or less. 1,800 customers received this waiver. Commercial Rates are payable in full from 1st January, 2026.

A prompt payment discount of 8.3% (*capped at €300 per rate account*) is available for customers who pay bill in full before end of May 2026 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2026.

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the three month period up to the end of March 2026. The draft Financial Statements for 2025 have been finalised and will be presented to Council at the April meeting.