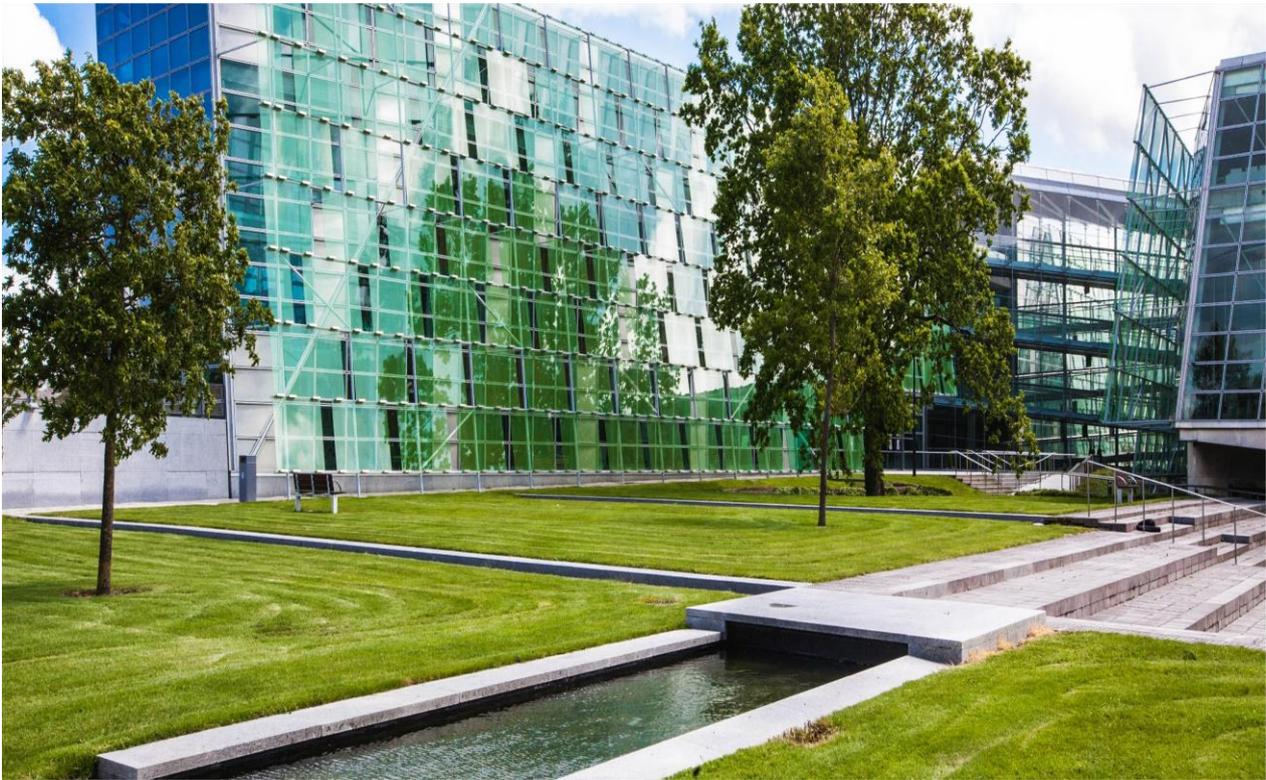




**Kildare County Council**

**Chief Executive’s Management Report – November 2023**





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## News Items

### **Official Opening of new Athy Distributor Road**

Kildare County Council hosted Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, and Cathaoirleach of the County of Kildare, Councillor Daragh Fitzpatrick for the official opening of the new Athy Distributor Road on 31 October (see page 7).

### **Annual Health and Safety Conference**

Kildare County Councils eight Annual Health and Safety Conference took place on Wednesday 25 October in a packed function room in the Osprey Hotel (see pages 8/9).

### **Chamber Upgrade**

Work is continuing to complete the upgrade to the chamber including the provision of a speaker list for the Cathaoirleach (see page 13)

### **Upgrade to Kildare Libraries public PC management system**

Kildare Library Service recently completed an upgrade to a new reservation management system for public PCs, allowing for more accessible and streamlined access to their network of public PCs across 14 branches. (see page 15).

### **Innovation**

“Public Service Transformation Week” took place from 23 October – 27 October 2023 to celebrate and reflect on the ongoing work on innovation and transformation initiatives across the public service (see page 21).

### **CARA Mental Health Visiting Tenancy Support Service**

A Tenancy Sustainment Officer for mental health has been appointed to Kildare and Wicklow (see pages 23/24).



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## **Housing Allocations**

For the period January to October 2023, the council allocated a total of 1,011 throughout the county (see page 25).

## **Draft National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.**

The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, under the auspices of the County and City Management Association, are co-ordinating the preparation of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (see pages 38/39).

## **Local Authority Climate Action Plans**

All local authorities continue to engage with the process of developing their LA CAPs for adoption on or before the 23 February 2024 (see page 44).

## **Healthy Ireland**

Healthy Ireland funding continues to be rolled out under the LCDC on behalf of the county. Pobal announced additional funding of €35,000 towards the 2024 budget. (see page 52).

## **Public Lighting**

PLEEP Survey to commence in November of this year followed by detailed design in Quarter 1/2 2024 (see page 59).

## **Kildare County Council Industrial Estate Enhancement**

A project manager and contractor has been procured to deliver enhancement works on four industrial estates owned by Kildare County Council (see page 72).

## **Lexington Visit**

Report on Visit to Lexington Kentucky by delegation from Kildare from 11 to 15 October 2023. (see pages 73-82 ).



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## Diary/Calendar

### **Awards**

The closing date for the LAMA Awards (All Ireland Community and Council Awards) is 01 December 2023 (see pages 10).

### **Little Library at Bedtime**

Little Library at Bedtime is a collaboration between the library and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy. This initiative will be ongoing until the end of December (see pages 13/14).

### **Climate Action SPC**

The next meeting is scheduled for 06 December 2023 (see page 47).

### **Leader Programme**

The current LEADER programme is at the final stages with projects having until 31 March 2024 to complete their work (see pages 51).

### **LCDC**

The next meeting of the LCDC is scheduled for: Wednesday 29 November 2023 (see page 53).

### **Economic Support Services**

The Brigid 1500 Window Grant has opened for businesses to apply for support to celebrate St Brigid next February (see pages 70/71).



## December Calendar

| Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday                | Friday                                   |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| 27 Nov<br>10:00 Capital Budget Meeting; Meetings<br>15:00 Full Council Meeting | 28   | 29<br>10:00 LCDC  | 30                      | 1 Dec<br>10:00 Clane-Maynooth MD Meeting |
| 4<br>15:00 County JPC  | 5<br>15:30 Naas MD Meeting   | 6<br>10:00 Climate Action SPC<br>14:30 Environmental Services and Water SPC | 7                       | 8  |
| 11<br>10:00 Athy MD Meeting<br>14:00 CPG                                       | 12<br>10:30 LTACC<br>15:00 Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning SPC | 13<br>10:00 Kildare-Newbridge MD Meeting                                    | 14<br>14:30 Housing SPC | 15<br>10:00 Celbridge-Leixlip MD Meeting |
| 18<br>15:00 Full Council Meeting   | 19   | 20  | 21                      | 22                                       |
| 25   | 26   | 27  | 28                      | 29                                       |



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## Corporate, People and Cultural Services

### Corporate Services

#### Communications

#### Official Opening of new Athy Distributor Road



Kildare County Council hosted Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, in the presence on the Cathaoirleach of the County of Kildare, Councillor Daragh Fitzpatrick for the official opening of the new Athy Distributor Road on 31 October.

The official opening marked the completion of a new 3.4km road that commences east of Athy and provides a southern bypass of the existing town. The scheme includes 5.8km of combined walking and cycling infrastructure including a repurposed railway bridge over the River Barrow, two new roundabouts, new signalised junctions at the Carlow Road and Fortbarrington Road, an 80m single

span steel bridge over the River Barrow and a new railway bridge over the Dublin to Waterford railway line. The scheme will also create a safer travel environment in Athy as well as reducing journey times and improving public transport accessibility. The project is fully funded by the Department of Transport under Project Ireland 2040.



#### Public Workshops and 'Drop-in' Information events

Kildare County Council has hosted a number of workshops and 'Drop-in' information events in recent weeks regarding the development of new plans for various locations across the county, which were supported by social media coverage to raise awareness of the events.

#### Clane Town Centre First Plan

In preparation of a 'Town Centre Plan' for Clane, Co Kildare, as part of the ongoing consultation process, Kildare County Council hosted a public



workshop in Clane GAA on 07 November from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Members of the public are encouraged to come along and find out more about the development of the plan.

### **Newbridge Local Area Plan**

Kildare County Council has commenced the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Newbridge town (2025 – 2031). This important plan will set out an overarching land use strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Newbridge over the lifetime of the Plan to 2031. The Plan will incorporate a framework for guiding the future development of transportation, housing, employment, retail, heritage, environmental and community infrastructure for the area.

A ‘drop-in’ event took place at the Town Hall, Main Street, Newbridge from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday the 09 November 2023 where Kildare County Council staff were available to answer general queries and provide guidance on the pre-draft consultation and plan-making process.

### **Kildare County Council Urged Pedestrians to Stay Safe over the Bank Holiday Weekend**



As the clocks went back on the bank holiday weekend, Kildare County Council appealed to pedestrians to be more visible to others while using the road. This time of year, we experience dark mornings and longer dark evenings, which bring additional hazards to road users.

### **Kildare County Council held *eight* Annual Health and Safety Conference**

Kildare County Councils eight Annual Health and Safety Conference took place on Wednesday 25 October in a packed function room in the Osprey Hotel. This year’s event broke attendance records, with more staff than ever before, coming together to listen to the exciting line-up of speakers.

The theme of this year’s conference focused on Health and Wellness.



We were delighted to welcome three exciting and engaging expert speakers to immerse us in the theme of Health and Wellness for the morning.

### **Karl Henry**

Ireland's most recognised and leading Personal Trainer, whose goals are to enhance the health and wellbeing of staff, give tips and advice on how to make lasting and important changes to your lifestyle.



### **Dermot Whelan**

Radio and TV presenter, comedian and meditation expert, and author of the number one bestseller 'Mind Full:

Unwreck Your Head, Destress Your Life', offered a fun and accessible guide to meditation.



### **Dr Brendan O'Shea**

GP and Occupational Medicine Physician at The Bridge Medical Centre, Newbridge, focused on advising how to improve care for people living with chronic illnesses as well as important tools for end of life planning.

### **Ernest Shackleton Autumn School 2023**



Ernest Shackleton Autumn School 2023. Official opening of the twenty-third annual school on Friday, 20 October last at The Abbey, Athy.



## Open Government Programme

A presentation on Open Government Programme was made to Management Team on Tuesday 14 November 2023.

## Awards

The closing date for the LAMA Awards (All Ireland Community and Council Awards) is 01 December 2023. We are encouraging relevant sections to make submissions.

## Children First

The Policy document and Child Safeguarding statements have been updated on the Council's website under Human Resources and Corporate sections.

Director of Services, Eoghan Ryan has been appointed as the Designated Liaison Person in accordance with the Children First Act 2015. Ciara O'Sullivan has been appointed as Deputy Child Liaison Officer, Emma Burns and Katie Lane will also continue as Deputy Child Liaison Officers. Risk assessments are ongoing.

HR will be rolling out meta-compliance training on Child Safeguarding awareness for new staff and refresher training for current staff and

## Public Sector Duty

A strategy for the implementation of the Public Sector Duty is being discussed.

The Framework document is now complete and will be forwarded to the Seniors group. A revised training presentation has been received from the IHREC for roll out to staff and members.

## Register of Electors

### Voter Registration Activities

At the start of Quarter 2 2023, as part of a sector-wide initiative, Kildare County Council was awarded a grant of €68,393 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The deadline for recoupment of the grant is 01 December 2023.

The following sets out what our Team have been doing during 2023 with this grant, to progress and complete a accurate Register.





**THE EASY WAY  
TO SECURE YOUR SAY**

Do you want to vote? You must register to do so.  
Moved address? You must update your registration.  
Now most people can register online!  
Join the register or update your details on

**checktheregister.ie**

If you cannot access this information online, please  
email [register@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:register@kildarecoco.ie), phone 045 980 201 or visit:

**Kildare County Council**  
Áras Chill Dara  
Devoy Park  
Naas  
Co Kildare  
W91X77F



Hard copy forms  
are also available in:  
Local Libraries  
Garda Stations  
Post Offices



 **Comhairle Contae Chill Dara**  
Kildare County Council

 **Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

**Media and Outdoor Advertising**  
Adverts in all Local newspapers  
Irish and English three times



### Bus Shelters

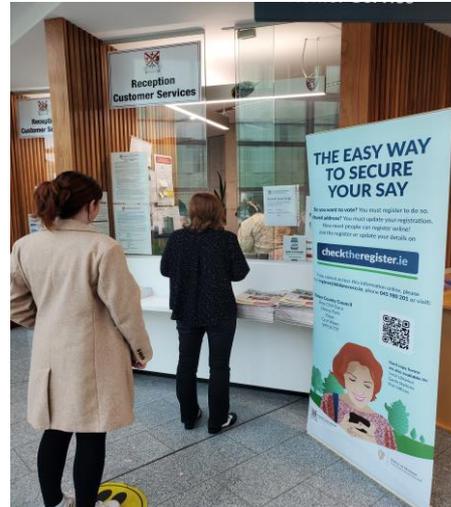
36 across County for two weeks during  
October, Irish and English.

### Radio

KFM, iRadio – 30 second adverts Irish  
and English, peak times up to end  
October 2023

### Leaflet Drop

In October 2023 to over 8,000 houses  
assigned Eircodes between  
June 2018- March 2023.



### Events and other outreach

During 2023, in order to reach all parts  
of the community, the Register of  
Electors Team have attended a wide  
range of events including, Play Day,  
Readers Festival, Social Inclusion  
Week, Ploughing Championships,  
Health and Safety Conference and the  
Curragh Races.

We have also provided posters and  
leaflets throughout our Libraries and to  
Garda Stations, Post Offices, Intreo  
Offices.



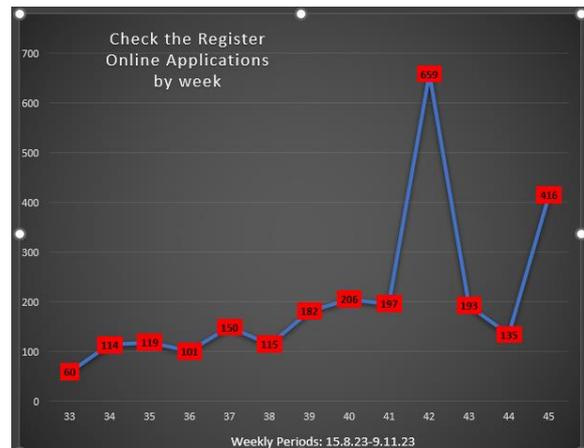
Contact has also been made with Nursing Homes, Secondary Schools, the Department of Defence and many other organisations to brief them on the possibilities for online registration and to propose further in-person events involving our Register Team.



### Impacts

- Almost 3,000 online applications on CheckTheRegister.ie received in last three months alone.
- Almost 2,700 citizens added to the Register since 2022.
- An Eircode project has resulted in County Kildare’s Register having 10% above the national average, in terms of recorded Eircodes on the Register.

- Almost 90% of applications now online.
- Arising from our campaigns online applications are running 50/50 new registrations/updates to existing electors.



The above shows the increase in applications notably rising following radio, bus-shelter, and leaflet campaign.

Thank you to our elected representatives for spreading awareness, encouraging political participation, sharing our materials, our social media content and promoting the online options available. A more detailed presentation will be circulated to elected members in the coming days.

### Member Services

The October monthly council meeting was held in the upgraded Council Chamber. All council meetings in



November will be held in the Council Chamber.

Municipal District Committee meetings continued in October with each committee required to approve its Draft Budget Plan 2024. Clane/Maynooth and Naas Municipal Districts had to hold special meetings to discuss their Municipal district Budget Plan as their monthly meetings fell outside the prescribed time.

It was agreed at the October meeting to hold a special meeting to discuss the Capital Programme on Monday 27 November at 10.00am.

### **Chamber Upgrade**

Work is continuing to complete the upgrade to the chamber including the provision of a speaker list for the Cathaoirleach, a clock and a voting system for the use of those attending in the chamber. Camera angles are also to be adjusted. Members have the facility to make presentations from their assigned seat by sharing the presentation on TEAMS.

## **Library and Arts Service**

### **Library and Arts Service**

#### **News and Highlights – Library**

### **Libraries, Always Remind Me That There Are Good Things In This World - Lauren Ward**

### **Summer Stars**

The summer reading challenge has finished for another year. Over 3,300 children took part in summer reading this year in Kildare.

### **My Little Library Book Bag**

The 'My Little Library Book Bag' initiative is a collaboration between the library and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy. Over 2,600 My Little Library Bags books have been collected by children starting junior infants in 2023 to help them to prepare for this big step. This initiative will be ongoing until the end of October and Kildare Libraries have gained 338 new members as a result.

### **Little Library at Bedtime**

Little Library at Bedtime is a collaboration between the library and the Department of Children, Equality,



Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

Over 700 Little Library Bedtime books have been collected by children under the age of four since the start of October. This initiative will be ongoing until the end of December, Kildare Libraries have gained 251 new members as a result.

### **Kildare Readers Festival 2023**

The Kildare Readers Festival took place from 02 October to 08 October 2023. There were 17 events with over 900 attendees.

### **Outreach and Integration Activities**

Following 34 outreach and in house Summer activities provided by the library service to residents of the two direct provision centres in Kildare (the Hazel Monasterevin and the Eyre Powell Newbridge) and the Celbridge Manor emergency centre (34 events in total),

50 children attended Mid-term activities, including two art workshops and a puppet show in the Celbridge Manor, and a group from the Hazel attended Monasterevin library for facepainting. Kildare Library Service is a partner organisation in a funding application awarded by

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee. (CYPSC) in May, of 50,000 to support children, young people and their parents living in Direct Provision Centres in 2023.

### **Dads Fest**

Kildare Library Service is part of a multi-agency collaboration with In Sync Youth and Family Services, Newbridge Family Resource Centre, Kildare CYPSC, Heads Up Kildare, County Kildare LEADER Partnership, Kildare Sports Partnership, HSE and Tusla to try to engage more Dads with our services. A 'Dads Fest' was held in Newbridge Town Hall on Saturday 21 October 2023, with Baby Beats, Drumming, Men's Shed, Library Reading Corner, Games, Refreshments and information stands from each service provider. 50 Dads attended with their children with feedback hugely positive. Over 30 surveys were collected which will be valuable in helping inform all our service delivery going forward.



### **Upgrade to Kildare Libraries public PC management system**

Kildare Library Service recently completed an upgrade to a new reservation management system for public PCs, allowing for more accessible and streamlined access to their network of public PCs across 14 branches. Alongside improved compatibility with the Library Management System, new features to improve the user experience include the ability for users to self-extend their sessions and, in a first for Kildare Libraries, the option to directly reserve a PC in any of our branches at a time and day of their choosing, up to seven days in advance, via an online booking system: [netloan.kildarecoco.ie](http://netloan.kildarecoco.ie). Links to the booking page are live on the library app and [online public catalogue](#), with updates to the website to follow. The library social media team will be promoting this new and exciting development in the coming weeks.

### **Local Studies, Genealogy and Archives**

Kildare County Archives has digitised over 6,000 pages of the surviving County Kildare Grand Jury records from 1810-1893 and these are now available online. These are some of the oldest records held in County

Archives. This brings the total number of volumes online to 131, including records of the Poor Law Unions of Athy and Naas, Kildare County Council Minutes, and burial grounds registers. Conservation work has also been carried out on several items in the archives and local studies collections continuing preparation for move of the collections to Naas.

### **Decade of Commemorations**

Staff of the Local Studies, Genealogy and Archives Department continue to co-ordinate the Decade of Commemorations programme. The national Decade of Centenaries programme is concluding next month. Co-ordinator Senior Executive Librarian Mario Corrigan recently spoke at a national reflective forum for local authority staff in the National Concert Hall on County Kildare's busy programme over the past decade.

A large number of activities took place during October. Castledermot Local History Group hosted a screening of a new documentary on the 1919 Farm Labourers Strike in Kildare on Thursday 12 October. The Federation of County Kildare Local History Groups held their annual Seminar on Saturday 14 October, supported by the Decade



of Commemorations Committee, with historian James Durney speaking on those involved in the revolutionary struggle in Kildare based on his new book *Stand You Know For Ireland's Cause*. Artist Greg Hallahan opened his 'Nine Lives' exhibition in Kildare Courthouse in late October with his Civil War themed exhibition currently on display in Kildare Town Library. Athy Library hosted the 'Ag Fanacht – Waiting' exhibition based on the First World War Widows project by artist Angelina Foster during the last week of October.

### **Gnáthóga Nádúrtha event in Rathangan**

Tales and Tastes from the Bog - a free event for children and adults, took place on Sunday 01 October in The Old Schoolhouse in Rathangan. The Gnáthóga Nádúrtha/Natural Habitats project is funded by the Arts Council Invitation to Collaboration Scheme. It promotes collaboration with environmental activists, artists and community mapping experts in an ambitious arts-led inquiry, aiming to bring the urgency of climate action to the forefront. The project is sited across three natural heritage peatland habitats in each of the partner counties: Drummond, County Carlow,

Rathangan, County Kildare and Girley Bog, County Meath communities.

### **Maynooth Film for All is back!**

Maynooth Film For All is a partnership between Kildare County Council Arts Service and the Departments of Media Studies and English at Maynooth University. Members of the club meet on the first Wednesday of every month to watch a film and have an informal post-viewing discussion.

### **ACRE Project Artists in Residence for 2023/24 Announced**

Kildare-based musicians and Arts and Health practitioners Sharon Murphy and Sadhbh O'Sullivan (Embrace Music) have been selected as Artists in Residence 2023/24 at the ACRE Project in Celbridge, with support from Kildare Arts Service. As part of this residency, the artists will have access to the beautiful onsite space where they will welcome members of the community to participate in a range of workshops.

### **Speed Curating Event in collaboration with VAI (Visual Artists Ireland).**

On Thursday 26 October 2023 we hosted a speed curating event where local artists got the opportunity to



speak about their work to curators Aoife Banks and Ann Mulrooney along with Emer Ferran from Visual Artists Ireland (VAI) and Assistant Arts Officer Paula Barrett.

### **Creative Places Athy**

Phase one of a collaborative music programme took place with Athy College teachers and students, Athy Community Arts Centre, Made of Athy Project, Music Generation and UK artist and band Toby Lee. A concert was held in the school on the 13 October 2023 with a follow on one to one mentoring and interactive workshops on 14 October in the community arts centre.

**The Woodstock artists** in residence held a two-day arts workshop in mask making in the Athy Community House at Townspark for young people from the area in the run up to Halloween.

## **Health and Safety**

### 1. Site Inspections:

Ten inspections completed in the following areas:

- Architects (Contractor)- Coill Dubh
- Architects (Contractor)- Athgarvan
- Roads- Kildare Roads Depot
- Water- Ardscurr Reservoir with Uisce Eireann
- Water – Portersize Reservoir Ballitore with Uisce Eireann
- Parks- Little Connell Depot
- Planning
- Planning – Floor three
- Community – Floor seven
- Housing- Floor four

### 2. DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Assessment:

- Five completed – Housing, Planning, Architects, Aras, Motor Tax

### 3. Pregnancy Risk Assessment:

- One completed in Environment.

### 4. Health and Safety Management Committee Meeting.

### 5. Training on Dealing with Far-Right Demonstrations.

### 6. Arrangement section support (part of Safety Manual) in the Athy area in advance of roadshow covering



- Gallows Hill, Rathstewart and Bothar Bui.
7. Examination of Gallows Hill for fire safety documentation
  8. Briefing in Gallows Hill on the fire register/ safety statements on site location/ maintenance records on site.
  9. Site specific risk assessments for gallows hill examined and discussed.
  10. Health and Safety Roadshow – Athy Municipal District- 24 attendees.
  11. Safety Committee Meeting
  12. Preparation and hosting of Annual Health and Safety Conference
    - Approx. 340 in attendance
    - 118 viewers via live streaming
  13. Attended briefing session at machinery yard on winter maintenance.
  14. Review of fire safety training with Newbridge depot.
  15. Update of Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) with environment crew
  16. Review and preparation of new specific parks Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP) for Parks Department.

17. Review and completion of Arrangements Section of Safety Manual with Human Resources
18. Working with Proworks Team to enable the completion of accident reports, inspections etc on Proworks APP.
19. Flu vaccinations in Athy, Naas and Maynooth-222 availed of vaccinations

#### **Accessibility:**

1. Meetings:
  - a. Athy Disability Access Group Meeting
  - b. Naas Disability Access Group Meeting
  - c. County Kildare Access Network (CKAN) Meeting
  - d. Meeting with Fingal County Council Access Officer to review accessibility works in Kildare.
2. Dara Community Living Hub Celbridge – Opening – Funding given for Changing Places
3. Working with Naas Access Disability Group on Presentation for National Disability Authority (NDA) Conference.
4. Age Friendly Housing and Public Realm Training

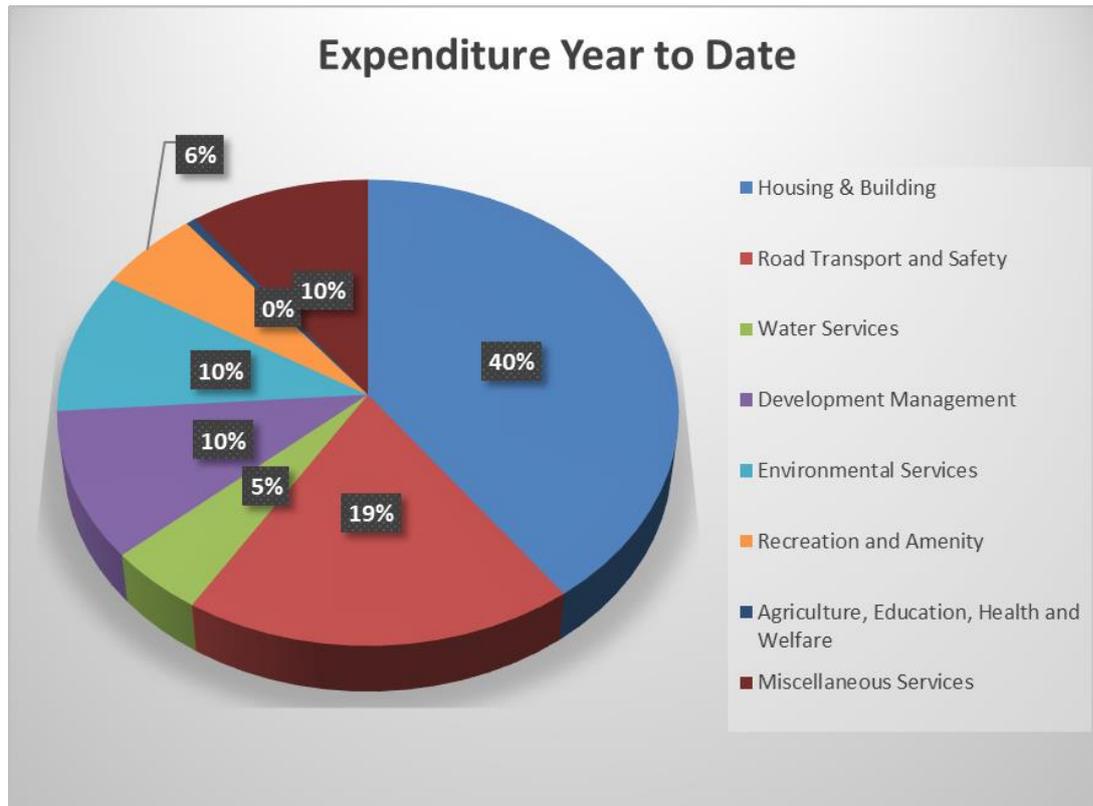


## Finance, Digital Services and Innovation

### Finance

#### Revenue Account

| Kildare County Council   |                |                |                |                  |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Revenue Account Summary by Service Division to period to 31 October 2023 |                |                |                |                  |
| Division   | Expenditure    |                |                |                  |
|  | Expenditure    | Budget         | % Budget Spend | Budget remaining |
|  | €,000          | €,000          |                | €,000            |
| Housing & Building   | 70,449         | 66,041         | 107%           | 4,408            |
| Road Transport and Safety  | 33,531         | 40,812         | 82%            | 7,281            |
| Water Services   | 8,272          | 10,174         | 81%            | 1,902            |
| Development Management   | 18,203         | 25,606         | 71%            | 7,403            |
| Environmental Services   | 17,202         | 21,947         | 78%            | 4,745            |
| Recreation and Amenity   | 10,099         | 14,018         | 72%            | 3,919            |
| Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare                               | 968            | 1,376          | 70%            | 408              |
| Miscellaneous Services   | 17,843         | 19,070         | 94%            | 1,227            |
|  | <b>176,567</b> | <b>199,044</b> | <b>89%</b>     | <b>22,477</b>    |





As Members are aware the budget in the public sector represents the ceiling to funding provision of a service – i.e. excluding additional grants, the budget amount is the maximum spend that can be incurred.

Estimates are fixed and service delivery is limited to within the envelope of funding. If a budget holder wants/needs to increase some aspect of the service beyond the

budget provision, they need to find the funding elsewhere by reducing some other line of expenditure.

The executive is very conscious of the need to monitor and manage expenditure and to ensure that overall budgets are not exceeded whilst at the same time delivering services in accordance with the budget agreed by Members.

## Commercial Rates, Rents and Loans Collections

| Kildare County Council                            |                       |            |           |         |                      |            |                           |
|---|-----------------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Summary of Major Collections to 31st October 2023 |                       |            |           |         |                      |            |                           |
|   | Arrears<br>01/01/2023 | Accrued    | Write Off | Waivers | Total for Collection | Collected  | Outstanding<br>31/10/2023 |
| Commercial Rates                                  | 9,906,814             | 62,956,667 | 2,642,282 | 50,371  | 70,170,828           | 51,469,337 | 18,701,491                |
| Rents & Annuities                                 | 1,343,246             | 15,494,798 | 37,591    | -       | 16,800,453           | 15,148,410 | 1,652,043                 |
| Housing Loans                                     | 1,623,567             | 3,311,057  | 7,405     | -       | 4,927,219            | 3,435,207  | 1,492,012                 |

### Cashflow / Overdraft

Kildare County Council manages its cashflow requirements daily and did not avail itself of its overdraft facility during the period 01 January to 31 October 2023.

### Budget 2024

Statutory budget date – 20 November 2023, with a briefing on Monday 13 November. Capital Programme discussions with full Council on 27 November.

### 2022 Audit

The Local Government Auditor report for the year 2022 is complete and on the November 2023 Council meeting. The Local Government Auditor presented his audit report to the Audit Committee at their November meeting.

### Risk Management

IT ran a Cybersecurity ‘Table-Top Exercise’ with Senior Management on 10 November. This was a round-table simulation of a cyber-attack on the



organisation to help assess our preparedness for such an incident. The exercise was overseen by cybersecurity firm BH Consulting. This is still a major risk 'event' so ongoing training and phishing exercises will continue with all users as will the work in the background by the IT team.

## Innovation

“Public Service Transformation Week” took place from 23 October – 27 October 2023 to celebrate and reflect on the ongoing work on innovation and transformation initiatives across the public service.

The Innovation Team attended the flagship Public Service Transformation Conference on Monday 23 October. The event explored the key pillars of Better Public Service and was a great opportunity for networking and learning from other PSB colleagues working in Innovation and transformation. MyCoCo took centre stage under the Digital and Innovation at scale and Kildare County Council were highlighted as a key partner/champion of this project.

The Team also attended the NOAC Good Practice Event (online) which focused on a diverse range of local authority projects and initiatives.

Charlie Tuxworth of Celsio delivered an engaging Innovation Masterclass in the chamber on how we can continue to keep innovation business as usual in Kildare. Over 40 of our colleagues attended the event.



We also had a Creative Ideation Workshop where we got to be superheroes for the afternoon! We were exploring the area of voter registration and participation amongst our new communities and youth. This was a very powerful tool for thinking very differently about our challenges and opportunities and coming up with some novel ideas!!

## Development Contributions Waiver Scheme

Circular PL 04/2023 introduced a Temporary Time-Limited Waiver for Development Contributions in respect of residential developments with commencement notices issued on or after 28 March 2023 and completion of



the build of the units by 31 December 2025.

On the fifteenth of each month each Local Authority is to submit a claim to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with the value of waivers applied.

| Development Contributions Waiver Scheme |           |                 |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| Position at:                            |           | 15th Oct 2023   |
| Type of Residential Units               | Number    | Value           |
| Houses                                  | 54        | €621,994        |
| Apartments                              | 16        | €47,484         |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>70</b> | <b>€669,478</b> |

### Motor Tax

Customers are encouraged to use the online motor tax facility at [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie). If they are not in a position to use the online facility, we accept and continue to process postal applications or an appointment can be booked online or by telephone on 045 980 920.

Most customer queries regarding motor tax matters can be found by visiting [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie). Alternatively, customers can email [motortax@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:motortax@kildarecoco.ie) or contact the office by telephone on 045 980 920.

## Housing and Regeneration

### Housing

#### Housing for All

##### Affordable Housing

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage recently announced an amendment to the Help to Buy Scheme for Local Authority Affordable Purchasers (LAAP). LAAPs who entered a contract to purchase an affordable property from 11 October 2023 can combine the value of their mortgage and the affordable dwelling contribution to calculate their loan to value ratio for the purpose of qualifying for the Help to Buy Scheme. To qualify for the Help to Buy Scheme, LAAPs must have a minimum of a 70% loan to value ratio. This amendment will assist more LAAPs to qualify for Help to Buy, and where applicable this amendment will be applied to the Grey Abbey Scheme. For example, if the mortgage value is €175,000, and the affordable dwelling contribution is €50,000, then the combined figure of €225,000 can now be used as the figure to calculate Loan to Value (LTV) in a HTB application, enabling more applicants of LAAPS homes to reach the 70% threshold to be eligible for the HTB scheme.



## **Homeless Services**

### **Street Work / Outreach Clinics**

In the month of October, the Outreach Team visited all Municipal District areas on a regular basis to identify rough sleepers. The areas covered were: Leixlip, Celbridge, Maynooth, Naas, Newbridge, Sallins, Prosperous, Robertstown, Kilcullen, Athy and Kildare Town.

The Outreach Team offered housing advice clinics in October to those who could not attend the council offices in person. These clinics were facilitated in Newbridge Family Resource Centre, Athy Family Resource Centre and Celbridge Community Centre in Ballymakealy, Cuan Mhuire Athy and Aras Newbridge. The team also conducted assessments with hospital and prison discharges.

### **Visits to Service Providers**

Meetings were held with The Peter McVerry Trust in Eyre Street, Newbridge and Kerdiffstown, Mount Offaly in Athy and Tiglin in Jigginstown to review clients housing needs and to discuss exit strategies.

## **Exits from Emergency**

### **Accommodation**

There were 18 'move-ons' in the month of October, facilitated through HAP, social housing and some clients returning to family. Two of these were actioned through new Housing First tenancies.

### **Tenancy Sustainment**

At present there are 48 active tenancy sustainment cases, with 11 on the waiting list. Sustainment Officers have engaged in two housing clinics, in the Prosperous Family Hub and Athy Family Hub.

### **Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme (CRTiS) and Homeless HAP**

The Housing Department has processed 61 Homeless HAP applications to date. The Council has submitted seven CRTiS applications to the Housing Agency; one has been withdrawn and the outcome of the others is awaited.

### **CARA Mental Health Visiting**

#### **Tenancy Support Service**

A Tenancy Sustainment Officer for mental health has been appointed to Kildare and Wicklow. In Kildare, the focus of the Cara Mental Health Visiting Tenancy Support Service will



be working with clients who are not linked with mental health services. The service is open to tenants of the local authority or approved housing bodies including both nominations to new tenancies and those in established tenancies. An information leaflet on this service accompanies this report.

- Individuals/Families will be housed in council or AHB provided properties.
- Grant funding is available to provide supports to refugees. Funding is provided for a support worker and intercultural worker for a period of 18 months.

### **Irish Refugee Protection Programme II**

The Government agreed to resettle 2,900 programme refugees in Ireland in the period 2020-2023 through the Irish Refugee Protection Programme II (IRPP). Kildare County Council is required to accommodate 66 refugees, which represents 15-20 households. Kildare was not included in IRPP I. The Members will be updated as the programme progresses; the following is a summary of the programme:

- Refugees will be relocated from Reception and Orientation Centres.
- They will be classified as refugees by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- Background checks are carried out by An Garda Síochána prior to arrival in Ireland.

### **Traveller Accommodation**

The DHLGH is continuing the nationwide Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme, to support the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation providing preferential loans to Travellers to purchase their own caravan/mobile home on halting sites for use as their primary residence. In July, Kildare was allocated one mobile home, and the installation took place in October. This allocation was inadequate to meet demand. As a result of Kildare's ongoing engagement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) an additional allocation of one mobile was secured at the end of October. A family has since been identified and work is progressing to purchase a mobile home on their behalf.



During October, a Fire Safety Awareness Programme was delivered by Kildare Fire Services to the Travelling community on each of the Halting Sites. This event was attended by members of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC), Kildare Traveller Action and Council officials from the Traveller Accommodation Unit.



## Addressing Vacancy

### Croí Cónaithe

One Hundred and twenty-eight (128) applications have been received for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

## Town Centre First

In preparation of the Town Centre First Plan for Clane, the first public workshop was held on 07 November. Members of the public came along and participated in the workshop and gave their views on Clane and its future direction.

## Housing Allocations

For the period January to October 2023, the council allocated a total of 1,011 throughout the county, which includes 123 properties allocated in the past month and 341 more properties than allocated for the same period in 2022. Among the locations that allocations took place were Newbridge, Leixlip, Naas, Celbridge and Kildare Town. In an effort to address the number of refusals of offers of accommodation, the use of Choice Based Letting (CBL) has been continually increased.

## Summary of Social Housing

### Assessments – SSHA

The closing date for SSHA 2023 has now passed. The SSHA 2023 Return is being prepared for submission ahead of 29 November 2023 deadline.



## Capital Programme

| Location  | No. of Units   | Updated Status  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Approval Stage 4</b>                                       |  |   |
| Athgarvan Village   | 18 units   | Works progressing well on site. Expected substantial completion September 2024.   |
| Coill Dubh  | 10 units   | Works progressing well on site. Substantial completion projected for Q4 2023.   |
| Ambassador Site, Kill   | 33 units   | Letter of acceptance issued. Contract signing and start date on site to follow.   |
| <b>Approval Stage 2</b>                                       |  |   |
| St. Patrick's Park Rathangan Remedial Works (Phase's 2 and 3) | Demolition of 15 units, refurb of 25 units, construction of 7 units. | Tender documents being finalised. Stage 3 application to be submitted to DHLGH week commencing 13 November 2023.  |
| Ardclough Road, Celbridge                                     | 39 units   | Observation period complete. 31 observations received by An Bord Pleanala and are available on the consultation portal. Awaiting feedback from An Board Pleanala. |
| Dispensary Site Carbury                                       | 5 units  | Design Team appointed and progressing Part 8 documents.   |
| Old Greenfield, Maynooth                                      | 65 units   | Design & Build tenders received and being assessed.   |
| <b>Approval Stage 1</b>                                       |  |   |
| St Evin's Park, Monasterevin                                  | 15 units   | Civil/Structural Engineering Consultants appointed. Part 8 being finalised.   |
| Caragh Road, Naas   | 73 units   | Development of 73 units [to include 15 no. affordable units]. Retender for design team required on the advice of Stage 2 submission to DHLGH.                     |
| Ardrew, Athy  | 8 units  | ESB have removed poles and overhead line. ESB to return to remove redundant underground cable crossing PPP and halting site extension.                            |
| <b>Single Stage Approval</b>                                  |  |   |
| Shamrock Stores, Athy   | 2 new unit + refurb of 2 existing units                              | Section 179A proposed to launch Q1 2024.  |
| Inniscarra, Athy  | 5 units  | Design Team tender being prepared.  |
| Ballitore Garda Station                                       | 5 (2 x refurb + 3 new)   | Evaluation of design team tenders ongoing.  |
| <b>Pre-Approval</b>   |  |   |
| Station Road, Kildare   | 18 units   | Design Team meetings ongoing. Stage 2 planned for submission to DHLGH in mid-December. Competition  |



|                     |          |   |
|---------------------|----------|---|
|                     |          | entries to go on display in Kildare Library week commencing 13 <sup>th</sup> November.                    |
| Craddockstown, Naas | 28 units | Stage1 funding application submitted to DHLGH.  |
| Sarto Road, Naas    | 7 units  | Feasibility complete on brownfield site. Single stage application being prepared for submission to DHLGH. |

### Infill Schemes

| Location               | No. of Units                             | Updated Status   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Newtown House, Leixlip | 4 units                                  | Preparation of contractor tender documents progressing.  |
| Glandore, Athy         | 5 units + 1 refurb                       | Detailed design and tender documents being prepared for construction tender. Stage 3 application to be submitted to DHLGH by end Q4. |
| Patrician Ave, Naas    | 2 new + 1 refurb                         | Works tender evaluation ongoing.   |
| 25 Corbans Place Naas  | 1 major refurbishment and extension      | Works progressing on site. Substantial completion: Q3 2024.  |
| Skenagun, Castledermot | 1 major refurb & extension & 1 new build | Design team appointed, survey works and site investigation completed; Part 8 design ongoing  |

### PPP Schemes

| Location                    | No. of Units                       | Updated Status   |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Ardrew, Athy                | 73 Housing units + Community unit. | PPP Bundle 3: ESB to return to remove underground cable crossing field.  |
| Oldtown Mill, Celbridge     | 60 units                           | PPP Bundle 5: Design work, meetings with internal departments and site investigation works all ongoing.  |
| Coolaghknock Glebe, Kildare | 99 social units/<br>32 affordable  | PPP Bundle 5: Design work, meetings with internal departments and site investigation works all ongoing.  |
| Rickardstown, Newbridge     | 80 social/<br>40 affordable units  | PPP Bundle 6: Design team being procured by NDFA, target appointment mid-November. S85 agreement with Cork County Council passed at October council meeting. |
| Rathasker Road, Naas        | 80 units                           | PPP Bundle 6: Design team to be procured by NDFA, target appointment mid November. S85 agreement with Cork County Council passed at October council meeting  |

### Approved Housing Body Schemes

| Location                | No. of Units | Updated Status   |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Cluid, ESB site Leixlip | 27 units     | Draft Section 179A documents received for review. Briefing to be arranged with Celbridge-Leixlip MD members. |



### Approved Housing Body Schemes - Capital Assistance Scheme

| Approved Housing Body                              | No. of Units | Updated Status   |
|--|--------------|--|
| Sofia Housing-<br>St. John's Convent,<br>Rathangan | 27 units     | Draft Part 8 being prepared.   |
| Cluid<br>Dominican Lands Athy                      | 34 units     | Decision to grant issued on 22 June 2023. Cluid progressing detailed roads design with Transportation.   |
| The Peter McVerry<br>Trust, Sallins                | 4 units      | Combined stage 1 & 2 CAS application approved by DHLGH. Draft Planning Pack received and being reviewed. |

### Families in PEA including Supported Temporary Accommodations and Family Hubs as of 31 October 2023

| Duration       | No. of Households with Dependents | Adults    | Dependents |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 0 - 6 Months   | 18                                | 29        | 33         |
| 6 - 12 Months  | 8                                 | 13        | 11         |
| 12 - 18 Months | 3                                 | 5         | 3          |
| 18 - 24 Months | 3                                 | 6         | 4          |
| 24 - 30 Months | 1                                 | 2         | 1          |
| 36 Months +    | 0                                 | 0         | 0          |
|                | <b>33</b>                         | <b>55</b> | <b>52</b>  |

### Families in Own Front Door Accommodation as of 31 October 2023

| Duration       | No. of Households with Dependents | Adults    | Dependents |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 0 - 6 Months   | 4                                 | 9         | 8          |
| 6 - 12 Months  | 6                                 | 10        | 12         |
| 12 - 18 Months | 3                                 | 4         | 8          |
| 18 - 24 Months | 0                                 | 0         | 0          |
| 24 - 30 Months | 0                                 | 0         | 0          |
| + 36 Months    | 0                                 | 0         | 0          |
|                | <b>13</b>                         | <b>23</b> | <b>28</b>  |



### Local Authority Home Loan

| Year       | Approval No. | Approval Amount | Approval Drawdown No | Approval Drawdown Amount | Expired No | Expired Amount |
|------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 2022       | 31           | €6,566,236      | 3                    | €611,550                 | 6          | €1,256,375     |
| Q1 2023    | 6            | €1,176,500      | 3                    | €632,000                 | 6          | €1,090,750     |
| Q2 2023    | 11           | €2,201,857      | 5                    | €931,000                 | 7          | €1,507,607     |
| Q3         | 13           | €2, 222, 400    | 5                    | €1, 098, 530             | 2          | €380, 000      |
| Q4 to date | 8            | €1,629,600      | 3                    | €464,030                 | 2          | €384,000       |

### Tenant Purchase Scheme

| Year       | Applications | Ineligible | Approved |
|------------|--------------|------------|----------|
| 2022       | 24           | 1          | 6        |
| Q1 2023    | 17           | 1          | 2        |
| Q2 2023    | 15           | 1          | 7        |
| Q2, 2023   | 15           | 1          | 7        |
| Q4 to date | 7            | 1          | 2        |

### Housing Adaptation Grants

|                             | Housing Adaptation Applications Received | Housing Adaptation Grants Approved | Mobility Aid Applications Received | Mobility Aid Applications Approved | Housing Aid for Older Persons Apps Recd | Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Approved |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 2022                        | 309                                      | 241                                | 7                                  | 7                                  | 362                                     | 378  |
| Q1 2023                     | 86                                       | 55                                 | 2                                  | 2                                  | 129                                     | 81   |
| Q2 2023                     | 80                                       | 42                                 | 1                                  | 1                                  | 120                                     | 74   |
| Q3 2023                     | 82                                       | 38                                 | 3                                  | 2                                  | 96                                      | 36   |
| Q4 2023 (up until 09/11/23) | 46                                       | 23                                 | 1                                  | 1                                  | 34                                      | 22   |
| Total YTD                   | 294                                      | 158                                | 7                                  | 6                                  | 379                                     | 213  |



## Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme

| Programme        | No. of Units        | Updated Status   |
|------------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>2023 EERP</b> | 86<br>(2023 Target) | Tender awarded for 31 units in Clane/Maynooth; work due to commence in the coming weeks. 57 units identified in Naas/Ballymore Eustace; tender documents being prepared. Remaining 6 units to be drawn from housing maintenance. |

## Acquisitions

|                       | Completed 2019 | Completed 2020 | Completed 2021 | Completed 2022 | Completed Jan-Oct 2023 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Housing Acquisitions  | 231            | 39             | 13             | 41             | 56                     |
| Housing Turnkeys      | 81             | 107            | 27             | 82             | 42                     |
| Part V Acquisitions   | 67             | 41             | 70             | 86             | 47                     |
| <b>Total complete</b> | <b>379</b>     | <b>187</b>     | <b>110</b>     | <b>209</b>     | <b>145</b>             |

| Acquisitions and Leasing by Municipal District                        | Athy | Celbridge-Leixlip | Clane-Maynooth | Kildare-Newbridge | Naas |
|---|------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| Acquisitions in 2023  | 18   | 34                | 31             | 51                | 11   |
| Properties Leased Year to Date (includes AHB leasing and MTR Leasing) | 7    | 34                | 6              | 67                | 2    |

## Housing Assistance Payment – HAP

| Year        | Applications Received | Applications Rejected | Applications Approved |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>2022</b> | 383                   | 98                    | 324                   |
| Q1 2023     | 85                    | 3                     | 79                    |
| Q2 2023     | 116                   | 3                     | 105                   |
| Q3 2023     | 98                    | 7                     | 133                   |
| Q 4 to date | 43                    | 3                     | 44                    |



## Social Housing Assessments

| Period     | Existing Housing File Updates | Transfer Requests | New Valid Applications | Mortgage to Rent Apps | Refusals |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 2022       | 157                           | 42                | 642                    | 7                     | 286      |
| Q1 2023    | 106                           | 3                 | 210                    | 5                     | 61       |
| Q2 2023    | 94                            | 18                | 278                    | 11                    | 67       |
| Q3 2023    | 65                            | 2                 | 400                    | 0                     | 107      |
| Q4 to date | 16                            | 14                | 178                    | 1                     | 29       |

## Public Realm

### Capital Works – Strategic Priorities

| Municipal District | Project Name                                | Estimated Value                     | Funding Awarded                               | Project Stage   | Notes  |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Countywide         | Barrow Blueway                              | €10,548,455 (incl additional costs) | RRDF €8,858,455 (incl add funding requested ) | Construction    | Of 16 sites along the scheme, works are substantially complete at 7 sites, mostly to the south. The work is ongoing at a further 7 sites and two sites are yet to start. The first tranche of sites is to be made available for snagging in November. Drawings showing the proposed new layout for Monasterevin station is to be sent to Irish Rail for comment. |
|                    | Greenway – Phase 1 Aylmer Bridge to Sallins | €3,000,000                          | €3,000,000                                    | Construction    | Sallins tie-in of Phase 1 and 2 to streamline route requires Part 8. The official opening is being arranged and should be held in the coming weeks.  |
|                    | Greenway – Phase 2 Sallins to Clonkeen      | €213,000                            | €213,000 DoT and Carbon Tax Fund              | Detailed Design | Constructive engagement with WWI is ongoing with assessments required. Additional Part 8 required for 2 bridges on this Phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure proposed for Lowtown to facilitate taking Greenway users off the public</li> </ul>   |



|                          |  |                       |   |   |   |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|---|---|
|                          |  |                       |   |   | <p>road and coming into Robertstown on the town side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridge proposed on the eastern side of existing Bonyngge Bridge, providing access to the southern side of the canal and proposed Greenway, without users crossing over the existing bridge.</li> </ul> <p>Tender process will take place subject to Part 8 and TII approval.</p> |
| <b>Kildare-Newbridge</b> | Kildare Square (Phase 2)               | €2,190,000            | €1,750,000 RRDF<br>€440,000                                       | Part 8  | <b>Phase 2 and Pedestrian Link from Kildare Village Retail Outlet:</b> Stage 1 design and consultation completed. RRDF funding of €1.75m for site acquisition and design. KCC in on-going discussions to progress this project.   |
|                          | Kildare Square (Phase 1)               | €1,500,000            | €500,000 Destination Towns – Failte Ireland<br>€1,000,000 KCC/LPT | Part 8  | Failte Ireland drawdown deadline of November 2023. Interim Works have been agreed and the MD office has commenced work on site. Interim works will be twofold; they will secure The Square and remove parking, while providing a trial period to assist a robust public consultation piece for the Part 8 application.  |
|                          | Curragh Plains Strategy                | €148,600              |   | Land Observation Plan & Interpretative & Branding Plan. | Review of the draft document underway with fact check completed on the historical and archaeological references. Resources and funding need to be identified with legislative changes also required to bring this Plan further.   |
|                          | Kilcullen Market Square                | €1,421,207 (Aug 2023) | €200,000  | Part 8  | Part 8 approved. A new funding application required to advance this project.  |
|                          | Rathangan Market Square                | €1,760,849 (Aug 2023) | €200,000  | Part 8  | Part 8 approved. A new funding application required to advance this project.  |
|                          | Athgarvan Health Check/ Urban Analysis | €30,500               | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT  | Town Renewal Plan                                       | Some edits to be completed.   |



|                          |  |            |   |                                       |  |
|--------------------------|--|------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
|                          | Kildare Town Renewal Plan                | €126,500   | €95,000 T&V<br>€31,500 LPT                | Town Renewal Plan                     | Final edits are required prior to publication  |
| <b>Athy</b>              | Emily Square                             | €3,026,177 | €980,000 (KCC)                            |                                       | Tender process ongoing. A decision on an application to Just Transition for funding assistance is awaited.   |
|                          | Shackleton Museum (RF0024)               | €6,964,937 | €5,207,500 (RRDF)<br>€1,500,000 (KCC)     | Tender assessment                     | Funding confirmed and contract awarded. S254 Licence for the Hoarding has been awarded by Planning Department & MD office. Contractor commencing on site on 13 <sup>th</sup> November.   |
|                          | Dominican Lands Masterplan               | €100,000   | €80,000 RRDF<br>€20,000 LPT               | Masterplan                            | RPS appointed to complete the SSFRA (Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment) and work has commenced. Once the SSFRA has been completed the Masterplan can be finalised.   |
|                          | Edmund Rice Square                       | TBC        | €500,000 KCC Capital Prog<br>€50,000 LPT  | On Hold                               | On hold pending the Emily Square project being delivered.  |
|                          | Athy Dry Dock                            |            | €40,000 LPT for feasibility study in 2023 | Not commenced                         | WWI have confirmed that this dock is still operational. Education facilities, as suggested by the members, have been provided at other dry docks no longer in use. Clarification sought from the members around the works they would like to see undertaken. |
|                          | Castledermot Health Check/Urban Analysis | €30,500    | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT                | Town Renewal Plan                     | Some edits to be completed.  |
| <b>Celbridge-Leixlip</b> | Wonderful Barn                           |            |   | Economic Business Case and Pre-Tender | The Economic Feasibility study has been completed. Preparation has commenced to develop the Part 8 application in preparation for URDF Call 4 application.   |
|                          | The Acre Project                         | TBC        | €10,000 LPT for feasibility study in 2023 | Not commenced                         | Tender issued and quotes due to be returned by 17 November 2023  |



|                       |                                       |                          |                                     |                         |  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
|                       | Celbridge Town Renewal Masterplan     | €73,585                  | €73,585 LPT                         | Town Renewal Masterplan | Edits to be completed following a briefing with Senior Management Team   |
|                       | Leixlip Town Renewal Masterplan       | €60,974                  | €60,974 LPT                         | Town Renewal Masterplan | Edits to be completed following a briefing with Senior Management Team.  |
|                       | Ardclough Health Check/Urban Analysis | €30,500                  | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT          | Town Renewal Plan       | Small edits to be completed.   |
| <b>Clane-Maynooth</b> | Maynooth Town Centre Master Plan      | €3,438,500               | €2,574,375 URDF<br>€858,125 KCC/LPT | Town Centre Masterplan  | Preliminary Business Case has been approved by URDF team to prepare a Masterplan informed by an urban design analysis and stakeholder/public consultation. The TRMP will include an exploration project to determine the potential for a district heating scheme within the historic grid town centre. (Pilot Feasibility Study). SPPR have reached out to CARO to investigate if any work has been carried out in this area. This could be a joint project SPPR/ CARO. Student collaboration project; a pilot project, participatory urban design with NUIM academics and students/community during design process may include the development of an online platform. The development of key Town Renewal Projects will proceed once the Masterplan is completed. |
|                       | Harbourfield                          |                          | €2,574,375 URDF                     | Detailed Design & Works | Tender documents to be prepared to procure consultants.  |
|                       | Bawnogues Community Centre            | €3,438,500<br>€3,134,541 | €858,125 KCC/LPT<br>100% KCC funded | Construction            | Compliance certification documentation is being completed after which Kildare County Council will take ownership of the building.  |
|                       | Derrinturn Health Check               | €30,500                  | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT          | Town Renewal Plan       | Edits to be completed  |



|             |  |            |   |                                  |   |
|-------------|--|------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
|             | /Urban Analysis                              |            |   |                                  |   |
|             | Johnstown Bridge Health Check/Urban Analysis | €30,500    | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT                  | Town Renewal Plan                | Edits to be completed   |
|             | Straffan Health Check/Urban Analysis         | €30,500    | €20,000 T&V<br>€10,500 LPT                  | Town Renewal Plan                | Small edits to be completed and accessibility checks  |
|             | Allenwood Small Village Renewal Masterplan   | €30,000    | 100% LPT                                    | Small Village Renewal Masterplan | SPPR are working with the consultant to finalise dates for the public consultation piece which will inform the next stage of the Plan   |
|             | Robertstown Small Village Renewal Masterplan | €30,000    | 100% LPT                                    | Small Village Renewal Masterplan | SPPR are working with the consultant to finalise dates for the public consultation piece which will inform the next stage of the Plan   |
|             | Kilmeague Small Village Renewal Masterplan   | €30,000    | 100% LPT                                    | Small Village Renewal Masterplan | SPPR are working with the consultant to finalise dates for the public consultation piece which will inform the next stage of the Plan   |
|             | Coill Dubh Small Village Renewal Masterplan  | €30,000    | 100% LPT                                    | Small Village Renewal Masterplan | SPPR are working with the consultant to finalise dates for the public consultation piece which will inform the next stage of the Plan   |
| <b>Naas</b> | Potato Market                                | €248,931   | Historic Towns Initiative grant<br>€248,931 | Phase 1 delivered.               | Farmers Market operating on Saturdays 10:00 – 15:00. Consultant appointed to carry out works for ESB and drainage connections. Completion date extended to 22 <sup>nd</sup> November.   |
|             | Naas Town Centre Masterplan                  | €4,662,000 | €3,500,000 URDF<br>€1,165,000 LPT/KCC       | TBC                              | Preliminary Business Case approved by URDF Team.<br><br><b>Sub Project A: Naas Town Renewal Masterplan</b> – approval granted to proceed to tender for the preparation of the Masterplan subject to the provision of updated costs and addressing points raised in the letter received. Agreed at the last Naas MD meeting to hold a non- |



|  |  |          |                                 |                     |  |
|--|--|----------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--|
|  |  |          |                                 |                     | <p>statutory public consultation piece to seek comments on proposed use of the Castle area.</p> <p><b>Sub Project B: Background Assessments.</b> KCC to submit an update on the Feasibility Study for the Castle Quarter, Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Survey for St. Davids Castle and Grounds which were planned under sub project B.</p> <p><b>Sub Project C: Acquisition of key sites in the town centre.</b> KCC to provide an update on the proposed acquisition of key sites, the current status of planned acquisitions.</p> <p><b>Sub Project D: Transportation Interventions.</b> Proceed to tender for the design team and subsequently the detailed design and secure all necessary permissions for Poplar Square to progress to detailed design stage only. Proceed to develop Murtagh's Corner and Corbans Lane to Part 8 stage only.</p> |
|  | Market House Naas (Canal Quarter)        | As above | As above                        | TBC                 | Proposed water-based hub/bike hub.   |
|  | Failte Ireland Outdoor Scheme (Parklets) | €187,275 | €187,275                        | 1 parklet installed | A request has been received for a 2 <sup>nd</sup> parklet on the Sallins Road. Two businesses operating in the area have put forward the request. The site is being considered for suitability.  |
|  | Sallins Town Renewal Masterplan          | €70,000  | €63,000<br>T&V<br>€7,000<br>LPT | Masterplan          | Review ongoing.  |



## Climate, Community, Environment and Water

### Community Grants

The table below sets out all grants awarded in 2023.

| All Grants 2023                                |             |                   |
|--|-------------|-------------------|
| Type   | No.         | Amount            |
| Community Grants                               | 161         | €269,380          |
| Festival Grants                                | 68          | €82,300           |
| Private Residents' Associations Grants         | 273         | €242,695          |
| Local Authority Residents' Associations Grants | 50          | €41,243           |
| Local Property Tax Specific Grants             | 150         | €825,300          |
| Local Property Tax Mini Schemes                | 89          | €244,240          |
| Community Support Fund                         | 138         | €315,429          |
| Community Support Womens Sheds                 | 5           | €3,328            |
| Education Bursaries                            | 44          | €35,400           |
| Drehid Grants                                  | 43          | €179,560          |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>1021</b> | <b>€2,238,875</b> |

### Water Services

#### Uisce Éireann Councillor Clinics

Uisce Éireann quarterly Councillor Clinics are held online for local representatives on selected dates throughout the year.

Uisce Éireann will make contact with members in advance of clinics.

Uisce Éireann is formulating responses to any outstanding queries via the Local representative Support Desk.

Uisce Éireann Regional Communications team provide regular updates concerning upcoming projects in the area and planned works on the



Uisce Éireann website  
at [www.water.ie/?map=supply-and-service-updates](http://www.water.ie/?map=supply-and-service-updates)

### **Uisce Éireann Framework**

The Framework for the Future Delivery of Water Services was published in June 2022, setting out the Government policy with Uisce Éireann taking full control of all aspects of the delivery of water and wastewater services. Uisce Éireann is engaging with key national bodies and representative groups to prepare for the implementation of the Framework provisions.

The existing Service Level Agreement will be replaced by a Master Agreement for all local authorities and an individual support service agreement per local authority, taking into consideration changes included in the new Framework. In this regard, the Master Cooperation and Data Sharing Agreements were signed by Kildare County Council in May 2023.

## **Environment**

### **Draft National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.**

The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, under the auspices of the County and City Management Association, are co-ordinating the preparation of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.

The Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2023 – 2029. Details are on [www.mywaste.ie](http://www.mywaste.ie)

A National Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) has been launched by DECC. The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) being introduced is a circular economy initiative, focused on plastic bottles and aluminium/steel cans. Latest info suggests a go live date in February /March 2024.

### **Public consultation on Disposable Vaping Devices**

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for Communications and the Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth



TD, launched a public consultation to help inform Ireland's response to disposable vaping devices.

Further information at [visit.gov.ie](http://visit.gov.ie) - Public consultation on Disposable Vaping Devices ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie))

### **Tidy Towns**

Grants to local Tidy Towns committees were approved by the respective Municipal District members and have been processed for payment.

### **Water Framework Directive**

Monitoring and investigation work continue in the water priority areas under the Water Framework Directive. The council awaits the publication of the third cycle of the River Basin Management Plan for the period up to 2027.

This document is expected to be published this year and will set the priorities and areas for action over the next cycle.

### **Enforcement Priorities 2024**

#### **Waste Enforcement**

Illegal waste activities,  
Construction and Demolition Activity,  
End of Life Vehicles and Waste Metal,

Household and Commercial Waste,  
Producer Responsibility Initiatives and local priorities

#### **Water Priorities**

Pressures from agricultural storage,  
Pressures from agricultural spreading,  
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems,

Discharge licenses,

Water quality monitoring

#### **Air Priorities**

Solid fuel regulations,

Air monitoring programme

The Kildare County Council Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) and the 2023 Plan submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Kildare County Council was judged as one of the top performers Nation-wide in terms of environmental inspections.

### **Environment Complaints**

Pollution complaints continue to be investigated in accordance with national guidelines.



## Domestic/Commercial Refuse Collections

Domestic and commercial waste collections are continuing as normal. Details of approved operators are available via the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO) website: [www.nwcpo.ie](http://www.nwcpo.ie)

## GAA Green Clubs Initiative



Cappagh GAA club is the pilot club for Kildare for this national initiative. The next phase of the project involves reducing waste arisings within the clubhouse and work on this is proceeding.

## Anti-Dumping Initiative Grant Scheme

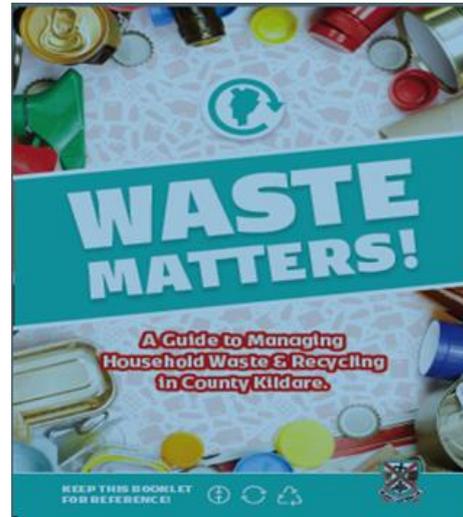
Funding was awarded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication under this scheme.

Kildare County Council used the funding to:

Hold two mattress amnesty days on 01 October in Sillot Hill and 08 October in Gallows Hill, Civic Amenity sites.



Deliver a guide to managing waste booklet to all households in the county.



Carry out clean ups at Loughnamona in Leixlip, Old Greenfield in Maynooth and Kildoon outside Kildare. The success of these projects was promoted on social media.

## New Initiatives – Civic Amenity Site North – Near Celbridge

A joint project of the civic amenity in conjunction with the proposed



Municipal District depot is being assessed.

### **Catchment Flooding**

#### **Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS)**

A steering group with the Office of Public Works (OPW) has been established to progress the consultant's brief for schemes within Kildare. The municipal districts will be briefed as schemes from the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management (CFRAM's) Programme commence.

#### **Morell Flood Management Scheme**

Construction of this scheme is continuing.



Further details of the scheme can be found at: <https://www.morellfms.ie/>

#### **Athy Flood Relief Scheme**

RPS Consulting Engineers have been appointed as the design consultants

for the Athy Flood Relief Scheme. Works have commenced and a number of steering meetings have taken place.

#### **Naas Flood Relief Scheme**

Detailed hydraulic modelling work continues in for the Naas Flood Relief Scheme. Details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://www.floodinfo.ie/frs/en/naas/home/>

#### **Kerdiffstown Park project**

The construction of Kerdiffstown Park is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that the park will be operational in Quarter 1 2024.



The 3D Visualisation Model of the proposed park can be viewed on Kildare County Council website: <http://kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/KerdiffstownPark/KerdiffstownParkVisualisation/>

The local community is being kept informed of progress through the Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings and the wider public have



access to updates on the council website:  
<http://kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/KerdiffstowPark>

### **Cemetery Capital Programme**

This programme, which includes cemetery extensions, capital type internal improvements and proposals for columbarium walls is currently being reviewed in line with funding availability.

### **Columbarium Walls**

It is proposed to install new Columbarium Walls in St. Michaels Athy, Leixlip Confey, and St. Conleths Newbridge cemeteries as part of the current Capital delivery program of works. Detailed design drawings are currently being worked on and it is envisaged that the project will advance to tender stage in early Quarter 4 2023. It is hoped that works will commence onsite in Quarter 1 2024 subject to funding approval.

### **Cemetery Works**

#### **Allen**

Works have been recently completed on a new lawn cemetery.

#### **Staplestown**

Landscape improvement works are expected to commence during Quarter 4 2023 and Quarter 1 2024 to open the lands to the rear for future internments.

#### **Confey**

Works have been recently completed to allocate additional plots for internments within the cemetery.

#### **Athy Cemetery Boundary Wall**

Works completed on new boundary wall between the cemetery and the new Athy Southern Distributor Road.

#### **Boycetown, Kilcock**

Tenders have been issued for major drainage improvement works. It is hoped that this will help deal with ground water problems that regularly hamper winter time internments in certain areas of the cemetery.

#### **Newbridge**

Works on improvements to Newbridge cemetery carpark are scheduled to commence mid November and last approximately four weeks.

#### **Monasterevin**

Works have been carried out on cutting back shrubs and bushes within



the cemetery. Removal of rubbish (stone, clay etc) from the cemetery will take place in November.

## Climate

### Climate Action Regional Office



The Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) works to support local authorities to drive climate action in their jurisdictions and coordinate activities to promote effective climate action across the local government sector. For more information on the work of the CARO, see our website at [www.caro.ie](http://www.caro.ie)

### Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme



The training programme 2020-2023 is nearing the end of its term. The programme maintains an objective to build capacity of the c.29,000 staff and 949 elected members on climate change, climate action and the role of local authorities on climate action. Through six unique training pillars the

programme has to date, provided some 23,000 training places to 21,600 participants (figures correct as of end of October). Training continues with outdoor staff till the end of the year and into early 2024 and will include fire services staff.

A high level steering group chaired by a representative of the Climate Action, Transport, Circular Economy and Network (CATCEN) committee will be convened in early 2024 to oversee the development of a training plan guiding future training needs and priorities in the area of local authority climate action.

### Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LA CAP)

All local authorities continue to engage with the process of developing their LA CAPs for adoption on or before the 23 February 2024.

Currently local authorities are at draft stage and engaging in public consultation activities. This stage sits ahead of the completion stage where written submission will be considered and elected members will have the opportunity to consider all documentation including adaptation



and mitigation evidence base, draft plan, SEA and AA reports and submissions of stakeholders before adopting the plan by way of resolution.

**Local Authority Progress Reporting – Climate Adaptation Strategies:**

Annual reporting on progress of the implementation of Local Authority Climate Adaptation Strategies / Plans has been undertaken by all Climate Action Officers/Leads in all local authorities. A sectoral report is being collated by CARO for progress in the 2022 – 2023 period, for submission to the Department.



**Sub-Regional Energy Projects**

The CARO are working with local authorities in each of the four sub-regions to develop regional energy units to avail of funding for projects that support the decarbonisation of local authority buildings. The energy units comprise:

Mid-east (Kildare, Meath, Wicklow and Louth), commencing projects and

accessing Pathfinder support from SEAI.

Midlands (Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, Longford, Roscommon), have developed their project pipeline and sourced funding to match Pathfinder support.

Border (Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim) are working with project manager assistance from SEAI to build a project pipeline.

South-east (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford, Waterford City and County) convening to agree partnership approach to access Pathfinder support.



**Reimagining Local Authority Fleet**

The CARO supports the reconfigured working group established to explore support and options for local authorities on fleet decarbonization.

A survey was distributed to local authorities recently to gauge their alignment with Avoid-Shift-Improve principles. The findings of this survey



will be compiled for the CATCEN committee meeting in December.

### Development of Local Authority Key Performance Indicators on Climate Action



Data collation for 2022 will be published towards the end of December 2023. Data collection for 2023 will be done in March 2024. Thereafter, data collection will be undertaken every March.

### GAA / CCMA Green Clubs Programme:



The CARO continues to work with the GAA and expert partners to advance the Green Club Programme. Phase two of the Programme commenced in early 2023 increasing the number of participating clubs to approximately 200. During phase two of the

Programme clubs are working their way through a range of sustainability and climate action related projects as provided for by Green Club Toolkits covering the five themes of Energy, Water, Waste, Biodiversity and Travel.

Participating clubs are working to implement actions and projects detailed within the toolkits towards supporting the pursuit of climate action initiatives at club and community level. Kildare County Council's continued support of Green Clubs will help to achieve climate actions and targets set out in the Council's new Climate Action Plan.

### Kildare County Council Climate Action



### Kildare Climate Action Office

Branding for the Climate Action Office has been created in conjunction with Designedly to create awareness of the council's local office within the council

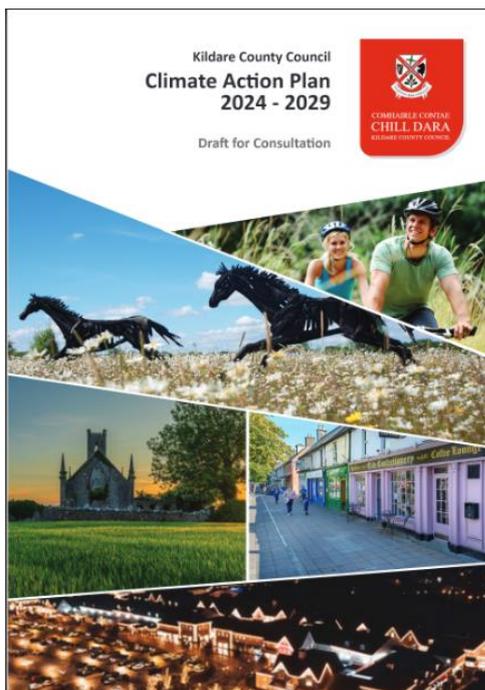


and the wider community base that we service in the County of Kildare.

The tagline ‘inspiring change, shaping tomorrow’ is used in conjunction with #climateactionkildare.

The branding was officially unveiled at the Climate and Me! Day on 20 October by the Cathaoirleach of the County of Kildare, Councillor Daragh Fitzpatrick

### Climate Action Plan (SECAP) /Climate Action Plan (CAP)



Public consultation closed on 03 November resulting in 33 submissions. Overall the submissions were positive with many welcoming the plan. The final draft and Chief Executive report are scheduled to be compiled in mid-

November. The aim is to have the plan adopted on 18 December and published in January 2024 to coincide with the start of the new working year.

### Decarbonising Zone (DZ) – Maynooth



The Climate Action Office has streamlined consultation efforts with An Taisce who are developing a Low Carbon Community Plan for Maynooth (national example) under the Legacy 4 Life programme, Maynooth University, RPS Group (consultants) and various local actors.



The DZ Plan was adopted on 31 July to inform the Maynooth Local Area Plan (LAP) being compiled presently and Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and other policies.



An Taisce held a public consultation event on the evening of the 28 September to gather the local community's preferred actions.

### The Mid East Energy Unit



The baseline of energy usage to inform the decarbonising of our buildings' energy usage has been presented by CODEMA. To advance the Register of opportunities (RoO) the SEAI have agreed to pilot Pathfinder funding for the Photo Voltaic (PV) cells at the Cotton Mills, PV and Geothermal for K Leisure pools facilities at Naas and Athy in conjunction with works on swimming pools in Meath and Wicklow. The work will enable retrofit works (energy efficiency and de-carbonisation) on existing buildings.

Given the potential for future district heating in Naas the unit is working to ascertain the capacity to undertake a district heating feasibility study in the first half of 2024.

### Climate Action SPC:

The scheduled meeting on 13 September took place and two presentations were given. The first by Dr. Ursula King on conservating and restoring Kildare's Biodiversity. This was followed by a presentation on the progression of the LA CAP and DZ. The next meeting is scheduled for 06 December 2023.

### Alternative Fuel of the Council's Fleet

The CCMA have published its Electric Vehicle (EV) Guidance Document for Local Authorities;

The Climate Action Office is examining the potential to introduce compressed natural gas heavy goods vehicles into Kildare County Council's fleet with mechanical services. Smaller vans have a variety of potential options such as electrification; the larger trucks are an issue. One solution to this is compressed natural gas options.

Presently the installation of a pumping station at the New Hall Depot is being progressed and potential vehicle types are being analysed.





## Climate Action Community Initiatives

### Items Awarded:



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

The successful implementation of Gnáthóga Nádúrtha (Natural Habitats) - initiative as part of the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration scheme has been completed.

€75,000 was awarded under the Creative Ireland's Climate Action: Invitation to Collaboratively fund an application, led by Carlow County Council, in conjunction with Kildare and Meath County Councils. The ambitious arts led inquiry, an interdisciplinary, collaborative intervention, sited across three natural heritage peatland habitats in Carlow, Kildare and Meath brought the urgency of climate action to the forefront. An application to the Arts Council for a continuation / Phase two of the project that focusses specifically on the artists has been successful and provides an additional €35,000 in funding.

## People's Patches for Community Climate Action:

Kildare, Longford and Laois County Council along with Maynooth University, The Useless Project and Neighbourhood Network (lead) have been awarded by Pobal €271,000 funding for the Community Climate Action project submitted in January 2022. The project is to inform in communities how to source and grow quality local food and increase cooking skills to enable meaningful dietary skills to combat poor nutritional uptake especially within deprived neighbourhoods.



### 'Climate Design Lab: Where Creativity In Practice Meets Climate Action'

Under Creative Climate Action Fund II: 'Agents for Change Creative Ireland' informed Kildare County Council on 12 July that a conditional award of funding of €250,000 has been approved. This conditional offer is subject to a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Climate Design Lab: Where Creativity In Practice Meets Climate Action Kildare



County Council along with the Design Innovation Department in Maynooth University and Riverbank Arts Centre will pilot a Climate Design Lab that aims to use design-thinking and behavioural economics to co-create fun theory solutions for Maynooth, the decarbonising zone for the county. Preliminary work has commenced with Maynooth University.

## Research

### Gas Innovation Fund and Public Service Innovation Fund



The Climate Action Office is reapplying for the Gas Network Ireland's Gas Innovation Fund in conjunction with Maynooth University's Terrain-Ai research group and Teagasc. This project aims to assess the potential for green spaces to generate biomass e.g., grass-clippings as a feedstock for energy generation in Kildare with potential of scaling the study up to different county councils and state bodies nationwide. If successful the main body of work will be carried out with project support from the Climate

Action Office, Maynooth University and engagement with Teagasc.



To advance the project financially an application was made to the Public Service Innovation Fund 2023 the bid has been successful and funding of €50,000 awarded. An agreement is now being formulated with Maynooth University to enable the research to commence at pace. It is expected that the project will be completed by Quarter 2/3 of 2024.

### Climate Innovation Fund 2023



The projects funded under the 2022 scheme are concluding in July 2023. The fund launched on 30 June and the closing date was 30 July 2023. One successful submission was made in the Kildare Newbridge Municipal District.



### Alternatives to Herbicides Project

The Parks/Climate Action Office's project including scientific research together with practical assessment in the field (Kildare County Council Parks Department and National University of Ireland, Maynooth) has produced a practical maintenance guide for public open spaces and documented research practices undertaken and disseminated to ten Local Authorities have partnered together with Waterways Ireland.

PhD research has commenced and the final scheduled experiments have been undertaken on Millenium Link Road, Naas. The site will be monitored over the coming year to inform the research further.

### Climate and Me! Day



Occurred on the 20 October 2023 with activities in the Aras, associated car park and MERITS. Activities in general were well attended regardless

of the rain. The day informed on items of interest to people's areas of work and life.

To increase accessibility and knowledge sharing, videos of the speakers' sessions, donut economics and a short sum-up of the day will be made available to all council staff and councilors in the near future.

Thank you to all for their support and attendance on the day.

### Health and Safety Conference

The Climate Action Office was delighted to be invited to have a stand at this year's Annual Health and Safety Conference which took place on Wednesday the 25 October 2023 in the Osprey Hotel.

The theme of this year's event was "How do you look after your Mental Health" which was very apt given climate anxiety is felt by many.

### Branding

The Climate Action Office has engaged Designedly to brand the office and Decarbonising Zone along with the graph input to finalise Kildare's Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Office branding is complete and the DZ branding being advanced swiftly.



## Local Community Development Committee

The last meeting of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was held on the 27 September 2023 in the Merits building.

### SICAP- Social Inclusion Programme

County Kildare LEADER Partnership, who are contracted to run SICAP in Kildare are focusing on responding to priorities agreed by Kildare LCDC that fit with current national priorities.

A national tendering process is underway for the SICAP programme 2024 to 2028. It is anticipated that this contract will be issued before the end of the year.

For further information contact: County Kildare LEADER Partnership  
[www.countykildarelp.ie](http://www.countykildarelp.ie) or telephone 045-895450

### LEADER Programme

Kildare LCDC as Local Action Group (LAG) and County Kildare LEADER Partnership (CKLP) as Implementing Partner, submitted a plan in mid-July, to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) for the next round of LEADER funding

2023-2028. The outcome from this application is awaited.

The current LEADER programme is at the final stages with projects having until 31 March 2024 to complete their work.

For further information contact: County Kildare LEADER Partnership  
[www.countykildarelp.ie](http://www.countykildarelp.ie), or telephone 045-895450

### Sláintecare Healthy Communities

Work is progressing very positively in Athy to roll out a range of evidence-based health programmes in addition to local supports to engage people in healthy activities.

A range of programmes are available in Athy through Slaintecare. Seed Funding applications for €75,000 for projects in Athy in 2023 have been approved by Department of Health.

The four themes are:

- (1) Food Insecurity
- (2) Traveller Wellbeing
- (3) Supporting vulnerable children and young people
- (4) Woodstock Artist in Residency.

Service Level Agreements are finalised with the various project partners and agreed actions under each of the four themes have



commenced.

For further information contact Maria Healy, Local Development Officer phone 087-9974155 or email [mhealy@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:mhealy@kildarecoco.ie)

### **Healthy Ireland**

Healthy Ireland funding continues to be rolled out under the LCDC on behalf of the county. Pobal announced additional funding of €35,000 towards the 2024 budget. This may be used for a new programme or to increase the capacity of agreed programmes. Priorities of the overall programme for 2023-2025 focus on mental health and physical activity initiatives.

Service Level Agreements have been signed with the five project partners in the HI Round 4 Programme 2023 – 2025 and programmes are ongoing. For further information contact Claire Morrissey, Healthy Ireland Co-ordinator: ph. 086-8858505 or email [cmorrissey@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:cmorrissey@kildarecoco.ie)

### **Empowering Communities Programme Athy**

Athy has been selected by Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) as a target area for a new

community development programme 'Empowering Communities Programme' (ECP) with a funding allocation of €140,000. County Kildare LEADER Partnership are the programme lead on this work and employ the project staff.

### **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**

Stage two, Consultation, to inform the development of the LECP is now concluding. The Advisory Steering Group met on 06 November 2023 to consider progress and agree next steps. The consultation process included: Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN) ran five Municipal District consultations with 94 community groups attending. The outcomes from these meetings will feed into the LECP and PPN Wellbeing Plan. The LECP survey closed with 869 respondents. Engagement with employers and business leaders took place through the Economic Development Forum, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) meeting and ongoing engagement with a range of employers across the county. Consultations took place with a broad range of statutory bodies,



voluntary sector organisations and collaborative structures (over 224 people participated). Engaging with representatives of the most excluded was a key consideration. The Advisory Steering Group are recommending the final LECP vision and high-level goals go to the LCDC and SPC for Enterprise, Economic Development and Planning at their upcoming meetings. While consultation is a distinct stage in the guidelines, it continues throughout the development and implementation of the LECP. Drafting of the objectives and actions to finalise the plan will then commence. Work continues to compile the analysis of Census 2022, as it is released by AIRO in Maynooth University.

For further information contact: Susan Bookle, LECP Co-ordinator ph. 087 6687808 or email [sbookle@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:sbookle@kildarecoco.ie)

### **LGBTI+ Dormant Account Funding**

Kildare LCDC applied for 2023 Dormant Account Funding to support LGBTI+ Community Organisations. Should the application be successful, funding will be allocated to help provide services to LGBTI+

organisations targeting marginalised people experiencing exclusion on account of their LGBTI+ identities.

**The next meeting of the LCDC is scheduled for: Wednesday 29 November 2023.**

## **Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces**

### **Transport**

#### **M4 Maynooth to Leixlip M4**

#### **Eastbound Bus Priority Measures**

The Part 8 for the M4 Eastbound Bus Priority Measures was presented at the February 2023 Council meeting and was approved. Work is ongoing with TII to progress to construction.

#### **M4 Westbound**

The Westbound project will progress to the end of Phase 2. It is likely at that stage that the project will be divided into three areas- Westbound Bus Running, Active Travel and Safety Measures



### **Athy Main Street (N78)**

This scheme is likely to transfer to the Roads Projects team.

Kildare National Roads Office have undertaken a pavement design and safety improvement for pavement improvement works on the existing N78 through Athy town and have also been liaising with Public Realm and Kildare County Council Roads with regard to the Emily Square project. Now that the Athy Distributor Road (ADR) is open, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) are being asked by Department of Transport (DoT) to contribute to a more significant public realm type project through Athy Main street. If agreement can be reached then Kildare County Council Roads Project team will assume responsibility for delivery.

Existing N78 to be reclassified - new ADR will become N78 in Athy – DoT / TII in discussion as to further requirements.

### **Leinster Road Bridges**

Rehabilitation Contract Scheme involves rehabilitation works to M7, Junction 10 Overbridge; M7, Newhall Overbridge; M7 Greatconnell Overbridge; M7 Corbally Overbridge;

M9, Kineagh Road Overbridge. Glas Civil Engineering Limited has been awarded this contract.

### **Athy Distributor Road (BAM, Roughan and O Donovan)**

The Athy Distributor Road is now open (31 October 2023). BAM has achieved substantial completion, however snagging work still continues.

### **New Machinery Yard Relocation and Regional Salt Barn (Clonmel Enterprises, Kilgallon and Partners)**

Project is nearing completion. Regional Salt Barn is 95% complete. Yard is 95% complete. Admin Building is 90% complete. Project has largely transferred from Project to Implementation phase.

### **Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (Roughan and O Donovan)**

The Oral Hearing for the CPO went ahead on 04 May 2023 via Teams. A decision is expected in 2023.

### **Maynooth Transport Strategy (Aecom)**

The ABTA is currently being finalised and will issue to councillors for information before being published.



## **Newbridge Transport Strategy (Aecom)**

AECOM have started modelling and option development for Newbridge. Phase 2 consultation will be scheduled for later this year.

## **Junction Programme**

Phase 1A of the Rural Junctions Improvement Project is for the delivery of five separate schemes, which are to be delivered in tandem. These schemes are listed below. Consultants are O'Connor Sutton Cronin.

1. Dagwelds Cross R403/R409
2. Prosperous Main Junction R403/L2002
3. Allenwood Cross Roads R403/R415
4. Berts Cross, Athy R417/ L8-68/7
5. Watchhouse Cross, Naas R411/ L2023

Surveying at these locations has commenced.

Phase 1B tender assessment is complete and has been awarded for design. Consultants are Clandillon Consulting.

## **Newbridge Southern Orbital Relief Road.**

Planning permission 22/1504 for part of relief road and second bridge over

the Liffey has been granted by Kildare County Council to Aston Ltd.

## **Sustainable Transport Section - Projects Update Maynooth North-South Corridor (Phase 5)**

Project ready for construction, but there is insufficient funding in 2023 to commence construction.

## **Royal Canal Greenway (Maynooth- Leixlip)**

Section one is open to the public. The rest of the scheme, from Louise Bridge to Maynooth is being retendered.

## **Naas to Kill Active Travel Scheme**

Project stopped. Insufficient funding in 2023 to commence detailed design.

## **Green Lane Active Travel Scheme**

Project ready for construction, pending land transfer agreements but there is insufficient funding in 2023 to commence construction.

## **Naas to Sallins Greenway**

Consent to proceed to Part 8 Public Consultation Process has not been received from Waterway Ireland.



### **Sallins Village Active Travel Scheme**

Design of permanent scheme awaiting an evaluation of rapid build options for the scheme, as requested by the National Transport Authority (NTA).

### **Celbridge Road Active Travel Scheme**

Approval from the NTA required prior to starting Public Consultation. NTA has requested alternative options to be examined.

### **Kilcock Road Active Travel Scheme**

Approval from the NTA required prior to starting Public Consultation.

### **Craddockstown Active Travel Scheme**

Project ready for construction, but insufficient funding in 2023 to commence construction.

### **Kilcullen Road Active Travel Scheme**

Works progressing well and due to finish in Quarter 2 2024.

### **Celbridge Active Travel Bridge**

Detailed design of bridge structure and ancillary works are continuing.

### **Athy College Campus to Southern Distributor Road Active Travel Scheme**

Following discussions with the NTA, scheme is not being advanced.

### **Monread Road (Naas) Active Travel Scheme**

Preliminary design awaiting an evaluation of rapid build options for the scheme, as requested by the NTA.

### **Dublin Road (Naas) Active Travel Scheme**

Project ready for construction, but there is insufficient funding in 2023 to commence construction.

### **Monasterevin Active Travel Scheme**

Approval from the NTA required prior to starting Public Consultation.

### **Newbridge Road (Naas) Active Travel Scheme**

Preliminary design awaiting evaluation of rapid build options for the scheme, as requested by the NTA.



### **Naas to Newbridge Interurban Active Travel Scheme**

Preliminary design awaiting evaluation of rapid build options for the scheme, as requested by the NTA.

### **Newbridge Main Street and Station Road Active Travel Scheme**

Preliminary design awaiting evaluation of rapid build options for the scheme, as requested by the NTA.

### **Cycle Safety Infrastructure at Signalised Junctions**

Construction completed.

### **Blessington Road Active Travel Scheme**

Construction continuing in 2023.

### **Meadowbrook Active Travel Scheme**

Project ready for construction, but there is insufficient funding in 2023 to commence construction.

### **R418/R408 Maynooth Active Travel Scheme**

Insufficient funding to commence project.

### **Safe Routes to School Round 1 Schemes**

€50,000 allocation – Straffan National School.

€50,000 allocation – St. Brigid's Primary School, Kildare Town – Section 38 proposals being prepared.

€50,000 allocation – Holy Child School Ballycane – Section 38 proposals being prepared.

### **Safe Routes to School Round 2 Schemes**

€20,000 allocation – Patrician Primary/St. Conleth's Schools, Newbridge.

€20,000 allocation – Scoil Bhríde/Scoil Phadraig, Clane.

€20,000 allocation – Scoil Mochua, Celbridge.

### **Poplar Square Naas Active Travel Measures**

Project stopped. Insufficient funding to progress Project.

### **Supplementary Projects**

Commitment given by NTA in Council chamber to approve funding for several projects and construction of these are ongoing.



### **Pathfinder Project**

Topographical survey completed for the Project. Appointment made to commence traffic surveys. Tender Process for consultants is underway.

### **Speed Limit Review**

No update from the Department of Transport at present.

### **Municipal District Works**

Roads Works Programme 2023 is nearing completion – all records now to be uploaded onto MapRoad PMS system. Surface Dressing work carried out by direct labour is fully complete and again Kildare County Council treated over 4% of Non-National Road network.

Annual call from Department of Transport for grant funding requests on Bridge Rehabilitation, Road Safety works, CCAR (Climate) and former National roads (FNR) for 2024 are currently being prepared to be submitted in coming weeks.

TII Road Surfacing grant to value €67,500 to be drawn down via PRS to cover works carried out on N78 (Athy – M9 Roundabout). Other maintenance

monies will be utilised on both N78 and N81 before year end.

Winter Maintenance season starts commenced on 16 October. Duty Engineers are appointed to monitor weather via Viasala system. Tool-Box Talk carried out in Machinery Yard for all drivers before start of season.

### **Public Lighting**

PLEEP Survey to commence in November of this year followed by detailed design in Quarter 1/2 2024 with works on site to commence in Quarter 3 2024. Contract duration is for eight months and due for completion in Quarter 2 2025 which will lead to annual savings of approx €750,000 on energy and maintenance costs going forward.

### **Open Spaces (Parks)**

#### **News and Highlights**

##### **Allenwood Playground**

Works are continuing on the site. Works on the pump track have commenced.



### **Outdoor Gym, Celbridge**

The Outdoor Gym in Celbridge has been opened for use.

### **Monread Park Playground**

Works on the installation of a new basket swing, sandpit and seesaw has been completed.

### **Sallins Amenity Lands**

A tender for the detail design of an initial phase of works has been advertised. This will involve grading the site to create playing pitch areas, installation of entrances and a car park, design of the wetland area and a perimeter path.

### **DeBurghs Woodland Garden**

Works are underway to prepare a tender for resurfacing the footpaths and securing the perimeter of the site.

## **Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Service**

### **Planning**

#### **Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029:**

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 came into effect on 28 January 2023 and replaced the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023.

Work is underway on implementation plan for a series of objectives and actions for 2023/2024 with work started on Nature Based Surface Water Solutions Guidance, Serviced Sites Pilots, Allotments Feasibility Study and Permeability Guidelines.

### **Local Area Plans**

#### **Kildare Town**

The Kildare Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 was adopted at a Special Planning Meeting held in Merits on Thursday 26 October 2023 and will take effect from 06 December 2023

### **Joint Maynooth and Environs**

Work is on-going in relation to the preparation of evidence-based reports to support the draft plan. The Area



Based Transport Assessment for the plan is being finalised.  
Visioning workshop was arranged for the 06 October 2023.

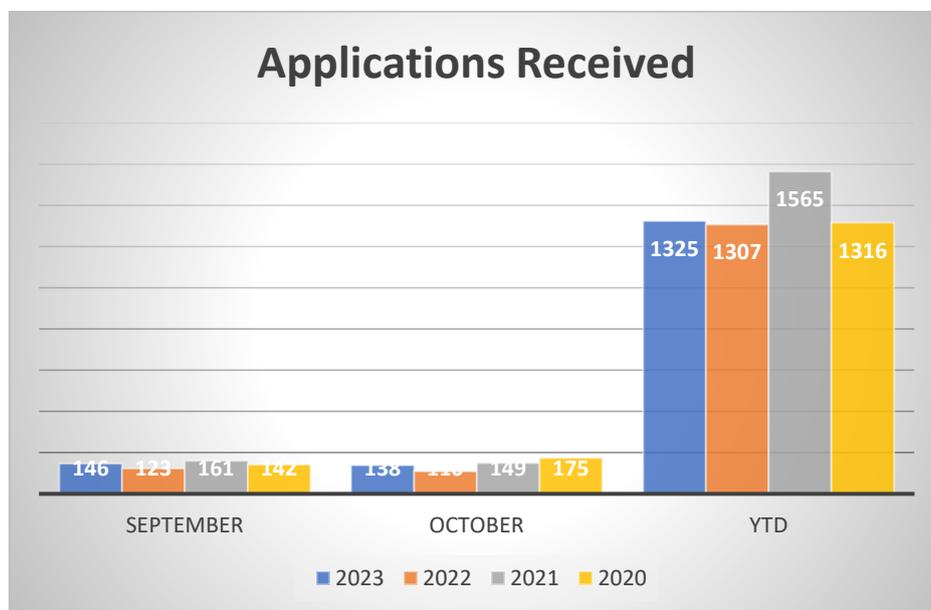
### Newbridge

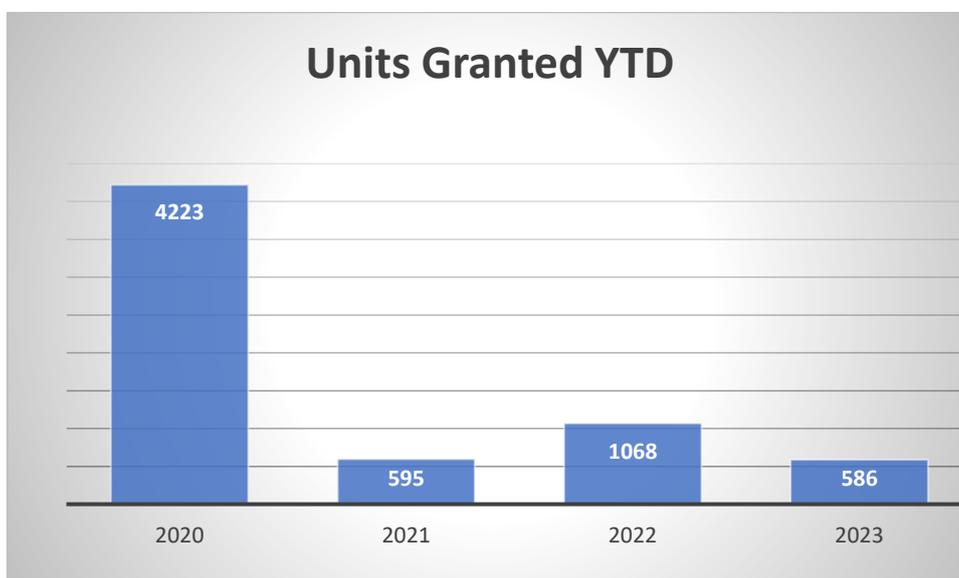
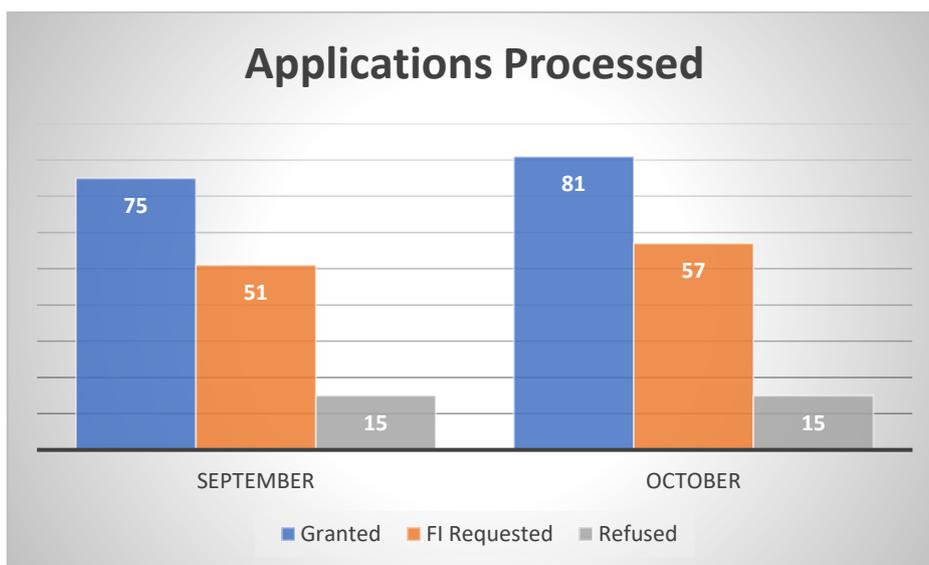
Pre-draft (non-statutory) consultation commenced on 10 October 2023 with in-community event on 09 November 2023 in Newbridge Town Hall. There is also an Art competition as part of the predraft consultation.

## Development Management

### ePlanning

ePlanning went live in Kildare on 27 June 2023. This enables applications and submissions/refs to be submitted via the online planning portal. Confirmation of our live status was communicated to planning agents and Elected Members and positively acknowledged. To date we have seen a steady rate of applications and submissions coming through the online portal, with electronic applications representing c.59% of all applications received.





#### Strategic Housing Development Applications to An Bord Pleanála (SHD)

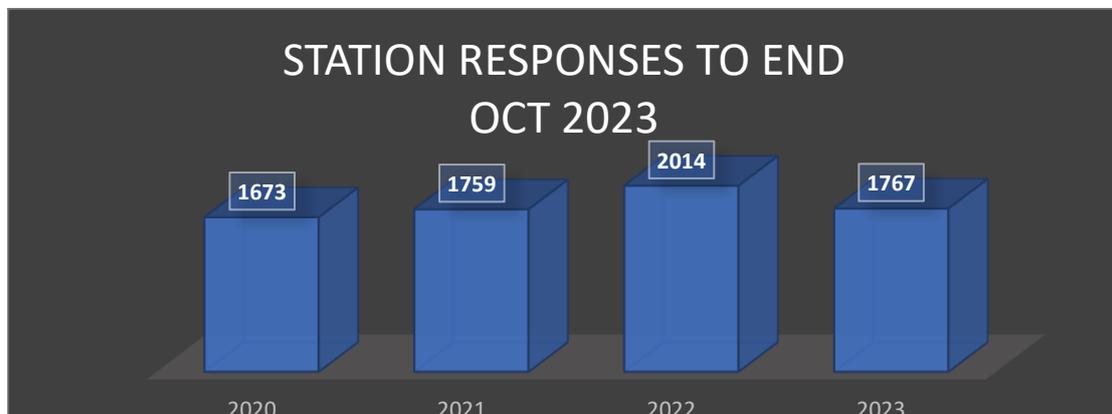
Decisions five SHD applications due between June 2022 – January 2023, remain outstanding with An Bord Pleanála.

#### Large-scale Residential Development (LRD)

LRD applications must be submitted within six months of the issue date of the LRD Opinion.



**Fire Service Operations:**  
**2023 Summary**



**Fire Safety Certificates**

Applications received to the end of October 2023 compared with the totals received in previous years.

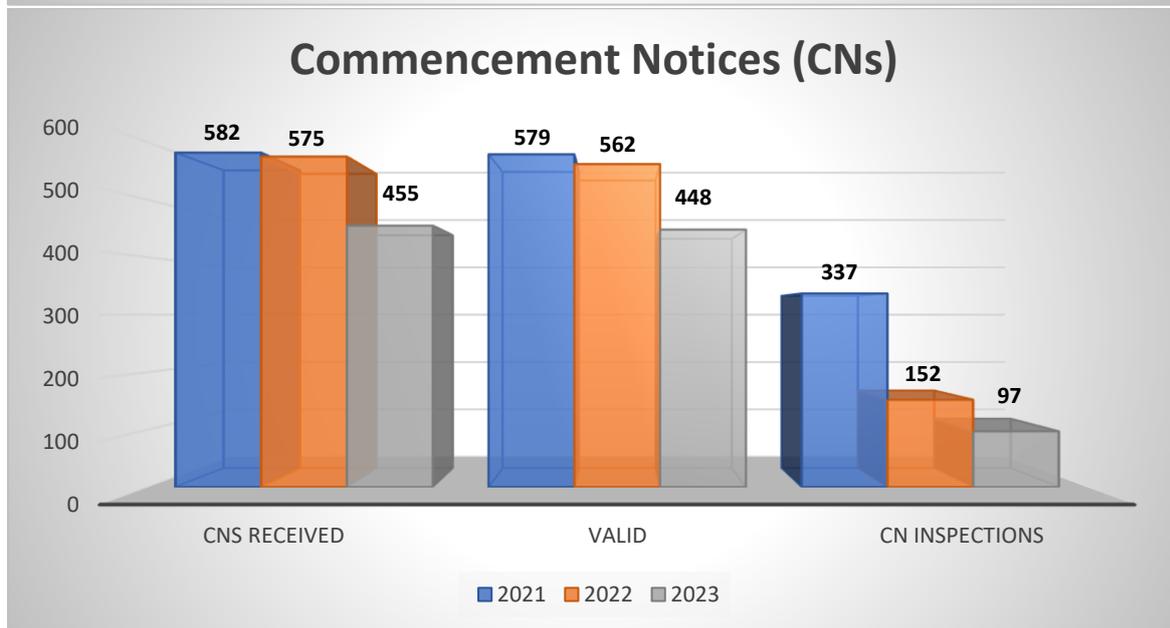




## Building and Development Control

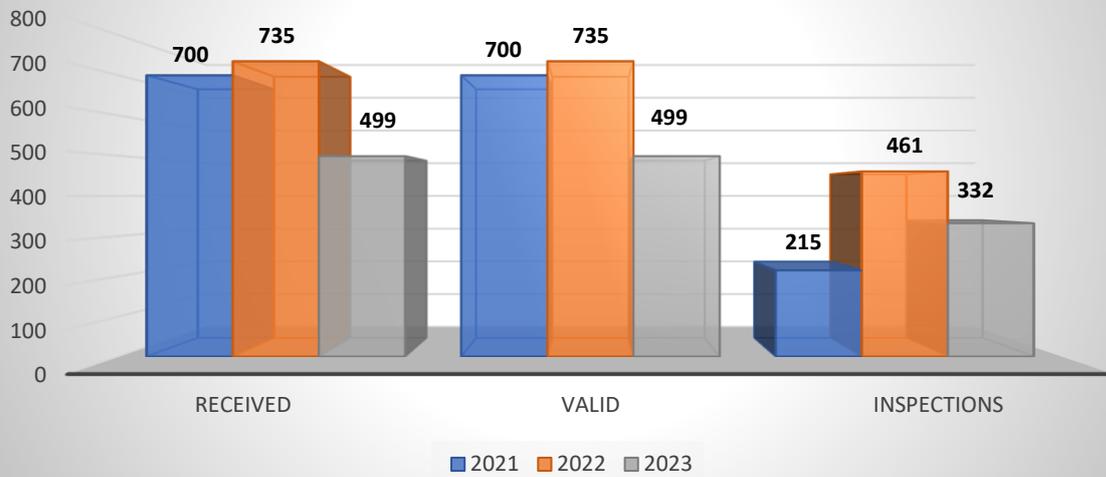
The following figures are cumulative up to end of October 2023 set against full year figures for 2021 and 2022.

### BUILDING CONTROL

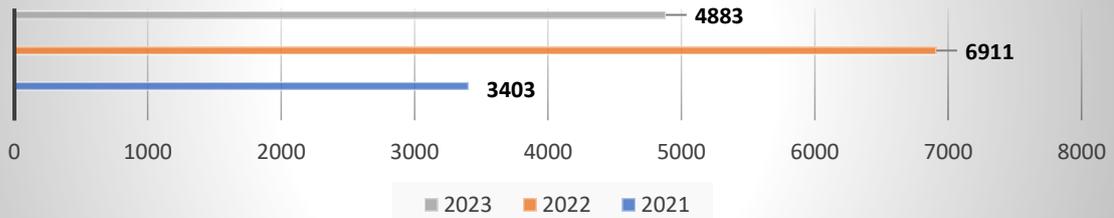




### Certificates of Compliance on Completion (CCCs)



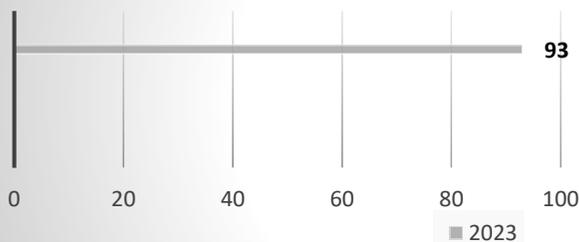
### Number of Buildings Inspected



Note: Please note the reduction in building inspection numbers in 2023 is due to staff shortages.

### DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

#### Active Sites





## Kildare Fáilte

### Key Activities

As the school mid-term approached, the tourism and hospitality industry strategically focused its marketing message on Autumn breaks, seasonal activities, and Halloween events. The primary target demographic was families looking to capitalise on the school holidays, with diverse offerings tailored for all visitors seeking short getaways, day trips, and autumnal walks.

Fáilte Ireland hosted a Golf Convention and Workshop in Derry, which Áine Mangan attended. During the event, she had the opportunity to connect with several international tour operators and guests and members from the Into Kildare Tourism Network.



Moyvalley Hotel

Kildare County Council invited Áine Mangan to visit the Lexington Twinning Sisters in Lexington, Kentucky, where a number of meetings and visits were scheduled including Visit Lexington and Alltech which was originally founded by Dr Pearse Lyons.



Kildare delegation visit to Lexington

Into Kildare curated several Familiarisation Trips in October. Mary-Jane O'Regan, Editor of HiStyle and Munster's online Social Diary, a go-to source for fashion enthusiasts, alongside Marietta Doran, a presenter and influencer, undertook a comprehensive itinerary created by the team. The purpose was to showcase various hotels, restaurants, and attractions in the county, aiming to broaden coverage to reach new and more extensive audiences.

Educational Trips are organised on an ongoing basis to spotlight the diverse range of offerings available in Kildare,



leveraging social media groups and followers for amplification.

Áine Mangan participated in an International Cultural event hosted at Newbridge Silverware, which brought together several Asian embassies.



An Cathaoirleach Daragh Fitzpatrick, Áine Mangan, Dublin Convention Bureau representatives

A number of member events were supported including the launch of Nearly Sisters in Newbridge. This shop offers high-quality gifts and homeware sourced locally, strongly emphasising eco-friendliness and conscious consumerism.

Into Kildare attended Fáilte Ireland's Greenway Development Program to expand their understanding of the current status of Greenway development across Ireland. The aim was to gain comprehensive insights

into the economic and tourism potential presented by these Greenways and how to promote businesses surrounded by them.



Fáilte Ireland's Greenway Development workshop

On social media, Into Kildare supported tourism attractions, Halloween activities, and upcoming events in preparation for the bank holiday weekend and school midterm break.

Additionally, Into Kildare sustained a series of competitions in partnership with the 2FM's 2 Johnnies Show. This collaborative effort allows prize contributors and the county to benefit from a week-long promotional spotlight on national radio.

Visitor engagement across all platforms continues to show strength, positioning Into Kildare consistently among the top five search results for events and among the top three for Halloween-related information.



## Local Enterprise Office

Elected members are asked to advise constituents that Kildare LEO is always open to discuss business needs or grant availability, and weekly business advice clinics are available.

Immediate business support:

Request to speak to a Business

Advisor:

<https://leokildare.submit.com//show/113>

For all other queries

email [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)

or call 045980838.

For continued updates please follow Kildare County Council's LEO on social media.

## Financial Supports direct to Clients 2023

|                       | No. Businesses | Amount Approved (€) |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Web Development Grant | 72             | €163,400            |
| Priming Grant         | 7              | €225,855            |

|  |    |                 |
|--|----|-----------------|
| Business Expansion Grant                 | 6  | €171,033        |
| Feasibility Study Grant                  | 4  | €50,230         |
| Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters | 17 | €28,091         |
| Agile Innovation Fund                    | 1  | €41,235         |
| IP Start grant                           | 3  | €6,480          |
| IP Plus grant                            | 2  | €35,100         |
| Gradstart grant                          | 2  | €60,000         |
| <b>Total</b>                             |    | <b>€781,424</b> |

### AGILE INNOVATION FUND:

Sportsfuel limited t/a Nutracopack and lead by David Carey was approved €41,235 in Research Development funding. An ambitious product, packaging and automation project is underway at the Celbridge based food production plant that will see potentially five new jobs for the growing company over the next three years.



## Entrepreneurship Support Services FOCUS ON CRAFT:

GATHER, a collection of gifts created in Kildare, launched as a pop-up in Kildare Village on 26 October. This collaboration with 24 Kildare-based creative small businesses runs until New Year's Eve and is a unique retail opportunity for these creative businesses.



187 guests and shoppers attended the launch event.

In its first week trading the pop-up exceeded €22,500 in sales and welcomed over 5,000 guests.

## FOCUS ON WOMEN IN BUSINESS:

As part of a collaborative event with Carlow County Council, LEO Kildare hosted National Women's Enterprise Day in The Clonard Court Hotel in Athy. 74 female entrepreneurs joined the celebration from Kildare.



Master of Ceremonies for the event was Susan Keogh, Ireland's Director at H/Advisors Cicero, a leading public affairs and corporate communications agency. The keynote speaker was business owner and author, Rachel Doyle.



The event also featured Ambassador for Kildare LEO and panelist Fiona Uyema of Fused by Fiona, and panelist Emma Early Murphy, National President of Network Ireland 2023.

## FOCUS ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:

Kildare's Digital Champions aims to recognise the best digitalisation cases from Kildare's business scene. A



judging panel with expertise in digital strategy and export development were overwhelmed with the volume of applicants and shortlisted almost 40 businesses as finalists in four categories.

The awards event took place in the Osprey Hotel with guest speakers Joan Mulvihill and Alan McCormack.



Kildare's Digitisation Champion was Deirdre O'Keeffe of Premier Accounts Assist Limited T/A Burdy based in Clane/Maynooth Municipal District.



Naas Municipal District based GastroLife Limited, led by Melissa Dooley was named.

## Kildare's Export Champion.



The People's Champion for Best in E-commerce saw two businesses tying for joint- first position on the day: Faerly and Siog Botanicals.

Overall Digital Champion 2023 was awarded to Vanessa Liston of Aphelion Limited T/A CiviQ



The “[All In A Day's Work](#)” campaign, launched by Neale Richmond, T.D., Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail is focused on highlighting the supports that will enable small businesses to make significant changes to the way they



work that will support small businesses to become more competitive and productive in how they work.



### Economic Support Services

The Shopfront Improvement Scheme Grant for 2023 is closed for applications. The economic development team continues to visit retailers across the county providing them with information on all the supports available.

| MD Applications as of 08 November 2023 | No. of Apps | Value of App Approved |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| Kildare/Newbridge                      | 18          | €44,570               |
| Athy                                   | 19          | €33,699               |
| Naas                                   | 22          | €39052                |
| Clane/Maynooth                         | 9           | €16,935.20            |
| Celbridge/Leixlip                      | 16          | €30,773.25            |

The Retail Window Merchandising Grant remains open to applicants until November and businesses can avail of 80% funding on eligible expenditure up to a maximum of €500 for outlets to enhance their window displays for Hallowe'en and Christmas.

The Brigid 1500 Window Grant has opened for businesses to apply for support to celebrate St Brigid next February.

### Athy Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022-2023

Under this scheme, property owners and local groups have applied for grants to improve the facades of their buildings, carry out artwork or install features such as street furniture or canopies in Athy. The economic development team continues to work with the project team and is supporting prospective applicants with the application process. The scheme is closed for applications and successful applicants are completing projects presently.



### **Kildare Craft, Creativity and Design Hub, Courthouse Kildare.**

The consultants have completed the stakeholder analysis and are finalising the draft feasibility study at present. Kildare County Council has reached a lease agreement for the deployment of a pilot on a smaller footprint in two Retail Units in Kildare Town Square.

### **Fashion, Textiles and Design Hub (former BOI Monasterevin)**

The consultants have submitted the feasibility study for the building; funding mechanisms are now being investigated, should the appropriate planning and development regulations be in order, for the proposed development we will commence work in Quarter 1 2024.

### **Kilcock Green and Sustainable Enterprise Park Feasibility Study**

The study has been submitted to the Elected Members of the Clane-Maynooth Municipal District. Funding mechanisms are now being investigated. Progression will be very much subject to the appropriate planning and development regulations be in order, for the proposed development.

### **Athy Green and Sustainable Enterprise Park Feasibility Study**

A study is underway to acquire lands and develop Green and Sustainable Enterprise Park in Athy. Funding mechanisms are also now being investigated. Progression will be very much subject to funding availability and the appropriate planning and development regulations be in order for the proposed development.

### **Kildare County Council Industrial Estate Enhancement**

A project manager and contractor has been procured to deliver enhancement works on four industrial estates owned by Kildare County Council in Newbridge, Kilcullen, Rathangan and Celbridge; the works have commenced and will enhance the exteriors and signage of the respective estates.

### **Online Retail Series**

34 retailers across the County participated in the four sessions of retail-focused webinars covering trends and peak trade, visual merchandising, and online trading and marketing that were delivered by expert retail professionals.



### **K-Hub Network**

Kildare County Council's Economic Development Team successfully organised and supported a diary of events and open days in October for people to visit Kildare's hub network.

### **K-Hub activity:**

The MERITS Hub hosted a Venture Capital and Investment networking morning during October as part of the K-Hub promotional activity. The event was attended by 13 business owners who are exploring funding opportunities.

### **Coding for Kids Camp:**

The MERITS hub hosted a "Coding for Kids" camp during the mid-term break. 12 children participated in this pilot programme which saw them learn the basics of coding and further their insight into the world of technology and innovation.

### **The Innovation Exchange:**

The Innovation Exchange came to MERITS during October to offer businesses the opportunity to learn about their network. The programme offers the opportunity for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to

sell their products and services to Multinational Corporations with whom they may traditionally find it difficult to engage.

### **Appendix: Business Supports**

Please advise your constituents of the following business supports available in response to their ongoing business needs from All Government Bodies Outlined on the Kildare LEO [Website Localenterprise.ie/Kildare](https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)



## LEXINGTON SISTER CITIES VISIT 2023



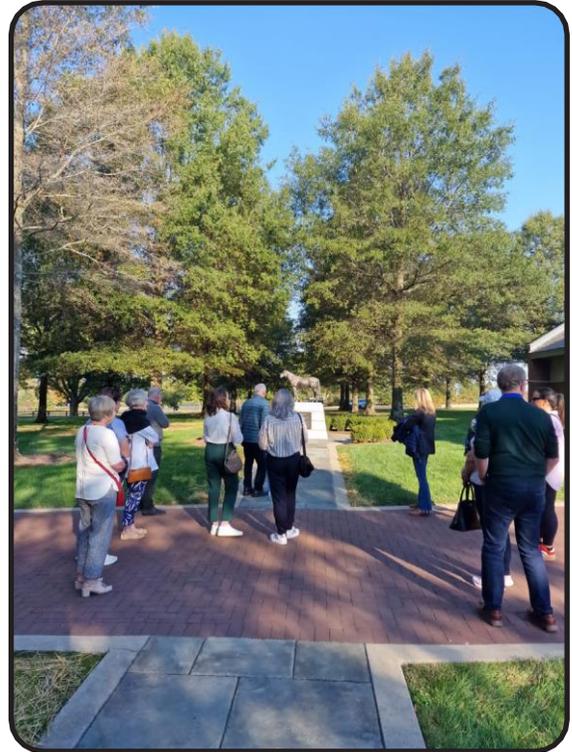


## **Report on Visit to Lexington Kentucky by delegation from Kildare from 11 to 15 October 2023.**



### **Background**

This visit, arranged through Kildare County Council, was continuing the relationship between Kildare and Lexington, Kentucky. This twinning was instigated in 1984 by then County Manager, Gerald Ward, and has been sustained since through the Twinning Committee and Kildare County Council. Originally based around the equine industry in both areas, it has also embraced culture, industry, and other aspects.



The concept of twinning is about development and sustaining friendships between different parts of the world and in this case is reflected in the work of the Kildare Twinning Committee chaired currently by Councillor Fintan Brett. The committee includes representatives of the local authority as well as members with long relationships with their counterparts in Lexington Sister Cities Committee (Sister Cities is the name given to twinning throughout the U.S.). In addition to Kildare, Lexington is a Sister City with a region in Japan, with Deauville in France and with Newmarket in the UK. In each case, the original basis for the relationship was the strong equine tradition and industry.



Throughout the period since 1984, there have been regular reciprocal visits between Lexington and Kildare, with the Lexington group last visiting in September 2022 when they spent three days in Kildare including a Gala dinner and an afternoon at Taste of Kildare at the Curragh.



The programme for this visit in October 2023 was agreed through engagement between the offices of the Chief Executive of Kildare County Council and Ms. Kay Sargent, Executive Director of Sister Cities in Kentucky. The composition of the group was agreed by the Chief Executive and comprised members of the Twinning Committee as well as representatives of the tourism and equine industries and the Chamber of Commerce.



Pictured l-r (back row) Aine Mangan, CE, Into Kildare, David Mongey, Chair, Into Kildare, Donal O Keeffe, Chad Aull, Kentucky State Representative , Cllr Fintan Brett, Chair of the Twinning Committee, Senan Griffin, Peter O Murchu of the Kildare Twinning Committee, Marian Higgins, Director of Service KCC, Sonya Kavanagh, Chief Executive, KCC  
l-r (front row) Kay Sargent , Kathy Dalton, Ellen Brett, Sinead Ronan, representing Kildare Chamber of Commerce, Laura Magee, CEO of the Thoroughbred Country, Marjorie Moore, Anne O’Keeffe, Secretary, Into Kildare (and former Secretary of the Kildare Twinning Committee), Kent Barker.



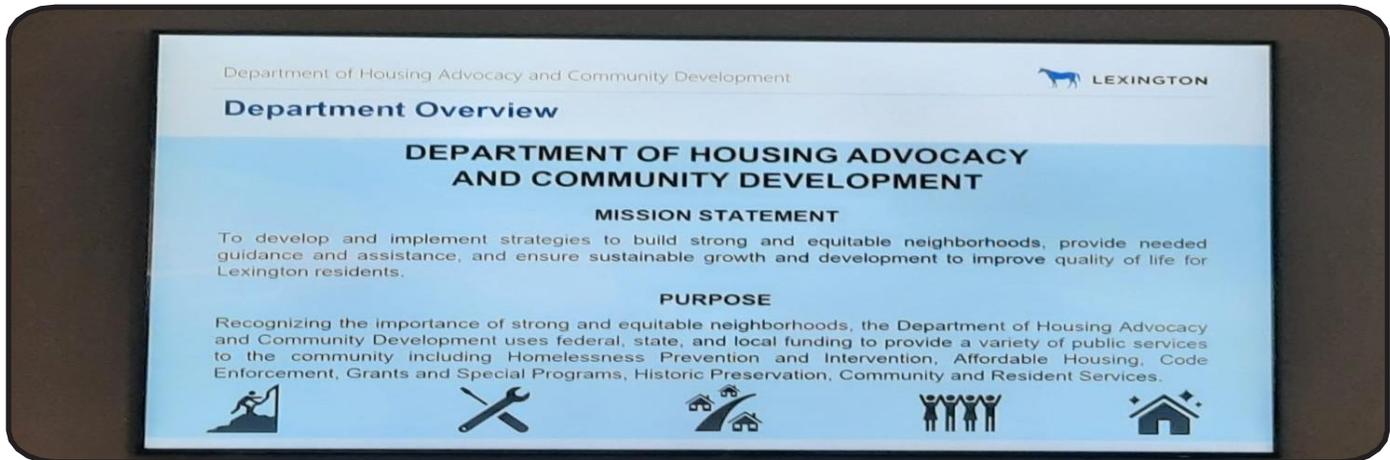


## Programme

In advance of the visit extensive communication took place between the office of the CE and Ms. Sargent to ensure that the content of the visit would be relevant and use- ful as well as enjoyable. As a result, the programme for the members of the travelling party was developed to ensure that the various interests were covered. Sample pro- grammes are attached for information.

A significant part of the programme concentrated on the equine industry, with visits to Jonabell Farm (Godolphin) and to Ashford Stud (Coolmore). Interestingly, in both these cases, the input at the farms was presented by Irish staff and there was ample time for discussion and engagement on issues of relevance, including tourism potential and experience.





There was a visit to the State Capital of Kentucky, Frankfort where the group was welcomed by the State representative, Chad Auli and enjoyed a tour of the hugely impressive Capital Building. Later that day the group was welcomed formally by the Mayor of Lexington, Ms. Linda Gorton, and full Council at a Council Meeting in Lexington where Kildare CE Sonya Kavanagh addressed the attendance.

The remainder of the 3-day programme provided for visits to and meetings with representatives of Commerce Lexington, Visit Lex, KY World Trade Centre, Environmental, Planning, Housing Advocacy and Community Development departments for the relevant member(s) of the group as well as site visits including to public realm, community/recreational and cultural sites of relevance.

The social aspects of the visit were very impressive and included attendance by the group at Keenland Races and a welcome reception and formal dinner hosted by the Mayor at the Lexington Club, held in an impressive Heritage Building in Lexington. At this dinner, Councillor Brett addressed the attendance on behalf of the Kildare delegation and presentations were exchanged.

Finally, the group were invited to visit the international Headquarters of Alltech International and were given a guided tour of the magnificent new building and museum, by Mrs. Deirdre Lyons, Co-founder of the company. This was followed by a very informative visit to Lexington Brewing and Distilling.





## Comments and observations

1. This was a very successful visit and reflected the advance preparation both from Kildare County Council and the Sister Cities office. This resulted in a very relevant and enjoyable programme for all involved.
2. It is clear that the Twinning arrangement is hugely valued by the Sister Cities group in Lexington, led by Kay Sargent.
3. It is worth noting that apart from Kay Sargent, there is a very active group of Friendship Volunteers who support and work with Kay in sustaining the arrangement, as well as contributing financially. For instance, they were available as volunteer drivers throughout the visit and it was clear that they were very involved in all aspects.
4. Throughout the visit we met with several proud Irish business people who are involved in various industries in Kentucky, principally equine related. They may represent useful contacts for follow up actions. (it is worth noting that a former pupil from Maynooth was delighted to welcome his former Headmaster, Senan Griffin, to Alltech – he is now a senior member of staff based in Kentucky!)
5. Members of the delegation made useful personal contacts with their counterparts, which, if pursued, offer opportunities for effective collaboration.
6. The expectations of the Lexington counterparts are high and mean that there is a need to continue to support and strengthen the Twinning Committee here to ensure that a suitable programme of activity can be delivered on an ongoing basis. This may present a challenge but one that will be worthwhile.



**Sonya Kavanagh**  
**Chief Executive**