



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

FEBRUARY 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.

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CIVIC EVENTS IN JANUARY

Mayor John Coonan presenting members of James Stephens Barracks Kilkenny with cheques from the Mayor's Christmas Appeal.



Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh celebrates Kilkenny PPN hitting 500 members.

Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh carrying out the official handover of Ireland's first purpose-built electric fire appliance to Kilkenny Fire Service.



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January	
	2025	2026
Planning Applications Received	59	52
Planning Applications Granted	62	70
Planning Applications Refused	3	3
Complaints Received	16	7
Warning Letters Issued	10	6
Enforcements Notices Issued	3	3
Cases Closed	11	43
Cases sent for legal prosecution	0	0
Section 5's Received	14	2
Section 5's Decided Upon	4	3

FORWARD PLANNING

Ministerial Guidelines on Housing Growth

The Minister recently published Guidelines on the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision. These Guidelines set out the housing demand projections to 2040 for each local authority. Each local authority is required to assess the current City and County Development Plan core strategy and settlement strategy against the objective of the Guidelines.

The Council was required to prepare a report detailing how the objectives of the Guidelines will be secured and submit to the Elected Members. The 'Chief Executive's Report on NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements' was approved at the November Kilkenny County Council meeting and is available here:

<https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/variation-8-npf-implementation-housing-growth-requirements.html>

The process of varying the Development Plan to take account of this Report will now be commenced. The preparation process for a Variation begins with the assessment of all proposals under relevant EU Directives (environmental assessments). The process will include a comprehensive public consultation, which will be an opportunity for landowners, and all interested parties, to engage.

Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2030

A review of the Development Contribution Scheme and a Draft Scheme 2026 to 2030 is currently out for public consultation from 6th February to 23rd March 2026. Any submissions received during the consultation period will be considered and a report will be presented to the members for their consideration and approval with or without amendment as soon as possible thereafter.

The draft development contribution scheme can be viewed at:

<https://consult.kilkenny.ie/en/consultation/draft-development-contribution-scheme-2026-2030>

Development Plan 2021 – 2027 - Update on Review

The Southern Regional Assembly recently notified the Council that they will commence the review process for the RSES (*Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*), and MASP (*Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan*), by 2nd April 2026.

As the RSES should be completed prior to commencing the review of the Development Plan, the date for commencement of review and preparation of the new Development Plan will be determined in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Castlecomer Settlement Plan (Variation 5)

Material Alterations to Proposed Variation 5, to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan (KCCDP) and align the KCCDP with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) as relevant, were on public display until the end of January. A total of 8 submissions were received. The Chief Executive's Report on submissions will be brought to the February Council meeting.

Ferrybank / Belview Settlement Plan (Variation 6)

Material Alterations to Proposed Variation 6, to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Ferrybank/Belview into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan (KCCDP) , commenced public display on the 30th January. Submissions are now invited until the 27th February.

Proposed Variation no. 9 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan

Proposed Variation 9, relating to wastewater treatment systems in designated settlements, was on public display for 6 weeks, from the 19th December 2025 to 30th January, 2026 and 8 no. submissions were received. The Chief Executive's Report on submissions will be brought to the March Council meeting.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following estates:

- Cluain Glasan, Kilkenny
- Berkley Terrace, Ferrybank Co Kilkenny

Active Land Management

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has come into effect. The Council prepare the RZLT maps, and Revenue administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown.

The Final Map for 2026 and the Annual Draft Map for 2027 are now on public display, and submissions on scope, and rezoning requests, are invited until the 1st April.

Vacant Sites Register

The Vacant Site Register has been replaced by the RZLT, and all vacant sites are now cancelled from the Register. Any outstanding vacant site levies will remain due to the Council, and the process of debt collection will continue.

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.

Successful applicants for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2026 are as follows:

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) No. Projects Funding Allocated

BHIS26/KK01 Fairmount House, Convent Lane, Graiguenamanagh	€14,000.00
BHIS26/KK02 Kilkenny Design Centre & Design Workshops, The Parade	€25,000.00
BHIS26/KK03 Main Street, Urlingford	€24,000.00
BHIS26/KK04 No. 9 The Parade, Kilkenny	€16,000.00
BHIS26/KK05 St. Canice's Cathedral, Church Lane, Kilkenny	€30,000.00
BHIS26/KK06 Rothe House & Garden, 16 Parliament Street	€1,803.00
BHIS26/KK07 Farmhouse, Newmarket, Hugginstown.....	€39,000.00
BHIS26/KK08 No. 2 & No. 3 William Street, Kilkenny.....	€9,259.00
BHIS26/KK09 Sacred Heart Church, Moneenroe, Castlecomer	€9,000.00
BHIS26/KK10 12 Talbot's Inch, Kilkenny	€20,000.00
BHIS26/KK11 Jerpoint Mill, Abbey House, Jerpoint Abbey, Thomastown	€33,000.00
BHIS26/KK12 Cleere's Public House, 28 Parliament Street, Kilkenny	€11,000.00
BHIS26/KK13 1 Ormonde Road, Kilkenny.....	€21,000.00
Total:	€253,062.00

Successful applicants for the Historic Thatch Buildings 2026 are as follows:

Historic Thatch Buildings (HTB) Ref No. Projects Funding Allocated

HTB26/KK01 Byrne's Cottage, Kylevehagh Commons, Callan	€10,000.00
HTB26/KK02 Westcourt North, Callan.....	€13,916.50
Total:	€23,916.50

Once offers have been accepted, work will commence.

Historic Structures Fund 2026: applications will be assessed shortly and forwarded to the DHLGH for consideration.

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

▪ Planning Referrals.....	4
▪ Further Information requests	1
▪ Clarification of Further Information requests.....	1
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	1
▪ Part 8	2

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
January 2026.....26	January 2026..... 1
January 2025.....14	January 2025..... 6
January 2024.....35	January 2024..... 3
January 2023.....14	January 2023..... 4

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Table below provides an update on recently completed and ongoing projects which are funded under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme:

ORIS 2023 -2025 APPLICATIONS			
	Project Title	Combined figure	Remarks
	Project Development		
	Kings River Boardwalk and Pedestrian Bridge, Kells, Co. Kilkenny.	€55,000	Feasibility and Design Options Report completed Planning consent to be sought under Part 8 - Application to be lodged in end Q1/ early Q2 2026.
	Brandon Hill Summit Walk – Upland Trail Enhancement Scheme - Full Assessment & Works Proposal to ready for Measure 3	€18,000	Completed
	Measure 1		
	Abbey Meadow Trail Enhancement Scheme	€33,000	Completed
	Development of 3 Community Loop Walks	€23,000	Completed
	King's River Trail Phase II Trail Rehabilitation in Kells	€29,000	Completed
	The Islands Walk, Urlingford, Co. Kilkenny	€33,000	Substantially Completed
	Glencoum Wood Walking Trails Development Scheme	€30,000	Completed
	Measure 2		
	Woodstocl Estate Accessibility Trail and Play Enhancement Scheme	€217,000	Completed
	Ennisnag Loop Walk - New 2km loop walk	€223,500	Completed
	Measure 3		
	Castlecomer Discovery Park - Woodland Bike Trail	€555,000	Design consultant appointed and works expected to go to tender in Q2/Q3 2026
	Totals	€1,216,500	
	ORIS 2025-2027 APPLICATIONS -		
	Project Title	Combined figure	Remarks
	Project Development		
1	Cois Bearbha, Goresbridge - Waterside Amenity Area Masterplan	€55,000	Consultants appointed in Jan 2026
	Measure 1		
1	Dunmore Carpark to Mass Path Trail (KCP)	€42,000	Design commenced
2	Barrow Valley Recreational Amenity Enhancement Scheme - Graignamanagh	€44,000	Contract awarded for pontoons etc
3	Freshford Loop Walk	€44,444	To commence
4	Kilfane Loop Walk	€44,444	Tenders awarded
5	Knockdrinna Wood	€44,444	Works out to tender + Signage awarded
6	Windgap Trail Extension into Coillte land	€44,444	Works out to tender + Signage under design
	Measure 2		
1	Kilmacow Pedestrian Bridge & Trail Enhancements	€222,222	Design review commended
3	Mountain Grove Trail Enhancement Scheme	€223,000	To commence
	Measure 3 Deadline 28.03.25 (1no.) €550k		
1	Brandon Hill Trail Enhancement & Upland Protection Scheme - Works	€488,250	Consultants appointed and detail design and tender documents ongoing. Expected completion Q4 2026



Jeninstown Woods



Ennisnag Loop Walk



Abbey Meadow's Callan

Community Sport Facilities Fund

The most recently completed additions to the Kilkenny Countryside Park included the installation of a new secure maintenance compound for the park and the installation of perimeter fencing around the two ball walls. This work was funded under the Community Sports Facilities Fund (*formally known as Sports Capital Grant*) with match funding from the Councils' own funds. Over the next number of weeks, a drinking water refill fountain will be installed near the Dog Friendly Enclosure and Ball Walls. This will strengthen the Parks "green ethos" by encouraging sustainability, reducing single-use plastic, and providing free, accessible drinking water.



Woodstock Gardens



In preparation of the main tourist season a staff recruitment process for the management and operation of the Woodstock Tea Room Coffee Truck and Ice Parlour will commence shortly. This represents an excellent opportunity for individuals interested in taking on engaging roles in the hospitality sector and in recent years has provided rewarding season employment for many local third level students.

The significant focus on planting conducted over the winter period is now beginning to show results. Woodland bulbs and understorey plants are emerging well, with primulas, cyclamen, and snowdrops coming into flower and adding welcome colour to the gardens during these darker early-spring days. Winter pruning of the espalier fruit trees and the rose garden is scheduled to take place over the next fortnight, ahead of the busy growth period.

Tree Management



Significant tree surgery works have been completed over the past few months across the county and city. These works are part of our scheduled maintenance programme to manage tree health and ensure public safety. Works commenced along the boardwalk in Silaire Wood towards the end of the month. The focus of this work is on the removal of large Ash trees which have succumbed to Ash die back disease, this preventative work is to ensure continued public safety and to protect the boardwalk itself. Compensatory planting will be undertaken when the tree surgery works are completed.

In Freshford, the tree surgery works on The Square forms part of our ongoing monitoring programme, aimed at supporting the long-term health of these historic trees. Works scheduled for next month include remedial works to the trees in The Square, Inistioge, Rockshire in Ferrybank, and Gowran. All works are being programmed to ensure completion before the commencement of the bird-nesting season.

Microforests

Over the 12 months, the Parks Department has continued to expand its microforest programme across Kilkenny. This initiative uses the “Miyawaki Method,” a Japanese afforestation technique that involves planting dense clusters of native tree and shrub species together to rapidly establish small, self-sustaining woodland habitats.

More than 5,000 native saplings have been planted using this approach in locations including Slieverue, Ferrybank, Kilkenny Countryside Park, and several other sites throughout the City and County.



The method is environmentally friendly, relying on cardboard and organic mulch to suppress weeds and promote strong early growth without the need for chemicals. Microforests are an excellent way to create biodiversity rich habitats in small urban or community spaces and we plan to continue this work into the future.

COMMUNITY

Community Projects

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

TOWN AND VILLAGE SCHEME			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	January 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 90% complete
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	92% 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 in progress, public consultations in progress
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 being 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

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	January 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. Tender contracts being prepared
Glenmore	Develop the Southeast Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Detailed design stage
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works 98% complete, Library Department have received handover to start fit out of internal library building

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES CAPITAL SCHEME				
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	January Status	
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walkway around complex	€40,000	Works in progress, 40% 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 50% complete	
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Works not yet commenced	
Glenmore Camogie Club 2025	Contribution towards the re-instatement of walkway	€29,000	Works not yet commenced	
Mullinavat Drama Group 2025	Lighting, Sound, Projector, Screen, Curtains	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Marian Hall Kilmacow 2025	Installation of heating, bathrooms, kitchen	€11,000	Works to commence February 2026	
Kilkenny Girl Guides 2025	Emergency Lighting & Fire Alarm	€15,000	Works to commence February 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 due to commence February 2026	
Freshford Town AFC 2025	Floodlighting for all weather pitch	€32,000	Works due to commence Q1 2026	
St. Joseph's Athletic Club 2025	Shelter and walking track	€11,000	Work in progress	
Graiguenamanagh Rowing Club 2025	Storage racking for rowing boats	€15,000	Work in progress	
Evergreen Football Club 2025	Spectator Stand	€20,000	Project Completed on 4 th February 2026	

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	January Status
Galmoy Community Hall 2023	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Ballyouskill Community Hall 2024	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced
Windgap Handball Alley 2024	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Not yet commenced
Windgap GAA 2024	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Procurement in progress
Naomh Aodhan Community Centre CLG 2024 Kilmanagh	Upgrade works on rebuilding and refurbishing of handball alley and ground works	€44,312	Works in progress

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	January 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	Painting and windows complete. Contractor appointed for Solar Panels
Ballyragget Community Hall	Renovation of CYMS Hall	€173,000	Procurement process ongoing

Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS)

The CCFCS scheme provides financial support to community and voluntary groups to develop recreational and cultural facilities including open spaces, walks and parklands, play areas, community arts projects and conservation and natural heritage projects. The 2026 grant scheme is now open, and community & sporting groups are encouraged to apply for the grant by contacting the Community Section at 056-7794920. The closing date for receipt of applications is 6th March 2026.

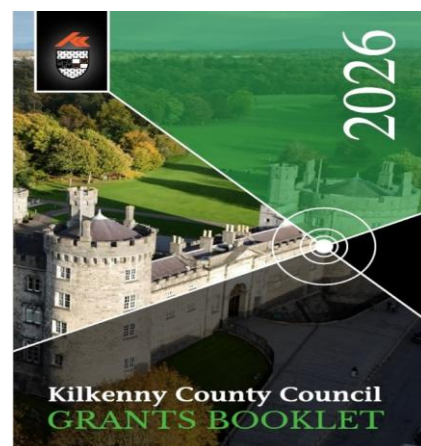
CLÁR

In June 2025, Kilkenny County Council submitted six applications for funding under the CLÁR 2025 programme of which six applications were successfully approved for funding. The successful projects under Measure 1 were announced in November 2025 and the funding for Kilkenny in the amount of €364,946 are listed below: -

Name of Applicant	Project Description	Grant Approved
St. Brendan's National School, Muckalee	Pitch Development	€65,000
Lisdowney GAA	Construction of new MUGA and ball wall	€65,000
Coolagh Community Hall Upgrading Project	Hall and kitchen upgrade	€77,022
Moin Ruadh National School	Construction of new MUGA with carparking area and sensory garden	€100,000
Killanaspick Lighting Project	Roadway Lighting	€22,500
Kilmoganny GAA	Lawnmower for Community Area	€35,424
TOTAL		€364,946

Community Grants Booklet/Community Calendar

Kilkenny County Council issued the 9th Edition of the Community Grants Booklet in 2026, which provides a comprehensive overview of all grant supports available to community groups and residents across the county. The booklet includes details on grants for improving community spaces, estate management supports, and funding options for home adaptations. Designed as a convenient *one-stop information guide* for the people of Kilkenny, the booklet is available on the Kilkenny County Council website at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/>





The Community Department recently published its third Community Calendar, highlighting key community achievements and projects.

The Calendar features important grant closing dates, as well as successful initiatives delivered by the Community Department in 2025.

Public Participation Network

Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN) has reached an important milestone, announcing that more than 500 community, environmental, and social inclusion groups are now registered with the network. This achievement reflects the growing commitment of local organisations to actively participate in shaping policies and decisions that influence life throughout County Kilkenny.

Serving as a vital link between Kilkenny County Council and community groups, the PPN provides a structured way for members to engage in local democracy. Through the network, registered groups can nominate and elect representatives to various decision-making committees, ensuring that community perspectives help guide policy areas such as social inclusion, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and local development. A recent partnership with Equal Ireland offered members the chance to apply for a scholarship in Business, Social Enterprise, and Community Development.



Kilkenny PPN celebrating 500 groups registered with the network

The Local Community Development Committee:

The Local Community Development Committee held their first of six statutory meetings in January 2026. Local Community Development Committees were established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and have been given a statutory remit in developing and coordinating the delivery of local and community development programmes in their respective areas.

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is a public-private partnership and comprises 19 members drawn from 4 main sectors, State agencies (*such as the Education & Training Board, the Dept of Social Protection and Teagasc*), The Local Authority (including local Councillors), Economic and Social partners (*such as the IFA, Chamber of Commerce, the Family Resource Centres and Kilkenny LEADER Partnership*), and the local community and voluntary sector.

The LCDC has primary responsibility for coordinating planning and overseeing the Local Economic Community Plan. The current LECP 2023 -2028 was adopted in June 2023 and included the first of three implementation plans. A review of the Implementation plan took place and a new Implementation Plan prepared for the period 2025 – 2026.

The LECP Implementation Plan 2025 – 2026 contains a total of 119 actions and was adopted by the LCDC Members on the 28th March 2025. The LCDC will continue to monitor the progress of actions within the plan throughout 2026.

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee Local Enhancement Programme 2026
The Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee Local Enhancement Programme 2026 is now open for applications. The Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) provides funding to support community groups across Ireland.

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. Locally based community and voluntary groups are eligible for funding in urban and rural areas and not-for-profit organisations. Commercial organisations and individuals are not eligible for funding.

Application Forms & Guidelines are available for download from Kilkenny County Council website www.kilkennycoco.ie. The closing date for receipt of valid applications is Friday 27th February 2026.



*Cladding works carried out to Ionad Dara, Community Hall, Goresbridge
funded under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025*

LEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

KILKENNY BUSINESS ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF THE 2026 BUSINESS OF CRAFT AWARDS

Gail Daniels with her business Bó Bar Soap was a national winner in the Newcomer category at the Business of Craft Awards 2026 at Showcase 2026.

Bó Bar manufacture a handmade cow's milk soap created in small batches using milk from grass fed cows. The family run business was identified as having significant growth potential with a defined sales and export plan for what is a unique product.



Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny Now Supporting Over 192 Small Businesses & 48 Jobs According To New Figures

During January, Minister of State for Employment, Small Business and Retail, Alan Dillon, T.D., announced the annual results of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) for 2025 which showed that Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny supported companies and created 48 jobs in 2025.

The net jobs created by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny supported clients in 2025 was 48, which takes into account businesses that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland. The new figures show that the LEO Kilkenny financially supported 192 small businesses in their portfolio across the county these companies in turn employ 1,119 people.

Business Support Roadshow

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in partnership with Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Kilkenny Leader Partnership and Kilkenny Intreo Office will be holding a Roadshow in various locations throughout the County. The roadshows are an opportunity to connect with a network of support that can help navigate challenges of running a business. Attendees will have a chance to speak directly with funding and support agencies representatives who can answer 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.

A poster for the Business Support Roadshow Across County Kilkenny. The poster is blue and white with a map of Kilkenny in the background. It lists the following dates and locations: 12th February Paulstown, 11th March Ferrybank, 15th April Castlecomer, and 13th May Graigueanagh. It also mentions 'More locations to follow' and 'Meet the various agencies and learn all about business funding and other supports'. Logos for the Local Enterprise Office, Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, and Kilkenny Intreo Office are at the bottom.

TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council Festival Grant Scheme



Kilkenny County Council has provided funding for festival organisers to aid with the development and promotion of festivals **with a significant tourism impact**.

The main purpose of the Festival Support Grants scheme is to support festivals which drive tourism in Kilkenny, underpinning Kilkenny County Council's Tourism strategy and improving the visitor experience in Kilkenny city and county.

To be considered for funding, applicants were asked to provide details demonstrating the following: - Tourism Impact; Visitor numbers / participation; Sustainability and Accessibility measures; Seasonality; Support for the Night Time Economy.

Application deadline for festival grants was 23rd January, 2026. The applications received are now being assessed and a recommendation for award of grants sent for approval by elected members at their February meeting.

Faile Ireland Festival Grant Scheme



Faile Ireland confirmed that their Faile Irelands festival grant will return for 2026. Kilkenny County Council have been awarded €8,000 from Faile Ireland's Regional Festivals fund and will be used to enhance its' grant awards to festival organisers locally.



Kilkenny Tourism promoted Destination Kilkenny at the 2026 Holiday World show at the RDS in Dublin from 23rd to 25th of January.

Feedback from volunteers attending the show, shows great interest in Kilkenny as a short break in 2026 from the domestic market. Attendees from Northern Ireland, Dublin, Kildare and our neighbouring counties were very positive towards spending time in Kilkenny this year.

This Tradeshow is the first of a series planned for 2026 to attract the domestic guests from various target audiences throughout the year.

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 January 2026 under the various support services.

HOUSING CAPITAL



42 units development at Abbey Hill, Thomastown comprising of 20 social housing units and 22 units for purchase under the Affordable Housing Scheme

AFFORDABLE HOMES

Overview

January was a strong month for moving forward with the delivery of affordable homes through the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme. With two active developments – **Abbey Hill in Thomastown and Church View in Kilmacow** – the team made steady progress on key tasks. These included assessing applications, eligibility and affordability, and issuing Letters of Offers, and continuing to promote both schemes to potential buyers. Overall, the work this month shows strong ongoing momentum in providing high-quality, affordable homes to potential buyers.

Church View, Kilmacow

Kilkenny County Council, in collaboration with **Michael Murphy Building Services** and supported by the **Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage**, continues to advance this scheme.

- The application portal remains open, and applications are being reviewed for eligibility and completeness.
- **We have just four homes left in this development (with nine reserved).**
- **Three-bedroom units** are available, with prices starting from **€248,475**.
- The scheme targets **First-Time Buyers** and **Fresh Starters**.
- Social media promotion remains active across Kilkenny County Council platforms, ensuring ongoing visibility of the scheme.
- **Showhouse** scheduled to open Saturday 07/02/2025 which is expected to further support sales activity.

Abbey Hill, Thomastown

A Kilkenny County Council led scheme, built by **Ormonde Construction** and supported by the **Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage**, Abbey Hill comprises **22 high-quality homes** (16 three-bed and 6 two-bed units) available under the Affordable Purchase Scheme.

- The application portal for this scheme re-opened to sell the **remaining five homes. (17 reserved)**.
- Applications are currently being checked & assessed.
- The majority of homes are reserved, and the team are busy supporting buyers and progressing contracts with our solicitors.

Summary

- Interest in both schemes remains very strong, with both schemes attracting high engagement. *(We note an increase in applications from 'Fresh Starters')*.
- The continued demand shows the clear need for well-designed, accessible, and affordable homes across the county.
- The strong response from potential buyers highlights the importance of keeping up delivery momentum and ensuring a steady supply of affordable purchase options.



HOMELESS SERVICES

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

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

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

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2026	TO-DATE
Homeless Presentations	71	71
Homeless Assessment Outcomes		
Prevention & Interventions	51	51
Emergency Service	13	13
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	7	7
HAP Place Finder Service		
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	46	46
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1	1
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	2	2
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	45	45
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported / created during month	9	9
Provision of Emergency Accommodation		
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 31 st	30	30
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</i>	46	46
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front</i>	20	20

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2026	TO-DATE
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on January 31 st (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,259	1,259
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on January 31 st (<i>Net Need</i>)	629	629
Number of Social Housing Applications received in January	93	93
Number of applications incomplete/awaiting further information/clarification	47	47
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	33	33
Number of applications assessed during January	25	25
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at 31 st January	65	65

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2026	TO-DATE
Total active HAP tenancies	361	361
New HAP tenancies set up	1	1
HAP allocated Social Housing	3	3
Closed HAP tenancies	3	3
HAP Rent Reviews	31	31
HAP Other tenancy amendments	26	26

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2026	TO-DATE
Local Authority Social offers of allocations made in January	12	12
Approved Housing Body offers of allocations made in January	4	4
RAS offers of allocations made in January	1	1
LA/RAS/ AHB offers of allocations made to date 2026	17	17

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Complaints

The Tenancy Management Section of Kilkenny County Council deals with anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. A total of 45 issues were recorded in January 2026.

COMPLAINT TYPE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	NUMBER INVESTIGATED	NUMBER ONGOING	NUMBER CLOSED
Drugs related; Violence; Racism; Threats & Intimidation	10	7	1	2
Damage to property, animal related (dog/horse/fowl); Refuse/dumping/hoarding	9	5	4	0
Noise; Parking/boundary issues; Other	26	18	6	2

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

The Housing Operations team have commenced a pilot scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock. The completion of stock surveys will allow Kilkenny County Council to improve the delivery of our planned maintenance programme.

MAINTENANCE CALLS JANUARY 2026	
Maintenance Calls in January	831
Total Number of Issues Raised in January (including multiple issues reported in a single call)	1005
Number of Invalid/Tenant Responsibility Calls	140
Number of Repeat Calls	213
Number of Calls That Resulted in a Call Out	652

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The housing grants budget is €2,575,197, made up of €2,188,917 (85%) grant funding and €386,280 (15%) KCC contribution for 2025. The Housing Grants Section are currently awaiting confirmation of the 2026 allocation.

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED JANUARY 2026

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	62	€719,019
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,450
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	114	€780,008
Total	182	€1,521,477

GRANTS PAID OUT JANUARY 2026

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	4	€34,956
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	0	€0
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	12	€91,950
Total	16	€2126,906

HOUSING LOANS ACTIVITY 2026

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	3	0	€0	2	€262,600
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	3	0	€0	2	€262,600

VOIDS ACTIVITY JANUARY 2026	
Number of Voids Upgraded Ready for Allocation in January 2026	7
Number of Voids in progress on the 31 st of January 2026	33
Total Number of Voids Upgraded for Allocation to Date 2026	7

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS SUMMARY JANUARY 2026	
Number of Inspections Completed by Kilkenny County Council Staff	44
Number of Inspections Outsourced	0
Total number of Inspections Completed to-date	44

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Community Climate Action Programme

Phase 1 of the Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) is at final delivery stage with successful groups closing out the final works and submitting documentation re same. The completion date for projects under this phase is 01st Feb 2026. 22 Groups were successful and the Community Climate Action Officer is working with and supporting these groups during delivery. We are delighted to showcase an example of a completed project in Castlecomer.

Spotlight: Castlecomer Enterprise Centre:

The Enterprise Centre in Castlecomer applied under this Programme to upgrade internal lighting to energy efficient LED, replace 13 storage heaters with new efficient radiators that have controls built in and to also insulate the ceiling in the building. The Centre took a 2 staged approach as the building is a 'T shape' and decided to apply for one section first deliver on this and then apply for the next stage at a future date (*consequently applying for Phase 2 of the CCAP*).



The result of these energy upgrade works is that the building is now more energy efficient, reducing energy consumption and thus electricity bill spends, as well as providing a lot more comfort to the building users who have provided very positive feedback. The Enterprise Centre is an integral organization in North Kilkenny that fosters the growth and development of new and existing local businesses so receiving funding to support energy upgrades has been vital in keeping this building updated and ensuring longevity of same.

Phase 2, Applications for Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) are now closed. We were once again oversubscribed with applications received seeking funding from CCAP to the value of €998,069.52. Kilkenny County Council has an allocation from the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) of €511,000.

Applications received have now been evaluated against set criteria and are being prepared for submission to DCEE for final approval. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of evaluation April 2026 and where successful in receiving funding groups will have 18 months to deliver their project.

LAMA Awards 2026 – Best Green Sustainable Initiative

The Climate Action team are delighted to have been shortlisted in the *Best Green Sustainable Initiative*, for their entry "Championing Community Climate Action" at the All Ireland Community and Council Awards which is taking place at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre, Saturday 28th February 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Green Schools Programme 2025/2026

There are 35 schools within the City and County applying for their respective Green Flag in 2026. These flags cut across the themes of Litter & Waste, Water, Energy, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship. For schools renewing their Green Flag award, the deadline for the 2025/2026 school year is **Friday, March 20, 2026**. All schools have been notified to arrange their individual assessments with the Environmental Awareness Officer before the deadline.

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Community Grant



The Anti-litter and Anti-Graffiti community fund is now open for applications. Deadline is the 29th of May 2026. For more information

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/environment/litter/anti-litter-anti-litter-grant-2025.html>

Agricultural Map Alerter

Map Alerter

Agriculture alerts for your local area

Attention Kilkenny Farmers

48 hrs prior to a heavy rainfall event-chemical fertilisers and organic manures must not be spread

MapAlerter offers text alerts, notifying of date and time, when land can be assessed for spreading.

Alerts that Guide. Maps that Matter. Decisions that Deliver!

Scan the QR here and Sign Up for Free

<https://www.mapalerter.ie/kilkenny>

Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

The Environment Department identified the need for a reliable, user-friendly system to communicate environmental compliance information directly to the agricultural community. Through cross-departmental collaboration between environment, climate action, IT and externally with the IFA, the council defined the technical and operational requirements of the tool.

Custom mapping layers were developed to show agricultural zones, risk areas and relevant environmental data. It comes down to a 48-hour or 96-hour runoff time. The alerting rules were programmed to align with fertiliser spreading regulations. The system monitors weather patterns, particularly heavy rainfall and automatically calculates when land is suitable for assessment or spreading again.

An email is sent asking existing Kilkenny-based subscribers to opt in to this new category and automatically an email is sent to any new subscribers that have provided a Kilkenny location. Farmers and landowners can subscribe through the Kilkenny County Council (CoCo) portal, selecting preferred communication channels, SMS text or email. This ensures targeted, personalised alerts. <https://alerts.kilkennycoco.ie/>

Kilkenny County Council Clothes Swap Toolkit

Kilkenny County Council now offers a free to borrow clothing swap kit for businesses, schools, communities and groups. Clothes swaps can be run in community halls, schools, sports clubs, workplaces or apartment complexes. Groups/Organisations can borrow the toolkit by booking online via our website:

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/environment/environmental-awareness/clothes-swap-toolkit.html>

They work for all ages and styles, from everyday wear to children's clothes and seasonal items. Clothing has a significant environmental footprint. By extending the life of clothes through swapping, communities can:

- Reduce textile waste going to landfill
- Lower carbon emissions linked to fast fashion
- Save money for individuals and families
- Build community connections through shared action
- Promote sustainable habits in a positive, accessible way

"Circular Cups for Community Events"



The Southern Region Waste Planning Office in partnership with Kilkenny County Council, other local authorities across the Southern Waste Region and IRD Duhallow launched 'Circular Cups for Community Events', a first-of-its-kind initiative in Ireland in January. It provides local not-for-profit community events, throughout the Southern Waste Region, with access to high quality reusable cups, designed to eliminate single-use waste at their events.

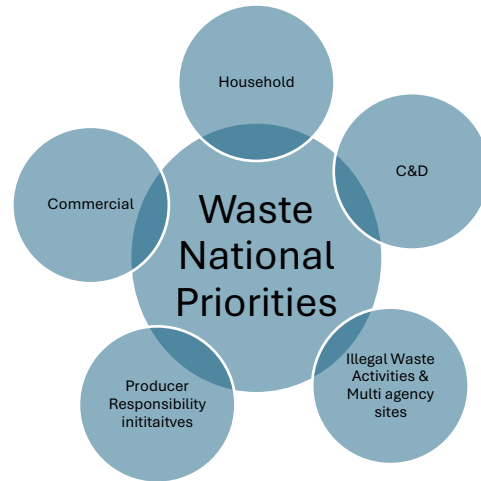
This program now empowers a wide variety of organizations including local sports clubs, schools, youth organizations, craft markets and community festivals to easily access a shared stock of reusable pint, half-pint, and hot/cold beverage cups with or without lids. The stock includes 12,000 pint cups, 9,000 half-pint cups and 7,000 coffee cups, ensuring ample supply for various event sizes.

The booking system for 'Circular Cups for Community Events' is now live, and reusable cups are available for all eligible events. Not-for-profit groups within the Southern Waste Region are encouraged to visit <https://reusablecups.tenvito.com/> to learn more and secure their supply.

WASTE

RMCEI Inspection and Reporting

The National Enforcement Priorities Progress Report for the EPA is currently being finalized and is due for final submission to the EPA on the 28th February. All teams are compiling reports and case studies as part of this submission to meet the RMCEI 2025 compliance, progress has started on 2026 inspections also. Inspections are carried out in the areas of National priority. Inclusive of these inspections the following areas of Multi agency inspections, litter patrols, End of Life Vehicles and metals and inspections of waste facilities are being conducted.



Ongoing works include investigating complaints received by members of the public and reviewing / issuing of waste facility permits.

Civic Amenity Site - Dunmore

The Civic Amenity site at Dunmore continues to provide a valuable service to the public and operates from 8am to 4.30pm through lunch five days a week whilst also providing a Saturday morning service from 9am to 12 noon. January 2026 saw the following tonnages:



The various recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of March and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard	9.0
Plastic	6.0
Paper	9.8
Glass Bottles & Cans	2.2
Food Waste.....	0.5
Mattresses.....	5.3
Metal	3.6
Timber.....	11.1
Tetra-pac.....	0.4
WEEE	9.3

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.

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.

Septic tank Inspections

The target for 2026 is 51 inspections. Kilkenny County Council staff has started organizing inspections for 2026 and highlighting households in high priority zones to be nominated for inspections.

Environmental Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for January 2026 is 102. 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.

Noise

Noise monitors are currently in the process of being calibrated. Kilkenny county council may have to purchase 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.

RURAL WATER

Well Grants - Improvement Works to Private Water Supply

A total of 20 applications for grant assistance for improvements to private water supplies have been received to date, compared with 17 applications during the same period in 2025. Payments amounting to €38,504.10 were issued to approved well-grant applicants in January 2026. For the corresponding period in 2025, payments totaled €25,970.

Introduction of On-Line Applications

The Rural Water Section are continuing to work with KCC's IS Section to develop online applications for grant assistance for private water supply improvement works (well grants). This will later be extended for applications for Group Water Scheme (GWS) subsidies.

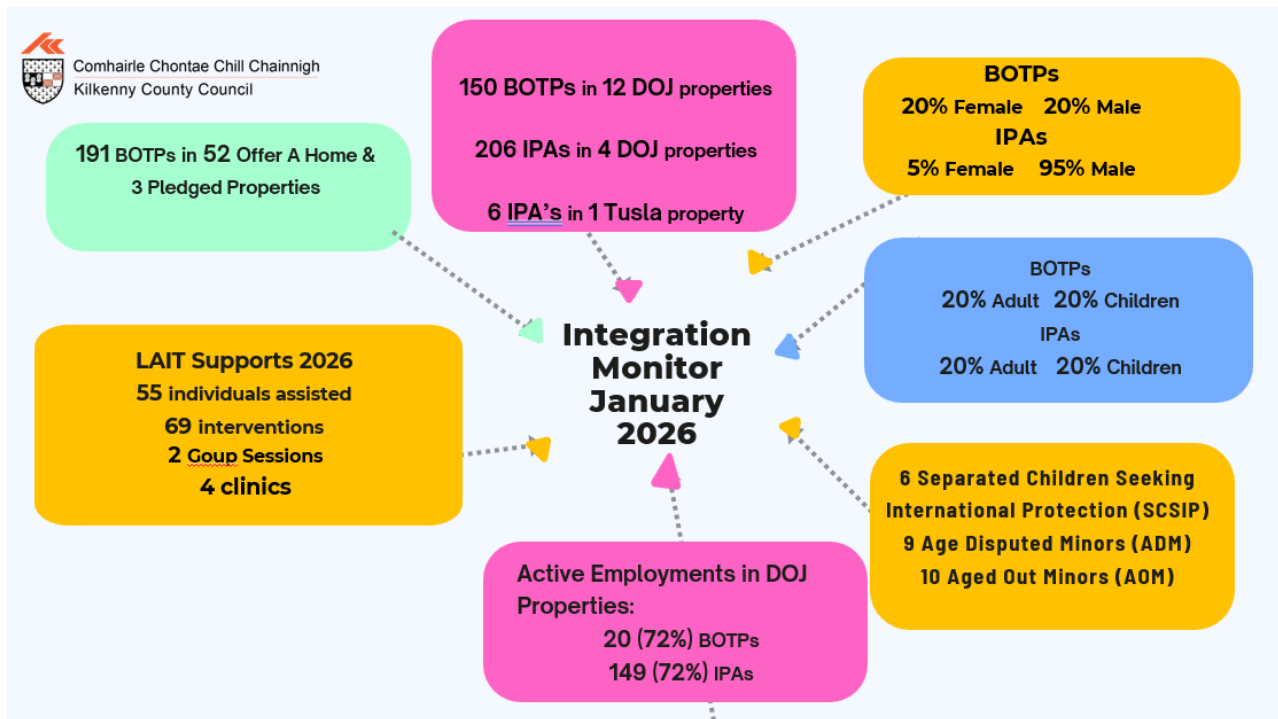
Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026

Group Water Schemes approved for funding by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are advancing their planned works through the procurement phase, with some measures already completed or partially completed. Capital funding amounting to €135,616.72 was released in 2025.

INTEGRATION

The Integration Team 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

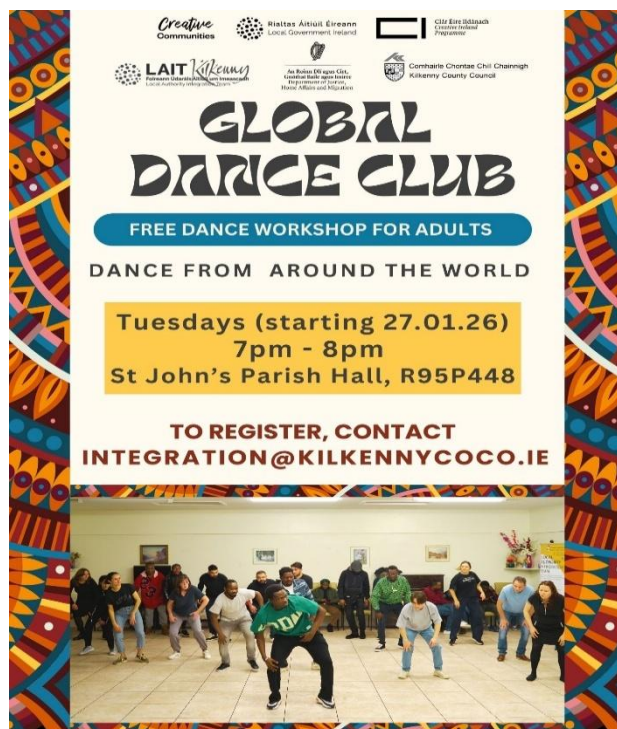


EVENTS:

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

- **Global Dance Club** – A programme piloted by 2 LAIT clients, through Creative Ireland funding in 2025 has commenced its' 2026 programme of free weekly classes of various global dance styles with a choreographed piece being developed to showcase in St. Patricks Day parade, Africa Day and Refugee Week. Rehearsal classes commenced on the 29/01/26, for the St. Patrick's Day Parade performance. For more information visit <https://www.instagram.com/globaldanceclubkk/>
- **Weekly Drop-In Clinic** – Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, LAIT hosts an open clinic at the Neighbourhood Hall, offering advice and assistance to those seeking support. Working in partnership at Tuesday clinic with HSE and Kilkenny Leader Partnership to expedite signposting to most queries.
- **Information Sessions** – Ongoing at the Wallslough Designated Accommodation Centre, these sessions help new arrivals navigate integration processes and access accommodation supports.

Global Dance



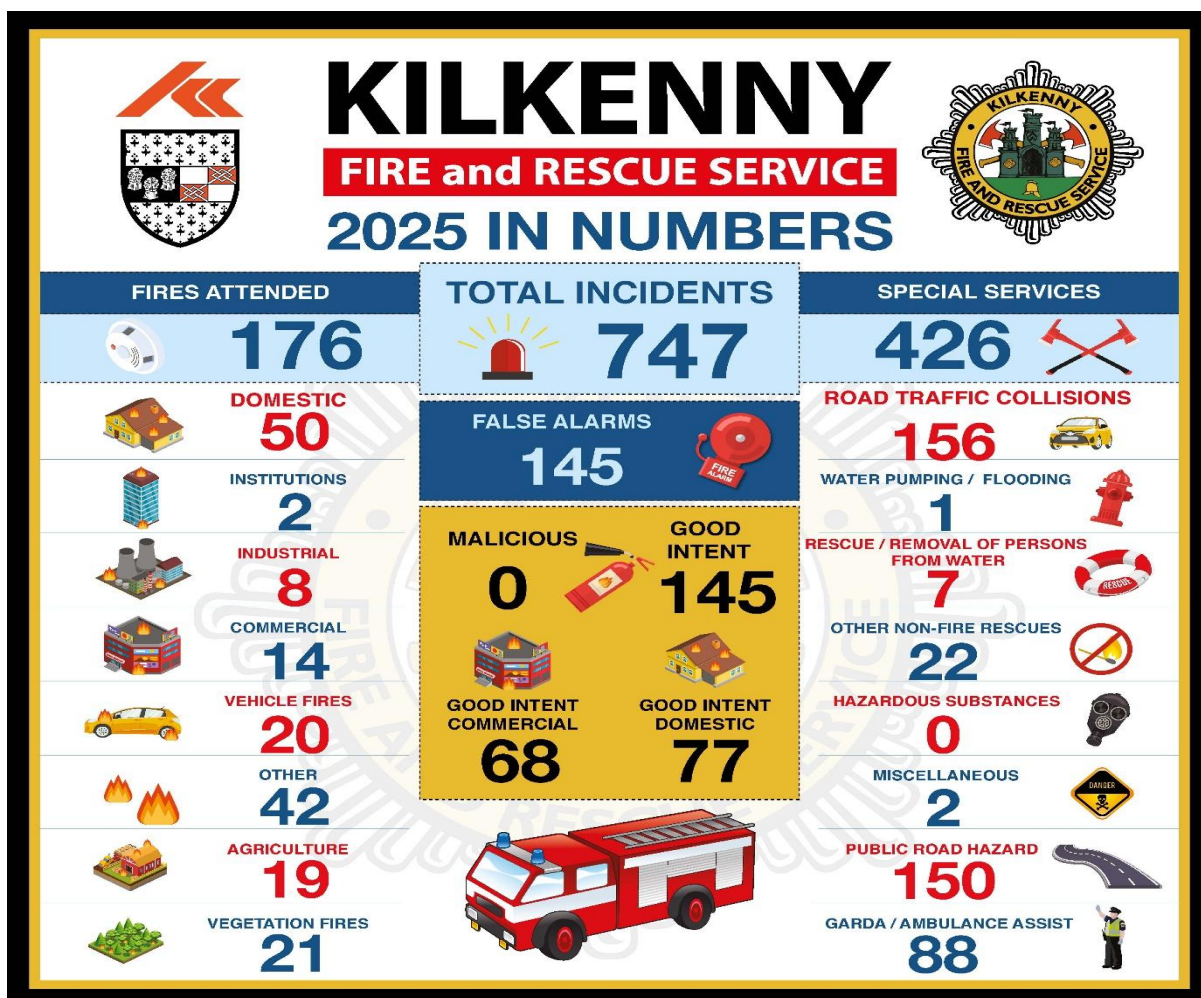
Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties at 31st January, 2026

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. Further details are available on www.offerahome.ie or you can contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

A separate programme is in place 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.



Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Kavanagh carried out the official handover of the new 2-seater electric fire vehicle in the presence of Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr. Maria Dollard, and Fiona Deegan, Director of Services at Kilkenny County Council, members of the Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service team and the chassis and coach builders. It is Ireland's first purpose-built electric fire appliance, a compact two-seater vehicle designed specifically to access the narrow streets, laneways and other restricted areas that define Kilkenny's Medieval City Centre and also assists in the reduction of our carbon footprint.



CIVIL DEFENCE

Overview

- Kilkenny Civil Defence volunteers began 2026 with strong engagement. Weekly training and course attendance is good, with volunteers keen to support principal response agencies and the community when needed.

Summary of Total Volunteer Hours in January

- Weekly Training – 146 volunteer hours
- Courses – 180 volunteer hours
- Call outs/ Activation – 25 volunteer hours
- Duties – 21 volunteer hours

Weekly Training

- Training now operates on **Tuesday and Wednesday nights** due to increased volunteer numbers.
- Disciplines covered on a rotating basis: **medical, search, and water/boats**.
- Flexibility remains to put emphasise on other areas as needed and training schedules can be adjusted based on call-outs and operational demands.

Courses

- **10 newly inducted volunteers** completed the *Missing Person Search Responder* course, including night search training in Jenkinstown Wood.
- New volunteers are also undertaking the *First Aid Response* course on separate nights, supporting their integration.

Call Outs / Activations

Flooding Response

- Civil Defence remained on standby during recent south-east flooding following continuous rain over the month and the aftermath of **Storm Chandra**. Support and readiness included preparedness for evacuations, welfare checks, sandbagging, and transport to rest centres or alternative accommodation.

29 January:

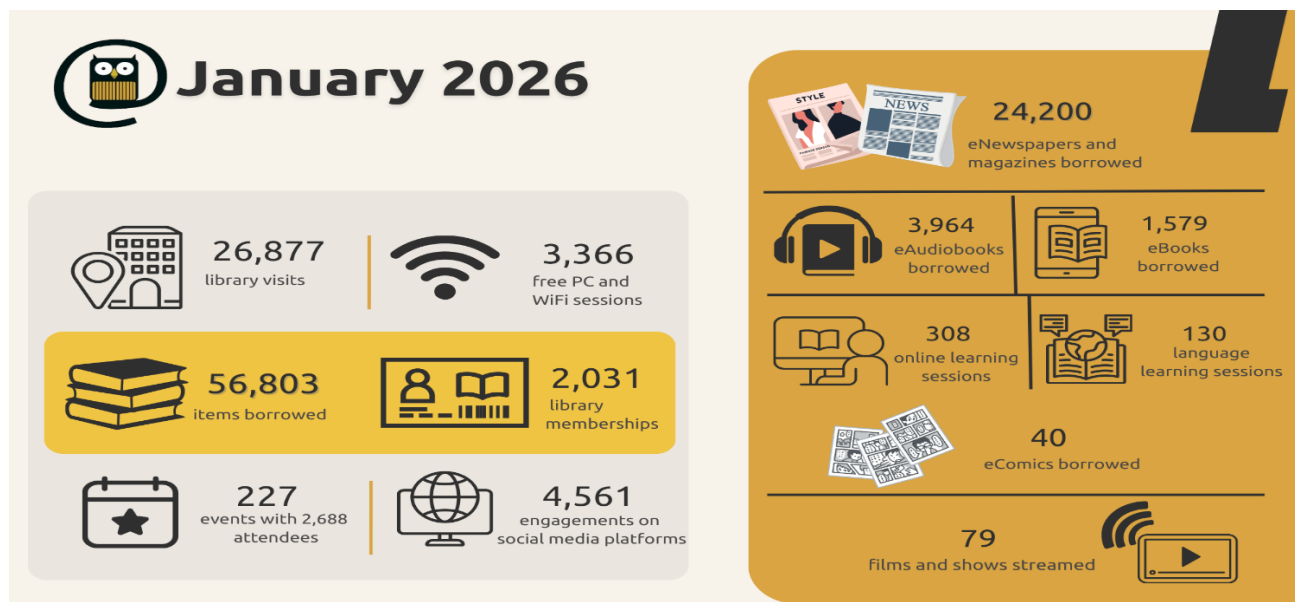
- Activated to assist the local authority with information distribution and sign-up for the DSP emergency response payment.
- Six volunteers engaged with flood-affected residents in Thomastown and Graignamanagh over three hours in heavy rain.

30 January:

- With assistance from Laois Civil Defence, drone footage and photographs were captured across key flood-affected areas: Graignamanagh, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, and the Bleach Road (North of Kilkenny City).
- Footage was taken at peak water levels on the Rivers Nore and Barrow and will serve as an important future reference.
- The Assistant Civil Defence Officer attended daily Teams coordination meetings where possible.

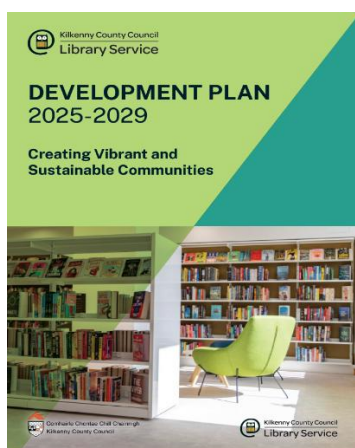
Other Call Outs / Duties

- Medical service completed a patient transfer by ambulance to St. Vincent's Hospital and medical duty assisting Wicklow Civil Defence at running event.



Launch of New Library Development Plan

Kilkenny County Council Library Service launched its new Library Development Plan, *Creating Vibrant and Sustainable Communities 2025–2029* at Mayfair Library on Friday, 16th January. The Plan outlines a forward-looking vision to ensure libraries remain dynamic, community-centred spaces where knowledge, culture, and connection thrive. Focusing on user experience, community engagement, innovation, literacy, learning, and long-term sustainability, the strategy sets out how the service will grow and adapt in the years ahead. With leadership emphasising innovation, inclusivity, and resilience, the Plan invites everyone in Kilkenny to engage, learn, and grow with their library service.



Authors Evening Celebrating 25 in 25

Kilkenny book lovers were treated to a special Authors Evening at Mayfair Library on Thursday, 22nd January to celebrate the 2025 adult reading challenge, Read 25 in 2025. The event featured acclaimed local writers Niamh Mulvey, Orla Mackey, and Brendan Casey, with Castlecomer Librarian Lori Moriarty chairing the discussion. Attendees enjoyed an engaging night of conversation as the authors shared insights into their work, reading habits, and the books that shaped their year. Free and open to all, the event brought the community together for an inspiring start to the literary year.



**Leabharlann
Mayfair**

Kilkenny County Council
Library Service

Pilot Book Buddy Programme

A three-week pilot of the Book Buddy Programme took place in Mayfair Library during January. Transition Year students from Kilkenny City Vocational School met weekly with pupils from Presentation Primary School for paired reading activities.

The initiative fostered growing confidence among the younger pupils as they read aloud to their TY partners, while also providing valuable mentoring experience for the TY students. Students were accompanied each week by Ms Lynch, KCVS and Ms Power, from Presentation Primary. At the final session, all participants received certificates presented by Karyn Deegan, Branch Manager of Mayfair Library.



St. Brigid's Day Programming

Workshops and craft sessions celebrating St. Brigid took place across Kilkenny Libraries, where participants learned to make traditional St. Brigid's Crosses with Monica Fleming using locally sourced rushes and explored related European customs.

Events were held in Ferrybank Library, Callan Library Mayfair Library, Loughboy Library and Castlecomer Library between 23rd January and 30th January with additional family storytelling and crafts in Graiguenamanagh & Thomastown Libraries. These sessions offered a meaningful way for communities to connect with heritage.

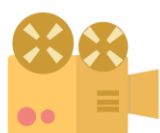


Library Activities

Our libraries hosted a diverse mix of events and activities throughout the month, including:

- Genealogy Club in Mayfair Library on 8th January
- A CAO information talk for parents in Mayfair Library on 13th January
- "Morning Mug Club" for cosy social chats and fun in Castlecomer Library Fridays 10-1pm

- Eco paper crafting for children in Thomastown Library on 20th January
- An “Our Kids Code” family taster workshop in Urlingford Library on 20th January
- A family LEGO morning in Ferrybank Library on 10th January
- An adult collage-making workshop in Graiguenamanagh Library on 20th January



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published 198 posts and videos on our social media platforms in January. Our engagements for the month were 4561 and our videos and reels had 2837 views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **13,787** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



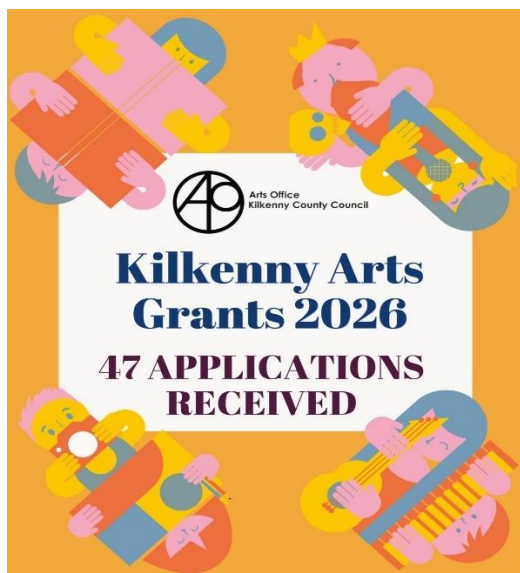
The “Our Kids Code” workshops and CAO information session supported lifelong learning and digital literacy, aligning with **SDG 4: Quality Education**. Community-building events such as the **Authors Evening** and **family LEGO session** strengthened cultural participation and inclusive public spaces, supporting **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**.



ARTS

2026 Grants - Arts Act Grant and Artists Residency Bursaries 2026

The Arts Office announced their annual call out for applications for the Arts Act Grants and their various Artists' Residency Bursaries 2026 in December, with a deadline for all awards of Monday 26th January, 2026. We received 47 Arts Act Grant Applications and 23 Tyrone Guthrie First Time Applicant Bursaries, 10 Artists Residency applications and 4 Tyrone Guthrie Performing Arts Residency applications. These applications will be assessed by external assessors on the 3rd February.



Creative Kilkenny

On 5th January, the Creative Ireland Programme in Kilkenny launched the 2026 Open Call for both the Creative Ireland and *Cruinniú na nÓg* Grant Schemes, with a closing date of 13th of February

The final phase of the *Cruinniú na nÓg* consultation was completed, engaging over 95 young people across the county. Although resource-intensive to manage, the process provided valuable insights, and the findings have been circulated to inform planning for the 2026 programme.



Cruinniú na nÓg 2026 Consultation

Throughout January, the Creative Ireland Engagement Officer attended the Funding Club information session and dedicated briefings for both the *Live Music in Retirement Homes* initiative and the *Shared Island* open call. The officer also responded to a significant volume of queries related to the 2026 Open Call, offering guidance on eligibility, project development and submission requirements.

Consultations with colleagues and key stakeholders supported the development of strong proposals. As a result, two applications were submitted to Creative Ireland: one for *Live Music in Retirement Homes* and one for a *Shared Island* project.

YOUNG PEOPLE

January Activity – Art of Change

Art of Change workshops started in early January with an exploration of textile production with designer Lynn Haughton. Lynn founded the multi award winning community organisation 'The Upcycle Movement' in 2012 to promote and inspire the rethinking of what we consider as waste - recognising this as a positive way to keep items out of landfill and contribute to a circular economy. Lynn brings back beauty and provides new function to otherwise redundant materials.



The Workshops explored the materials and processes required to make T-shirts. The group set about turning old t-shirts into yarn, which were then used to knit, crochet and weave with. They investigated all the different ways t-shirt yarn could be used rather than being discarded.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



As part of the Arts Office Community Climate Action programme, Waste Not Want Not, plans for **Sewing Seeds** is well underway. This project is a three-season creative programme exploring circular design, textile waste streams, and community connection through making, reflection, and environmental action. Each season—Spring, Summer, and Autumn—is led by a different artist whose practice aligns with a phase of the fashion cycle: production, consumption & care, and waste & disposal. The programme combines hands-on making, seasonal awareness, and real-world environmental engagement. Each block includes a Generate Day, a series of artist-led workshops, and an Activate Day with a local eco-group. Winter will be held as a quieter period for reflection and future thinking. This programme is being delivered as a progression to last years project and has been designed based on participant evaluations.

Living Values, Living Futures is a partnership between the Arts Office, the Environment and Community sections and is a progression of a project run by the Arts Office in 2025. We are currently in the delivery and content research phase for this innovative **Ecoliteracy Training Programme**. It will be delivered to local community groups to strengthen environmental awareness and empower informed action. Delivered through sessions led by eco-poet and environmental writer Grace Wells and Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald, a leading advocate for holistic ecoliteracy education, the programme will introduce accessible, arts-led sustainability learning into local community structures.

ARTISTS SUPPORTS

Big Look Artists mentoring scheme. This partnership programme is currently being developed, adding new elements to progress its breadth of supports for visual artists in Kilkenny. The successful artists will participate in a structured learning programme supporting them to develop their existing art practices. By focusing on contemporary visual art practice, the scheme will provide a structured learning programme based on current international trends, studio practice, and how to attract opportunities in this field. The mentees will learn both from mentors and each other through a lively exchange of ideas and work.

HERITAGE

Kilkenny County Heritage Strategy, 2026-30

Stage two of the Public Consultation process on the draft County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy, 2026-30 is now complete and revisions to the draft are now being made. Throughout the process, seven group consultations were held across County Kilkenny with 139 people in total, 40 written submissions were received, in total over 1,000 discrete ideas/suggestions/comments were contributed during the process. Heritage is a vital part of our identity and community, and it is essential to ensure its protection for future generations. This strategy will help preserve, protect, and promote the rich heritage of our county within a local, regional and national context.



National Heritage Week 2026

National Heritage Week 2026 will take place from **15–23 August**, offering a wide range of events celebrating Ireland's rich heritage. Key highlights include **Heritage Open Doors** on **15–16 August**, **Wild Child Day** on **22 August**, and **Water Heritage Day** on **23 August**. The 2026 theme, "**Heritage at Risk**," focuses on the natural, built, and cultural heritage under threat across Ireland. Event organisers are encouraged to explore and share local stories of endangered habitats, traditions, and heritage sites, raising awareness and fostering community engagement in protecting what makes our heritage unique. You can read more about the theme here: <https://www.heritageweek.ie/news/announcing-the-national-heritage-week-2026-theme-and-dates>

Leadership Development Programme for Heritage Officers

The Heritage Officer recently completed a Leadership Development Programme for Heritage Officers organised by the Heritage Council and delivered by the Irish Management Institute. The programme covered modules on Leadership, Strategic Thinking and Management; Change Management; Influencing Others and practical application of learning in the local authority context. On the final day of the course the group was addressed by Christopher O'Sullivan TD, Minister of State as the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage with special responsibility for nature, heritage and biodiversity.



Christopher O'Sullivan, TD, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity with Virginia Teehan, CEO Heritage Council and Heritage Officers from Local Authorities across Ireland.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of January is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €10m compared with the annual budget of €129m.

Table 1	Actual YTD January 2026	Budget Full Year 2026
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	1,870	36,921
Road Transport & Safety	1,416	33,045
Water Services	495	5,928
Development Management	1,106	16,101
Environmental Services	1,733	19,972
Recreation & Amenity	672	10,229
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	31	348
Miscellaneous Services	773	6,847
Central Management Charges for Allocation	1,955	
OVERALL TOTAL	10,052	129,391

Rates Invoices 2026

At our Annual Budget Meeting 2026 the Council approved a 4% increase in commercial rates. The council also approved a Rates Waiver Scheme for business with an annual rates invoice of less than €3,000 which account for 57% of the total rates customers. The effect of this scheme will reduce the increase on these businesses to a 2% rates increase. The average increase for these businesses in 2026 will be less than €30. This is only the third increase in commercial rates in 17 years and it was absolutely necessary to reduce the impact of inflation which has increased by 32.2% since Jan 2010. The net income yield from the combined changes is €780k. The Prompt Payment Incentive Scheme will continue in 2026 whereby rate payers can avail of a grant of 8.3% of their 2026 rates invoice up to a maximum value of €300.

Rates Invoices totalling €25.5 million will issue in February to over 2450 customers.

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the month of January 2026. The draft financial statements for 2025 will be finalised in the coming weeks and will be presented to Council at the March meeting.