

KILDARE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council





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Further information is available on the Kildare County Council website at:
<https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/>



Glossary

AIRO	All-Island Research Observatory
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CE	Chief Executive
CKLP	County Kildare LEADER Partnership
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DRC DG	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
EMRA	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
FRC	Family Resource Centre
HI	Healthy Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
IEC	Independent Evaluation Committee (LEADER Programme)
IFA	Irish Farmers Association
IP	Implementing Partner
IRIS	Integrated Reporting and Information System
KCC	Kildare County Council
KCCD	Kildare County Childcare Committee
Kildare	Kildare is used to refer to the County of, or Local Authority area of, Kildare throughout this plan
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KWETB	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
LA	Local Authority
LAG	Local Action Group (LEADER Programme)
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaisons Entre Actions de Development de l' Economie Rurale
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LEP	Local Enhancement Programme
LIG	Local Implementation Group (Athy)
MD	Municipal District
MU	Maynooth University
PPI	Public Patient Initiative
PPN	Public Participation Network
SCHC	Sláintecare Healthy Communities
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
TFI	Transport for Ireland



1. Introduction

In 2025, Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) continued to play a central role in supporting community development, social inclusion and local collaboration across County Kildare. Working in partnership with statutory, community, voluntary and business stakeholders, the LCDC oversaw the delivery of key national and local programmes, progressed the implementation of the community objectives agreed in the Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029, and secured additional resources to respond to emerging community needs.

During the year, the LCDC was responsible for overseeing and allocating almost **€3.25 million** across a range of programmes, including the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), LEADER, Healthy Ireland (HI), Sláintecare Healthy Communities, Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) and the Local Enhancement Programme (LEP). Significant progress was made across all programme areas.

- Through **SICAP 2024-2028**, 1,157 individuals and 103 community groups were supported, significantly exceeding programme targets, with a budget allocation of **€1.697 million**.
- The **LEADER 2023-2027 Programme** continued to support rural local development, with seven projects approved in 2025 valued at **€433,139**, bringing total approvals under the programme to almost **€700,000** by year end.
- The LCDC also progressed implementation of the **Kildare LECP 2024-2029**, with 62% of actions recorded as ongoing or completed by November 2025.
- The Local Enhancement Programme also provided **€235,640** to 100 community and voluntary groups, supporting local facilities, equipment purchases and running costs throughout the county.
- Healthy Ireland initiatives engaged almost **9,000 participants** in activities promoting physical activity and mental wellbeing,
- The Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme in Athy delivered targeted health and wellbeing initiatives and secured additional funding to address health inequalities to **237 people** across a range of focussed, sustainable initiatives in collaboration with the local community and key agencies.
- A key achievement during 2025 was the successful securing of additional funding and supports for Kildare communities, including funding for Traveller health initiatives, child poverty interventions, community-based occupational therapy supports, and the establishment of a new Family Resource Centre in Leixlip.
- The first year of the What Works Dormant Accounts funded **Child Poverty Initiative** is particularly notable. 2025 included the finalisation of the County Kildare Child Poverty Profile and commencement of community-led occupational therapy supports for neurodiverse children and families through four Family Resource Centres across the county.



The achievements outlined in this report reflect the commitment of people and communities, LCDC members, programme partners, community organisations and Kildare County Council staff who worked collaboratively throughout the year to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Kildare. The LCDC remains committed to building inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities and will continue to drive implementation of local priorities and opportunities in 2026 and beyond.

1.1 LCDC 2025 in brief

Programme/Initiative	Key Achievements 2025
LCDC Funding overseen	Almost €3.25 million
SICAP	1,157 individuals and 103 community groups supported with a budget of €1.697 million
LEADER	7 projects approved, valued at €433,139
LECP	62% of actions ongoing or completed
Local Enhancement Programme	100 applications successful to support capital, equipment and running costs with €235,640 allocated
Healthy Ireland	Almost 9,000 participants engaged in a range of physical and mental health activities
Slaintecare Healthy Communities	Almost 240 people in Athy engaged and directly benefited from a range of initiatives to promote and support better health outcomes under the Local Authority funded supports
Additional funding secured	Dormant Accounts Genio Traveller Health funding, Child Poverty Action Plan Pilot commenced and a new Family Resource Centre was established in Leixlip



2. Role of Kildare LCDC

Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is a statutory committee established under the Local Government Act 2014.

The Act gives formal effect to the *Putting People First* reforms and provides for the establishment of LCDCs in every local authority area. The role, composition and structure of LCDCs are set out in national circulars and guidelines, which continue to shape and support the committee's ongoing development.

2.1 Purpose of Kildare LCDC

The purpose of the LCDC is to:

Develop, Co-ordinate and Implement a Coherent and Integrated approach to Local and Community Development

2.2 Role of Kildare LCDC

The LCDC's key roles and functions are to:

Have primary responsibility for coordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funding for the county

Bring a more joined up approach to the implementation of local and community development programmes and interventions, pursuing an integrated approach to local community-based services across providers and delivery structures

Drive meaningful citizen and community engagement in the scoping, planning and evaluation of local and community development programmes

Pursue a more cost-efficient administration of local and community development programmes and delivery structures, the matching of resources to priorities and better value-for money in the management and delivery of programmes

Focus on learning and feedback, enhancing the links between service delivery and policy development

Pursue opportunities for additional funding for the county, whether exchequer, EU, private or other sources.



3. Membership and Meetings 2025

Kildare LCDC is a nineteen-member committee made up of representatives from both statutory and non-statutory organisations. Legislation requires that non-statutory members hold the majority of seats (see table below). The committee is supported in its work by the LCDC Chief Officer, Marian Higgins, Kildare County Council (KCC) Director of Service, along with designated KCC support staff.

Although Kildare LCDC operates as a committee of Kildare County Council (KCC), it differs from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) as it functions independently of the local authority in carrying out its statutory responsibilities. Kildare LCDC is also the Local Action Group (LAG) to oversee the LEADER Programme in Kildare.

This table outlines the membership of Kildare LCDC. There were two vacancies at the last LCDC meeting 2025 held in November.

3.1 LCDC Membership 2025

Name	Organisation
Statutory Representation – 9 Members	
Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer	Kildare County Council – Elected Representative, LCDC Chairperson
Cllr Carmel Kelly	Kildare County Council – Elected Representative
*Cllr. Paula Mulroe	Kildare County Council – Elected Representative
Sonya Kavanagh	Chief Executive, Kildare County Council
Jacqui McNabb	Head of Enterprise, Kildare County Council
Margaret McQuillan	Head of Health & Wellbeing, CH07, HSE
*Audrey Warren	Service Director, Dublin Mid-Leinster, Tusla
Ruth Langan	Area Manager Kildare, Dept. of Social Protection
Ken Seery	Director of Adult Education & Training, KWETB
Non-Statutory Representation – 10 Members	
Tom Malone	Irish Farmers Association
Mary O'Connor	Board Member, County Kildare LEADER Partnership
*Sinead Ronan	CEO, County Kildare Chamber of Commerce
Evonne Boland	PPN, Community Development
Alan Kerry	PPN, Social Inclusion
Michael Kenny	PPN, Community Development – LCDC Vice-Chairperson
Jide Sadiq	PPN, Social Inclusion
Liz Deniffe	PPN, Environment
Vacant	
Vacant	



Membership Replacement 2025

Name	Membership Replacement 2025
*Cllr. Paula Mulroe	Replaced Cllr. Aidan Farrelly in March 2025 via co-option process
*Sinead Ronan	CEO, County Kildare Chamber of Commerce stepped down in November 2025
*Audrey Warren	Service Director, Tusla stepped down in November 2025

There were six LCDC/LAG meetings held in 2025

Date of LCDC/LAG Meeting	Held
12 th February 2025	In-Person
26 th March 2025	In-Person
28 th May 2025	In-Person
2 nd July 2025	In-Person
16 th October 2025	In-Person
26 th November 2025	In-Person

Subgroups are established to support the work of the LCDC. These are outlined in the next section of the report.



4. Work and Progress 2025

Since it was established in 2014, Kildare LCDC's role and workload has grown significantly. This section summarises the committee's main activities and achievements during 2025.

4.1 Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Kildare's second Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 was approved by KCC in May 2024. The LECP 2024-2029 is the statutory framework for inclusive and sustainable community and economic development in County Kildare.

A three-year Implementation Plan 2024-2026 is also in place. The LECP sets out agreed priority objectives and actions to support community and economic development in County Kildare.

Vision: Kildare LECP 2024-2029

County Kildare; working as a sustainable, inclusive, economically vibrant, healthy community for all

The current LECP Implementation Plan outlines 367 agreed actions under four high-level goals. It identifies lead and support agencies across both community and economic development organisations to implement actions.



County Kildare is a **PLACE** with resilient communities where all people live full, healthy and inclusive lives.



County Kildare nurtures its **PEOPLE** to reach their full potential and to enjoy a high quality of life at all stages.



County Kildare promotes and prioritises **CLIMATE ACTION, CLIMATE JUSTICE and SUSTAINABILITY**



County Kildare attracts the **RESOURCES and INVESTMENT** to be a sustainable, inclusive, economically vibrant community for all.



Oversight

An LECP Advisory Steering Group composed of key leaders across statutory and non-statutory sectors with expertise in community and economic development meet to discuss LECP implementation progress.

The LCDC oversee and monitor LECP progress, with responsibility for the Community Objectives. KCC Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee has responsibility for monitoring progress of the Economic Development Objectives.

The monitoring and evaluation phase of the LECP Implementation Plan continues to progress steadily. In 2025 a Microsoft Lists system was used to track LECP progress. This platform serves as a live, centralised tool for ongoing LECP monitoring and supports real time reporting with the addition of visual dashboards.

Mid-Term Review

An LECP Mid-Term Review was prepared in November 2025. The Mid Term Review was formally presented to the LECP Advisory Steering Group and the LCDC with an updated report of all relevant actions provided to the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee.

In November 2025, 227 Actions or 62% of LECP Implementation Plan actions were Ongoing /Completed.

The review highlighted that the LECP is progressing very positively with significant achievements in developing infrastructure, social inclusion, climate action, and securing resources.

Work commenced in 2025 to finalise a new Economic and Community Monitor based primarily on Census 2022. This will be launched in 2026 alongside a new Settlement Profile Dashboard that will provide detailed socio-demographic summaries for key towns in Kildare. Both will be easily accessible through the KCC website.



227 / 62% Actions Ongoing / Completed

108 / 29% Actions In Progress

22 / 6% Actions Not Started

10 / 3% Actions Already Captured



4.2 Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a national programme that aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality. It focuses on people and communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage in Ireland. SICAP is co-funded by the European Social Fund and delivered locally through LCDCs. Pobal is contracted by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG) to oversee delivery. The programme has two goals with annual targets: (1) supporting disadvantaged communities and (2) supporting disadvantaged individuals.

County Kildare LEADER Partnership (CKLP) implements SICAP (2024–2028) on behalf of the LCDC in Kildare. SICAP delivery in Kildare in 2025 was very positive: the plan was delivered in full with targets exceeded.

Goal	Focus	Target 2025	Target reached 2025
One	Supporting Disadvantaged Communities	72 groups	103 groups (43% higher than target)
Two	Supporting Disadvantaged Individuals	859 individuals	1,157 individuals (35% higher than target)

Kildare's total SICAP budget allocation for 2025 was **€1,697,006**. This was fully spent, with the exception of **€73,768.90** which is carried into the 2026 budget.

The SICAP 2025 plan had thirteen actions:

Goal 1: Communities	Goal 2: Individuals
Community Engagement	Education Supports
Supporting Local Community Groups and Networks	Lifelong Learning
Supporting Social Enterprises	Employment and Opportunities
Collaborations	Supporting Self Employment
New Arrivals Community Supports	Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing
Traveller and Roma Inclusion	Supporting New Arrivals
	Supporting Heads of One Parent Families

CKLP delivers SICAP in Kildare, working closely with state agencies including Kildare County Council, the HSE, KWETB, the Department of Social Protection, Tusla, local schools, community and voluntary organisations including In Sync, TFI Local Link, Family Resource Centres, Kildare Traveller Action, Community Centres, volunteer



led groups and sports groups. This collaborative approach, a key feature of SICAP in Kildare, supports delivery across both SICAP goals and helps inform future priorities and planning.

Some highlights of Kildare SICAP in 2025:

- Demand for one-to-one support remained high in 2025, with individuals seeking help to build confidence and progress to education, training and employment. A range of **training** was delivered across the county, including, Safe Pass training, Manual Handling, assistance with creating CVs and use of Smart Technology.
- **Capacity building supports** were provided to community organisations including governance training, GDPR compliance training, volunteer management, action planning and fundraising.
- The **Social Farming** programme expanded in 2025 to include recovery-focused social groups, parent support groups and countywide LGBTQI+ participation.
- SICAP delivered structured workshops and one-to-one mentoring to support **social enterprises** at different stages of their development. A successful launch of the social enterprise strategy for the county also took place.
- A range of **education support** programmes were delivered in 2025, including Story Stacks, JumpAGrade, Breakfast and Lunch Clubs, afterschool summer camps, and the Wild Horizons Forest School Programme, targeting several schools.
- Supports for **new arrivals** to Ireland continued throughout 2025, including intensive English language support and intercultural and community workshops to build social connections. Summer camps, community day trips and local events also took place across the county. Employment and Skills Development programmes were also delivered.
- A number of **climate action initiatives** were delivered with community groups in 2025, including Grow Together Community Gardening and SEAI workshops.



SICAP Community Gardening in Derrinturn



SICAP Flower Arranging New Arrivals



SICAP Manual Handling Course



SICAP Workshop for people with Disabilities and Carers



Suncroft Young at Heart Group



SICAP Story Stacks Programme

The LCDC SICAP subgroup met six times in 2025 in advance of the scheduled LCDC meetings to review SICAP progress to prepare for upcoming LCDC meetings. Final decisions in relation to all aspects of SICAP are made at LCDC meetings.



SICAP Subgroup Membership 2025:

Membership	
Marian Higgins	Subgroup Chairperson, LCDC Chief Officer, KCC Director of Services
Evonne Boland	LCDC Member, PPN, Community Development
Liz Denieffe	LCDC Member, PPN, Environment
Cllr. Paula Mulroe	LCDC Member, Elected Representative
In attendance	
Linda Walsh	SICAP Manager, CKLP
Violet Balfe	Financial Controller, CKLP
Supported by	Susan Bookle, LCDC Co-ordinator, Marie Kane, LCDC Administrator

4.3 LEADER 2023-2027

LEADER is an EU-funded rural development programme that supports community-led local development in rural areas. LEADER provides funding to approved applicants, supporting the sustainable development of enterprises and communities. This programme is based on the approved Kildare Local Development Strategy 2023-2027 which commenced implementation in 2024. The funding available to support grant aiding projects through the LEADER 2023-2027 programme is **€4,080,353**.

The Kildare LEADER programme is implemented by CKLP and overseen by Kildare LCDC (as LAG). Two final projects from the first LAG overseen LEADER Programme 2014-2023 Programme were completed in 2025. This concluded funding under this programme.

The three themes of LEADER are:

- 1 Economic Development and Job Creation
- 2 Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion
- 3 Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

All three themes have a budget of €1,359,118.



There were seven projects approved for LEADER funding in 2025, totaling **€433,139.17**.

Theme	Project Name	LEADER funding
Theme 1 Economic Development and Job Creation	Tom Tierney Purchase of Wood Cutting Equipment	€17,965.41
Theme 1 Economic Development and Job Creation	Paul Murphy & Linda Lyons Hunting Lodge @ Weston	€200,000.00
Theme 1 Economic Development and Job Creation	Mark O'Connor Video Equipment	€9,569.06
Theme 2 Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion	SMART Village in-house Training	€139,425.00
Theme 2 Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion	Teach Tearmainn Strategic Plan	€11,152.00
Theme 2 Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion	Leixlip Village Renewal Feasibility Study	€13,500.00
Theme 3 Sustainable Development of Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	Rathcoffey GAA Solar Panels	€41,527.70

By the end of 2025 almost €700,000 in total of the LEADER 2023-2027 was approved with €3,391,164.77 remaining.¹

Three examples of projects awarded LEADER funding are outlined below:

James O'Dwyer Glamping and Cycling

James O'Dwyer operates an organic farm near Kildare Town and was awarded €200,000 LEADER funding to build chalets as part of his newly establishing glamping business. This was the first project approved for LEADER grant aid under the 2023-2027 programme and was completed in 2025.

Purpose of LEADER grant aid to James O'Dwyer

This project was funded under the Economic Development and Job Creation theme. The aim of the project was to construct three chalets for short holiday/tourist rental. This project addresses issues around the availability of mid-priced tourist accommodation in Kildare, identified as a priority in the Kildare LEADER Local Development Strategy.



¹ €689,187.73 was allocated in total from the LEADER project budget in 2024 and 2025



Rathcoffey GAA – Solar Panels

Rathcoffey GAA is based in Donadea and serves as a central hub for the local area, providing multiple grass pitches, floodlit astroturf pitches, fully lit walkway, and indoor sports hall, meeting rooms and gym. €41,527.70 was awarded in October 2025 to install solar panels above their main hall.

Purpose of LEADER grant aid to Rathcoffey GAA

This project was funded under the Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption theme. The aim of the project was to reduce the reliance on grid electricity and promote sustainable energy use through the installation of a solar photovoltaic system on the roof of the club's premises.

Tom Tierney –Wood Processing Equipment

Tom Tierney runs Ballinafagh Farm located outside Prosperous in Northwest Kildare. He is committed to working with the best Conservation Agriculture practices to safeguard the environment and biodiversity. Funding of €17,965.41 was approved in July 2025 to purchase wood cutting equipment.

Purpose of LEADER grant aid to Tom Tierney

This project was funded under the Economic Development and Job Creation theme to purchase a firewood processing machine to enable the promoter to generate additional income through the processing and sale of locally grown timber, sourced from the farm's own forest. This operates as part of a proposed social farm planned for development over the next five years, which will offer participants an opportunity to engage in purposeful work, learn new skills, and contribute to the local community.





LEADER Subgroup

The LEADER subgroup met seven times in 2025 in advance of LAG meetings. Its role is to review LEADER implementation progress, consider LEADER projects recommended by the Independent Evaluation Committee for grant aid in addition to opportunities and challenges. This meeting helps to prepare for upcoming LAG meetings with all final decisions in relation to all aspects of LEADER made by the LAG.

LEADER Subgroup Membership 2025

Membership	
Marian Higgins	Subgroup Chairperson, LCDC Chief Officer LCDC, KCC Director of Services
Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer	LCDC Member, Elected Representative
Sinead Ronan	LCDC Member, CEO, County Kildare Chamber of Commerce
Jacqui McNabb	LCDC Member, Head of Enterprise, Kildare County Council
Tom Malone	LCDC Member, Irish Farmers Association
Alan Kerry	LCDC Member, PPN, Social Inclusion
Michael Kenny	LCDC Member, PPN Community Development
In Attendance	
Maeve Howe	LEADER Manager, CKLP
Supported by	
Susan Bookle, LCDC Co-ordinator, Kathryn Morbin, LCDC Administration Support	

4.4 Healthy Ireland Programme

Healthy Ireland (HI) is the national framework for improving health and wellbeing. It provides funding to LCDCs to support local actions that promote positive health and wellbeing. Following Healthy Ireland Rounds 1, 2 and 3, Kildare commenced Healthy Ireland Round 4 in mid-2023.

Healthy Ireland 4 was initially a three-year programme (2023–2025), but it was extended into 2026 to allow for completion of an updated national Healthy Ireland strategy. It is expected that Healthy Ireland 5 will be announced when the national strategy is completed. Funding supports a Co-ordinator post and provides annual project funding. In 2025, project funding increased to **€75,000** (agreed as part of HI 4 as €40,000 annually). The Department of Health also committed in 2025 to fund and make all Healthy Ireland Co-ordinator posts permanent within Local Authorities. Work was at an advanced stage by the end of 2025 to recruit this post.

A detailed annual Healthy Ireland plan is submitted to Pobal and aligned to the agreed outcomes and targets for Kildare. In Kildare, the HI programme focused on two outcomes: (1) improving physical activity and (2) supporting mental health. The projects funded in 2025 were as follows:



Physical Activity

	Project Implementer and Budget	Target set 2025	Target Reached	% Higher than Target
Increase physical activity particularly targeting people with disabilities, older people, disadvantaged families and communities	Kildare Sports Partnership (KSP) €25,000	People with Disabilities -3000	6044	101%
		Disadvantaged Families -600	980	63%
		Older People - 700	920	31%
		Training- physical literacy/community outdoor leaders- 80	98	23%

Kildare Sports Partnership implemented six programmes in 2025 to increase participation in physical activity in County Kildare, particularly targeting disadvantaged areas and people with traditionally low engagement levels in physical activity.

This included:

- **Kildare Inclusivity Festival:** a very successful free, inclusive family day with activities for people with disabilities and carers took place in 2025
- **Training for leaders:** "Back to Basics Physical Literacy" and "Walk Leader" training programmes took place to support community outdoor leaders to deliver activities locally.
- **Get Kildare Walking:** a wellness walk and exercise programme, the STEPtember walking challenge, and the Hillwalking Festival provided opportunities for people to engage in physical activity through walking.
- **Women's Couch to 5k:** two five-week programmes delivered during 2025.
- **Fitsticks for Farmers:** two programme blocks delivered of twelve weeks duration.
- **Recovery Walking Group:** a six-week walking programme in Cuan Mhuire during Recovery Month (September), incorporated wellbeing activities such as meditation and journaling.

All Kildare Sports Partnership programmes funded and supported through Healthy Ireland in 2025 were delivered in full with the targets for the year exceeded. They supported people, traditionally not engaged in physical activity to become more active through a range of opportunities.



Mental Health

	Project Implementer and Budget	Target set 2025	Target Reached	% Higher than Target
Increase mental health outcomes	CAMS-care - €4,500	18 participants	22 participants	22%
	Kildare Mental Health Association (€700 from 2023 funding)	100 participants	280 participants	180%
	County Kildare LEADER Partnership Dads Fest - €6,000	120 participants	160 participants	33%
	County Kildare LEADER Partnership - Heads Up - €5,000	150 participants	166 participants	11%
	First Fortnight LTD	3 families	6 families	100%
	Kildare Traveller Action - €10,000	50 participants	65 participants	30%
	McVerry Trust - €7,900	100 families	136 families	36%
	Substance Use Regional Forum (SURF)	20 young people	20 young people	0%

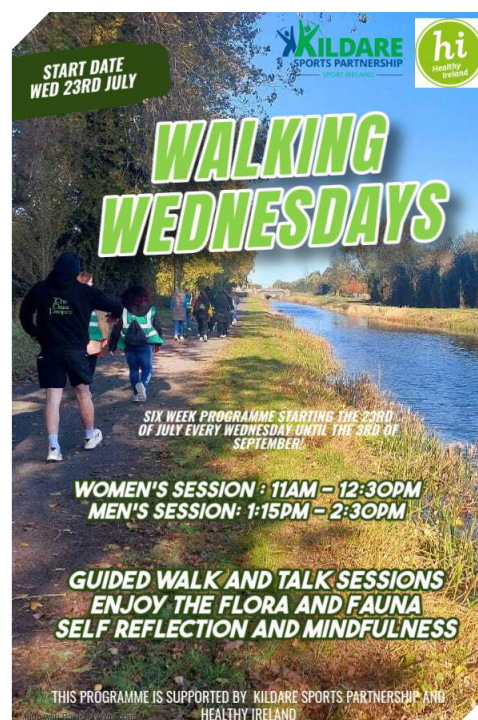
Eight mental health and wellbeing projects were agreed with four fully completed in 2025 with some continuing into 2026.

- **CAMS-Care** ran training for therapeutic professionals in the Kildare area working with people experiencing suicidal ideation. CAMS-Care also facilitated group sessions to discuss difficult cases. In 2025 a masters drivers' course which was a more in-depth training was completed.
- **Kildare Mental Health Association** hosted additional **Connect Cafes**. These cafes provide information and support on mental health. One was held in Maynooth University targeting Traveller and Roma communities. Another café was held in Naas Hospital.
- **Dad's Fest** took place in Clane and Newbridge in 2025. This targeted fathers through a range of events. A 'Dads Directory' outlined services in the county which was very beneficial to signpost fathers to a range of services.
- The **WRAP** programme, as part of the **CKLP Heads Up**, ran two successful programmes funded by Healthy Ireland in Celbridge and Monasterevin.
- The **Substance Use Regional Forum (SURF)** focused on raising awareness of the impact of **vaping**. In 2025, a workshop took place to understand young people's views on vaping, and a survey tool was developed.
- **Kildare Traveller Action** delivered a number of **wellbeing initiatives** in 2025. The main focus was providing Kildare's first Traveller specific counselling service to respond to counselling requests. An equine educational programme for children and women also took place in 2025.



Peter McVerry Sensory Garden Prosperous Family Hub

- **Peter McVerry Trust** completed the sensory garden at the **Prosperous Family Hub** for homeless families. Peter McVerry staff will complete "As I Am" neurodiversity training in 2026 following the establishment of sensory pods in both homeless family hubs in Kildare (Athy and Prosperous) to support neurodiverse children and families experiencing homelessness.
- **First Fortnight** collaboration between Healthy Ireland Kildare and CYPSC Kildare provided therapeutic play to children in Kildare living in hotel accommodation accessing homeless services. One hotel converted a cabin into a dedicated therapeutic space which was a very positive unexpected outcome of the programme. This programme continues in 2026.



*Walking Recovery group
led by Kildare Sports Partnership
and Cuan Mhuire Athy*



4.5 Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

Sláintecare Healthy Communities is a collaborative initiative led by the Department of Health, working with the HSE, local authorities and community organisations. The programme was initially located in nineteen communities nationwide and was later expanded to twenty-four. Athy was one of the initial locations. Sláintecare Healthy Communities supports people in the Athy area to live healthier lives. It aims to reduce health inequalities by delivering evidence-based initiatives and increasing access to targeted health and wellbeing supports.

Since launching in 2022, the programme has funded and developed local initiatives that respond directly to needs identified in Athy, providing practical supports, activities and services where they are most needed. In 2025, the role of Sláintecare Healthy Communities Local Development Officer was made permanent within local authorities with recruitment completed in Kildare.

The HSE oversees the delivery of a range of evidence-based programmes and works closely with the Local Development Officer who identifies community health and wellbeing needs and supports local co-ordination. Funding priorities are agreed in Athy by the Local Implementation Group (LIG). This group informs the priorities for **€75,000** in seed funding available to support the work. There were three initiatives that commenced in 2024 and concluded in 2025

Place Based Wellbeing

Fifteen residents and five stakeholders participated in a Place Standard Assessment in the Ballyroe community. This enabled people from Ballyroe to identify and discuss their needs with relevant agencies. Emerging needs identified through the assessment were addressed, with improved footpath works and upgraded road markings completed with the support of the Athy MD Area Engineer. Additional enhancements were also initiated, including new playground equipment and goalposts, TFI Local Link are exploring options for expanding transport services from the Ballyroe area into Athy.

Creative Literacy for Children

Sixteen children participated in an eight-week creative writing programme from January to May 2025 in three local DEIS primary schools. The programme supported children to build literacy skills through fun, imaginative, and engaging activities.

Health and Wellbeing Hub

Sláintecare Healthy Communities Athy installed **Ireland's first Interactive Health and Wellbeing Hub** in Edmund Rice Square in August 2025. This innovative installation informs the local community of a range of new community-focused health initiatives. It provides inclusive access to information on social and active-living opportunities,



education, employment and volunteering pathways, local transport options, and Sláintecare programmes. This accessible and interactive hub is designed to connect people with local services, support groups, and wider wellbeing opportunities

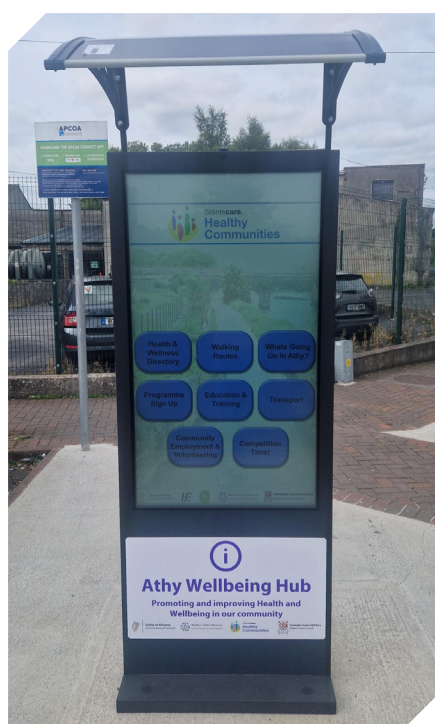
In 2025, priorities for seed funding were:

- (a)** Age Friendly – Living Well
- (b)** Neurodiversity and Inclusion
- (c)** Trauma-informed practice
- (d)** Children’s recreation and play.

Dept of Health Seed Funding 2025	Brief description	Partner Organisations	Amount
Age Friendly – Living Well programme	Twelve older adults from the Athy area participated in a nine-week Food for Thought programme– a bespoke initiative developed by SHCP, KSP, CKLP and Kildare Age Friendly Ireland. The programme focused on nutrition and movement for older adults, supporting participants to build confidence and adopt healthier lifestyle practices. Several participants have since progressed to additional programmes with KSP and KCC Community Development Team. In 2025, work commenced on the development of the inaugural Age Friendly Mile, delivered in partnership with Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme, Kildare County Council Community Department, Kildare Age Friendly, and Waterways Ireland. Throughout 2026, the project will continue.	Age Friendly Kildare KCC Community Development Kildare Sports Partnership County Kildare Leader Partnership Waterways Ireland	€15,000
Recreation and Play – Castlepark Playground	The Woodstock community benefited from the refurbishment and enhancement of equipment and play areas at Castlepark Playground. This project was co-designed with the local community and delivered in partnership with Sláintecare Healthy Communities, Kildare County Council (KCC) Parks Department, and Empowering Communities. In addition to Seed Funding, the project received financial support from the KCC Parks Department and through funding secured under the National Play and Recreation Fund.	KCC Parks Department Department of Children, Disability and Equality.	€20,000



Dept of Health Seed Funding 2025	Brief description	Partner Organisations	Amount
Neurodiversity and Inclusion	The Kildare Child Poverty Initiative commenced in Spring 2025. As part of this work, a comprehensive Kildare Child Poverty Profile was developed and subsequently launched at the Department of Children, Disability and Equality in October 2025. In addition, Community-Led Occupational Therapy supports began in September 2025, engaging 40 children and 106 parents across Kildare through one-to-one interventions and targeted education programmes.	Athy Community Family Resource Centre	€25,000
Trauma Informed Practice	Thirty-eight professionals were supported to participate in Trauma-Informed Practice training during 2025. In addition, the Kildare Trauma-Informed Advisory Group strengthened its shared vision and strategic goals, and commenced planning for the inaugural Kildare Trauma Conference scheduled for April 2026	Trauma Informed Kildare Steering Group	€15,000
Total Seed Funding			€75,000



Athy Wellbeing Hub



World Mental Health Day Walk
Athy



Trauma Informed Practice Training Athy



Interagency Family Event Athy



Traveller Inclusion

Sláintecare Healthy Communities, in partnership with Kildare Traveller Action, **secured €142,000** in 2025 through the Department of Health Genio Dormant Accounts funding to address the social determinants of Traveller health in Athy. In conjunction with Kildare Traveller Action and the HSE Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme this initiative commenced in March 2025 for a two-year period. This funding is being used to employ a dedicated **Traveller Community Worker** in Kildare Traveller Action to deliver programmes aligned with Traveller men's interests, focussing on community participation and wellbeing.

The funding is also used to establish an **after-school programme** for ten local Traveller children attending primary school, in addition to a **support hub** for Traveller students at secondary school. It is expected that this initiative will expand in 2026.

Health and Wellbeing Subgroup Membership 2025

The Health and Wellbeing subgroup continued to meet in 2025. This subgroup supports planning and oversight of Healthy Ireland and the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programmes in preparation for the LCDC meetings. All final decisions are made by the LCDC. The subgroup met six times in 2025.

The membership of the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup in 2025 was as follows:

Cllr. Aidan Farrelly	Chairperson/LCDC Member (resigned June 2025)
Anne Myler	Kildare Library Service (resigned April 2025 replaced by Mario Corrigan)
Edel Byrne	HSE
Karen Heavey	HSE
Carmel Cashin	KCC Senior Community Worker - Kildare Age Friendly
Steven Joyce	SURF
Deirdre Bigley	CKLP
Emma Berney	CYPSC
Sinead Ronan	LCDC Representative/Co. Kildare Chamber of Commerce (resigned November 2025)
Sarah Shakespeare	Family Resource Centre's representative
Supported by:	Susan Bookle LCDC Co-Ordinator, Maria Healy Sláintecare Local Development Officer, Emma Meates HI Co-Ordinator.



4.6 Empowering Communities Programme Athy

Athy was designated as one of fourteen Empowering Community Programme (ECP) areas in 2022. This programme is co-ordinated by Local Development Companies and overseen by the LCDC. The ECP targets areas experiencing significant disadvantage and aims to empower local communities to respond to area-based poverty, social exclusion, and the resulting consequences. The ECP in Kildare is located in, and targets specific estates in the Athy West Urban Area: Townspark, Castlepark, Carbury Park, St. Dominic's Park and Greenhills.

The focus of work is on supporting and building the capacity of the individuals, households, families and communities within the target area to address issues impacting them. This work spans individual, family, education, training, employment, health and wellbeing themes. One full-time and one part-time ECP Community Worker continued to be employed by County Kildare LEADER Partnership in 2025 with an increased annual budget of €230,603 to implement agreed actions and approaches which aim to build and maintain trusting supportive working relationships to respond to complex challenges.

Key Outcomes 2025

- Implementation of a **Health Literacy Programme** with ten participants.
- In collaboration with In Sync Youth and Family Services, a monthly **youth cafe** was set up at the Community House.
- Nine participants completed **QQI Level 4 accredited training -retail security course**.
- Twelve participants took part in an eight-week **mindfulness** programme.
- A **breast cancer awareness** pink-themed coffee morning was organised which led to the establishment of a monthly peer support cafe group.
- The **local soccer club** were supported by the ECP team to secure funding to develop their grounds.
- **JumpAGrade** (online tuition support) was provided to students in DEIS schools in the targeted area to promote equity of opportunity.
- The **Community Car** was provided to older residents with mobility issues by providing them with transport to do their shopping and other needed transport supports.
- A resident was employed through the Community Employment Scheme to maintain estates in the ECP area.
- **Food supports** were provided to residents through the Athy Community Family Resource Centre and Vincent de Paul during the winter months.
- ECP supported the Athy Community Family Resource Centre to provide **play therapy** supports to residents in the ECP estates.



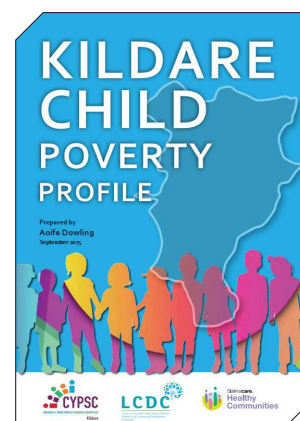
4.7 Local Enhancement Programme

Kildare LCDC allocated €235,640 to one hundred successful applicants from Kildare based community groups and organisations under the Local Enhancement Programme in 2025. This funding assisted with small scale capital and equipment costs, as well as running costs (see Appendix 1). The funding, provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht opened for applications for six weeks closing on 28th of February 2025.

4.8 Additional Funding Secured

Significant additional funding was secured following applications made in 2024. This included:

- Department of Health Genio Dormant Accounts Traveller Funding of €142,000 was secured (see page 24 Traveller Inclusion)
- Dormant Accounts – Kildare secured €100,000 over two years as one of four Child Poverty Local Area Action Plan areas. Work commenced in 2025 to a) complete a Child Poverty Profile for Kildare. This was completed and launched in the Department of Children in November 2025 b) provide Occupational Therapy supports for children and young people in established Family Resource Centres. Work will continue to provide these supports in 2026.



Launch of Kildare Child Poverty Plan November 2026

- In May 2025, the Department of Children announced an application process for five additional Family Resource Centres nationally. Kildare LCDC actively promoted this opportunity and supported two applications that it was aware of. Leixlip Youth and Community Centre was successful in its' application and became the 5th FRC in the county, the first in North Kildare. Core funding of €180,000 is available from Tusla to run this FRC which will provide a hub for a range of other programmes to emerge. This is a very positive development and will enable a distinct service for families and children in the Leixlip area.



4.9 Collaborative Networks

One of the central roles of LCDCs is to collaborate to maximise opportunities and avoid duplication. While the LCDC provides oversight and leads on a number of programmes required nationally, Kildare LCDC, through its members and support staff, is involved in a number of collaborative initiatives. A small snapshot in 2025 includes:

- **Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) Chief Officers Network** - The LCDC Chief Officer attends this network meeting bi-monthly to share information and liaise with the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.
- **CYPSC:** The LCDC Chief Officer is the Vice Chairperson of Kildare CYPSC. Strong working relations continued in 2025 and CYPSC is a standing item on all LCDC agendas.
- **Department of Health/Royal College of Surgeons Ireland-** The LCDC Co-ordinator continued to participate on the national Slaintecare Healthy Communities Programme evaluation steering group, being completed by the RCSI.
- **HSE- National Health Service Improvement Team and RSCI-** The LCDC Co-ordinator participated on the *All Together for Population Health Project*, representing local authorities.
- **Maynooth University Public & Patient Involvement Network-** The LCDC Co-ordinator participated on the newly formed PPI Network in Maynooth University representing Kildare County Council.
- **Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Network:** The LCDC Co-ordinator continued as a representative on this network that provides a range of supports and services to people experiencing bereavement in Kildare.
- **Child Poverty Action Plan Steering Group-** The LCDC Co-ordinator and Slaintecare Healthy Communities Local Development Officer participated on this steering group to oversee the implementation of Child Poverty Plan for Kildare.
- **Connecting for Life - Suicide Prevention:** This HSE led network plays an important role in implementing the Connecting for Life Plan for Kildare. The LCDC Co-ordinator is a member of this multi-agency group.



5. Financial Overview

Kildare LCDC was responsible for allocating and overseeing almost **€3,250,000 in 2025:**

Programme	Budget 2025
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)	€1,425,342
SICAP New Arrivals funding	€271,664
LEADER: -Administration costs - Seven Projects approved in 2025 - Final project claim from 2014-2023 Programme	€776,993
Local Enhancement Programme	€235,640
Healthy Ireland	€147,516
Slaintecare Healthy Communities Seed Funding	€161,434
Empowering Communities Programme	€230,603
Total	€3,249,192

Kildare County Council Staff supporting the work of the LCDC

Marian Higgins	LCDC Chief Officer, KCC Director of Service Climate, Community, Environment and Water
Susan Bookle	LCDC Co-ordinator
Marie Kane	LCDC Administrator
Kathryn Morbin	LCDC Administration (LEADER)
Terrie Devlin	KCC Administrative Officer (with responsibility for LECP)
Ken O'Reilly	KCC Clerical Officer (LEP support)
Maria Healy	Slaintecare Healthy Communities Local Development Officer
Emma Meates	Healthy Ireland Co-ordinator (from March 2025)
*Paula O'Brien	SEO Community (resigned July 2025)
*Tony Shanahan	SEO Community (from September 2025)

For further information please visit
<https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/>



Appendix 1 Local Enhancement Programme 2025

Group/Organisation Name	Description	Amount Awarded
23rd Kildare (Sallins) Scout Group	Birch panels, hedging, raised beds, coat rails	€2,762.29
8th Kildare Allenwood Scout Group	Storage	€899.20
Anchor Youth Club (Athy)	Equipment	€2,632.41
Arch Athy Community Hall	Electrical work	€3,614.98
Ardclough Village Centre	Replacement of entrance lobby	€7,235.63
Ardclough Youth Theatre (AYT Kildare)	Laptop, case, printer	€2,707.60
Happy Days Community Childcare Athy	Outdoor play area	€9,780.00
Athy Community Men's Shed	Wood turning equipment	€6,504.05
Athy Sing and Sign	iPad, Phone	€4,946.35
Balyna Rural Enterprise Development Association Ltd	Window blinds	€1,000.00
Caragh Community Centre	Tables, chairs	€3,431.33
Clongorey and District Association	Roof repair, paint, floodlight, cabinets	€7,485.75
Curragh Family Resource Centre	Painting, tables, laptop	€3,899.66
Derrybeg Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)	Laptop, strimmer	€645.00
Extern Ireland	Desks, Multi game table	€2,103.96
Foróige Kildare (Rosconnell)	Painting, decorating, console, washing machine, storage	€9,275.00
Griese Youth Theatre & Children's Drama	Front door	€3,420.00
HUGG (Healing Untold Grief Groups CLG)	IT Equipment	€1,195.02
John Sullivan Centre (IWA) Clane	Chairs	€1,041.98
Kilcullen Bridge Cinema (Kilcullen Lions Club project)	Laptop	€624.50
Kilcullen Town Hall & Heritage Co Ltd	Lighting and handrail for theatre	€2,979.38
Kildare Down Syndrome Ireland	Storage	€3,087.20
Kildare Town Community & Family Resource Centre	Tables and chairs	€6,128.68
Kildare Town Derby Festival	IT Equipment	€986.00
Kilmead Community Development CLG	Lawnmower, strimmer	€7,403.20
Kingdom Life House LG	Chairs, tables, appliances, exterior door	€8,000.00
Leixlip Musical and Variety Group (LMVG)	Roof replacement	€4,767.00



Group/Organisation Name	Description	Amount Awarded
Leixlip Youth Premises Group Ltd	Signage, upgrade coffee shop & reception	€7,964.26
Leixlip Youth Project (Insync) Formally Kildare Youth Services	Flooring, furniture, sensory toys	€5,986.84
Maynooth Access Group	Laptop	€680.00
Maynooth Local Market	Generator, trolley, shed, flag	€2,304.12
McAuley Place	Pallet truck for bins	€4,499.25
Midlands LGBT+ Project trading as Laois Youth Services	Branded tents for events	€900.00
Mná Beoga	Exercise equipment	€3,715.20
Monasterevin Tidy Towns CLG	Shelving	€3,543.78
Monasterevin Women's Shed	Tables, fridge, dishwasher, trolley	€1,599.95
Monasterevin Youth Action	Branded hoodies	€786.58
Naas Community Men's Shed	First aid, alarm systems, paint, tables, fume extractor	€1,602.86
Newbridge Access Group	Communication boards	€3,148.80
Newbridge Family Resource Centre	Storage	€4,881.00
Newtown Ladies Club	Laptop, printer, laminator	€809.98
Peter Bradley Foundation T/A Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Boccia ball set, assistive ramp, arts & craft sets	€974.07
Rathangan Day Care Centre	IT Equipment	€993.84
Sallins Sunshine Club	Replace flooring	€7,500.00
Straffan Community Hall Committee	Display board, storage, burco boiler, laptop, iPad	€7,496.09
Teach Dhiarmada Ltd	Upgrade floor	€9,200.00
The Ballymore Eustace Community Trust (AKA The Bandhall)	Fire alarm and lighting upgrade	€10,000.00
The Peoples Market Monasterevin	High tables, chairs, defibrillator cases	€3,608.99
Willow Community Counselling Services	Wooden flooring, gas boiler, table, chairs	€7,696.80
Total LEP 2025 Capital/Equipment Funding Awarded		€198,448.57
23rd Kildare Sallins Scouts	Electricity	€700.00
Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association	Heating, Alarm, Fire Safety, Insurance	€1,000.00
19th Kildare Salesians Scout Group	Electricity, Sewerage Costs	€375.01
4th Kildare Town Scout Group	Rent	€1,000.00
8th Kildare Allenwood Scout Group	Electricity, Fire Alarm Maintenance	€458.54



Group/Organisation Name	Description	Amount Awarded
9th Kildare Kilcullen Scouts	Electricity, Insurance	€616.35
Anne Street Residents Association	Insurance, Bins, Broadband	€1,000.00
Arch Athy Community Hall	Electricity, Gas	€1,000.00
Ardclough Village Centre Ltd	Electricity	€700.00
Happy Days Community Childcare Athy	Electricity	€1,000.00
Athy Community Men's Shed	Rent	€1,000.00
Athy Women's Shed	Insurance	€280.00
Balyna Rural Enterprise Development Association Ltd.	Printer rental	€1,000.00
Bishopsland Awareness Committee	Broadband	€343.28
Caragh Community Centre	Electricity	€498.98
Caragh Community Park Limited	Landscape maintenance	€700.00
Carbury Ladies group	Insurance, Bus	€419.23
Castledermot First Responders Group	Insurance, Rent, Garda Vetting	€476.75
Castledermot Youth Club	Rent	€300.00
Griese Youth Theatre & Children's Drama	Bins, Pest Control	€757.95
Hope Cottage	Electricity	€972.51
Irish Wheelchair Association Athy.	Gas	€1,000.00
Johnstownbridge Men's Shed	Rent	€1,000.00
Kilcock Scouts (St Cocas Scout Hall)	Insurance	€700.00
Kildare Downs Syndrome Ireland	Rent	€1,000.00
Kildare Town Community & Family Resource Centre	Electricity	€1,000.00
Kildare Town Community First Responders	Insurance, Mediana Pads, IT software	€421.11
Kildare Town Youth Hub (The Hive)	Insurance, Heating	€1,000.00
Larries on the Move	Rent	€710.00
Leixlip Men's Shed	Insurance, Electricity	€363.18
Maynooth Autism Friendly Town	Insurance	€275.28
Mná Beoga	Rent, Insurance	€1,000.00
Monasterevin Women's Shed	Insurance, phone	€1,000.00
Monasterevin Tidy Towns	Accountant fees	€1,000.00
Naas Arch Club	Rent, Affiliation Fees, Insurance	€1,000.00



Group/Organisation Name	Description	Amount Awarded
Naas Community Men's Shed	Oil, Insurance	€700.00
Naas Women's Shed	Insurance, Rent	€700.00
Newbridge Family Resource Centre	Heating	€1,000.00
Newtown Ladies Club	Rent, Insurance	€447.50
Peter Bradley Foundation T/A Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Rent	€1,000.00
PlayActing Youth Theatre	Rent	€500.00
Rathangan Community Association	Electricity, Insurance	€1,000.00
Ryston Sports and Social Club	Electricity	€700.00
Sallins Sunshine Club	Insurance	€295.00
Sallins Women's Shed	Insurance	€292.00
ShareRing Skills Community Group	Website Domain, Bee Training, Running costs	€533.84
Space2be CLG	Insurance	€900.00
Straffan Community Association Ltd	Electricity	€635.06
Teach Dhiarmada Ltd	Accountant, Gas, Electricity	€1,000.00
The Ballymore Eustace Community Trust (AKA The Bandhall)	Insurance	€1,000.00
Young Life Ireland	Rent	€420.00
Total LEP 2025 Running Costs Funding Awarded		€37,191.57



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

