

The background of the cover features a photograph of the Wexford County Council building, a modern structure with a glass facade and a blue metal framework on the roof. To the right of the building is a large, stylized sculpture of a person in a dynamic pose, set within a blue archway. The top and bottom corners of the cover are decorated with diagonal stripes in shades of blue, purple, and yellow.

Wexford  
County  
Council's

# Annual Report 2023

Adopted on 13th May 2024



Comhairle Contae  
Loch Garman  
Wexford  
County Council

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our aim is to lead the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Wexford and to provide high-quality services at local level.

The council will use all its available resources and work in partnership with others to overcome infrastructural deficits that inhibit the county's economic development.

The council is committed to building strong sustainable communities with enhanced education and better employment opportunities for all our people.

Our aim is to lead the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Wexford and to provide high-quality services at local level.

The council will use all its available resources and work in partnership with others to overcome infrastructural deficits that inhibit the county's economic development.

The council is committed to building strong sustainable communities with enhanced education and better employment opportunities for all our people.

We will promote County Wexford nationally and internationally as an exceptional place to live, visit and invest in.

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## CATHAOIRLEACH'S INTRODUCTION

### to Annual Report 2023



It was an honour and privilege to be elected as Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council at the Annual meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 for the final year of the current Council I was proud to lead my fellow Councillors as we continued to work alongside the Chief Executive, Management Team and staff throughout 2023 in delivering a comprehensive range of high-quality services to the people of Wexford.

The year saw continued collaboration with the various statutory, voluntary and community bodies to achieve the Corporate Plan's objectives to make Wexford a better place to live, work and visit. This included the progression of specific initiatives and the further development of services.

It was also a particularly challenging year regarding exceptional weather events and emergencies. I wish to thank the various staff teams and volunteers who work tirelessly, often in difficult and challenging situations to ensure the safety of our citizens and the preservation of property in an ever-increasing occurrence of severe weather events. In this context I was pleased to be part of the democratic process of signing off on the Draft Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 going forward for public consultation, in October 2023.

There was continued investment in public realm improvements with interventions which will unlock the potential of the county and help it grow and prosper as a major tourist destination. A significant project worthy of special mention is the opening of Phase 1 of the Southeast Greenway in July 2023. This 6km stretch of spectacular off-road cycling and walking from New Ross to Glenmore is the first part to be opened of the 24km of the Southeast Greenway, which when fully completed, will run to the quays in Waterford City.

Wexford County Council remains committed to supporting a Healthy Wexford where each person can enjoy physical and mental health and well-being to his or her full potential from the youngest to the oldest across our communities. During 2023, Wexford County Council, Slainte Care Healthy Communities and Healthy Wexford programmes supported this objective including:

- Development of the Enniscorthy 'Learn to Cycle Park'.
- Provision of Calisthenics equipment at Maudlintown
- Provision of Oilgate Playground
- Taghmon Camross Community Car initiative
- Support for Enniscorthy Community Allotment's sensory garden and Geodesic Dome
- Development of the Happy to Chat Initiative

In December I was delighted to sign a Framework Agreement with Wexford Local Development which will provide up to 15.5 million euro for social inclusion and related services over the next 5 years.

The Community Recognition Fund provided funding for 27 projects across the County to acknowledge the efforts of local communities, in welcoming and hosting new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries, in a spirit of inclusion and integration. The programme specifically targeted areas with the highest numbers of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection Orders and International Protection Applicants, funding projects for the benefit of all members of the community.

Many more exciting and ambitious projects were commenced during the year, while others, developed in previous years were substantially progressed. You will find opportunity throughout this publication to review some of those projects and initiatives.

I look forward to building on this progress throughout 2024 and wish to thank the Chief Executive, Management and Staff for their support and dedication.

Cllr. John Fleming

Cathaoirleach

## INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

### to Annual Report 2023

As Interim Chief Executive of Wexford County Council, I welcome the publication of the 2023 Annual Report. It reports on a year of further in making Wexford the best place to live, work, visit and do business, and so delivering on the objectives of the 2019-2024 Corporate Plan

Housing provision remained a key priority, with over 170 new social homes provided across a range of delivery streams, with 96.5% of our new social housing target achieved. Wexford County Council introduced Choice Based Letting in August 2023 and the 5 months

to year end saw significant positive interest and some 74 properties made available for allocation.

To further support home ownership and to help address dereliction and vacancy a Regeneration Unit was established. The unit amalgamates the Regeneration and Vacant Homes business areas and has led the establishment of Town Centre First Teams in both New Ross and Enniscorthy. In addition, 66 vacant homes refurbishment grants were approved under the new Croí Cónaithe Fund in 2023.

Wexford County Council continues to be an advocate for Climate Action. We are required to identify and implement a range of actions under a new Climate Action Plan to help meet targets of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and the longer-term goal of a climate neutral by no later than 2050. A new Climate Action Team of three was formed in early 2023 and the team developed a Wexford County Council Draft Climate Action Plan, which went for public consultation in October. The Plan will be the roadmap for delivering on our Climate Action ambitions and is to be adopted in early 2024.

In January the process to acquire lands for a new Southeast Technological University (SETU) campus at Killeen's was formalised. The Master Plan proposals for the SETU Campus and a large-scale sports complex which includes the relocation of the Wexford FC Stadium and facilities from



Ferrycarrig Park were presented to the elected members at their November meeting. This transformational project which spans over 120 acres at Killeens and Clonard will also provide for over 600 social, affordable and private homes, 2 new schools and supporting community facilities.

In March Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) announced that Wexford was chosen to host the 2024 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. The announcement that the world's largest celebration of Irish music, song and dance was to be held in Wexford was received with much excitement and jubilation. I would like to pay particular tribute to our elected members, who voted unanimously to provide budgetary support from the Council towards this event which will generate an estimated €50m in the local economy.

March also saw Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien perform the official 'turning of the sod' of Phase 1 of the iconic waterfront development at Trinity Wharf, currently the most significant job creation initiative for County Wexford and the South East region. The development of Trinity Wharf is a landmark investment which will significantly enhance Wexford Town's profile as an attractive environment for international companies seeking to locate in the county, and for existing companies looking to expand, providing property solutions to meet investors' expectations.

The continued progress across many areas of importance for our citizens during 2023 reflects the dedication and positive engagement by our Elected Members whose ongoing support is greatly appreciated. I also want to express my sincere thanks to the Management Team and all members of staff for their loyalty and commitment as we continue in our mission to provide services of the highest quality to the people of Wexford.

Eddie Taaffe

Interim Chief Executive

## ELECTED MEMBERS

### WEXFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT



Cllr Garry Laffan Fianna Fáil



Cllr George Lawlor Labour Party



Cllr Maura Bell Labour Party



Cllr Tom Forde Sinn Fein



Cllr John Hegarty Fine Gael



Cllr David Hynes Sinn Fein



Cllr Leonard Kelly Non-Party

## ENNISCORTHY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr. John O' Rourke, Non-Party



Cllr. Aidan Browne, Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Fine Gael



Cllr. Jackser Owens, Non-Party



Cllr. Cathal Byrne, Fine Gael



Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy, Fianna Fáil

**GOREY KILMUCKRIDGE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr Donal Kenny Fianna Fáil



Cllr Willie Kavanagh Fianna Fáil



Cllr Mary Farrell Non-Party



Cllr Andrew Bolger Fianna Fáil



Cllr Diarmuid Devereux  
Fine Gael



Cllr Oliver Walsh  
Fine Gael



Cllr. Anthony Donohoe  
Fine Gael



Cllr Joe Sullivan Fianna Fáil



Cllr Pip Breen Fianna Fáil



Cllr Fiontán Ó Suilleabháin  
Sinn Fein

**NEW ROSS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr John Fleming Fianna Fáil



Cllr Michael Whelan Fianna Fáil



Cllr Michael Sheehan Fianna Fáil



Cllr Anthony Connick Non-Party



Cllr Brídín Murphy Fine Gael



Cllr Pat Barden Non-Party

**ROSSLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr Lisa McDonald Fianna Fáil



Cllr Jim Codd Aontú



Cllr Jim Moore Fine Gael



Cllr Ger Carthy Non-Party



Cllr Frank Staples Fine Gael

## STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES (SPCs)

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### PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

There were three Planning and Building Control SPC Meetings held in 2023:  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

#### **Members:**

Cllr. John Hegarty, Chairperson  
Cllr. Anthony Donohoe  
Cllr. Garry Laffan  
Cllr. Bridin Murphy  
Mr. Tom Doyle (Agriculture/Farming)  
Mr. Anthony Neville (CIF)  
Mr. Zeno Winkens (PPE Environment)

The key items for discussion during 2023 were as follows:

Draft Taking in Charge Policy, Local Area Plans, Pre-Planning Meetings, Town Centre First, Heritage/Biodiversity, E-Planning, Wexford Heritage Regeneration Plan, Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Land Value Sharing and Urban Development Zone Bill, Active Travel, URDF Call 3 – Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, New Draft Planning Legislation/ Guidelines and Designated Marine Area Plan (DMAP).

## **ECONOMIC & ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

There were five Economic & Enterprise SPC Meetings held in 2023:

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February (special LECP), Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July (special LECP) and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

### **Members:**

Cllr. Michael Whelan, Chairperson

Cllr. Aidan Browne

Cllr. John Fleming

Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy

Cllr. George Lawlor

Cllr. Ger Carthy

Cllr. Michael Sheehan

Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan

Cllr. Cathal Byrne

Mr Joe Breen (Agriculture/Farming)

Mt. John Doyle (CIF)

Mr. Niall Slattery (Business/Commercial)

Mr. Ernest Levingstone (Business/Commercial)

Mr. Dave Morris (Trade Union)

Mr. Seamus Murphy (PPN Community & Voluntary)

Mr. Senan O'Reilly (PPN - Environment)

Ms. Mary B O'Leary (PPN Social Inclusion)

Ms. Liz Hore (Wexford County Council)

Ms. Breege Cosgrave (Wexford County Council)

Ms. Angela Lawless (Wexford County Council)

Mr. Billy Byrne (Wexford County Council)

The key items for discussion during 2023 were as follows:

Preparation for LECP, Town Centre First policies, Trinity Wharf, Enniscorthy Technology Park, John Street Building Regeneration Project, Oyster Lane Car Park, Gorey Market House, Wexford Art Centre, High Hill New Ross, Adoration Convent, Wexfordia Projects, South East Greenway, HPBA/Nzeb, Remote Working Hubs, Rebellion 225, Ireland South East Development Office updates, SETU updates, Rose of Tralee 2023, IHF occupancy, Savannah delegations, Chinese delegations, Tourism Ireland collaborative competition in Bilboa, Fáilte Ireland Meitheal 2023, Monck Street canopy, International marketing,

## **TRANSPORTATION AND WATER SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

This committee met twice during 2023 to discuss the following matters:

- N25 Rosslare Europort Access Scheme
- N11 / N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme
- Roadworks Programme Update
- Water Services Programme Update
- Speed Limit Update & Review
- Active Travel initiatives
- Review of Parking Operations
- Continuation of Public Lighting upgrade scheme

### **Members:**

Cllr. P. Breen, Chairperson

Cllr. A. Connick

Cllr. A. Bolger

Cllr. W. Kavanagh

Cllr. P. Barden

Cllr. D. Devereux

Mr. John Waters (PPN Community & Voluntary)

Mr. Tom Logan (PPN Social Inclusion)

Mr. Eoin Neville (CIF)

Ms. Emer Ward (Trade Union)

Mr. Brendan Crowley (Business/Commercial)

## **CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

The CCBDENV SPC Committee met 5 times during the year on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> December

### **Members:**

Cllr. M. Farrell (Chairperson)

Cllr. T. Forde

Cllr. L. Kelly

Cllr. D. Kenny

Cllr. M. Bell

Cllr. J. Moore

Cllr. O. Walsh

Mr. Allen Holman (PPN - Community & Voluntary)

Mr. Kevin Molloy (PPN - Social Inclusion)

Mr. Danny Forde (PPN - Environment)

Mr. Anne Marie Neville (CIF)

Mr. Joe Ryan (Trade Union)

Ms. Mary Walsh (Business/Commercial)

Mr. James Brennan (Agriculture/Farming)

The Committee dealt with regular reports on the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 implementation, Coastal Management Reports, Biodiversity Reports, Waste Management Enforcement Reports, Reports on Environment Education & Awareness Activities, The Wexford County Draft Climate Action Plan was recommended for public consultation. The Draft Report of the Litter Waste and Waste Sub-Committee was adopted as was the Draft Litter Management Plan 2024-2027 was recommended for public consultation as were New Ross Port Pilotage Byelaws. There were presentations by LAWPRO on water quality in the County and the new Deposit and Return Scheme for plastic bottles & cans.

## **HOUSING & COMMUNITY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

There are 12 members on the Housing and Community Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) which includes elected councillors, representatives of farming interests, trade unions and community and voluntary members. The committee is tasked to advise and assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy.

The principal areas of activity include issues such as Housing, Community, Libraries, Arts Service and Emergency Services.

### **Members:**

Chair - Cllr. J. Sullivan (Gorey)  
Cllr. J. Codd (Rosslare)  
Cllr. J. O'Rourke (Enniscorthy)  
Cllr. F. O 'Suilleabháin (Gorey)  
Cllr. D. Hynes (Wexford)  
Cllr. F. Staples (Rosslare)  
Cllr. J. Owens (Enniscorthy)  
Cllr. L. McDonald (Rosslare)  
Mr. William Considine (PPN Community & Voluntary)  
Ms. Anne Sharry (PPN Social Inclusion)  
Mr. Michael Wall (Trade Union)  
Ms. Alice Doyle (Agriculture/Farming)

The Committee met four times in 2023. Among the policies and programmes discussed by the Committee during the year were the following:

- Mid- Term Review of the Traveller Accommodation Plan
- Review of allocation Scheme
- Choice Based Letting
- Affordable Housing
- Strategic Plan for Housing Disabled People 2021 – 2026
- Homeless Service – Homeless Action Plan 2023 – 2026 approved.

## JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE (JPC)

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The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) serves as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area. The JPC aims to develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Local Authorities, elected local representatives and relevant agencies.

The 28 members of the JPC are drawn from Elected Members, Oireachtas Members, Council Staff, staff of An Garda Síochána, and representatives from community and other relevant agencies.

The JPC meets on a quarterly basis. Meetings in 2023 were held on the following dates:

- 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023
- 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (Joint Meeting between Wexford and Wicklow JPCs)

Key items in 2023 were as follows:

- Municipal District Reports & Chief Superintendent's Reports at each meeting, indicating crime statistics and trends throughout the County, and the measures being taken by An Garda Síochána to combat same
- Ongoing discussions regarding Community CCTV schemes and submission of same to the National CCTV committee for approval
- Acquisition of the Property Marking Device and rollout of associated Crime Prevention Scheme
- Presentation on Animal Control from the Environment Department, Wexford County Council
- Presentation on the SAFE Youth Diversion Project by Tommy Byrne of FAB Coolcotts
- Presentation on the Garda Operating Model by Drew Harris, Garda Commissioner (joint meeting with Wicklow JPC)

# WEXFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT



## WEXFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT

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During 2023 Wexford Borough District continued to experience growth and positive development, fostering collaborative approaches with the business sector, local groups, and communities to strengthen and respond to economic, social, and cultural opportunities for Wexford Town and District.

Throughout the year, the elected members and staff were to the forefront working collaboratively with various key stakeholders to promote the development of the district and the Wexford band while ensuring consistent delivery of high-quality public services.

### **Active Travel Scheme**

Works commenced on the Newtown Road Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme, Wexford Town.

Discussions are ongoing with the National Transport Authority regarding the design of the Beechlawn / Clonard Avenue Cycle Scheme, Wexford Town

The design for the R730 Roxborough Phase 1 (Danone to Coolballow Junction) is to be forwarded to the National Transport Authority for approval.

### Light Segregation Cycle Schemes

- o Works will be integrated into main Newtown Road cycle schemes.
- o Road selected for this scheme also include cycle lanes on Drinagh Road R730 and Ardcahan Road R741

## **ROADS PROGRAMME**

2023 saw further significant investment in the town and wider district under the Roads Restoration Improvement and Maintenance Programme.

### **Restoration Improvement Programme**

- R730-31 Redmond Square to Westgate\*\*\*
- R889-1 *School Street*\*\*\*
- L-3005-1 Crossabeg junction\*\*\*
- L-3504-1 Grogans Road\*\*\*
- L3505-1 *Faythe*\*\*\*
- L-7511-1 Rowe Street\*\*\*
- L6094-4/3 Corlican Killurin
- L7001-1 Ballinesker\*\*\*
- L-7532-1 John's Gate\*\*\*
- L30051-1 Ballyboggan Upper
- Additional Works
- L-7007-4 Castlebridge – Woodview to Figtree
- L-3001-1 Curracloe to soccer pitch
- L-3009-1 Glynn
- L-7001-1 Curracloe to Ballinesker

### Restoration Maintenance Programme.

L-2045-7	Declan's Pub
L-3001-1	Curracloe to Screen
L-7007-4	Ballymartin to Castlebridge
L-7017-7	Blackhall Lane
L-7018-1	Blackhall to Tomcoole

### Low-Cost Safety

Pedestrian Crossing Presentation Secondary School – narrowing of the road, sustainable drainage, pocket garden, pull in area, belisha beacon pedestrian crossing completed.

Pedestrian Crossing at Fishers Row – one way system on Fishers Row, narrowing of the road at crossing, narrowing of the exit on the Faythe, barriers for entrance to school, belisha beacon pedestrian crossing, ramp prior to crossing completed.

### TRAFFIC AND CAR PARKING BYE-LAWS, 2023

The Wexford Borough Traffic and Car Parking Bye-Laws, 2023, following public consultation, were adopted by Members on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2023. The bye-laws required amendment to allow for the one-way traffic flow system at Fisher's Row and the inclusion of additional loading bays in the town.

### RECYCLE BIN PILOT SCHEME

A recycle bin trial in 4 locations in the town centre in partnership with Big Belly Bins was trialled in 2023. Although the rate of correct recycling increased overtime there was some contamination in the recycling. The trail will continue with signage being added to the bins of the most common contaminated materials to try to increase compliance.

## **PLANNING**

### **Local Area Plan**

Work commenced on the Wexford Local Area Plan in 2023. The plan will set out the spatial planning strategy for the town to ensure the town can grow, support employment and homes and can do so sustainably and successfully. A publicity campaign was launched to actively engage the public to participate in the development of the plan so as to achieve the consensus and support of all of those with an interest in the town's future is critical to making a successful plan which has a shared vision for the future of the town and a plan which people want to see implemented. This initial public consultation stage ran from Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

The Wexford Town Local Area Plan (LAP) 2024-2030 Pre-draft Consultation Report was completed in November 2023 and will be submitted to the Elected Members of the Council for their consideration as part of the preparation of the Draft LAP.

Once the Draft LAP is finalised, it will be placed on public display and there will be a period of public consultation on the Draft LAP. This public consultation period, which is likely to take place during Q2, 2024, will run for a minimum period of six weeks during which time people will be able to make written submissions and observations on the Draft LAP

## **ECONOMIC**

### **Monck Street Canopy**

Works on the installation of the retractable roof over Monck Street commenced in 2023. Funding for the canopy was secured from Failte Ireland under the Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme. This canopy is the first of its kind in Ireland and will add a unique opportunity for outdoor hospitality in the heart of Wexford Town. The canopy will be completed in 2024.



## **Trinity Wharf Development**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 Mr. Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, officially 'turned the sod' on the €110 million investment project at Trinity Wharf. The Trinity Wharf project is one of the most significant job creation initiatives for County Wexford and the Southeast region, with Phase 1 of the iconic waterfront development at Trinity Wharf.

Under the Urban Regeneration Fund / Project 2040, €20 million has been allocated to the project.

In line with Project Ireland 2040's goal to make Ireland "a better country for all", the revitalisation of Wexford harbour offers the opportunity to develop a sustainable and exemplary town and regional development in Southeast Ireland



## **Bid for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 following a successful bid campaign, Wexford town was chosen to host the 2024 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ).

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the world's largest celebration of Irish traditional music, language, songs and dance, and hosting Fleadh 2024 will require a significant body of work, with input from all relevant stakeholders required to ensure the event runs smoothly. The event will provide an opportunity to showcase the town at its best with the potential for a huge economic and cultural boost to the town.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Wexford Tidy Towns**

Wexford Tidy Towns were once again delighted to receive a Gold Medal in the National Tidy Towns competition announced in October 2023. This is a huge recognition of the ongoing work and dedication of the local Tidy Towns Committee and volunteers.



## **PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**

### **The Walls of Wexford Art Project**

Wexford Borough District continued to work in collaboration with Wexford Arts Centre in 2023 to manage and delivery of the remaining street art murals in Wexford Town.

A total of eight of the murals were completed by the end of year along the “Cultural Spine” from Westgate to Peter Street, which adds to the rich heritage of the town and this area.



## **Shopfront Improvement Scheme**

Wexford Borough District devised a grant scheme to support businesses in the town to renovate the front façade of their building, both ground and upper floors.

The scheme was very successful with a total of 56 applications and committed expenditure of €90,712 in grant aid at the year end.

As part of the scheme, the owner of an unoccupied premises on the South Main Street permitted Wexford Borough District to display a photo gallery of different images relating to the town's history serving to enhance the building.



## **CCTV PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

A review of the current CCTV Scheme was carried out and it was agreed to increase the number of cameras in the town centre and to extend the use of cameras to include Min Ryan Park and Redmond Park

Following the statutory public consultation process a Section 38 application was submitted to the Garda Commissioner for approval on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for the existing 33 cameras across 18 locations, a further 16 cameras, at 12 new locations which combined will provide a total of 49 cameras across the Wexford Scheme.

## **COMMUNITY**

### **Community Supports**

The scheme of Amenity, Arts and Residents Association Grants provides much needed assistance to community and voluntary groups and to committees in local housing estates. In

2023, 38 Amenity Grants were awarded totalling €30,000, 22 Arts Grants, totalling €19,000 and 38 Residents Association Grants, totalling €17,100, were awarded.

## **FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMME**

Wexford Borough District promotes and supports a vibrant festival programme throughout the district each year. The following events took place during the year.

- St. Patricks Day Festival
- Wexford Motor Show
- Wexford Half Marathon
- National Services Da
- Park Live Music Festival
- Culture Night
- Wexford's Medieval Walled Town Day in conjunction with National Heritage Week.
- Wexford Stages Rally Ceremonial Start and Pairc Feirme
- Wexford Spiegeltent Festival
- Wexford Opera Festival
- Wexford Festival Art Trail
- Art in the Open
- Frederick Douglas Festival
- Wexford Christmas Winterland Programme.



Video of Walled Town Day can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/NaueQhRZl>

## **HERITAGE LED REGENERATION PLAN**

Urban Scale Interventions, Belfast were appointed the contract for the preparation of a Heritage Led Regeneration Plan for Wexford Town, which was funded by the Heritage Council.

Following various meetings, site surveys and workshops attended by key stakeholders and a public consultation process the plan was unanimously adopted by Members at the Ordinary Meeting of Wexford Borough District on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 and officially launched on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June in Wexford Arts Centre.

The plan will form the basis of the Council's strategy for heritage-led regeneration of the town, to support a high quality of life for its citizens, now and into the future.

## **CIVIC HONOURS/EVENTS**

Wexford Borough District hosted several civic and mayoral receptions during 2023. The following groups and individuals were honoured by the mayor.

- Wexford Soroptimists
- Wexford Harbour Boat & Tennis Club
- Church of Ireland Synod
- Mr. Michael Benson, Film Producer
- Wexford Lions Club
- Mr. Frank Flanagan Marine Watch
- Ms. Michelle O'Neill, International Referee
- Dynamic Kick Boxing
- Wexford Handballers
- Loch Garman Band

### **May Day Ceremony – 1911 Lock Out Gate**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2023 the Annual May Day ceremony and wreath laying took place at the Lock Out Gate in the Faythe, where the Mayor Cllr. M. Bell laid a wreath in remembrance of the leaders of the 1911 Lock Out and 700 men and their families who were affected by the Lock Out

### **Commodore John Barry Commemorative Ceremony**

The 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Commodore John Barry Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony took place on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June. Guest of honour Minister James Browne T.D. addressed the gathering. Wreaths were laid by Minister Browne on behalf of the Irish Government and Lt. Col. Thomas Nolta on behalf of the United States of America.



### **Remembrance Sunday**

The Annual Remembrance Day Service in St. Iberius Church was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> November. Afterwards, His Worship the Mayor Cllr. J. Hegarty laid a wreath at the War Memorial Monument in Redmond Square.

## **MV Kerlogue 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2023, a wreath laying ceremony was held on Wexford Quay front to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the heroic actions of the crew of the Wexford merchant ship, who intervened to save the lives of 168 German sailors in the aftermath of a World War II naval battle in the Bay of Biscay.

Wreaths were laid at the MV Kerlogue monument by His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. J. Hegarty and Ms. Wiebke Hochhaus, whose grandfather Richard Langes was one of the rescued soldiers.



## **REBELLION 225 COMMEMORATION EVENTS**

In April, 2023 Wexford County Council received an allocation under the Historical Strand of the Decade of Centenaries Programme 2023 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media towards hosting a number of commemorative events across the county to mark the anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford.

Wexford Borough District hosted two events as follows:

### **Battle of Three Rocks Commemoration Ceremony**

On Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, The Battle of Three Rocks was commemorated at a ceremony at Three Rocks 1798 Monument and Battlefield Site.

Mr. Tom Wickham, a member of the original Three Rocks Commemorative Group laid a wreath at the Three Rocks monument, and a wreath was laid at the Battlefield Site by Her Worship the Mayor, Cllr. Maura Bell.

Historian Dr. Ronan O’Flaherty enthralled all present, with a talk on the events leading up to the rebels setting up camp at the Three Rocks. Weapons used during the battle, including a pike, replica brown-bess musk, musket balls and a carbine gun were demonstrated to the captive audience. At the Battlefield Site, Dr. O’Flaherty continued the account of the battle and how the redcoats were overwhelmed by the rebels led by Thomas Clooney and John Kelly. He highlighted the importance of the Battle of Three Rocks, which led to the declaration of the Wexford Republic. This is significant in Irish history in that this is where the first republic originates that is subsequently reaffirmed in 1916 at the G.P.O.

The ceremony concluded with a performance of “The Rocks” sung by local man, Mr. Phil Berry.

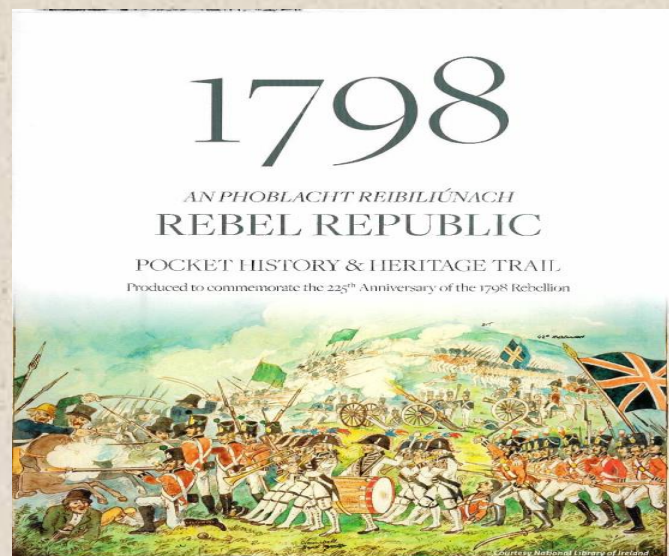


### **Wexford Town’s Rebellion Commemoration Event**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 a ceremony was held to commemorate Wexford Town’s Rebellion. Her Worship the Mayor, Cllr. M. Bell opened the ceremony in Wexford Arts Centre. An overview of the rebellion event was presented by Ms. Celestine Murphy, Historian, with Brian Ó’ Cléirigh, Historian providing an interesting lecture on the setting up and importance of the Wexford Republic.

This was followed by a walking tour, facilitated by Ms. Celestine Murphy, to key locations within the town. The ceremony concluded with a wreath being laid by Her Worship the Mayor, Cllr Maura Bell, at the Pikeman Monument in The Bullring.

The map used for the walking tour was developed for an historical walking trail of the town.



# ENNISCORTHY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



## ENNISCORTHY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

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The staff and elected members of the Enniscorthy Municipal District continued to work together successfully throughout 2023. They were committed to delivering high quality services, building productive working relationships with local stakeholders and championing issues of importance to the district. This commitment underpins a shared vision to develop the Enniscorthy District as a location of choice to live, work and visit.

A total of eleven monthly district meetings were held with the elected members along with several other subcommittee meetings with other stake holders.

Enniscorthy town is on the cusp of significant change in its landscape with a number of major infrastructure projects planned for the town.

Enniscorthy Municipal District implemented the following work programme for 2023, supporting an inter departmental approach with Wexford County Council:

## **Streetscape Enhancement Scheme**

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced funding of €100,000 for the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022 for County Wexford. Enniscorthy Town was selected by management of Wexford County Council as the beneficiary of this grant funding for 2022. The scheme is designed to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades of defined areas within the selected town under the Government’s 5-year strategy “Our Rural Future”. Applications were received in 2023 and work was carried out, a total of 18 premises benefited from funding to Enhance the streetscape. Businesses/Owners who took advantage of the scheme have enhanced the look of their buildings in Enniscorthy by cleaning and painting, replacing torn awnings and upgrading their facades and signage. The buildings now look clean and bright, the paint colours were chosen from a heritage pallet provided by a colour consultant.

## **Historic Town Initiative 2023- Heritage Led Plan Enniscorthy**

Wexford County Council were successful in securing €40,000 in funding from the Heritage Council to develop a heritage-led plan for Enniscorthy which will examine the existing heritage of the town and determine what conservation focused interventions are required. A public consultation event was held in the Market Square and Enniscorthy Municipal District offices for Heritage week. An engagement board was set up by the consultants Urban Scale Interventions for the public to have their say.

A Stakeholder engagement meeting was held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September followed by a walkabout tour of the town and its heritage sites. The resulting plan will be used to inform future grant applications for capital works.

## **ENNISCORTHY TECHNOLOGY PARK, KILLAGOLEY**

The Enniscorthy Technology Park is located alongside the old N11 to the south of Enniscorthy. The site is approximately 14.5 HA and Wexford County Council is developing the lands as a technology park with associated services infrastructure to facilitate investment by the science and technology sectors.



Phase 1 – the development of three serviced sites is substantially complete and the construction of the first building is well under way.

### **Murphy Floods Redevelopment**

Wexford County Council has recently acquired the former Murphy Floods Hotel site, and adjacent derelict properties, in Enniscorthy Town Centre. The Council now seeks to advance a proposal to redevelop this vacant plot, which has previously secured Part 8 consent in July 2022. O'Connor Sutton Cronin Consulting Engineers were appointed in May 2023 to undertake full stage design services for the demolition and site preparation elements of the scheme.

A tender competition to appoint a works contractor for the demolition works onsite has commenced and tender assessment is underway. Phase 1 works anticipated to commence onsite in Q1 2024.

### **Templeshannon Regeneration, Enniscorthy**

The Templeshannon Regeneration Strategy identifies a number of enabling projects required to achieve regeneration, including:

- Improving the public realm and streetscape in Templeshannon area
- Establishing a new link to the town centre by construction of a new pedestrian bridge
- The management and progressive transformation of the Leisure Centre Car Park
- The creation of new urban blocks for infill development.

The site investigation (SI) work for the pedestrian bridge has been completed. The preliminary design and bridge options report has been completed taking account of the results of the SI works and is currently under review.

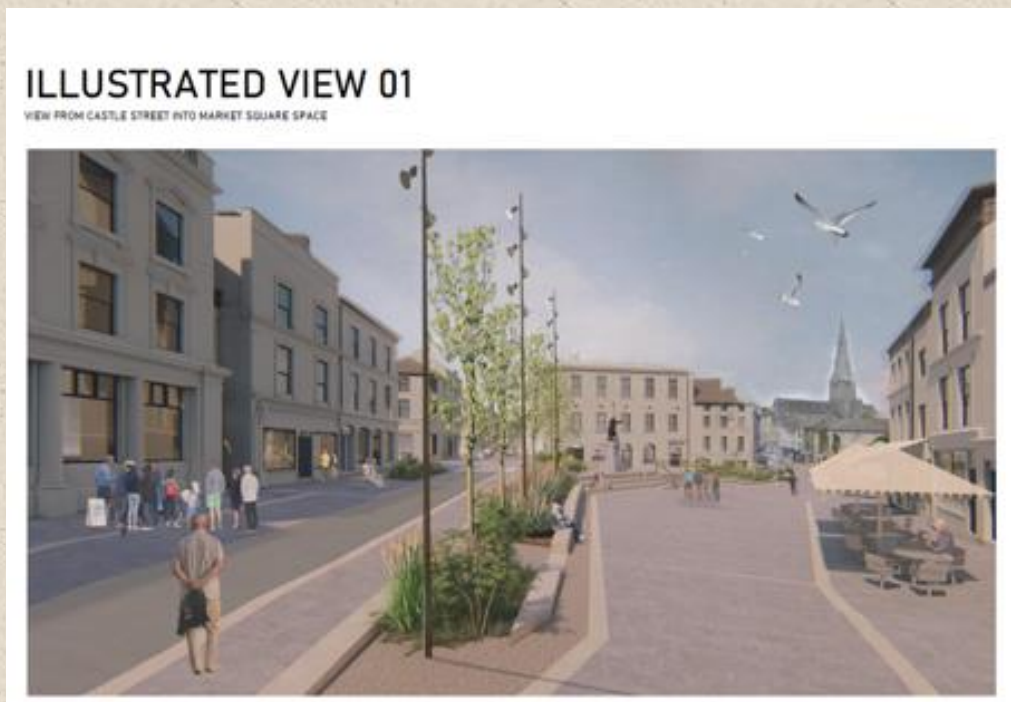
Wexford County Council is engaged with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in regard to a further funding application to support regeneration in Enniscorthy. The planning Department is working in collaboration with Special Projects to develop a strategic plan for Enniscorthy and is currently being drafted.

ODKM Architects have been appointed to undertake concept master planning design services for the Templeshannon Regeneration Project. This masterplan will be completed in time for the forthcoming Urban Regeneration and Development Fund application.

### **Enniscorthy Town Centre & Tourism Project**

The Planning Department in collaboration with Special Projects has developed a strategic plan for Enniscorthy town centre, which was adopted at the Enniscorthy MD meeting in December 2022.

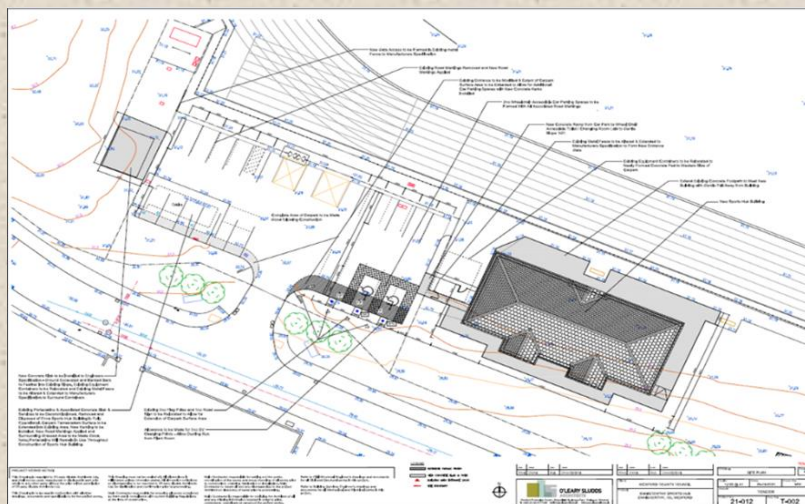
Regeneration works to the Market Square, Enniscorthy Castle Quarter and Templeshannon will form part of a forthcoming Call 4 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund application. The Part 8 process for Market Square and town centre street enhancement was commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which was designed by Moloney O’Beirne Architects & Roughan & O’Donovan Consulting Engineers. Preliminary design work on the Enniscorthy Castle Quarter project has now also commenced and it is intended to submit a Part 8 planning application for this in Q1 2024.



## **Enniscorthy Sports Hub**

O'Leary Sludds Architects were appointed in Feb 2021 for the detailed design, procurement of works contractor and construction management of the Sport Hub building. A competition to award a works contract for the sports hub building was advertised in May 2022. The lowest price tender opened for the project exceeded the available budget and, therefore, it has been decided not to progress with awarding this works contract. A redesign process for the project has been completed, and it is expected to retender the project in early 2024.

Enniscorthy Municipal District have secured additional athletics equipment which will be available to all users in 2024 and this will allow the hosting of National Events at the Sports Hub. A user-friendly online booking system has been acquired along with an assessment on the track which will be progressed in 2024.



## **Old Dublin Road Business Park, Enniscorthy**

A contract for the initial phase 1 works was advertised in January 2022. Hughes and Hennessey Ltd were appointed to commence construction of the ENBD – Enniscorthy North Business District (Old Dublin Road) Phase 1. This work involved the enhancement and improvement of the footpath streetscape, enhanced gateways and pedestrian safety. This stage 1 of the project included footpath, drainage and road improvements together with the installation of two bellisa beacon pedestrian crossings. This work was completed in September 2022.

An application for further funding has been prepared and submitted to the National Transport Authority, in conjunction with the Roads & Transportation Section, for the active travel elements of the masterplan. No funding was forthcoming for 2023.

## **Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme**

**Statutory Process** - The Minister for the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) issued his decision to refuse the scheme on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Details are available on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie). Following the decision, the Office Public Works confirmed their commitment to delivering an effective scheme for Enniscorthy. The Minister for State, Mr Patrick O'Donovan, and senior officials from the Office of Public Works & Wexford County Council attended a special meeting of Enniscorthy MDC on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to update the members in relation to the Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme. The minister supported a Wexford County Council proposal to progress the new River Slaney Bridge element of the scheme and the Flood Defence Works as separate projects.

### **Flood Defence Scheme – Phase 1**

Wexford County Council is progressing the planning consent for Phase 1 at present. This phase includes the construction of the new River Slaney Road bridge to the south of the town, the removal of the Seamus Rafter Bridge and the construction of a replacement pedestrian bridge. Phase 1 will provide flood relief benefit in the town centre and enable traffic flows in and around the town centre to be managed during the construction of the main flood defence works. The baseline data for this phase is currently being updated. Traffic surveys are complete, ecology survey reports are to be completed in Q1 2024. The planning application is to be submitted in Q1 2025.

### **Flood Defence Scheme – Phase 2**

This phase of the scheme will involve the construction of the main flood relief works for Enniscorthy, including the flood defence walls and in-river works. To progress this phase of the project the baseline data will be updated. The scheme alternatives will be assessed, consulted on publicly and a preferred option identified. It will then be necessary to decide on the most appropriate planning route for the scheme. The hydrology and environmental baseline data is currently being updated; ecology survey reports are to be completed in Q2 2024.



### **Enniscorthy Walking Trails**

Wexford County Council secured grant funding under the Accessibility ORIS Measure 2 Grant in 2021 for the Enniscorthy Riverside Trail. Funding in the amount of €200,000 was awarded for the provision of resurfacing works to the entire riverside trail by the Slaney, 3km and to resurface a track around the Urrin River up to St. John's Bridge, 600m loop. These works will allow accessibility around the Urrin Footbridge. A further €50,000 was granted in 2022, Extending Enniscorthy Walks Project Development Measure and a further €30,000 for the Upgrading River Slaney Banks Trail ORIS Measure 1, works commenced in Q4 of 2023.

### **Vinegar Hill**

Upgrade works commenced on the Vinegar Hill trails on 25<sup>th</sup> September. The overgrowth was cut back, pathways widened and re-surfaced with gravel. The trails will be developed as formal walking trails with appropriate signage. Seating for the trails has been received and will be installed to provide resting areas for users. Upgrade works were also carried out on the monument at Vinegar Hill.

### **Road Transport and Safety**

Enniscorthy Municipal District received funding of €2,082,490 from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under the Restoration Improvement Grant along with funding of €498,027 under the Restoration Maintenance Grant which allowed further improvements to the road network throughout the town and district. Numerous footpaths in the district were also improved in relation to condition and access under Active Travel funding.

The Local Improvement Scheme continued in 2022 and funding of €192,934 was received from the Department of Rural and Community Development, this allowed for the completion of works

to numerous laneways. The Community Involvement Scheme also continued, and this allowed for the completion of drainage and resurfacing works on the public road at Ballinure & Mandoran. Severe weather funding was also received in 2023 to finish all repairs to Bridges that were damaged during floods in 2021 in Enniscorthy Area.

### **Wexford County Council (Enniscorthy Municipal District) Traffic and Car Parking Bye Laws 2023**

At the September monthly meeting of the members of the Municipal District of Enniscorthy adopted the Draft Wexford County Council (Enniscorthy Municipal District) Traffic and Car Parking Bye Laws 2023. The Enniscorthy Municipal District Traffic and Car Parking Bye-Laws 2023 were presented and adopted at the full council meeting on 9th October and came into effect from 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### **CCTV Schemes**

CCTV Schemes for both Enniscorthy and Bunclody were initiated in 2023. The schemes were unanimously approved by the members of the Joint Policing Committee. The public consultation process was carried out and the Section 38 application for both schemes and were verbally approved by The Garda National Advisory Committee. The scheme will be finalised in 2024.

### **Learn to Cycle Park is officially launched in Enniscorthy.**

Enniscorthy Municipal District was delighted to officially launch the new Learn to Cycle Park on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This facility is the first of its kind in County Wexford.

The Learn to Cycle Track will give young children an invaluable space for them to engage with real life road features and its lines, signs, roundabouts and a pedestrian crossing without any vehicular traffic. The park also includes a cycle repair station and a walking track.

The park was funded by Sláintecare and Enniscorthy Municipal District. The Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme (SHCP) is a new initiative, led by Sláintecare and Healthy Ireland in the Department of Health and delivered locally by Wexford County Council. This collaborative approach with local authorities working together with the local community helps us to identify projects that are sustainable and that invoke an improved sense of community’.

This is a fantastic facility, and it will add to the other amenities located in this area including Enniscorthy Community Allotments and Enniscorthy Sports Hub.

### **Ross Road, Enniscorthy All-Weather Astro Pitch**

Sports Capital Grant €300K was received in 2022 for the construction of a new all-weather Astro turf facility for Enniscorthy Municipal District.

The tender was awarded to MGM Partnership Contract Managers & Sole Sports and Leisure for the construction of All-Weather Full Size Playing Pitch with Floodlighting including associated siteworks at Ross Road, Enniscorthy. The official Sod turning took place on Monday 19th June. Works will be completed in 2024.



## **Belfield GAA Complex Development & Public Realm Improvements**

Multi-Million-euro investment with Wexford County Council investing circa €400k of which €150k was secured from Community Recognition Fund for the Redevelopment of entrance to Bellefield GAA grounds & improved Public Realm.

Wexford County Council are delivering Public Car Parking, Pedestrian Crossing, Seating and Playground facility for community use.



## **Bunclody: Public Park & Playground**

Planning permission was lodged for the new public park, car parking, playground, public toilets & associated site at lands adjacent to Market Square providing access to the river Slaney. Expected decision date of May 2024.

## **Orchard Peace Park – Place Making Project**

Wexford County Council and the Irish Architectural Foundation with the co design team at Elements of Action engaged in a place making project to look at ways to enhance the 1.2 ha space for all. Fun interactive workshops were held with the local community to create new ideas and proposals for the Orchard Peace Park that compliments and builds on the existing design to increase the use of the park for everyone.

## **Festivals and Events**

The Enniscorthy Municipal District continued to support community development in 2023 through local festivals and events. Working closely with local groups and committees is a key objective in Wexford County Council's Corporate Plan and we recognise the importance of ensuring the

implementation of a successful festival programme putting Enniscorthy and its surrounds on the map while significantly benefiting the economy of the district.

Under the 2023 Festival Programme the Enniscorthy Municipal District supported a number of festivals, including but not limited to: -

- Ceremonial event on Vinegar Hill on the 7<sup>th</sup> March to commemorate the day the Tricolour was first flown publicly in 1848 in Waterford City by Thomas Francis Meagher and carried in a parade on Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy.
- Easter Monday commemoration.
- St. Patricks Day Parades in a number of towns throughout the district.
- Rockin' Food & Fruit Festival – August Bank Holiday Weekend.
- Street Rhythms Festival – 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- Blackstairs Blues Festival – 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> September.
- Santa's Enchanted Experience.
- Christmas Festivals – Enniscorthy, Ballindaggin, Bree, Bunclody and Ferns.

### **225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1798 Rebellion -26<sup>th</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> June**

Wexford County Council's received funding support of €75,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for the development of a county-wide commemorative programme to mark the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events surrounding the 1798 Rebellion in Co. Wexford. The funding, administered through the Decade of Centenaries Historical Strand, supported a number of specific projects related to commemoration such as public talks, walking tours, demonstrations and a 1798 summer conference in Enniscorthy.

### **Rose of Tralee Tour 2023**

The Rose of Tralee Tour arrived in Enniscorthy on the Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> of August with a very musical welcome to the town. The Roses were met by locals and visitors at Enniscorthy castle and led through the town by St. Colemans Ballandaggin Pipe Band, up to Slaney Street for a meet and greet in The Market Square. Local groups South East Rock 'n' Roll Club and Martina Leacy School of Dance performed on the day. The Village at Wheelock's had a beautiful display of strawberries

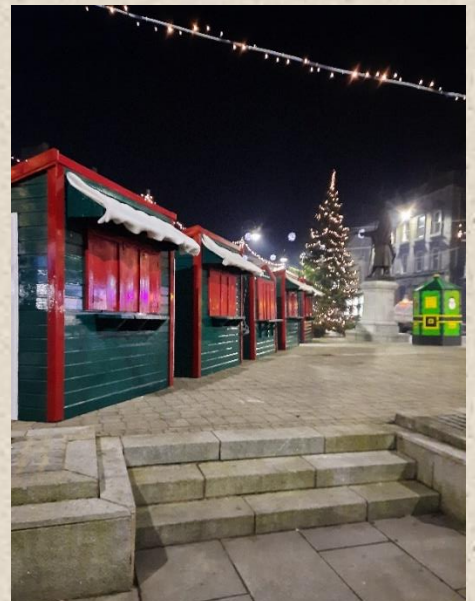
and desserts. A small group of the Roses were taken to Vinegar Hill to overlook the historic town. All roads then led to Bunclody Golf & Fishing Club for one last stop.



### **Enniscorthy Municipal District Christmas Market**

The Enniscorthy Municipal District Christmas Market was officially launched on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December in the Market Square in Enniscorthy. The market was stocked with a variety of local arts and crafts, festive treats hot food and lots more.

Free family entertainment over both weekends was provided by Giggles the Clown and Craft Central and the impressive 'Juggler Brendan'. Enniscorthy Municipal District hope to build on this event in 2024.



## **Sister Cities Agreement - City of Blacktown, Sydney Australia and Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland**

Enniscorthy Municipal District hosted a visiting delegation from Blacktown City Council, led by Cllr Brad Bunting (representing the Mayor Tony Beasdale OAM) and CEO Kerry Robinson, OAM from Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August.

The purpose of the visit was to meet and to discuss the establishment of friendly relations between both cities and counties by way of an interchange across the areas of economic, heritage, sport, education and arts and an exchange of citizens and to agree on a formal Sister Cities / International Link relationship between Blacktown City and Wexford and to grow on the significant historical Battle of Vinegar Hill link.

The delegation received a presentation on the wide range of services provided by Wexford County Council and exciting developments in the pipeline for Enniscorthy and County Wexford. Over the course of their stay Enniscorthy Municipal District facilitated a meeting with Dr Karen Hennessy, Head of Wexford Campus of South East Technological University (SETU) who outlined areas of educational excellence delivered by SETU and their ambition for the future. It is hoped to establish a link and partnership between universities. They also visited St. Patricks Special School and Gaelscoil Inis Córthaidh to discuss potential partnerships by way of book or staff exchange.

Sporting linkages were made by a visit to Ferns Centre of Excellence and a visit to Chadwick's Wexford Park where they met Michael Martin, Chairperson of Wexford GAA. It is hoped to foster a relationship between NSW Gaelic Football Association and County Wexford GAA with a view to developing sporting opportunities between the areas.

A Civic Reception hosted by The Cathaoirleach, Cllr John O'Rourke in Enniscorthy Castle on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023 where the delegation met the rest of the Elected Members of Enniscorthy Municipal District.

The Civic Reception included the signing of the 'Sister City Agreement' between Enniscorthy Municipal District and Blacktown City Council committing each Council to officially recognising both Vinegar Hills in commemoration events as well as commitment to fostering new connections across the areas of Tourism, Heritage, Sports, Arts and Culture.

On the final day the delegation visited the Enniscorthy Municipal District Chamber where Kerry Robinson OAM provided an overview of Blacktown City Council structure and key transformational projects.

Blacktown City Council hosted a thank you dinner in the Riverside Park Hotel and extended invitations to all new connections they had made on their visit to Co Wexford. It is hoped that this new agreement will assist with the establishment of a long and lasting beneficial partnership between Blacktown City and Enniscorthy, Co Wexford both of whom are looking forward to developing and expanding connections in the future.

Blacktown City Council has extended an invitation for a return visit in 2025 as part of the Blacktown City Festival celebrations.



### **Delegation from Bayeux, France Visit**

The Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy MD Cllr Aidan Browne welcomed the delegation from Bayeux, France on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April and showcased all that Ferns has to offer.

This included a visit to the Ferns Castle Heritage Centre to view the Ferns Tapestry project, Ferns Castle, the interactive Medieval Ferns Experience and the new Ancient Connections 'Do the Little Things' project. The new public artwork scheme will see the community of Ferns harvest and sell honey from bee colonies on the grounds of St Edan's Cathedral Church.



### **Civic Recognition Evening**

Enniscorthy Municipal District hosted a Civic Recognition evening in the Presentation Arts Centre on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June to honour 10 sporting groups and individuals in the district for their outstanding contribution to sport, drama and community work and education.

The individuals honoured on the night were: - Erin Kiernan, Jason Bolger, Enniscorthy Re-Enactment Historical Society, Dominik Morycki, Katie Whelan, Aoife Wafer, Orla Wafer, Enniscorthy Community Allotments, Alan Franklin, Andy Doyle

### **Civic Reception Evening**

The roof of Enniscorthy Castle provided the idyllic setting for a ceremony at which Enniscorthy Municipal District gave Civic Reception Awards to 13 sports groups and individuals from the town for their “outstanding contribution to sport”.

The event was set against the backdrop of the picturesque views of Vinegar Hill and surrounds, from the rooftop of Enniscorthy Castle.

Over 60 people attended the event which included some household names among the recipients including: Festy Ebosele - Irish International Soccer; Tom and Dena Hogan – Hyrox; Brendan O'Rourke and Colin Power - Powerlifting; Callum O'Sullivan - Darts; Ryan Murray - Athletics; Emily Nolan and Jake Nolan - Kenpo Karate; Senior Women's Team Enniscorthy Athletics Club - athletics; Patrick Kelly - boxing; Alfie Murphy – kickboxing; Ben Doyle, Tyler O'Connor and Adam Maher - pool.

The MC for the event was Fintan Kelly who gave an overview of each award recipient, and he outlined the achievements that were being recognised. Members of Enniscorthy Municipal District presented the awards.

There was also music performed during the ceremony by talented harpist, Una Walsh, who is well known from her three appearances on the Late Late Show on RTE. Showcasing her formidable talent as a musician, Una played her own compositions at the event.

### **Environmental Protection**

The Enniscorthy Municipal District places great pride on its presentation, as evidenced by the Council's annual Parks Improvement Programme which continued in 2023, In addition to maintenance of 60 acres of green areas throughout the town of Enniscorthy, the Council also planted roundabouts on the entrances to the town and maintained impressive street side floral displays in many areas. Wildflower planting and invasive species control were carefully managed in various locations within the town and district during 2023.

Council Street cleaning and town presentation crews continued to present the town in an excellent light and the fruits of their labours were enjoyed throughout the year by shoppers, visitors and residents alike.

In the IBAL Anti-Litter League, Enniscorthy put up a good performance, in coming 8<sup>th</sup> out of 40 towns and cities surveyed in 2023. Enniscorthy achieved a remarkable feat by securing six top ranking sites, with a further three sites just shy of the top ranking, making Enniscorthy being declared Cleaner than European Norms.

### **Tidy Towns**

Improving on our achievement last year securing Bronze Medal, the Tidy Towns Committee's throughout the Enniscorthy District, supported by the Council made even further progress in search

of national honours with Enniscorthy Town securing this year a Silver Medal in the Tidy Towns Awards 2023 with a gain of 16 extra points to 356.

Congratulations are extended to all the Tidy Towns Committee's including Enniscorthy, Bree, Bunclody, Ferns, Ballindaggin, Killealy, Kilanne and Marshalstown, and it is hoped that their commendable efforts will receive further recognition in the future. Enniscorthy Tidy Towns is continuing to engage with stakeholders in the community including schools, residents' associations, Sustainable Enniscorthy, Enniscorthy Community Allotments, Wexford Barn Owl project, Wexford Bat Group, Wexford Environmental Network, Wexford Volunteer centre, Enjoy Enniscorthy and Reimagining Enniscorthy to raise awareness of anti-litter initiatives and volunteers' work.

### **Shopfront Painting & Flower Grant Scheme 2023**

The Enniscorthy Municipal District Shopfront Painting & Flower Grant Scheme 2023 was advertised on 26<sup>th</sup> April. The scheme assisted business owners / operators to carry out works which improved the exterior appearance of their business premises. Applications were invited from commercial properties in the following locations: Ballindaggin, Bree, Bunclody, Enniscorthy, Davidstown, Ferns and Killealy.

### **Recreation and Amenity**

The role of community groups in the provision of recreation and amenity facilities in the Enniscorthy District has long been recognised by Wexford County Council. In 2023 the Enniscorthy Municipal District further supported these worthy organisations by awarding funding in excess of €37,350 to some 68 local groups under the Amenity & Arts Grants Scheme 2023.

The Enniscorthy Municipal District also administered funding to Residents Associations to assist with planting and general estate improvements in excess of **€10,800.00** to 18 Resident Associations throughout the district.

### **Grants Awarded under the Amenity & Arts Grants Scheme 2023**

Ajax Athletic	€	675.00
ArtBank Bunclody	€	375.00
Ballindaggin Development Group	€	825.00
Ballycarney Development Group	€	925.00
Ballyduff Community Text Alert	€	75.00
Ballyroebuck Parish Hall	€	200.00
Beneath My Angels Wings	€	750.00
Blood Bikes South East	€	200.00
Bree Davidstown Community Games	€	700.00
Bree Tidy Towns	€	800.00
Bree United Soccer Club	€	825.00
Bunclody Boxing Club	€	500.00
Bunclody District Meals on Wheels	€	225.00
Bunclody Recreational Committee	€	300.00
Caim Community Development Group CCDG	€	1,925.00
Capt Thomas Wafer Branch ONE	€	275.00
Castledockrell Amenity Group	€	1,575.00
Catholic Guides of Ireland	€	225.00
Clohamon Community Development Group	€	525.00
Clohamon Vintage Heritage Group	€	450.00
Clonegal Tidy Village Association	€	300.00
Community Kilrush Bingo	€	200.00
County Wexford Community Games	€	200.00
Davidstown Courtnacuddy Camogie & Ladies Football Club	€	450.00
Davidstown Development Association	€	750.00
Drumcree Historical Group	€	550.00

Dunsinane Templescoby Community Group	€	350.00
Edermine Ferry Rowing Club	€	250.00
Enniscorthy & Kilrush Ladybirds	€	400.00
Enniscorthy Basketball Club	€	425.00
Enniscorthy Brownies / Guides	€	475.00
Enniscorthy Community Allotments	€	850.00
Enniscorthy District North & South Pigeon Racing Club	€	425.00
Enniscorthy Gospel Choir	€	425.00
Enniscorthy Historical Re-enactment Society	€	575.00
Enniscorthy Historical Re-enactment Society - Special Project	€	425.00
Enniscorthy Musical Society	€	200.00
Enniscorthy Swimming Pool & Leisure Complex	€	200.00
Enniscorthy Town Football Club	€	225.00
Enniscorthy United	€	1,725.00
Ferns Community Development Association CLG	€	750.00
Ferns Men's Shed	€	550.00
Ferns Tapestry Group	€	300.00
Ferns Tidy Towns	€	450.00
Ferns United	€	475.00
Hillview Development Association	€	525.00
HWH Bunclody LGFA	€	475.00
Killanne Development Group	€	125.00
Kilrush Brownies / Guides	€	425.00
Kiltealy Celtic FC	€	800.00
Kiltealy Hall Development Group	€	400.00
Kiltealy Hall Development Group	€	800.00
Kiltealy Men's & Women's- Wood hub Shed	€	875.00
Kiltealy Parade Committee	€	550.00

Kiltealy Tidy Town Committee	€	1,000.00
London Wexford Association	€	475.00
Marshalstown Castledockrell Camogie Club	€	850.00
Marshalstown Community Centre	€	650.00
Martina Leacy Dance Academy	€	250.00
Moyne Rangers	€	775.00
Nolans Forge	€	600.00
Rockin Food and Fruit Festival	€	600.00
Schools Soccer Coaching Scheme	€	600.00
Shamrocks Ladies Gaelic Football Club	€	650.00
Shamrocks Rovers FC	€	625.00
Silverstone's Choir	€	425.00
Slaney Archers	€	375.00
Slaney Sharks	€	225.00

### **Grants Awarded under the Resident Association Grant Scheme 2023**

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Arduain Residents Association	€ 600.00
Ashbrook Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Ballyphilip Residents Assoc.	€ 600.00
Beachfield Manor Residents Association	€ 600.00
Berryfields Residents Association	€ 600.00
Bridgemeadows Residents Assoc.	€ 600.00
Castle Manor Residents Association	€ 600.00
Cherryorchard Heights Residents	€ 600.00
Crory Lodgewood Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Gleann na Gcaor Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Greenville Court Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Gurteen Road Residents	€ 600.00
Madeira Grove Residents Association	€ 600.00
Madeira Oaks Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Millbrook Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Riverwood Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Ryland Wood Residents Assoc	€ 600.00
Urrin Vally Residents	€ 600.00

### **Presentation Centre**

Enniscorthy Presentation Centre is a community arts facility in Enniscorthy. Enniscorthy Municipal District works in partnership with Wexford Arts Centre to manage and promote the community arts venue in the County. 2023 for The Presentation Arts Centre was one of the busiest yet in the venue's history. The visual arts programme saw a total of 171 artists from

across Wexford and Ireland given support through exhibition opportunities, curatorial advice and funding guidance. Exhibition launch attendees and overall gallery visitors reached 4,358. Meanwhile events booked in through our Ticketsolve system saw a total audience number of 4,179 throughout the year. The Presentation Arts Centre was also delighted to play a pivotal part in the much-acclaimed Walls of Wexford Mural Trail, which was completed in 2023, as well as the significant Creative Places Arts Council Fund that was awarded to Enniscorthy in 2023.

It is clear that Enniscorthy is entering a brand new era of arts and culture, where the town is becoming the central hub of the south east for creatives. The Presentation Arts Centre has massive potential to be a central part of this evolution and has demonstrated its immense value to the community consistently with each quarterly report over the years. To adequately maintain and evolve our vibrant programme of arts and culture, all public and rental feedback to date has the same request: for the partnership of Enniscorthy Municipal District and Wexford Arts Centre to consider increased investment in The Presentation Arts Centre through maintenance, repairs, staffing and programme budgets going forward.





## **Enniscorthy Castle and 1798 Centre**

For 2023, the Castle saw visitor numbers of 11,238 and the 1798 Centre saw visitor numbers of 6,297 with an additional 2,758 the Santa's Enchanted Christmas. Total visitors for 2023 was 20,293. The National 1798 Rebellion Centre and Enniscorthy Castle had visits from 65 different community groups during 2023 - from school and active retired group tours to evening launch events, community talks and workshops, and family entertainment events across both sites.

Enniscorthy Castle continued to bring temporary exhibitions to the second-floor space, this year with 'Enterprise & Determination: the history of the Irish Country Women's Association' and 'Power to the People: the Electrification of Ireland and the future of sustainable Energy'. The Castle also hosted exhibitions by local artists to show their work for two-four weeks between exhibitions.

The National 1798 Rebellion Centre recognised the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1798 with a programme of events from May to July. A summer school in May saw a number of speakers and tours focused on different aspects of 1798. The family Rebellion Day in June explored the music and stories, weapons and key figures of the rebels and the crown forces. Over 400 people participated in these events.

Santa's Enchanted Christmas saw its second year at the National 1798 Rebellion Centre. The event ran even more smoothly with over 2700 people attending to universally positive reviews. The Castle remained open throughout the lead up to Christmas with a festive display and both locations were re-opened in early January.



# GOREY-KILMUCKRIDGE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



## GOREY-KILMUCKRIDGE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

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The staff and elected members of the Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District continue to work together successfully throughout 2023. They are committed to delivering high quality services, building productive working relationships with local stakeholders, and championing the issues that are important for the district. This underpins a shared vision to develop the Gorey-Kilmuckridge District as a location of choice to live, work and visit.

### **Infrastructure Projects delivered in 2023.**

There is a continuous roll-out of works of both large and small scale.

### **Active Town Travel Funding for 2023**

Safe Routes to School – Gorey Central School

### **Esmonde Street Regeneration**

Wexford County Council were unsuccessful with their Rural Regeneration and Development Fund application for the Esmonde Street Regeneration Plan, but local funding is secure for Public Realm Improvement Works. In November 2023 an updated proposal for Esmonde Street and Esmonde Lane redevelopment works was agreed by the Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Committee. It is anticipated that works will commence in Q3, 2024.

### **Gorey Market House Re-development**

Re-development Plans for Gorey Market House were ongoing during 2023. Having acquired land at the back of the Market House reaching out into Market Square, the aim is to develop it as a community amenity. Proposed designs for all such works will be devised in 2024.

## **Gorey Arts/Crafts Hub and Tourist Information Centre – Gorey Market House**

Wexford County Council advertised for Expressions of Interest to manage Gorey Arts/Crafts Hub and Tourist Information Centre following the closure of this outlet in Gorey Market House in 2023.

Following the appointment of an operator at the end of 2023, it is their intention to take over the management of the Tourist Information Centre in Gorey Market House in early 2024. Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District looks forward to working with the Group to provide this service on the Main Street.

## **Community Enhancement 2023 Highlights**

### **2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme Courtown/Riverchapel**

The Courtown to Riverchapel Maritime Walking Trail was officially opened by An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Donal Kenny on the **9<sup>th</sup> of June 2023**.

This walkway has provided an invaluable link from Courtown to Riverchapel resulting in more time being spent in the village adjacent to Courtown and therefore attracting more footfall, visitors and economic value to the many businesses located in Riverchapel. In addition, it has provided a valuable new amenity for residents and a safe outdoor attraction for all to enjoy.

### **2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme Boolavogue**



The Boolavogue Digital Innovation Hub & Community Centre and Heritage Garden was officially opened by Mr. James Browne, TD on the **1<sup>st</sup> of October 2023**.

This community facility in the village of Boolavogue now provides a comfortable and well-equipped Centre that can be used by a wide range of local clubs and societies and the newly landscaped garden celebrates the village's heritage and provides an outdoor amenity for all to enjoy.

## **2021 Town & Village Renewal Scheme Craanford**

Funding was approved to assist with the development of a shop and digital hub in Craanford Community Centre under the 2021 TVR Scheme. As of the end of 2023, works under this project were almost complete. The shop was at fit-out stage and works to the Digital Hub were complete with desks, office equipment, including a laptop and privacy pod. New windows and doors were also installed along with a disabled access ramp to comply with building regulations.

This development of a rural remote working hub and several other essential local services is located adjacent to the primary school which is linked via an underground passage. The facilities on site at the Community Centre include creche, sports facilities, large car park and local gym.



## **Pocket Forest in the Park**

Local businessman Richard Mulcahy funded this initiative through the Environment Section and Municipal Districts. Intensive tree planting has created a small area of natural woodland within the Gorey District Park.

High density planting in this manner replicates the process by which our ancient woodlands have formed, and it is expected that the native species of trees will grow more rapidly consequently.

### **Official Opening of Oilgate Playground**

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Donal Kenny officially opened the new playground in the Cúm An Tobair estate in Oilgate on the **16<sup>th</sup> of June 2023** which includes accessible pieces of playground equipment.



### **Gorey Family Resource Centre**

The renovation works to the new Gorey Family Resource Centre were nearing completion at the end of 2023. The works have been funded in part from the Local Property Tax / Rates allocation agreed by the elected members at the April Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District (GKMD) Meeting.

In addition to the supports provided by the Family Resource Centre, the building, the former Credit Union Office in McDermott Street, will also operate as a Community Centre within the town. This arrangement is consistent with the findings of the feasibility study by Method Consulting published last year regarding the provision of a Community Centre within Gorey. Spaces have been provided that will accommodate groups of differing sizes.

### **Oulart Community Garden**

This project will transform a site that is currently unkempt and overgrown into a space that the community and visitors to Oulart can enjoy. As of the end of 2023, this project is still at the Procurement Stage.

### **St. Waleran's Sports Complex**

As announced by the Chief Executive, Consultant Architects, Kenneth Hennessey have been appointed to design the new Sport Hub at the St. Waleran's development.

The committee comprising the GKMD Chair, officials, members of the Hockey, Cricket, Athletic and Cycling Clubs, under the guidance of Rural Development Consultant, Dr Yvonne Byrne, met with the architects on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December for a walkover the Sports Hub site. The site is challenging due to the undulating nature of the ground and proximity to the railway line.

The Architects and committee are committed to providing a high-quality facility aimed squarely at minority sports and members of the public will be an asset to the region once built.

### **Riverchapel Community Complex – New Community Centre**

Planning permission has been granted for a new Community Centre at the Riverchapel Community Complex. The permission arrived in time to submit a funding application under the Community Centre Investment Fund through the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The Community Centre development, which is a collaboration between GKMD, Wexford Local Development, TUSLA and the Riverchapel Community Complex, is a completely new build with sports hall, changing rooms, community childcare facilities, youth café and a changing spaces room for people with special needs. A decision on the funding application is expected in Q1 of 2024.

## **Gorey Men's Shed**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 the keys for a newly built facility in McCurtain Street were handed over to Gorey Men's Shed.

Chairman of Gorey Men's Shed, Niall Taffe, extended a thank you to Wexford County Council, John Kelly of Wexford Local Development, Dublin Energy Group Joule, who donated the solar panels, Sean Sheridan, plumber, SKC Provides who donated sanitary products, Leinster Kitchens & Bedrooms who supplied the kitchen, and Matty Davis, electrician.

The official handover was attended by An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Pip Breen, & Leas-Chathaoirleach, Cllr Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin,



Wexford County Council Officials, Director of Services, Ms Liz Hore, & District Administrator, Mr Philip Knight, Senator Malcolm Byrne, and local members of Gorey Men's Shed.

## **Working Together 2023 Highlights**

### **Community Group Funding**

**Amenity & Arts and Resident Association Grants** in the amount of €93,000 was allocated to 153 Community Groups in 2023.

**Community Support Grants** in the amount of €37,000 was allocated to Community Groups within the Gorey District Area as a once-off to address ongoing difficulties encountered by such Groups. Projects funded included public realm improvement, environmental works, purchase of equipment for the development or upkeep of the community, and other associated projects to improve the locality.

### **North Wexford 2K Clean Initiative**

Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD continues working with North Wexford Tidy Towns & Development Groups for North Wexford 2K. This initiative can be promoted by all Groups as a National Spring Clean Project and involves people ‘adopting’ a 2km stretch of road and ensuring that it is kept litter free for the month of April. This year there were 75 roads/150km looked after by volunteers and we thank them for their ongoing work.



The areas were inspected during the month of April and Gold, Silver or Bronze standards were awarded based on the level of littering.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Donal Kenny welcomed Community Groups from across North Wexford to Gorey Civic Offices & Library on the **30<sup>th</sup> of May 2023** where they were presented with their North Wexford 2K Clean Awards. This Gorey-Kilmuckridge District initiative has again been a huge success with communities working hard to improve their environment.

### **Other Awards:**



The coveted status of blue flag beach has again been awarded to Ballymoney North Beach and Morriscastle Beach this year as it re-joins an illustrious group of beaches across the county honoured with the accolade.

The Green Coast awarded beaches for 2023 in North Co Wexford are Cahore Point Beach and Old Bawn Beach acknowledging the hard work of local Clean Coast Groups.



Green  
Coast  
Award

### Love Gorey Members & Community Information Evening

The Love Gorey Committee in conjunction with Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District held an Information Evening in the Ashdown Park on the **18<sup>th</sup> of April 2023** to showcase the work carried out by Love Gorey promoting the town and environs in relation to business, community, and tourism.



Ms Norma Quinsey outlined some of the many events that Love Gorey has helped to drive forward in Gorey including the creation of the Love Gorey Map, the inaugural Gorey Yellow Belly Comedy Festival, the Rose of Tralee Tour in Wexford, Culture Night, the Christmas Switch-On and much more. Priorities going forward include supporting the community in every way possible, continuing to raise awareness of Gorey and North Wexford and encouraging people to live local and support the North Wexford economy.

## **Civic Functions:**

### **Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD Civic Awards Ceremony 2023**

Following the **February District Meeting**, a gathering to highlight the contribution that successful individuals and groups have made to the economic, social, and cultural life of the North Wexford area when they gained national and international recognition was held.



Our high achieving artists, sports men and women, businesspeople and so many organisations are important Ambassadors and Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District wanted to acknowledge their achievements.

The last time this recognition evening was held was May 2019, so the Cathaoirleach was delighted to welcome all nominees to the Ashdown Park Hotel where 10 Presentations were made.

### **Visit of Students from College Bilikova, Bratislava**

Gorey Educate Together Secondary School hosted students from College Bilikova in November 2023 as part of their new exchange programme. Students were taken to see the sights in Co. Wexford as well as a visit to the Dáil. Apparently, a highlight of the trip was a visit to the seaside. Being a land-locked country, many Slovaks have not been to the seaside.



Students from both Schools were given a Civic Reception at Gorey Civic Offices. The reception was attended by the Ambassador of Slovakia to Ireland H.E. Andrej Droba, Senator Malcolm Byrne, representatives of the schools and host families. We hope the Slovakian students enjoyed their stay and plans for the return visit in 2024 are underway.

## **VISITING DELEGATIONS 2023**

### **Visit of His Excellency Andrej Droba, Slovakian Ambassador to Ireland**

The Chairman was delighted to welcome the Slovak Ambassador H.E. Andrej Droba and his Deputy Chief of Mission Mrs Viera Motesicka to the Civic Centre and Council Chamber on the **19<sup>th</sup> of January 2023**.

The Ambassador briefed members on the twinning of the Gorey Educate Together School with a school in Bratislava and the possible links that could be developed between Slovakia and Ireland. The Chair and members in turn gave the Ambassador an overview of Gorey town and the local offerings for business and tourism.

### **Visit from Georgia State University**

In **February 2023** Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD hosted a visit to Gorey of a delegation from the Georgia State University. The delegation headed by Dr Howard Keeley, Director of the Wexford Campus Initiative were given a tour of the Hatch Lab and introduced to some of the businesses working there, a tour of the District Park and a briefing on the considerations that shaped the development of the park, rounded off with a formal welcome by An Cathaoirleach in the Council Chamber, Gorey Civic Offices.



### **Queens University Belfast Field Trip**

In **February 2023** Queens University Geography and Urban Planning Undergraduates chose to come to Gorey for their field trip. Following an initial meeting in December, Dr Neil Galway elected to bring students here due to the unique growth of the town and the issue that such an expansion creates.

Students met with An Cathaoirleach and the District Manager for an introduction to the town and discussion session of some of the issues faced by the Municipal District.

The work completed in Gorey where students will have selected a discreet area of the town, identified the issues, and proposed potential solutions, will form part of the students' final assessment for the module.

Following the QUB field trip to Gorey, An Cathaoirleach and the District Manager were invited to attend the presentation of the Students' Reports.

**Visit of His Excellency Andrej Stancik, State Secretary for EU Affairs of Slovakia to Gorey, accompanied by His Excellency Andrej Droba, Slovakian Ambassador to Ireland**



An Cathaoirleach was delighted to welcome back Andrej Droba, Ambassador of Slovakia to Ireland, accompanied by Andrej Stancik, State Secretary for EU Affairs of Slovakia to Gorey on the **19<sup>th</sup> of April 2023**. During the visit, the Slovakian delegation paid a visit to the Gorey Educate Together School, to further along the plans to twin with a school in Bratislava.

They also visited the Gorey Youth Needs Centre where Mandi Tighe met with the delegation to discuss how youth services operate in Ireland. Afterwards they were formally welcomed at Gorey Civic Offices, followed by a photo shoot and Civic Lunch in The Ashdown Park Hotel.



### **Visit of her Excellency Nancy Smyth, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland**

An Cathaoirleach welcomed H.E. Nancy Smyth, Ambassador of Canada to Ireland on the **25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023**. During her visit, the Ambassador visited Gorey Community School where she met



with Politics & Society Students and the Student Council. This was followed by a tour of the M11 Business Park & Hatch Lab where she was introduced to some of the companies operating there, including those with Canadian connections. This visit also included a Working Lunch where the Ambassador spent time discussing the film industry in Wexford with John Gleeson of Tara Studios and

Screen Wexford Reps. In their meeting, they discussed ways to further develop Irish Canadian co-productions in the film, television, and creative industries.

The Ambassador also met with County Wexford Chamber of Commerce to discuss business opportunities and the economic outlook in Co. Wexford along with visiting IWP Pallets to explore how further trade links between Wexford and Canada could be developed.

To conclude her visit, An Cathaoirleach hosted a Civic Reception at Gorey Civic Offices. Following this, a public session was held where the Ambassador spoke to invited guests with Canadian connections about links between Ireland and Canada.



## ***EVENTS & FESTIVALS 2023 HIGHLIGHTS***

### **St. Patrick's Day Celebrations 2023**

Gorey's St. Patrick's Day Parade was a great success this year. The theme for this year's parade was "Irish Heritage & Culture" and 38 entries from Gorey's businesses, sports & community groups and bands took part. The lead was taken by Grand Marshal Sean Halford, also celebrating 100 years in business in Gorey this year.



### **Gorey 3-Day International Cycle Race**

The Gorey 3-Day International Cycle Race took place over the easter weekend (8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> April) drawing many visitors from all over Ireland. A huge thank you to Derek Webb and his team for organising this event.

### **Song Writers Group**

Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD welcomed the Mercyland in Ireland 2023 Song Writers Group to Gorey on the **11<sup>th</sup> of April** for a weeklong series of events as part of this international festival.

The hosts of this songwriting festival, Sammy Horner and Phil Madeira were thrilled to welcome this group to Gorey after a three-year delay caused by covid. The group also hosted an event in The Bear Cave on Saturday evening where those attending were able to hear some of the music from their work during the week.

The group was welcomed by An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Donal Kenny, and Michael Gleeson of Loch Garman Arms with outstanding performances by Caroline Fleming Irish Dance Academy.



## **1798 Commemoration Events**

Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District received funding support of €10,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media for the development of a commemorative programme to mark the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events surrounding the 1798 Rebellion in Co. Wexford.

The funding, administered through the Decade of Centenaries Historical Strand, has supported several specific projects related to commemoration such as public talks, walking tours, demonstrations, and a 1798 Summer Conference in Enniscorthy as part of the extensive county-wide commemoration programme.

## **Cruinniú na nÓg National Day 2023**

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of June children and young people took part in a range of events created by Wexford artists, creatives, and organisations. Gorey Library played host to several events, including:

- ✚ STEM Workshop Design and Make a Kite with Anyone 4 Science
- ✚ Rod Puppet Making with Bridget Ní Dhuinn
- ✚ Creative Writing Course for Children with Margaret Galvin

Other events in the district included the Tara Hill Art Trails developed by Gorey School of Art & Tara Hill CDA and the Seomra Traidisiúnta Online Screening of new songs & stories created by children under the guidance of Rachel Uí Fhaoláin (Ceol Mo Chroí) and John Ó Faoláin (Traditional Archive Channel).

## **Polska Éire Festival 2023**

The PolskaÉire Festival is an annual nationwide celebration of Irish-Polish friendship. The aim of the festival is to further strengthen mutual relations between Polish and Irish communities by means of various cultural, sports, business, academic and community events. This year's festival ran from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of June.

## **The Gap Arts Festival 2023**

The thirteenth annual Gap Arts Festival was held in and around Ballythomas, Gorey on the weekend of August 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> 2023. A variety of In-person Workshops had already taken place during May, June, and July.

As well as professional theatre, the weekend featured live music with *The Soul Cowboys*, a late-night outdoor family film, and the *Picnic@TheGap* - an afternoon in the Community Field with the newly formed *GapChoir*, live music with *The Ritz Brothers*, clowns, the *Gap Inflatable Cinema*, and more.

## **Official Opening of Gorey District Park and Launch of The Coffee Pod Café**

Gorey District Park or Páirc Cheanntar Ghuaire officially opened during the Gorey Market House Festival 2023. The official opening also saw the launch of the new Coffee Pod Café managed by local business couple Eoin and Sinéad Cullen, along with changing facilities.

Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Fianna Fáil Deputy James Browne TD, opened the facilities, with speeches from An Cathaoirleach of Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District, Cllr Pip Breen, Wexford County Council Chief Executive Tom Enright, and Municipal District Administrator Philip Knight, followed by a day of family fun.

### *Gorey District Park Official Opening & Launch of The Coffee Pod Café*



## **Gorey Family Fun Day, Gorey District Park**

Amongst the Market House Festival fringe events there was a highly successful Family Fun Day in Gorey District Park where children were treated to magicians, puppet shows, dancers, face painting and a DJ.



## **Gorey Market House Festival 2023**

The August Bank Holiday Weekend saw the return of the Gorey Market House Festival, with large crowds treated to a mixture of music over three nights.



Other fringe events included a Walking Tour of Gorey, Tarot Card Reading, an Open Chess Challenge against Gorey's Chess Club Champions, the Making Music & Market House Festival Busking Competition, Fancy Dress Fun Run, and Street Market with Arts, Crafts & Artisan Foods along with Gorey's own American Football Club, The American Eagles.

The Event Committee aimed to produce a high quality, family friendly festival from the outset and all feedback received from attendees confirmed that this was achieved. It is estimated that the festival attracted some forty thousand visitors to the events in town over the bank holiday weekend.

### **Wexford Rose Tour 2023**

Following on from last year's hugely successful Wexford Rose Tour, the Model County was once again chosen to host the 32 Roses over 3-days in August.

The Roses were welcomed in Gorey with live music, Irish dancers, and a rose-themed display in the windows of local shops, businesses, and cafés. Children were present to meet and greet the Roses, snapping photos and wishing them all the best, whilst creating an incredible welcome for the Roses.



### **Culture Night Gorey 2023**

There was a real buzz about the District for Culture Night on Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> with plenty of cultural events to choose from, from exhibits and talks to music and dancing.

Local artist Niamh Darcy showcased her art exhibit "Sunrise" at Partridges Bistro. Taken during Covid times, this exhibit captured the Wexford coastline at Morriscastle beach and is meant to remind us of a slower pace of life and to appreciate the beauty of nature.

Around 300 people arrived at the Gorey Market House for the North Wexford Historical Society's photographic exhibition. The event was such a huge success that they opened the doors again the following day and approximately another 200 people attended.

Other events which took place included Art Workshops & Live Painting Demos, Dance & Musical events, all providing wonderful entertainment for the night.

Overall Culture Night in Gorey town and environs was extremely successful, and it was wonderful to see events spreading into the district areas beyond Gorey town.

### **Gorey Yellow Belly Comedy Festival 2023**

Gorey's Yellow Belly Comedy Festival proved very successful again this year, and particularly very beneficial to the evening economy. Several groups reported in a survey thereafter that they went for dinner prior to the event and spent time in Gorey afterwards.

This Comedy Festival is only in its second year and is delivered by Gorey Yellow Belly Comedy Festival Committee in conjunction with Love Gorey, Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD, and the venues, The Ashdown Park Hotel, The Loch Garman Arms, the 64 Lounge, Gorey Little Theatre and Breen's Bar.

It is important to note that the support of Wexford County Council and Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District is crucial to the success of this event. It has proven a very welcome addition to the town for what is normally a quieter month on the entertainment and social front.



## Christmas in Gorey 2023

Santa Claus received a great welcome in Gorey on **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November** as he officially switched on the town's Christmas Lights. Accompanied by Mrs. Claus, Santa arrived on his elevated sleigh, and travelled up Main Street, greeting the children along the way with entertainment provided on stage by Gorey Ukes.



The night attracted the largest crowd ever for a Switch-On and reflected the hard work put in by Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District and the Christmas Lights Committee over the past number of months

Gorey-Kilmuckridge MD and Love Gorey continued to

spread the festive cheer throughout the month of December, holding their inaugural Christmas Market on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December on the Plaza Area in front of Gorey Civic Offices, the Illumination of Christmas Trees in Gorey Town, Community Involvement from Gorey Youth Needs Group who set up shop in Gorey Market House and another successful Christmas Window Competition which ran over the festive period.



Kilmuckridge also welcomed the **Santa Truck** on **Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December**. All proceeds from this event were donated to the Laura Lynn Foundation.

NEW ROSS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



## NEW ROSS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

During 2023 **New Ross Municipal District** continued to build on the excellent achievements and outputs of the previous years.

The General Municipal Allocations (GMA) again fully recognised and supported the excellent work of **New Ross Municipal District** with appropriate and relevant discretionary programmes providing funding for local community/district priorities and initiatives in 2023.

The Municipal District Staff, working with their Wexford County Council colleagues and Municipal District Members, continue the ongoing delivery of more economic, social, and cultural projects, along with the 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works, the 2023 Roads Programme, Bridge Rehabilitation Grant Programme, Active Travel Measures, and the new Climate Change and Adaptation Programme.

The following major projects continued, commenced, or were completed during the calendar year:

- *South East Greenway*
- *Emigrant Park*
- *Brennan's Lane/The Shambles Regeneration*
- *New Ross Skate Park*
- *New Ross Motorhome Park*
- *Duncannon Fort Masterplan & Works*
- *Hook Lighthouse Interpretive Design*
- *John Street Grain store Regeneration Project*



## **1. Town Centre First**

### **New Ross**

Wexford County Council appointed the Multidisciplinary Team of Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (town planning, urban design, landscape and townscape), Optimize (demographics, economics, tourism), Howley Hayes Cooney (heritage), Tobin (engineering and access) and A Playful City (consultation and community engagement) in May 2023 to prepare a Town Centre First Plan for New Ross. This urban regeneration plan for the town is the first of its kind for New Ross to bundle various strands of future development in a collaborative and holistic approach.

A Town Team and a Town Regeneration Officer have been nominated to steer the Town Centre First process and they coordinated the preparation of the Plan in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team. The Town Team represents the various key stakeholders for New Ross in order to address all social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of future development in the town. The New Ross Town Centre First Plan was completed in September 2023.

## **2. Public Realm Projects**

### **Destination Towns Project**

In May 2023, the Destination Towns Project which was completed over a 3-year period, was launched by the Chief Executive of Fáilte Ireland, Paul Kelly, the Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District, Cllr Michael Sheehan, and the Chief Executive of Wexford County Council, Tom Enright.

The project funded with €500,000 from Fáilte Ireland, along with €225,000 from Wexford County Council and €32,000 from the Heritage Council, has rejuvenated New Ross town centre and to date has brought a significant increase in footfall to the town.



The laneways have been brought back to life with new street lighting, renewed surface infrastructure and bespoke archways with custom name plates, linking in with new street signage, laneway murals, lighting, flags, archways and the new and improved street furniture comprising of bicycle racks, crested street bins, railings and street and laneway signs.

New Ross is a 12th century Norman town and continuing the Norman theme of the five major murals commissioned by New Ross Municipal District in 2020 and 2021, the walls of Conduit Lane and Back Lane were also painted by international artists, drawing huge acclaim locally and nationally.

### **South East Greenway – Phase 1**

On July 25<sup>th</sup> 2023 the South East Greenway was officially opened by Jack Chambers T.D. Minister of State at the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, in the presence of Councillor John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Councillor Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, along with Oireachtas Members, Councillor Anthony Connick, Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District, Councillors from Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford, Carlow, and other invited guests.

This project commenced in 2018 and is funded by the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, Wexford County Council and Waterford City and County Council.



Phase 1 of the South East Greenway is approximately 6km in length from New Ross to Glenmore. It is the first part to be opened of the 24km of the South East Greenway, which will be a spectacular off-road cycling and walking Greenway.

Once fully completed the Greenway will run along the old railway line from the quays of Ireland's oldest Viking City of Waterford to the Norman town of New Ross along the banks of the beautiful Barrow River, through the scenic countryside of South Kilkenny. Future phases will see this section ultimately connect with the Waterford Greenway.

### **Emigrant Park**

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Heather Humphreys T.D, Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister for Social Protection, performed the Project Launch of the Emigrant Park on the Quayside of New Ross. Turning the sod on New Ross's latest development along with the Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District she looked forward to returning to open the Emigrant Park on its completion.

Only a few months later, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which the Minister remarked on as the shortest time from a Sod Turning to an Official Opening which she had ever seen, Minister Humphreys was back opening the park to great public acclaim.

The development is a 1500m<sup>2</sup> accessible green urban space which tells the New Ross emigration story in a way that will inspire further investigation and interest.



The Emigrant Park in New Ross was part-funded under the Government's Rural Regeneration and Development Fund as well as the Town Centre First policy and it is hoped it will provide a major boost to the town in terms of tourism as well as wider benefits for local people. A €1 million regeneration project which has transformed an old oil tank site, beside the Dunbrody Visitor Centre along the River Barrow.

The Emigrant Park, along with the High Hill – Norman Gardens development, have been shortlisted for the 2024 LAMA awards.

### **3. Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVR) - €1,950,000**

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme remains a priority in the district. The following projects were further advanced during the year:

- *Duncannon Fort Masterplan PDM2021 – €100,000 / Completed*
- *Brennan's Lane TVR2021 – €500,000 / Consultant Appointed*
- *Ramsgrange TVR2021 - €100,000 / Completed*
- *Duncannon Fort Renovation TVR2022 – €500,000 / Ongoing*
- *Cushinstown TVR2023 - €250,000 Application / Decision Due*
- *Rathgarogue TVR2023 - €500,000 Application / Decision Due*

## **Building Acquisition Measure 2022 (TVRBAM) - €220,000**

The Department of Rural and Community Development allocated funding for the acquisition of following buildings for community use:

- *Former Courthouse, New Ross - €220,000*

## **4. Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - €263,500**

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme opportunities continue to be identified in the District.

The following projects were further advanced during the year:

- *Duncannon to Ballyhack Trail Phase 2 - €213,500*
- *Kellyswood Link - €50,000*

## **5. Festivals, Events and Cultural Programme:**

New Ross Municipal District continues to support a wide-ranging festival programme throughout the district each year. The following events took place during 2023:

- *Kennedy Summer School*
- *Eugene O'Neill International Festival of Drama*
- *AIMS Choral Festival*
- *St Patricks Day Festival*
- *Summer Sessions*
- *Tri the Hook / Hike to the Hook*
- *Baginbun Norman Festival*
- *New Ross Piano Festival*
- *New Ross Guitar Festival*
- *Magdalene Laundry Commemoration*
- *William Marshall Weekend*
- *Culture Night*
- *Cruinniú na nÓg*
- *Heritage Week - Guided tours*
- *1798 commemorations*
- *Nollaig New Ross*
- *Christmas Festival*



## **Film - Small Things Like These**

2023 was the year Hollywood came to New Ross. Following on from Claire Keegan's best-selling book based in New Ross, the huge vehicle that was the Small Things Like These cast, crew, and entourage, took over the town and some rural locations from February to April, bringing great excitement to the area.

The film was funded by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's company Artists Equity (AE) and starred Cillian Murphy and Emily Watson.

Filming transformed parts of New Ross to look like the Eighties again, including houses, shops on Quay Street and Mary Street, with many local people as extras to the cast.

Next year, the film is due to open the 2024 Berlin Film Festival and public release dates are eagerly anticipated.

## **6. A Better Place to Live, Work & Visit**

### **Tidy Towns – New Ross Town Bronze Award**

In 2023, New Ross celebrated winning a Supervalu Tidy Towns bronze award.

This was the first time New Ross Town has achieved such an award, a testament to all the hard work being done on the ground by Volunteers, Committee Members, and Council Staff.

Playing a large part in the achievement of the award were the workers and participants assisting at the polytunnels in the Irishtown where the seed propagation project continues to supply plants and flowers for the hanging baskets and flower beds in New Ross and the villages of the district.

### **An Taisce - Green Flag Awards 2023/24**

The 2023 Green Flag Award Scheme was open to candidate parks and gardens across Ireland. This year New Ross Municipal District again entered 2 local authority parks in the 2023/24 Green Flag Awards Scheme.

- *Pearse Park*
- *Library Park*

Following site visits and the completion of the An Taisce judging process, a press release in September confirmed that both parks had retained the previously awarded flags and were again accredited “Green Flag” status for 2023/24.

The internationally recognised award scheme is only open to freely accessible public green spaces and is enthusiastically received by Park and Garden Management Teams as it delivers major wins for the delivery of quality green spaces by participating park departments. It should be noted that these award winning parks are the only 2 such parks in the County.

In late 2023, work commenced on a Sensory Garden in Pearse Park bringing yet another worthwhile and important element to compliment those already in place.

The project is due to be completed in Q2 2024.

## **Tourism**

**New Ross Municipal District** continues to work on the promotion of its visitor attractions, including the **Norman Way** and **Eurovelo** and has formed an excellent relationship with **Failte Ireland** assisting under its brand **Ireland’s Ancient East**.

# ROSSLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



## ROSSLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

In 2023 Rosslare Municipal District built and expanded on the successes of the previous years.

The General Municipal Allocation continued to fully recognise and support the excellent work of the Rosslare Municipal District with additional funding in the discretionary programmes providing support for the delivery of District projects and initiatives during 2023.

Work of the following major projects either continued, commenced, or completed during 2023:

- N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Road
- Rosslare Harbour Access Road
- Rosslare Harbour to Rosslare Strand Greenway
- Kilmore Quay Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Coastal Protection Works
- Bridgetown to Kilmore Quay (B2K) Walkway/Greenway
- Kilmore Quay Recreational Trail
- Silvermines Conservation Works
- The Bannow Blueway

### **Rosslare Europort – Phase 1 Terminal 7 and Enabling Works**

Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works, Mr. Patrick O'Donovan, T.D. visited Rosslare Europort to mark the commencement in May 2023 of Phase 1 of the Rosslare Europort Infrastructure Masterplan with construction underway of the new integrated Border Control Post (BCP) and Customs Control Facility in Rosslare Europort, together with improved Port entry/exit access and facilities. Phase 1 of the 3 phase Masterplan will see a €200m investment delivered in a 26-month programme.



The BCP will be known as Terminal 7 and the upgrades are the most significant in the Port's history. This critical infrastructure is a consequence of Brexit and will allow Ireland to manage statutory requirements for checks and controls.



## **N25 Ballygilliane Roundabout**

The first major step in the proposed new Rosslare Europort Access road was delivered with the opening of the new N25 Ballygilliane Roundabout during 2023. This investment of over €2m is an integral part of the new link road infrastructure which will deliver heavy goods traffic away from the village.



## **Community Monument Fund – Silvermines Engine House, Barrystown**

In collaboration with Rosslare Municipal District the Bannow Historical Society secured funding of over €100,000 from the Community Monument Fund 2023 for urgent conservation works to the unique Silvermines Engine House in Barrystown.

## **Rosslare Municipal District (RMD) Strategic Plan 2024 - 2030**

The Rosslare Municipal District Strategic Plan was prepared during 2023 to establish a vision that will inform the development of the district over the term of the plan. This strategic plan, commissioned by the elected members of the district, recognises that there is a need to have an evidence based and planned approach to the future development and growth of the district over the next 7 years. This will ensure it has every opportunity to reach its full potential, in accordance with the objectives set out in the County Development Plan 2022-2028 and serve as a blueprint for developing the district by providing a roadmap to deliver beneficial projects for our communities.

This is an ambitious and forward-looking Strategic Plan, and it is the first of its kind to be delivered in the county. The work plan developed from the Strategic Plan informs the development and delivery of projects and initiatives under a number of specific headings and which will see communities and the Rosslare MD working together to contribute to the positive development and growth of the villages and settlements in the district resulting in catalysts for positive change and sustainable growth and enhance the quality of life for people who live, visit and work in the district over the coming years.



- **Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVR) - €1,459,667**

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme remains a priority in this uniquely rural District. The following projects were further advanced during the year:

- Bridgetown TVR2019 – €99,820 / Completed
- Foulksmills TVR2019 – €100,000 / Completed
- Rosslare Harbour & Kilrane TVR2019 - €191,386 / Completed
- Clongeen TVR20 - €100,000 / Completed
- Our Lady’s Island TVR20 - €100,000 / Completed
- Taghmon TVR20 - €97,547 / Completed
- Murrintown TVR21 - €220,914 / Completed
- Taghmon TVR22 - €50,000 / In Progress
- Rosslare Harbour TVR22- €250,000 / In Progress
- Carrig on Bannow TVR23- €250,000 /Application pending approval.

- **Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Building Acquisition Measure**

Former Bank of Ireland, Rosslare Harbour TVR22 - €250,000 / In Progress

## **EuroVelo 1 Route Launch**

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Jack Chambers T.D, officially launched the Irish section of the EuroVelo 1 route (Atlantic Coast Route) in Our Lady's Island in May 2023. The route links Portugal to Norway through most of the European Atlantic facing coastal countries including Ireland, where it enters through Rosslare Harbour and continues along the Rosslare Municipal District coastline.



## **Festivals, Events and Cultural Programme**

Rosslare Municipal District continues to support a wide-ranging festival programme throughout the District each year. The following events took place during 2023:

- St Patrick's Day Parade, Carrig on Bannow
- Civic Awards Events
- Rosslare Harbour Maritime & Heritage Festival
- Jazz at Johnstown
- Rebellion 225, Kilmore Quay
- Vintage Working Weekend
- Kilmore Quay Seafood Festival
- Phil Murphy Weekend
- Bannow Rathangan Show
- Leo Carthy Weekend

- Rathangan Comóradh 225 Commemorations
- Thomas Moore at Bannow House
- Write by the Sea Literary Festival
- Christmas Lights Events

### **Civic Receptions**

Rosslare Municipal District continued to host civic receptions during 2023 where groups and individuals, nominated by the elected members, were honoured at a prestigious award ceremony in Johnstown Castle.

The following awards were presented in 2023:

- *Margaret Gough (Sr. Mary de Lellis) - Excellence in Education*
- *Claragh Keane - Excellence in Sport*
- *Mark Doyle - Excellence in Sport*
- *David Stanners - Excellence in Sport*
- *Kilmore Parish Journal - 50 years' Service to the Community*
- *Nick Cullen - Excellence in Ploughing*
- *Martin Kehoe - Excellence in Ploughing*



## **Official Twinning Visit to Dunkirk**

Our twinning arrangement continued to develop with a deputation representing Wexford County Council and Rosslare Municipal District travelling to our sister port in France, Dunkirk.

The official visit was undertaken on foot of the invitation from Dunkirk City Council with a view to developing and strengthening relationships between Dunkirk and the Municipal District of Rosslare principally in the areas of education, culture, tourism, enterprise, ferry and port interaction and Local Government and social exchange.

The group met with senior officials and elected members of Dunkirk Local Government and Dunkirk Port officials where updates and ideas were shared.



**RMD delegation with Senior Officials and Elected Members of Dunkirk Council**

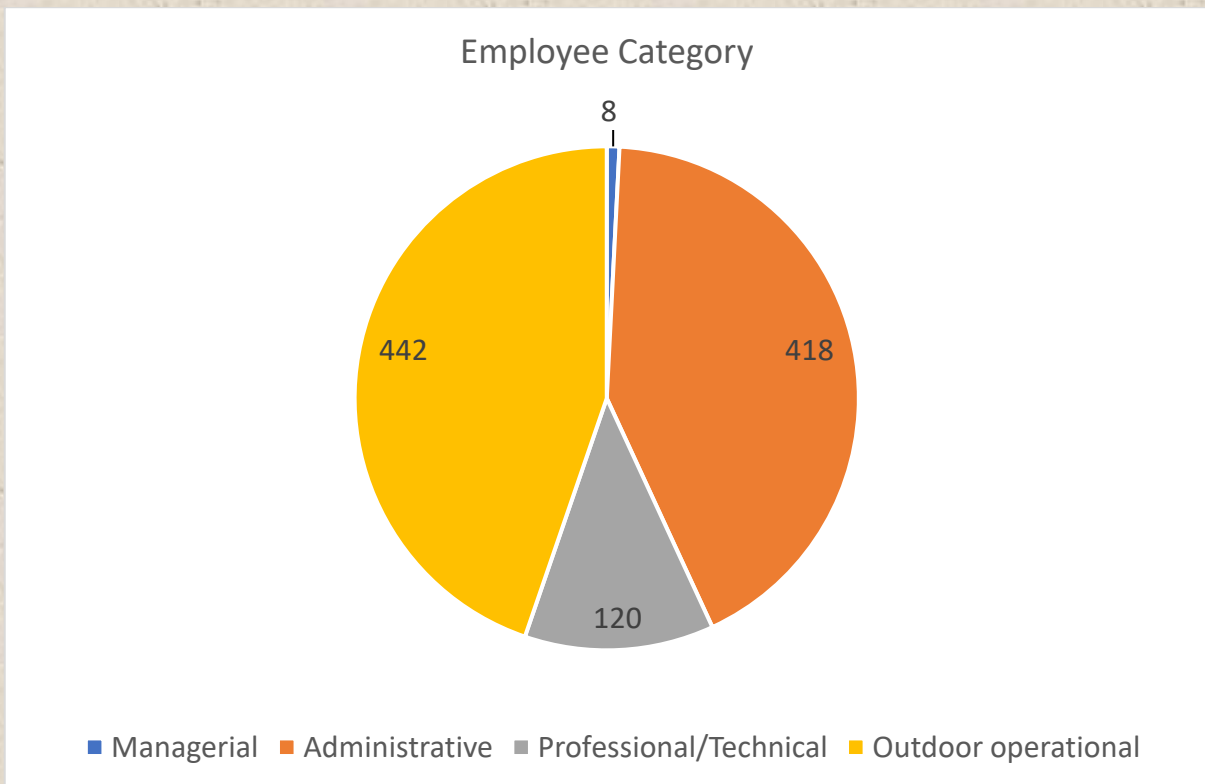
One of the many highlights of the itinerary was a visit to Lycée Jean Bart, the student exchange school who presented on their memorable visit to Bridgetown College secondary school.

Exchanges such as these are invaluable in educational and personal developmental terms for young people.

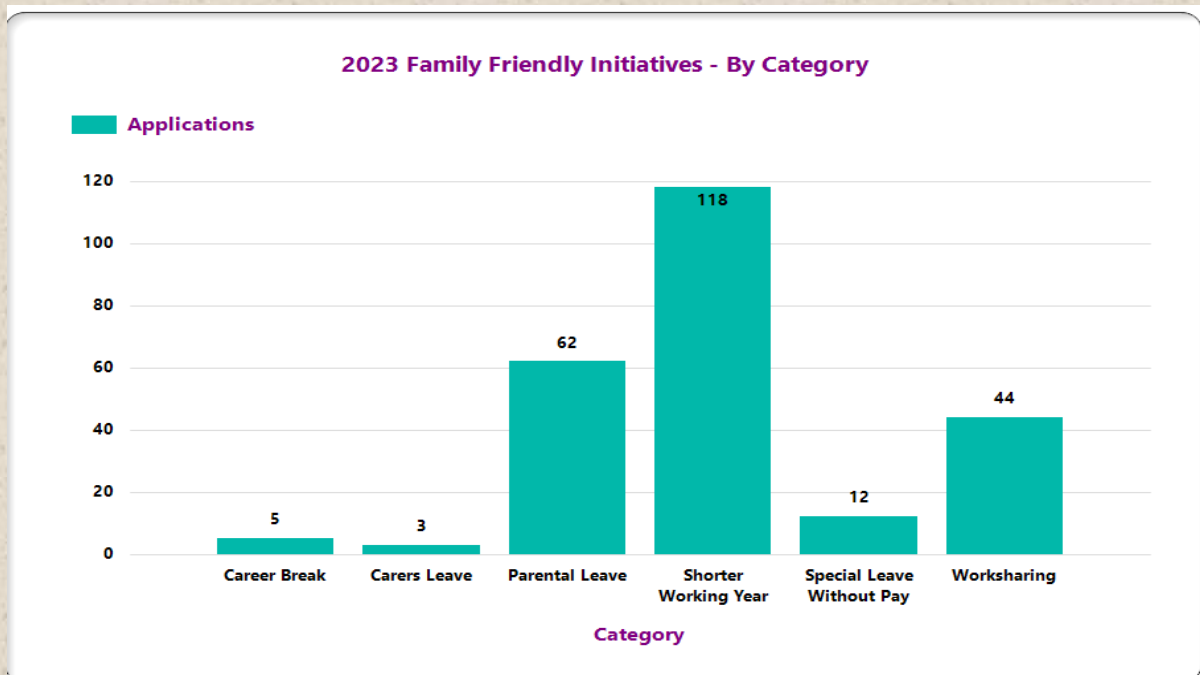
## Human Resources (HR)

The HR team support staff and line managers in understanding and applying human resource policies and procedures, industrial relations, family friendly schemes, sick leave, blended working, and employee assistance. The HR team calculated and implemented 2 Public Service Agreement pay increases in 2023, consisting of 2% from 1 March 2023 and a further 1.5% effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

Number of Staff Employed December 2023 (988)



In 2023, Family Friendly Initiatives approved for staff by HR totalled 244 and may be broken down as follows:



## **Pensions**

The HR Pensions team manages the pensions schemes for staff and pensioners in Wexford County Council. The number of pensioners on 31 December 2023 was 589. During 2023, a total of 33 retirements were processed and 51 pension estimates provided to staff. In line with the public service agreement, 2 pension increases were calculated and paid to all pensioners.

The Single Public Service (SPS) pension scheme is in operation for all staff who started in the public service for the first time after 1 January 2013, or who re-joined after a break in service of at least 26 weeks. Each member of the Single Public Service pension scheme must be provided with a benefit statement each year, and in 2023 a total of 397 annual benefit statements were calculated and issued to SPS scheme members.

## **Executive Coaching Programme**

During 2023 a Pilot Coaching Programme for 20 Internal Coaches in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency and facilitated by Kingstown College was introduced from across all business areas of the organisation.

In this Coaching/Mentoring programme 20 individuals for the organisation will undertake an accredited Level 6 QQI Coaching Programme and develop skills to coach fellow employees. The coaching will be provided by an accredited external organisation, appropriately procured. A panel of coaches would be created, a Team Co-Ordinator assigned, and continuous guidance and support provided to ensure the quality of the programme.

## **Key Achievements 2023**

- 64 New Starter / Rehires (46 First Appointment, 9 Re-Hire and 9 Temporary)
- 150 Appointment Changes (28 Promotion, 33 Transfer, 19 Permanent, 47 Change of workgroup and 23 Acting / Cessation of Acting)
- 109 Leavers
- In 2023 our sick leave level was Wexford County Council had a sick leave level of 3.77%.
- Blended working – a further 63 were approving bring a total number of approvals to date to 267 since September 2022.
- In terms of Performance Management Development System there were 529 staff assigned a Performance Development Plan (PDP) at the end of the year but there were 634 assigned a PDP throughout the year.
- A total of 58 interviews were conducted resulting in 1002 applicants called for interview.
- Learning and Development, in total over 160 courses including mandatory health and safety, professional development and personal development were arranged from HR. Furthermore, 11 employees completed the Certificate in Local Government and a further 5 completed the Diploma in Local Government.
- A bespoke 2 Day training course for all Line Managers was developed for both indoor and outdoor employees.
- Reintroduction of an Induction Training Course for all new employees.
- The Staff Wellbeing Strategy was launch during the year, this will continue to grow and develop throughout 2024. Two Wellbeing Seminars were held during the year, including a

mental health talk by “Rory Stories” and also a workshop by the Irish Cancer Society in association with Relay for Life.

- The 2023 report shows a Mean Gender Pay Gap of - 0.51%, this means that on average females occupy higher paid roles than males. The Median Gender Pay Gap of -10.04% means that there is a proportionately more males in higher grades, however a 50% (male) /50% (female) gender breakdown in senior grades is to be welcomed and reflects progress on gender balance in senior management roles.

## **Annual Service Delivery Plan**

Every year Wexford County Council must prepare a Plan identifying the services which it intends to provide to the public. The Plan must take account of the Council’s Annual Budget, and of best practice in service delivery.

The Plan must include:

- (a) a statement of the principal services to be provided by the local authority during the year
- (b) the objectives and priorities for the delivery of each of these services and the strategies for achieving those objectives and priorities,
- (c) the performance standards to be met in the delivery of services
- (d) the manner in which the local authority will assess its performance in respect of the delivery of services,

The Plan is developed following the preparation of the Annual Budget and must be approved by the elected Members.

The Annual Service Delivery Plan for 2023 was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

Significant progress was achieved in both years in the delivery of each of the objectives and was reported on a quarterly basis to the Elected Members. An annual progress report was published after the end of each year on the Council’s website.

## **Customer Service Unit**

The Customer Service Unit (CSU) handles all incoming calls, emails and the reception for County Hall, and comprises 8 staff. In addition, the CSU has active Service Level Agreements with the Housing and Environment Departments to handle additional services in order to streamline the customer experience.

The CSU additionally manages the Council's website, consultation portal, and newspaper advertising.

Emails: 34,473

Calls Handled: 51,954

Quick Calls – 35,093

Roads Faults - 817

With Housing, the CSU validates all Housing Applications and Change in Circumstance forms, logs all Housing Maintenance requests, and processes Homeless Service presentations.

Change in Circumstance forms - 448.

Housing Applications – 1,730

With Environment, the CSU logs all incoming reports from customers, as well as processing of Agricultural Burn applications each year.

Environment Complaints – 4,047

In 2023, the CSU expanded its opening hours to 9.00am to 5.00pm where previously the phones closed for lunch from 1.00pm to 2.00pm. We began the process of tendering for a new phone system and new website, with a launch date for both upgrades in January 2024.

## **Procurement**

The Procurement Department is responsible for the following:

- Improving compliance with local and national guidelines and with EU procurement rules.
- Advising staff involved in procurement activities.
- Assisting staff to follow the correct procedures and develop guidelines to ensure compliance with policies.
- Acting as an intermediary between the Office of Government procurement and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre and Wexford County Council to get the most out of centralised procurement.
- Reporting progress in procurement reform to management.
- The application of government circulars relating to procurement.
- Staff members from the Procurement Department sit on the Councils Climate Action Steering Group.
- Procurement Officer is a member of the Munster South Leinster Procurement Officers Working Group
- Uploading of all Wexford County Council tenders on the eTenders Platform.
- Management of the LVPC's for all Council Staff.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of Requests</b>	
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Tenders dealt with	84	94

### **Issues Advanced in 2023**

- Promotion of Green Public Procurement across the organisation through training and support.
- The introduction and implementation of the new eTenders Platform commenced in May 2023, training, and support to all business areas throughout the organisation is ongoing.
- 2023 saw a record number of tender requests.

## Communications

The Communications Office is responsible for developing and managing Wexford County Council's communications strategy. In 2023, work began on a new Communications Strategy to cover the period 2024 – 2027. Within the strategy, we will devise clear communications protocols on how the Council communicates with external stakeholders, with staff and our elected members, as well as strategies to support wider community engagement, monitoring and evaluation.

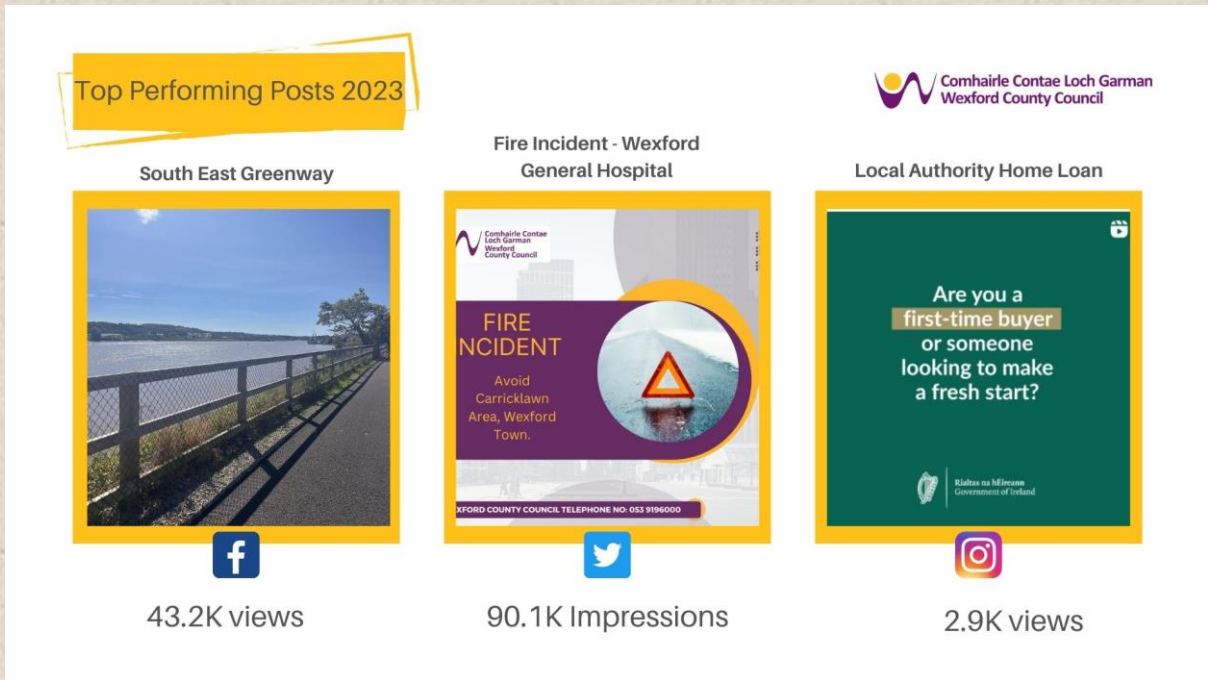
We provided support to staff in relation to internal and external communications, event management, social media, publications and advertising including compliance with the Official Languages Act.

The Staff Communications Forum, which is made up of both indoor and outdoor staff from all business areas, met on number of occasions during 2023 to discuss matters of concern. The group organised the post covid return of the Retired Staff Social Gathering. The event which was held in late October was a great success with over 150 former employees in attendance.

The Communications Office centrally manages content and the development of Wexford County Council's social media channels. 2023 saw a growth in followers across all social media platforms.

### **Social Media Followers 2023**

<b>Social Media Platform</b>	<b>Followers at 1st January 2023</b>	<b>Followers at 31st December 2023</b>	<b>Increase in Followers</b>
Facebook	5,435	8,435	3,000
Instagram	1,925	2,975	1,050
X	13,646	14,357	711



The Communications Office also handles interaction with mainstream media for the council, including:

Promoting the Councils achievements to the national and international media.

Helping journalists find the appropriate experts to comment on their fields of expertise.

During 2023, 103 Press Releases were issued and in the last six months of the year 46 media queries were received and responses issued.

Communication Liaison Officers have been nominated across the organisation to

- Advise the Communications Team of upcoming events in their section.
- Maintain an up to-date calendar of events for their section.
- Share details on new schemes, initiatives with everyone in their section and the Communications Team.

A number of Communication Liaison Officers meetings, chaired by the Communications Officer, were held in 2023.

For 'Your Council Day 2023' the Communication Team worked with various departments to highlight the services provided by the Local Authority with included staff videos highlighting the roles they play within the organisation and a testimonial from a social housing tenant which were posted to social media throughout the day.

## **Protected Disclosures**

### **Report Prepared & Published by Wexford County Council**

#### **In accordance with Sub-section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014**

Reporting Period: Year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	
The number of Protected Disclosures made to Wexford County Council	0
The Action (if any) taken in response to those Protected Disclosures	N/A
Such other information relating to these protected disclosures and the action taken as may be requested by the Minister from time to time	N/A

Wexford County Council also confirms that it has in place the following:

- i. Internal reporting channels and procedures.
- ii. External reporting channels and procedures.

## **Women's Coalition**

The Women's Coalition established in 2020 brings together the female Wexford County Council members, aims to ensure that female members are supported in the local government system.



**L-R Councillor Mary Farrell, Councillor Maura Bell, Councillor Bridin Murphy, Mairead O'Shea of See Her Elected, Councillor Barbara-Anne Murphy and Councillor Kathleen Codd Nolan**

See Her Elected has provided training to the Women's Coalition on topics such as how to be a spokesperson, media training and radio interviews, how to write an effective press release and getting confidence on social media.

In 2023 Wexford Women's Coalition commenced its initiative to bring the 'See Her Elected' Roadshow to secondary schools around the county. The aim of this initiative was to encourage more young women into politics and to bring diversity to council chambers. Six schools were visited in the year and the programme was very well received.

A representative from See Her Elected, an award-winning government funded project, gave a presentation to the students which was followed by a Q&A session with one of the current female elected members of Wexford County Council. This gave the students the opportunity to hear of the lived experience of the day-to-day life of a female public representative.

The schools that took part in 2023 include were Enniscorthy Community College, FCJ Bunclody, Creagh College, Gorey, Coláiste an Átha, Kilmuckridge, Loreto College and Selskar College, Wexford.



The Wexford Women's Coalition organised this 'flip it' gender reversal photo event in the Council Chamber with the assistance of staff and fellow Elected Members of the Council to draw attention to the stark under-representation of women in local government etc.

The Coalition Members are very aware that only 26% of councillors in Ireland are women and there is a major difficulty with an under representation of women in local politics in rural Ireland. For example, there are only six women out of 34 councillors on Wexford County Council. In almost one hundred years there have only been 15 women elected to Wexford County Council (since 1925).

# HOUSING SERVICES

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## Housing Services Department

### Housing Delivery

The Housing Department works to provide Housing Supports to people who are unable to meet their accommodation needs from their own means. We work in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Housing Agency, and Approved Housing Bodies to increase housing supply. The Council engages in various channels of housing delivery in an effort to increase supply of homes including own build, Turnkey acquisition, Part V Acquisition, CALF and CAS by Approved Housing Bodies (AHB), Mortgage to Rent, Tenant in Situ and Repair and Lease.



*Rosetown Housing Estate, Rosslare*

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Wexford County Council has an ambitious 5 year capital programme under the Housing for All Action Plan. Wexford County Council achieved 85% delivery under our housing for all targets in 2022. This was improved in 2023 where we hit 96.5% of our targets. We are hopeful with

approved and proposed projects, that we will surpass annual targets for the rest of the programme years.

Year	Estimated Part V (Private & LDA)	Existing LA Landbank	LA Turnkey Development	LA Leasing	AHB CALF	AHB CAS	Total Homes to be delivered	DHLGH TARGET	Target V Proposed Delivery
2023	27	22	41	1	79	0	170	176	-6

**AHB Forum** - The aim of Wexford County Council AHB Forum is to promote co-operation and develop partnership opportunities between Wexford County Council and Approved Housing Bodies to achieve our shared objective to deliver and manage homes for individuals and families who need support in meeting their accommodation needs.

This year’s Approved Housing Body Forum was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in the County Council Headquarters, Carricklawn, Wexford. The Forum was chaired by the Director of Services. Representatives from 13 different AHB’s, who operate within County Wexford and are interested in providing Housing solutions within the County, attended the Forum.

Discussion included the important contribution of AHB’s for Wexford County Council’s delivery of units under Housing for All and around aligning our housing needs, both for general housing and specific housing clients, with their delivery proposals through various housing models. There was plenty of opportunity also to share experience and learnings between housing managers and the networking carried on over lunch after the meeting.

The Forum will be meeting again in the early part of 2024 to discuss up to date relevant topics.

**Key Achievements in - Housing Delivery**

- 482 tenancy offers – 325 local authority and 157 AHB.
- 62 new homes delivered through Part V.
- 386 homes delivered in partnership with AHBs through CALF and CAS.
- 255 new HAP units.

## **Housing Maintenance**

The Housing Department is also responsible for the management and maintenance of our housing stock. The Maintenance Team provides supports and assistance to tenants as needed. Wexford County Council manages a housing stock of 4,969 Council owned housing units in the County as at the end of December 2023. In addition, Wexford County Council manages 185 leased units including Repair & Leasing.

### **Key Achievements in 2023 - Housing Maintenance**

- 4,980 Repair requests completed at year end.

## **Energy Retrofitting**

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2023 was the third year of a new 10-year Energy Efficiency/Retrofit Programme to retrofit local authority housing stock.

As part of this programme, the Housing Maintenance Section completed energy upgrades to 51 properties in 2023. The range of works undertaken in the properties included external wall.

and attic insulation, solar panels, new doors, new windows, blocking of fireplaces, low energy lighting, high efficiency boilers and upgraded heating controls. All properties received a minimum of a B2 BER rating after the works were completed.

## **Homeless Prevention and Supports**

Within the Housing Department we have the Homeless Support Service Unit (HSSU) which plays a key role in prevention of Homelessness in the County.

The Unit offers homeless supports, advice and services in one location, with an emphasis on homeless prevention and supports.

This is a collaborative initiative by Wexford County Council working in partnership with the HSE and Focus Ireland. Some of the main services being provided through the HSSU working in partnership with external state agencies and Non-Government Organisations are:

<b>Wexford County Council Services</b>	<b>Focus Ireland Services</b>	<b>HSE Services</b>
Homeless Assessment	Tenancy Sustainment Services	Substance Misuse Outreach Services
Homeless Prevention and support services through early intervention	Housing First Project	Mental Health
HAP Place Finder Service	Advice & Information Service	Tusla Aftercare
Links to external agencies where appropriate		Tusla Domestic Violence Women's Refuge
Advice and information		

It is important to point out that the figures below represent the total number of calls to the HSSU - it is not reflective of the number of individuals/families as quite often the same client may make multiple calls to the HSSU.

There were <b>1,568</b> calls to the HSSU from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023, the following is the breakdown of same:	
1247(79.5%)	Provided with advice and support in relation to housing and homeless prevention
107 (7%)	Supported with temporary, short, medium and long-term accommodation and tenancy sustainment support through Place Finder and Social Care Workers
156 (10%)	Ineligible at the time presentation for housing/homeless services. HSSU advised and assisted to regularise housing situation.
58 (3.5%)	It was not possible to complete a full assessment.

This is an increase in the use of this service of approximately 10% since 2022.

## **Housing Grants**

The Housing Department provides private grants assist works which improve the living conditions of people with a disability, persons with mobility issues as well as assist older people living in poor housing conditions.

### **Key Achievements 2023 – Housing Grants**

A total of €3,831,888 was paid to assist 624 household:

- €1,819,821 paid to 203 Applicants under Housing Adaptation Grant for persons with a Disability (HGD)
- €1,855,493 paid to 387 applicants under Housing Aid for Older Persons (HOP)
- €156,574 paid to 34 applicants under Mobility Aids Grants (MAG)

## **Housing Social Housing Support**

The Housing Department assesses eligibility for Social Housing Supports and allocates properties in accordance with the Council's Allocation Scheme. It also provides nominations to Approved Housing Bodies for tenancies.

Wexford County Council has 1,424 applicants on the social housing support list as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. An additional 1,444 were on the transfer list, this includes applicants currently in private rented receiving the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). 295 applicants on the transfer list were in local authority or AHB houses.



**Key Achievements 2023 – Social Housing Supports**

- 325 Wexford County Council property allocations.
- 157 further Approved Housing Body Properties were tenanted in 2023.
- Completed a Summary of Social Housing Assessment for 2023.
- Wexford Co Council fell slightly short of the targets for housing disabled people set out in their Strategic Plan for Housing Disabled People 2021- 2026. The target for new builds and relets is 20% and the target for HAP, RAS and Leased is 10%. The actual percentages realised were 19.2% and 10%.

**Private Rented Sector**

Wexford County Council continues to work with the Private Rented Sector to provide housing solutions to social housing applicants through the provision of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Leasing Scheme.

The number of inspections carried out in 2023 far exceeded the targets as shown in the following table:

Target	1,609
Inspections carried out	1,645
No. of AHB inspected	340

The total number of inspections carried out (1,645), includes the 340 AHB inspections.

**Key Achievements 2023 – Private Rented Sector**

- 255 New HAP Tenancies (Housing Assistance Payment)
- 1 New Repair and Lease Unit

## **Key Achievements 2023 – Vacant Homes**

- 19 Expressions of Interest (EOI) received in 2023 for Repair and lease applications. Each EOI may have multiple units.

## **Affordable Housing Units**

Wexford County Council has developed a delivery action plan setting out details of social and affordable housing delivery for the County over the period 2022-2026. The plan provides details of “how, where and when” social housing construction projects and affordable housing, are to be delivered to meet the target contained in Housing for All for the County.

Wexford County Council is progressing plans for the supply of affordable housing in County Wexford for the coming years -

- **Full Time Resource** – November 2023, an Administrative Officer has been allocated to the Affordable Housing Programme to manage this delivery stream.
- **Affordable Housing Fund** - an application for funding under the Affordable Housing Fund, was submitted to the DHLGH team for the proposed housing scheme at Ramsfort Park, Gorey Co. Wexford.



*(The pilot scheme includes 20 No. affordable houses at Ramsfort Park (Radharc na Beannóige), Gorey, Co. Wexford).*

- **2024 projected events –**
  - **Survey** – Planning is underway to establish the level of interest in potential affordable housing in areas throughout the county. Q1 2024, An Affordable Housing Survey is scheduled for launch, inviting those who meet the affordable housing criteria to have their say on their preferred needs. The information will be used to inform the Council on the level of demand, locations preferred, and the house prices that people might be able to afford and will help the Council to formulate its plans for Affordable Housing Options.



- **Programme Engagement** - Works are ongoing to hosting an Affordable Housing seminar for Project Developers in Q1 2024.

### Choice Based Letting

Wexford County Council introduced Choice Based Letting in August 2023. All applicants approved for social housing supports including approved transfer applicants received a login to the system.

Municipal District	Number of Properties Advertised	Properties Available for Allocation	Number of Views	Number of Expressions of Interest
Enniscorthy	12	20	6788	873
Gorey/Kilmuckridge	14	17	8553	1504
New Ross	11	12	5600	586
Rosslare	8	8	2873	335
Wexford	11	17	7240	1484
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>31054</b>	<b>4782</b>

To date there has been significant positive interest. The following table shows the number of properties advertised on the Choice Based Letting website, to **31/12/23**, together with Number of Views & Expressions of Interest.

As multiple properties were available in some cases, a total of 74 properties were available for allocation.

### **Residents Awards Day 2023**

On Thursday morning, 2 November in The Street, County Hall, the Housing Section hosted the Residents Awards Day. This was the first time the event was run since 2019. Residents of Local Authority Estates were invited to enter their estate or individual gardens in a countywide competition. Entries were received from 39 Residents Associations and 27 individual local authority tenants for the Best Estate prize as well as prizes for Best Garden, Best Window Box Display and Best Balcony. This year there was a new award for Best Biodiversity Initiative.

28 members of the public representing Local Authority Estates throughout the county as well as Housing Staff and Elected Members from all five districts gathered in the Street for a series of informative talks. This was followed by refreshments and an opportunity to chat and view information stands. The event concluded with the presentation of awards for Best Garden and Best Estate by the Cathaoirleach of each district and finally Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, John Fleming presented the individual awards and Special Achievement awards as well as the much-coveted Best Estate in County.

## ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

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The Transportation Department plays the principle role in the delivery of transport infrastructure in County Wexford.

The Department is responsible for policy & strategy and leads in the development of quality transport infrastructure, the daily maintenance of Wexford's roads network and the development of sustainable travel options.

The Transportation Department is also responsible for the delivery of major road projects including the Rosslare Europort Access Road and N11/N25 Oilgate Rosslare Harbour Scheme.

The Department works closely with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Department of Transport (DoT) on the delivery of major road projects, national, regional, and local road schemes, and active travel projects.

### **MAJOR ROAD SCHEMES**

#### **Rosslare Europort Access Road**

The N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road Scheme has been developed in accordance with TII Project Management Guidelines. The project is a key link in a very significant multi-modal transport investment that is planned for Rosslare Harbour in the next decade.

In 2023, An Bord Pleanála advised Wexford County Council that the Section 177AE Planning Application was approved for the development of the N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road and the Compulsory Purchase Order has been confirmed by Wexford County Council.



### **N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme**

This scheme forms part of the comprehensive TEN-T European Transport Network and complies with strategic policies at national, regional and local level. It strongly supports and aligns with two key objectives of Project Ireland 2040 of enhanced regional accessibility & high-quality international connectivity.

The scheme is also a key objective for the delivery of Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region in the Wexford County Development Plan.

The 31km section from Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour, in addition to the Rosslare Europort Access Road, provides a critical strategic land-sea transport connection between Ireland and Continental Europe.

The project team has progressed to Phase 3 of the project, Design & Environmental Evaluation.

As part of the structures design development a River Slaney Bridge Options Report is being prepared.

The River Slaney bridge is a major structure on this scheme, spanning over special area of conservation, River Slaney, regional road R730 & Wexford-Dublin railway line.

An assessment is ongoing to consider various bridge options with the objective of identifying the most appropriate bridge type.

## Phase 3 Design & Environmental Assessment – Structures Design Development



## ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The substantive element of the Department's annual work program is the maintenance and improvement of the County's 3,704km of national, regional, and local road network.

In 2023 €25.6m was allocated by Department of Transport & €9m by TII towards planning, design, development & maintenance of the road network. This grant funding also included an allocation towards Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) which allowed for the completed of 7 schemes.

Also, during the year, the Department of Community & Rural Development allocated funding in the sum of €1,030,935 under the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) providing for 21 schemes and 11 km of private laneways.

## National Roads

### N25 Ballygillane Roundabout

This roundabout forms a crucial part of the infrastructural development in Rosslare Harbour. It was substantially completed this year. The scheme, including land cost will amount to €3.15M.



### **Pavement Rehabilitation Schemes.**

N80 Tomacurry to Ballycarney – 3.7km – cost €1.54m

N25 Ballygillane to Orristown – 2km – cost €1.9m

## Non-National Roads

€25,637,853 was secured in grant funding from the DoT for non-national roads. All associated planned works were successfully delivered including 215km of roads upgrade under the restoration improvement & maintenance programs.

### Restoration & Improvement (RI)

The significant expenditure of €13,010,097 was spent on 109km of road, improving 3.1% of the road network. This relates to works deemed necessary to first strengthen and then surface and reseal. This provides for a 1–15-year treatment cycle.

Emphasis is placed on reducing transport of material and recycling existing stone where appropriate. This approach is consistent with low carbon and green policies.

## **Restoration & Maintenance (RM)**

More commonly referred to as surface dressing with the works intended to extend the longevity of the road.

In 2023 €2,941,000 was spent on 106km of road, improving 3.0% of the road network.

## **Bridges**

Following severe rainfall and flooding on Christmas Day 2021, several bridges throughout the county were extensively damaged. Six bridges were closed to the public, due to extent and severity of the structural damage. Restructuring works carried into 2023, with two remaining bridges to be completed in 2024.



*Wilton Bridge, Enniscorthy District – opened 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023*

## **Deeps Bridge, Killurin Wexford**

Following a detailed assessment of this bridge the structure was found to have multiple condition issues which required treatment and rectification.

The DoT allocated €2.5M towards this project which was completed in Q4 of 2023.



### **Fleet Management & Machinery Yard**

We continue to invest in our plant and machinery, supporting all Departments and operations within the Council.

## **Active Travel**

Wexford County Council's Active Travel team is working on delivering new infrastructure and existing infrastructure upgrades to support and encourage active travel in the county. It is intended that these infrastructure upgrades will encourage more active travel, improving the quality of life for people in Wexford as well as helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

'Active travel' means making a journey in a physically active way. This could be walking, cycling, wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid), or using a scooter.

Active travel journeys are typically short journeys such as trips to school, to work or to the shops.

According to CSO figures 29% of trips are to locations less than 2km from home, and of these, 57% are made by car. The development of better Active Travel infrastructure will support more people to walk and cycle for everyday short journeys, improving health, creating safer communities and reducing environmental impacts.

### **Funding**

Active Travel Projects are 100% funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA). €3.5 million was allocated in 2023 for a variety of projects.

## **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

By encouraging children to walk or cycle to school we can make a big impact on their safety and wellbeing. Congestion at the school gates is often a major issue but better cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure can help to create safer access options.

The following projects were delivered in 2023:

- SRTS at St. Mary's National School, Rosslare Strand
- SRTS at St. Abbáin's National School, Adamstown
- SRTS at St. Aidan's National School, Enniscorthy is near completion.



*Safe Route to School, Adamstown*



*Works at St Mary's National School, Rosslare Strand*

## **Pathfinder Projects or Cycle Schemes**

The Pathfinder Programme forms a key part of the implementation of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy which sets out a plan to 2030 to transform how we travel, making sustainable journeys more attractive and feasible for all.

The Pathfinder Projects for Wexford are active travel schemes from the Barntown roundabout on the Newtown Road to Wygram; active travel scheme at Beechlawn to Clonard; active travel scheme at Roxborough / Drinagh. Newtown Road Phase 1 is currently under construction.



*Construction of the segregated cycle and pedestrian scheme at Newtown Rd*



*Works to improve safety at the bus stop outside the Maldron Hotel on Newtown Rd*

## Car Free Day

Car Free day event which takes place worldwide, each year on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September. This year the Active Travel Department marked the day by working with the Gorey Pedestrian and Cycling Association to run an event in Gorey Town Park.



*A range of bikes on display for Car Free Day in Gorey Town Park*

## **Bike Week**

Bike Week took place in May. A range of cycling events were held across the County including a community 'Slow Roll' bike ride which encouraged those nervous about cycling on the streets to join a group cycle. It was very well attended with enthusiasm for more similar events in the future.



## **eBike Sharing Scheme**

A public eBike Sharing Scheme in association with Bolt launched in Wexford Town during Bike Week. This scheme is operating on a trial basis to allow both parties to examine the benefits for Wexford town. The scheme is proving very popular. As of end of December 2023 there were 3,165 unique users of the eBikes signed up with over 26,000 bike rides since the scheme commenced totalling 64,000 km of distance travelled.



*The launch of the Bolt eBike public bike sharing scheme during Bike Week in May 2023*

## **PUBLIC LIGHTING**

More than 12,000 public lights were upgraded to LED lighting since 2016 bring the % of LED lanterns to 93% of the total lighting stock.

## **ROAD SAFETY**

Wexford County Council continues to work closely with An Garda Síochána, The Road Safety Authority, other government agencies and local voluntary organisations to promote road safety in County Wexford.

### **Just One Life Road Safety Campaign**



For the past 17 years Wexford County Council and Wexford Rotary Club have jointly presented a unique road safety event entitled Just 1 Life. Aimed at Transition Year students, the objective of the Just One Life programme is to prevent young drivers' lives being needlessly lost in a road traffic collision.

Since 2007 more than 20,000 pupils have participated in our Road Safety events with over 2,200 students from all 23 of the County's second level schools attending during the 2023 / 2024 school year.

## **COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME**

Wexford County Council sponsor 2 Community Employment Schemes employing 2 supervisors, 1 assistant supervisor and overseeing some 75 participants.

The schemes operate from 6 locations throughout the county including Wexford, New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey as well as Wexford Library Archives and Duncannon Fort.

A total of 5 participants transitioned into full employment during 2023. All participants avail of mentoring and training programmes whilst engaged on the scheme including temporary work placements with both Wexford County Council and external organisations.

## WATER SERVICES

The Water Services Department of Wexford County Council delivers both Rural Water and Public Water Services. On 6th September 2023, Uisce Eireann took over the Management and Direction of Water Services Staff engaged in the delivery of Public Water Services.

Wexford County Council supervises the operation of the group water schemes (69 schemes serving approximately 4,250 people) and the Individual Well Grant scheme. Approximately 75% of the population of County Wexford is served by public water, 5% by Group water schemes and 20% by private wells. In 2023 we received 245 new applications and paid €350,000 to 170 applicants.

The Council also administers Grant Aid to existing group water schemes and new group sewerage schemes under the measures provided for under the Rural Water Programme. We are working actively with Group Water Schemes and Community Wastewater Schemes for submissions for the next round of funding in the 2022-2025 Rural Water Programme.

During 2022 a submission was made under Measure A8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP) for the servicing of unsewered villages. Options reports were prepared and submitted for Ramsgrange and Glynn villages, in order that funding be provided by the Department to provide public wastewater infrastructure in these villages. In 2023 we received notification that funding would be awarded to Ramsgrange.

### **Drinking Water**

On behalf of Irish Water, Wexford County Council operates 124 facilities (pump stations and treatment plants) and 2100 km of public water mains serving approximately 118,204 people.

Drinking water production in 2023 averaged at 46.1 MLD during the year, this is an increase on demand since 2022. In 2023, 613 leaks were detected and repaired.

11.8km of watermain rehabilitation projects were completed across the county in 2023. 4 backyard service replacement projects were completed and a further project commenced in Devereux Villas in Wexford town. Acoustic loggers were deployed in Enniscorthy, Wexford and Fardystown supplies.

During 2023 there was 1 boil water notice in County Wexford. This occurred in Ballycrystal/Kiltealy in December following high turbidity.

## **Wastewater**

On behalf of Irish Water, Wexford County Council operates 199 facilities (pump stations and treatment plants) and 501 Km of public sewer throughout the county treating the waste from both domestic and trade/industrial sources. The wastewater treatment plants serving the Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross, Bunclody and Rosslare Harbour are run by private contractors.

## **Capital Projects (in partnership with Irish Water)**

### **Water**

#### **Enniscorthy Water Supply**

New water intake and pumping station at Clonhasten on the River Slaney to improve water supply to Enniscorthy town, as well as new rising main and upgraded treatment plant at Vinegar Hill. The detailed design for this project progressed in 2022 with planning permission for the treatment plant upgrade granted in December 2022. Construction works are due to commence in 2024.

Wexford Water Supply-Newtown Upgrade.

Irish Water have appointed Glan Agua as contractor for the upgrade of Newtown Water Treatment plant and preliminary design is underway. The plant upgrade will look at dosing, sedimentation and run to waste to upgrade the operation of the plant. Construction work commenced in 2023.

#### **Creagh Water Treatment Plant Upgrade**

The Creagh Water Treatment Plant which serves Gorey town is undergoing upgrade. Irish Water have established a project for this work which will look at the refurbishment of the Dissolved Air Flotation Filtration Plant, repurposing of the slow sand filters, installation of the UV treatment and the replacement of dosing pumps and tanks. Construction work commenced in 2023.

### **Treated Water Storage**

Additional reservoir storage to bring schemes up to the required 24 hours of storage of treated water was approved for Camolin, Killealy and Kilmallock in 2019. The Kilmallock reservoir which will provide resilience and reliability for the Sow Water Supply Scheme received planning permission during 2021 and it was tendered in 2022. Construction work commenced in 2023.

### **Bunclody Water Supply**

A hydrogeological assessment has been completed for improved Ground Water Resources for Bunclody under the Supply Demand Balance Programme.

A further proposal is for new package plant to improve the resilience and capacity of Bunclody Water Treatment Plant progressing well with aim to be delivered under a new Irish Water Treatment Plant programme has been awarded with site visits taking place during 2023 to progress the project during 2024.

## **Wastewater**

### **Kilmore Quay WWTP**

A new Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) has been constructed Kilmore Quay Village under the UTAS (Untreated Agglomerations) Scheme. Construction on this project as underway during 2022 with new treatment plant, sewers and pump stations commenced. The new WWTP was made operational in 2023.

### **Enniscorthy sewer network Upgrade**

Surveying work was carried out in 2019 to enable a hydraulic model of the sewer network to be developed. The hydraulic model it was completed during 2021 and assets identified for upgrade. The Mary St SWO was completed in 2023.

### **Wexford Town Drainage Area Plan**

This project has been ongoing during 2023 and will produce a complete drainage model of the Wexford Town foul drainage system and identify all pipelines and infrastructure and deficiencies in the network.

### **Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme**

The small towns and villages growth programme aims will deliver additional capacity to existing towns and villages serviced by Irish Water. Wellingtonbridge and Tagoat villages are included in this programme. Options reports were completed for both settlements in 2022, with detailed design progressing during 2023.

### **Ferns WWTP Upgrade**

Ferns WWTP upgrade commenced at the project planning stage during 2023 with works expected to commence on site in 2025.

## ECONOMIC & ENTERPRISE

### **Town & Village Renewal Scheme**

There was significant interest in the request for Expressions of Interest for the Town & Village 2023 with a total of 22 expressions received from across the county. Following evaluation, 5 projects were selected to progress to full application stage and applications submitted for total potential funding of €1.5 million: Rathgarogue; Cushinstown Community Development Group; Carrig on Bannow Parish/Community Committee; Castlebridge Community Hall; The National 1798 Centre.

Successful applications will be announced in Q1 2024.

In 2023, Wexford County Council were approved a total of €500,000 under the Building Acquisition Measure to support the purchase of vacant and derelict buildings for conversion to community use continuing to support regeneration in rural towns and villages making them attractive, vibrant places to live and work. Two properties were purchased under this scheme: The Old Post Office, Ballyhogue – supporting community development initiatives; The Old Credit Union, Gorey – To be used by Gorey Family Resource Centre providing support to disadvantaged youth, outreach services and community support services.

### **Remote Working Hub Marketing campaign**

Wexford County Council secured €44,501 funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022. This supported an innovative county-wide marketing campaign in 2023 promoting remote working facilities across County Wexford, aligned with the National Remote Work Strategy. The multimedia campaign launched on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, showcasing the benefits of Remote Work Hubs.

### **IDA and Wexford County Council Collaboration for Enniscorthy Tech Park**

As part of Wexford County Council's economic strategy to provide high quality property solutions for investment by companies with potential for job creation, Wexford County Council has secured an Memorandum of Understanding with the IDA to collaboratively develop a property solution for

an advanced factory at Enniscorthy Technology Park. This phase will see a tender for design and planning of the advanced building solution.

### **Letter of Intent signed with Jiangxi Province, China**

Wexford County Council hosted the Governor of the Jiangxi Provincial People’s Government, Mr Ye Jianchun and a delegation of 5 key representatives from the Jiangxi Province in China and has signed a letter of intent for future trade, education, tourism and cultural ties for Wexford and the Chinese province.



### **Savannah, Georgia / Georgia Southern University (GSU)**

A number of delegations from Savannah, Georgia USA, visited Wexford in 2023 to advance the significant trade, tourism, education and cultural opportunities presented by the strong historic links between not only Savannah and Wexford, but also the counties of South East Georgia and South East Ireland through the Tradebridge project.

Over the summer period of 2023 a total of 150 students travelled from the US to study at the GSU Learning Campus in Wexford. Students also had the opportunity to travel around the county on education field trips as well as undertaking work study placements.



Work is progressing on the design and planning of the student accommodation with Stephen Carr Architects (SCA) who was formally appointed to the Adoration Convent Student Accommodation Project.

### **Tradebridge**

Two trade missions took place between SE Ireland and Savannah Georgia to explore and develop export and job creation opportunities.

### **Kilmore Quay Enterprise Park**

Work is progressing on the masterplan for the 11-acre council owned site at Kilmore. Once the masterplan has been finalised planning permission will be submitted and expressions of interest will be sought for the development of the site.

### **Butlersland**

To support commercial/industrial property solutions in New Ross and to attract further development and economic investment in the town, expressions of interest were sought from suitable parties for the design and construction of commercial/industrial property solutions on council owned lands at Butlersland, New Ross. Negotiations are progressing.

### **Trinity Wharf**

The sod turning at Trinity Wharf in March 2023 marked the first step in the transformation of the old Wexford Electronics site into a new, modern, state of the art urban district on Wexford Town's waterfront. Following a tender process for financial advisory and project management services, the successful tenderers are expected to be appointed in early 2024.

### **Tourism**

In 2023 County Wexford once again enjoyed significant upward trends in domestic tourism numbers and held the number 2 position in Hotel Bed Occupancy as reported by the Irish Hotel Federation.

Fáilte Ireland – Ireland's Ancient East

Wexford County Council continues to work and engage with Failte Ireland in the development of the of Ireland's Ancient East proposition.

### **Domestic Campaign**

Visit Wexford supported by Wexford County Council once again focused on a domestic tourism campaign to promote the Wexford attractions as well as outdoor adventures to explore, see and do for families, young professionals, and the mature generation in County Wexford. This campaign focused on 3 seasons; Spring/Summer, Autumn Winter and included National Radio and Press Advertising, in addition to Digital and Social Media Advertising and promotion.

### **International Campaign**

Wexford County Council and Visit Wexford collaborated with Tourism Ireland and Brittany Ferries in several promotional events highlighting international tourism opportunities for visitors from France and Spain. As part of promotional campaign included billboard advertising at Rosslare Europort and Failte Ireland's Tourist information point was installed in the terminal building at the Port.

### **Wexford Delegation to Savannah Georgia**

The Wexford delegation to Savannah were joined by Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD. on St Patricks Day. An Cathaoirleach, was interviewed for TV station WTOC which was seen by an audience of approximately 300,000 viewers.

### **Rebellion 225**

The County was awarded grant funding by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media towards hosting commemorative events across the county. Rebellion 225 campaign audience reach was an estimated 5.2 million with PR coverage with an average value of €1.15 million. Rebellion 225 events were hosted under one brand and banner with daily updates across dedicated Rebellion 225 accounts on social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (now X). A digital guide was also produced and available online. The

Rebellion 225 campaign saw significant coverage in local, regional and national media across online, print and Broadcast platforms.

### **Wexford Rose Tour**

Thirty-two Roses from the International Rose of Tralee Festival began a 3-day Wexford Rose on the 11<sup>th</sup> August with our Wexford Rose, Bronagh Hogan representing the County. The Tour was an outstanding success with the Roses visiting key attractions and towns across the county, experiencing the very best that Wexford has to offer. From an economic perspective, the earned PR value to County Wexford at the 25<sup>th</sup> August was €310,734. The Wexford Rose Tour featured heavily in the 2-minute showreel which was shown on the final night of the Rose of Tralee Festival which was broadcast on RTE One. The Live TV shows were watched in over 80 countries. Over half a million RTE viewers tuned into the Rose of Tralee Selection Nights.

### **Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Wexford**

LEO Wexford financially supported 235 small businesses who employ a total of 1,940 staff and were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally in terms of net job creation with a total job creation figure 328 and a net job figure of 177. This is the fourth consecutive year that Wexford has been in the top 5 for job creation in the country. The following infographic shows the key outputs for 2023:



### National Enterprise Awards Winner 2023

Jillian Duggan White and Nina Shelton from Sully & Juno represented LEO Wexford at the National Enterprise Awards where they won the South East Regional Award. The award was presented by Minister Simon Coveney, Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment at the Mansion House in Dublin. The company produce a highly innovative range of clothing for adults and children with sensory needs.



## **National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED) – 19th October 2023**



Wexford's NWED event took place in the Newbay House Wexford. Over one hundred female business owners and entrepreneurs gathered to celebrate NWED in the company of a dynamic, innovative and inspirational panel of speakers including keynote speaker, Theresa Grant OBE. Panellists included Deborah Brock, Nua Fertility, Pauline Dunne, Killowen Farm. The event received extensive media attention and was

featured on Ireland AM. NWED events act as a catalyst to support Government policy in encouraging and promoting more to set up and scale their businesses.

## **Blás na hEireann**

In September fourteen Wexford food producers, shortlisted from thousands of entries across the country competed for the Blás na hEireann Food Awards in Dingle. This year 12 Wexford's food producers took home an array of gold, silver and bronze medals from these awards. Wexford LEO sponsored an "Eat Wexford" stand in the Food Village at Blás where finalists had the opportunity to display, sample and sell their produce meeting both domestic and international food buyers.



### **SME Pharma Company of the Year 2023**

BioStór Ireland based in Kilrane Business Park, a client of LEO Wexford, recently won the 'SME Pharma Company of the Year 2023' at the Pharma industry awards in Cork.

BioStór Ireland are Ireland leading EU-licensed cell bank/biobank that offer certified storage and worldwide distribution of biological materials for scientific research and clinical applications.



### **Conference: Making Sustainability Happen: Funding Pathways and Success Stories**

An inaugural conference was held in Wexford County Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 with an objective to create awareness and encourage the uptake of sustainability supports and the integration of sustainability as a KPI for businesses in the South East. The conference acted as a catalyst for the development of a green cluster for the region, which is managed by Mandi Stewart, Business Development Manager with HPBA (Green Hub).



## **Regeneration Unit**

The Regeneration Unit was established on the 31<sup>st</sup> October and resides under the Economic Directorate.

The Unit consists of the Town Regeneration Officer, Vacant Homes Officer (Croí Cónaithe) and an Asst Staff Officer. Given the synergies between the roles of Vacant Homes Officer and Town Regeneration Officer it was decided to amalgamate both functions and create a Regeneration Unit within Wexford County Council. As we now have a more concentrated focus on Regeneration and vacancy activation through various Government programmes it was agreed to realign these roles into a new “Regeneration Unit”.

Town Centre First is a key pillar of the Regeneration Unit with the completion of Town Centre First Plan for both Enniscorthy and New Ross Towns and the creation of Town Centre First Teams in each of these Towns.

The Town Centre First Policy aims to create Town Centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

### **New Ross Town Centre First**

The New Ross Town centre first Team was established in Feb of 2023 and met 11 times during the year. This Team consists of representatives from cultural, community, business, tourism, education, PPN organisations along with a Garda representative and residents giving a broad spectrum of views represented through this forum.

Urban design Consultants Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd, Dublin was appointed as the urban design led team to prepare a Town Centre First Plan for New Ross in May 2023, this Plan was completed in Oct 2023 and formally launched by Minister Heather Humphrey’s in early 2024 as part of the National launch of pathfinder Town Centre First Plans.

The process involved consultation with all business, community, cultural, sporting organisations along with extensive consultation with the public and resulted in the formulation of a Town centre first Plan for New Ross that was based on the feedback from the community and was very well received in the Town and surrounding areas. Applications for funding under the Rural Regeneration Development fund were made for projects identified in the Town Centre First Plan in New Ross.

This plan is available to download on the Wexford County Council website.



*Members of the New Ross Town Centre First Team along with Cllrs and Officials of Wexford County Council at Contract signing with Cunnane Stratton Reynolds*

### **Enniscorthy Town Centre First**

The Enniscorthy Town centre first Team was established in April of 2023 and met 8 times during the year. This Team consists of representatives from cultural, community, business, tourism, sporting, Wexford Local Development, PPN organisations along with a Garda representative and residents giving a broad spectrum of views represented through this forum.

Urban design Consultants LOCI were appointed as the urban design led team to prepare a Town Centre First Plan for Enniscorthy. This plan was formally approved by the Enniscorthy Municipal District in Jan 2023 with amendments made including the addition of a Digital Town blueprint for Enniscorthy Town which was prepared through the Enniscorthy Town Centre First Team. The Plan was formally launched in Enniscorthy Castle in February 2024.

The Town centre first process involves consultation with all business, community, cultural, sporting organisations along with extensive consultation with the public and resulted in the formulation of a Town centre first Plan for Enniscorthy that was based on the feedback from the community and was very well received in the Town and surrounding areas.

This plan is available to download on the Wexford County Council website.



*Enniscorthy Town Centre First Team*

## **Vacant Homes**

The Regeneration Unit has taken on the functions of the Vacant Homes Officer namely Croi Cónaithe and ready to build scheme.

The Vacant Homes Officer is also carrying out a countywide Vacant Homes Survey, the objective of the survey is to capture data, granular and high level, on the number of vacant and derelict dwellings, their condition and the reason for vacancy, across the County. This will then provide a data base for Wexford County Council to use, which can be added to, as vacant properties come to our attention and properties can be removed from, when they are activated.

The database will also be used by Wexford County Council to identify properties to enter the CPO activation programme and capture data on all properties / owners who we are engaging with, and the various schemes used to activate those properties - Repair and Leasing etc. and in some cases CPOs or Compulsory Acquisitions

### **Croí Cónaithe (Vacant Homes Grant)**

A max grant of €50,000 is available for the refurbishment of a vacant property. A top up grant of €20,000 is available where the property is confirmed as derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous). Applicants can live in the property as their private residence or rent out the property. The property must have been vacant for a minimum of 2 years at time of application. The property must have been built / substantially completed by Dec 2007. The property can be located in Urban or Rural Areas.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Wexford County Figures for 2023</b>
Applications Received	220
Applications Approved	66
Applications Rejected	2



## SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Special Projects Office covers the development of:

- Industrial, Commercial, Technological and Business Infrastructure to facilitate and act as a catalyst for economic development.
- Town Centre space revitalisation, public buildings, and regeneration projects.
- High value recreational amenity and tourism projects.
- The Special Projects Office is also the lead for Regional Greenways. This function is resourced by Wexford and Kilkenny County Councils to develop a strategy for an integrated network of greenways in the region.

### **Trinity Wharf**

The development of the 3.6 Hectare waterside Trinity Wharf site will facilitate a new sustainable urban quarter with a high-quality public realm, a mix of modern office space, hotel accommodation, leisure and residential development, a landmark cultural and events building, residential units and a multi-storey car park. The leisure and residential development includes the provision of a 64-berth marina, a new boardwalk linking Trinity Wharf with Paul Quay and The Crescent, new public realm spaces and an urban greenway.

The contract for the construction of the access road was awarded to Glás Civil Engineering Ltd, in January 2023 and works commenced on site in late February 2023. The sod turning took place on site on 2<sup>nd</sup> March with Minister Darragh O'Brien and elected representatives.



Procurement of consultants for design services for the site development and public infrastructure works is underway. the preferred tenderer is identified, and the standstill period has expired. The formal appointment of the design services consultant is imminent.

## **Enniscorthy Technology Park, Killagoley**

The Enniscorthy Technology Park is located alongside the old N11 to the south of Enniscorthy. The site is approximately 14.5 HA and Wexford County Council is developing the lands as a technology park with associated services infrastructure to facilitate investment by the science and technology sectors.

Phase 1 – the development of three serviced sites is substantially complete and the construction of the first building is well under way.



## **Murphy Floods Redevelopment**

Wexford County Council has recently acquired the former Murphy Floods Hotel site, and adjacent derelict properties, in Enniscorthy Town Centre. The Council now seeks to advance a proposal to redevelop this vacant plot, which has previously secured Part 8 consent in July 2022. O'Connor Sutton Cronin Consulting Engineers were appointed in May 2023 to undertake full stage design services for the demolition and site preparation elements of the scheme.

A tender competition to appoint a works contractor for the demolition works onsite has commenced and tender assessment is underway. Phase 1 works anticipated to commence onsite in Q1 2024.

## **John Street Building Regeneration Project**

Wexford County Council was successful in securing Rural Regeneration and Development Fund funding to design a redevelopment of the old grain stores at John Street, New Ross which will see these buildings converted into a high-quality town-centre hub, with offices, community space and a destination café/restaurant.

A portion of the grain store building has been purchased by agreement and the Compulsory Purchase Order for the remaining sections is now formally complete. ODKM Architects undertook a preplanning meeting for the building in February, with the Concept Design Report being presented to the New Ross MDC at the May meeting.

Preliminary design is ongoing with Part 8 planned to commence in early 2024, subject to the outcome of a screening for appropriate assessment and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment.



### **Crescent Quay Dredging**

RPS Consulting Engineers have been appointed to provide design services for dredging works at Crescent Quay. The sampling and testing of the proposed dredge material, to inform the statutory consent process, is complete and results have been assessed. Further to a Preliminary design report issued by the consultants in August 2023, the scope of the project is currently under review.

### **Templeshannon Regeneration, Enniscorthy**

The Templeshannon Regeneration Strategy identifies a number of enabling projects required to achieve regeneration, including:

- Improving the public realm and streetscape in Templeshannon area
- Establishing a new link to the town centre by construction of a new pedestrian bridge

- The management and progressive transformation of the Leisure Centre Car Park
- The creation of new urban blocks for infill development.

The site investigation (SI) work for the pedestrian bridge has been completed. The preliminary design and bridge options report has been completed taking account of the results of the SI works and is currently under review.

Wexford County Council is engaged with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding a further funding application to support regeneration in Enniscorthy. The planning Department is working in collaboration with Special Projects to develop a strategic plan for Enniscorthy and is currently being drafted.

ODKM Architects have been appointed to undertake concept master planning design services for the Templeshannon Regeneration Project. This masterplan will be completed in time for the forthcoming URDF application.

### **Esmonde Street**

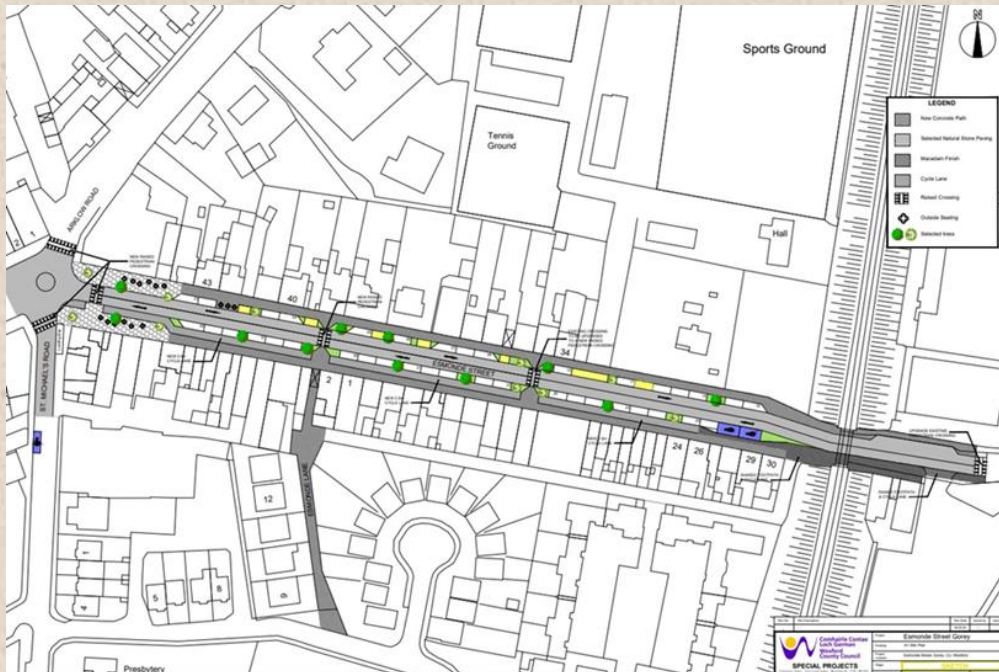
RPS is progressing with the detailed design. Site investigation works are now completed. Irish Water have now approved proceeding with the design of the sewer upgrade and CCTV and survey works has been completed. The detailed design for the sewer upgrade being progressed. Irish Rail has requested additional site investigations to the abutments of the bridge for the sewer upgrade which will take place this month.

An on-site meeting took place with the Members in Gorey – Kilmuckridge MDC in February 2023 and proposals for the street were discussed. A presentation was made to the Members in April 2023. The Members advised to proceed to detailed design with the proposed plans, with works expected to commence on-site in January 2024. €2m of own funds is committed to the Esmonde Street project.

The scope and phasing of this project is currently under review.

A further redesign of the proposed public realm improvement project, which included an increase in on-street parking from previous proposal and a revised layout for cycling infrastructure, was presented to the members of GKMD in November 2023. The members approved implementing the plan as proposed, with minor amendments. The project will now progress to detailed design

and then to tendering for a works contractor with the aim of commencing works on-site in September 2024.



### New Ross Public Realm

- **Phase 1: Removal of Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks:**
- **Phase 2 Emigrants' Park**

This project consists of removal of the oil tank structures on the Quay and the development of public realm works on the site.

The Advance Works Contract (Removal of Tanks) was complete in July 2021.

A Part 8 development consent application for the development of the public realm space on the site was confirmed at the Council's meeting in March 2022.

An application for category 1 capital funding under the



RRDF scheme was submitted in April 2022. Funding of €814,393 was awarded to the project in November 2022.

The works are now complete and the park was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphrey's on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

### **Mechanics Institute, Wexford**

The works contract for essential maintenance works at the Mechanics Institute has been awarded to Roger Doyle Contractors and works commenced on site in January 2023. Completion is expected in January 2024.



### **Carrigfoyle**

This site was identified for the construction of an Activity Centre in conjunction with Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board. The centre will provide recreational, social, health and wellbeing activities for locals and visitors.

#### **Carrigfoyle/ Forth Mountain Activity Park – Phase 2 - Activity Centre Building:**

**Phase 1 – Trails and Carpark-** access road, car park, trails, and services of this project is complete.

#### **Phase 2 - Activity Centre Building:**

The activity centre building is currently on hold.

The part VIII for the proposed boathouse and external toilet facility on-site was approved by Wexford County Council in February 2023. Tenders for works were received on May 31<sup>st</sup> and have been assessed. Contract award is subject to confirmation of funding.

### **Gorey Town Park**

This high-quality landscape designed park incorporates the existing two parks Gorey Town Park and Gorey Showground's into a well-designed and coherent new park that becomes a landmark within the area, an exemplar in landscape architect-led design and a template for modern parks in Ireland.

The external area of the park opened to the public on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and the new playground and adult gym equipment is fully installed and in use.

The park is substantially completed and is now fully open to the public.

The second invitation to tender for the Changing Places unit did not result in an award of contract. A third invitation to tender for the Changing Places unit was advertised on eTenders. Tenders have been received and a contract awarded. The Changing Places unit has been installed with snagging to be completed by the end of February 2024.



## **WEXFORDIA – Irish National Heritage Park (INHP), Hook Lighthouse and New Ross Tourism Projects**

The ambition is to develop a strong cluster of tourism projects within the county to maximise the economic impact of these attractions; and by offering an alternative destination for visitors to the South East region and Ireland.

Wexford County Council secured RRDF Category 2 (Feasibility Stage) funding for the following tourism projects within the county.

### **Irish National Heritage Park: INHP**

The tourism and environmental design teams for the INHP have commenced work on a preliminary design and the environmental assessments. The preliminary design has been extended to include a design for a new Visitor Centre to support service requirements at the INHP and to mitigate against future flood events. It is planned to submit a planning application for the entire project to An Bord Pleanála in Q3 2024.

### **Hook Lighthouse**

The tender competition for interpretative design services for the Hook Lighthouse was advertised in February with closing date for tenders on 30/03/23. Tandem Design have been identified as the successful tenderer and have been formally appointed. A commencement meeting took place on 6<sup>th</sup> November and subsequent site visit took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November where the Consultants met with the Manager and Board of Hook Heritage and representatives from Irish Lights and Fáilte Ireland. A Preliminary design for the Interpretive Design of the project is expected in Q1 2024.

The Brief for the associated architectural and related design services will be issued in Q1 2024 as part of the framework created for architectural



services focused on tourism and recreation projects. It is expected that the Preliminary design will be completed in 2024 and submitted to An Bord Pleanála in Q3 2025.

Wexford County Council secured RRDF Category 1 funding (Construction stage) for the development of a cluster of tourism projects within the county.

### **New Ross Tourism Project**

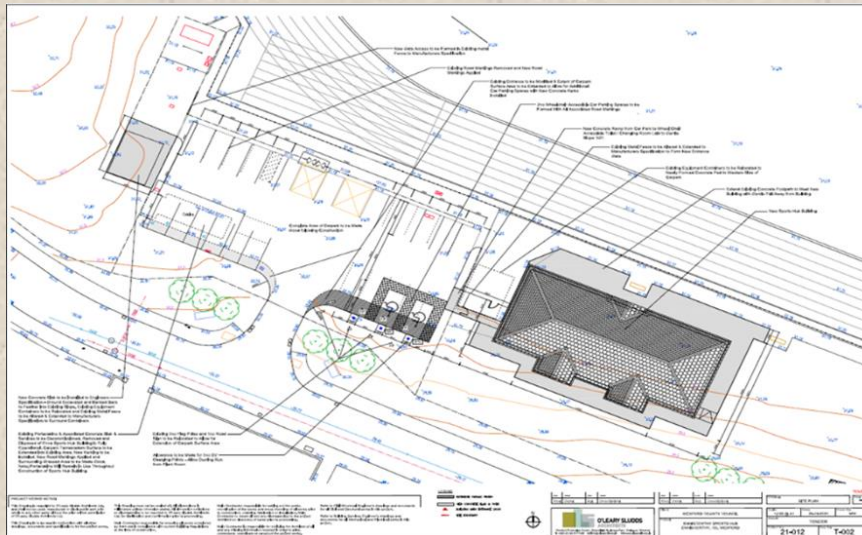
Tenders for the interpretive fitout on the Dunbrody Visitor Centre Experience have been received and a contract awarded to EPIC Design, based in Dublin who have completed the detailed design for the development. The procurement for works will take place shortly. Installation and fit out works on this project are planned to be completed by Q2 2024.

Tenders for the Interpretive and exhibition design of the Norman Visitor Centre have been completed and an apparently successful tenderer has been identified. Preliminary Design on this will begin in early 2024.

A framework for architectural services for tourism projects has been advertised with stage 1 submissions received and assessment now complete. Tenders will be invited from shortlisted candidates in November for the Norman Centre project, with award of contract anticipated in Q1 2024.

## **Enniscorthy Sports Hub**

O’Leary Sludds Architects were appointed in Feb 2021 for the detailed design, procurement of works contractor and construction management of the Sport Hub building. A competition to award a works contract for the sports hub building was advertised in May 2022. The lowest price tender opened for the project exceeded the available budget and, therefore, it has been decided not to progress with awarding this works contract. A redesign process for the project has been completed, and it is expected to retender the project in early 2024.



## **Enniscorthy Town Centre & Tourism Project**

The Planning Department in collaboration with Special Projects has developed a strategic plan for Enniscorthy town centre, which was adopted at the Enniscorthy Municipal District meeting in December 2022.

Regeneration works to the Market Square, Enniscorthy Castle Quarter and Templeshannon will form part of a forthcoming Call 4 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund application.

The Part 8 process for Market Square and town centre street enhancement was commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which was designed by Moloney O’Beirne Architects & Roughan & O’Donovan Consulting Engineers. Preliminary design work on the Enniscorthy Castle Quarter project has now also commenced and it is intended to submit a Part 8 planning application for this in Q1 2024.

ODKM Architects have been appointed to undertake concept master planning design services for the Templeshannon Regeneration Project. This masterplan will be completed in time for the forthcoming URDF application.



### **Gorey Market House**

Gorey Market House is an historic building and it forms an important part of the urban fabric & Public Realm Plan of Gorey Town. A Part VIII planning application for re-development of the Market House into a multi-purpose performance/exhibition/retail space was approved in May 2018.

A call for Expressions of Interest / Tender Proposals from private sector investors was advertised in January 2020 and 2 submissions were received by the closing date of 13/02/2020. This tender process was concluded in May 2021 without the award of a contract.

In February 2023, Wexford County Council again publicly invited Expressions of Interest for the re-development of the Market House using a Competitive Dialogue procurement process to identify the best option for a town centre development, including a performance space. Following tender assessment, no suitable candidate was identified to proceed to the negotiation stage. The tender process has now been concluded and closed out.

Wexford County Council are now considering further options for the development of the Market House.

### **Old Dublin Road Business Park, Enniscorthy**

A contract for the initial phase 1 works was advertised in January 2022. Hughes and Hennessey Ltd were appointed to commence construction of the ENBD – Enniscorthy North Business District (Old Dublin Road) Phase 1. This work involved the enhancement and improvement of the footpath streetscape, enhanced gateways and pedestrian safety. This stage 1 of the project included footpath, drainage and road improvements together with the installation of two bellisa beacon pedestrian crossings. This work was completed in September 2022.

An application for further funding has been prepared and submitted to the National Transport Authority

, in conjunction with the Roads & Transportation Section, for the active travel elements of the masterplan. No funding was forthcoming for 2023.

### **Ferndale Gymnasium and MUGAs, Wexford**

Sports Capital funding of €300,000 has been secured for this project, supporting a donation of €500,000 from William Neville and Sons for this project. Part VIII approved was received in 2022 and a design team has been appointed to prepare detailed designs and tender documents for the works. The works were tendered in August and the tenders received in September '23. Tenders exceeded the available budget, and a design review for the building was undertaken by the Design Team in November/December '23. It is planned to retender I nearly 2024 and commence works in Q2 2024.

Sole Sports and Leisure Ltd. have been awarded the contract, following public tender, for the construction of two MUGAs at an adjacent site, following confirmation of €100,000 in grant funding through the 2023 Community Recognition Fund. Works commenced on site in August 2023. Completion is expected in February 2024.

### **Adoration Convent Wexford**

Part 8 approval is in place for this project to convert the old convent into accommodation for students of Georgia Southern University Wexford campus. A design team appointment has been approved by GSU and preliminary design and associated survey works are underway. It is intended to tender out these works out in Q1 2024 with works to commence in Q2 2024.



## **GREENWAYS**

### **South East Greenway (SEG)**



The South East Greenway will be constructed on the disused rail corridor that extend from Mount Elliot, north of New Ross, to Ferrybank in Waterford running through south Kilkenny. It will, in conjunction with the North Quays projects and the Bilberry Greenway in Waterford, connect the South East Greenway with the Waterford greenway creating a 72km greenway that will attract both domestic &

international visitors to the area & will act as an economic driver for the region.

The rail lifting and site clearance contract has been completed. Glás Civil Engineering were appointed to construct 9.1km of greenway from Raheen to the Red Bridge and for the New Ross and Ferrybank urban sections under Lots 1, 2 & 3. These works have now been completed and a 6.5km section of the South East Greenway - New Ross to Glenmore was officially opened on the 25th of July 2023.

The works contract tender for Lot 5a – Ferrybank to Curraghmore (5.5KM) was advertised in March 2023. Tenders have been received and assessed and the contract has been awarded to Glás Civil Engineering Ltd.

The process to procure technical advisors for the completion of all remaining components of Southeast Greenway project has commenced.

There was a public consultation meeting on the South East Greenway held by Failte Ireland on 22/11/23. Failte Ireland have appointed The Paul Hogarth Company to create an Interpretation and wayfinding plan for SEG. The event was well attended by the public across counties Kilkenny & Wexford.



### **Rosslare Europort to Waterford City Greenway**

The Economic SPC of Wexford County Council and the Transportation SPC of Waterford City & County Council have written to the Minister for Transport seeking inclusion of the out-of-service Rosslare to Waterford railway line in the up-coming national rail review. The application for planning consent for the Rosslare to Waterford greenway project has been paused, pending a decision from the Department of Transport on the future of the rail corridor.

The Rosslare Harbour to Rosslare Strand section is now being advanced as part of the Wexford Town to Rosslare Greenway project.

### **Wexford Town to Rosslare Greenway**

Fehily Timoney & Co has been appointed to provide consultancy services for a feasibility study, route selection, preliminary design and environmental assessments for the development of this project. Constraints have been identified and ecological surveys are on-going. The scoping and route options process is ongoing. Public consultation on the preferred route corridor options commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 with submissions closing on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It is now expected to confirm a preferred route in Q2 2024. Submission to An Bord Pleanála is likely to happen in Q3 2025.

Fehily Timoney & Co has been appointed to review the route options for the proposed Rosslare Harbour to Rosslare Strand greenway in light of the significant coastal protection works that have

been carried out over the past two years by Irish Rail. It is planned to confirm a preferred route in Q2 2024, with an expected Part 8 application (subject to screening) to follow.

### **Oyster Lane Car Park, Wexford**

A Part VIII submission has been made for the demolition of existing unoccupied buildings on the old Tesco site, including the construction of a temporary surface level car park. The Part VIII was confirmed at the March 2022 County Council meeting. A further Part 8 submission has been made for erection of a temporary performance structure and public realm area, instead of a surface carpark.

O'Connor Sutton Cronin consulting engineers have been appointed to provide design and construction related consultancy services for the project.

The demolition contract was awarded to John Tinnelly & Sons (Ireland) Ltd, with an extension to the main works contract also agreed for the demolition of the former Dun Mhuire Theatre. All demo works onsite are now complete.

The procurement process is ongoing for the provision of the temporary performance structure at the site. Initial tender submissions were received in late December.

### **Curracloe Water Sports Activity Facility**

Wexford County Council received Stage 2 compliance approval from Fáilte Ireland for the development of facilities to support water sports activities at Whitegap, Curracloe. The project will include showers, toilets, changing facilities and lockers.

Following the tender process for design services in Jan 2022, Neville Conroy Architects was appointed. Surveying works and detailed design commenced in January 2023.

The tender for the enabling works package was published to etenders in December 2023.

Received tenders for the enabling works package are currently being assessed. These works are expected to commence on-site in April 2024.

The tender for the main building contract was published to e-tenders on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The tender deadline for this competition is in March '24 with construction anticipated to commence in May '24.



### **Courtown Coastal Protection & Beach Nourishment Scheme**

Following a competitive tender process, RPS Ltd was appointed to undertake the Preliminary Design and Statutory Consents Phase of the Courtown coastal protection and beach nourishment scheme.

Priority Geotechnical Ltd. is appointed to carry out the marine and land-based surveys and boreholes at Courtown. They commenced work on the May 2022 and the site investigation work is complete.

Marine profiling surveys will also be carried out in parallel at this time and this work is being carried out by Hydrographic Survey Limited. An application to the Marine Foreshore Dept., was submitted in December 2022, for permission to carry out benthic grab samples. This work will commence once approval is granted.

It is planned to submit an application to An Bord Pleanála for development consent in Q2 2024.

## **Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme**

**Statutory Process** - The Minister for the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) issued his decision to refuse the scheme on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Details are available on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie). Following the decision, the OPW confirmed their commitment to delivering an effective scheme for Enniscorthy. The Minister for State, Mr Patrick O'Donovan, and senior officials from the OPW & Wexford County Council attended a special meeting of Enniscorthy MDC on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to update the members in relation to the Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme. The minister supported a Wexford County Council proposal to progress the new River Slaney Bridge element of the scheme and the Flood Defence Works as separate projects.

### **Flood Defence Scheme – Phase 1**

Wexford County Council is progressing the planning consent for Phase 1 at present. This phase includes the construction of the new River Slaney Road bridge to the south of the town, the removal of the Seamus Rafter Bridge and the construction of a replacement pedestrian bridge. Phase 1 will provide flood relief benefit in the town centre and enable traffic flows in and around the town centre to be managed during the construction of the main flood defence works. The baseline data for this phase is currently being updated. Traffic surveys are complete, ecology survey reports are to be completed in Q1 2024. The planning application is to be submitted in Q1 2025.

### **Flood Defence Scheme – Phase 2**

This phase of the scheme will involve the construction of the main flood relief works for Enniscorthy, including the flood defence walls and in-river works. To progress this phase of the project the baseline data will be updated. The scheme alternatives will be assessed, consulted on publicly and a preferred option identified. It will then be necessary to decide on the most appropriate planning route for the scheme. The hydrology and environmental baseline data is currently being updated; ecology survey reports are to be completed in Q2 2024.

## **Wexford Flood Relief Scheme**

The contract for engineering and environmental services for the Wexford Town & Environs contract was signed by Wexford County Council and Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. A preliminary cost estimate of €9.52m has been approved by the OPW for scheme, which will be fully funded.

Early-stage data acquisition and feasibility studies are ongoing.



# PLANNING

## Development Management

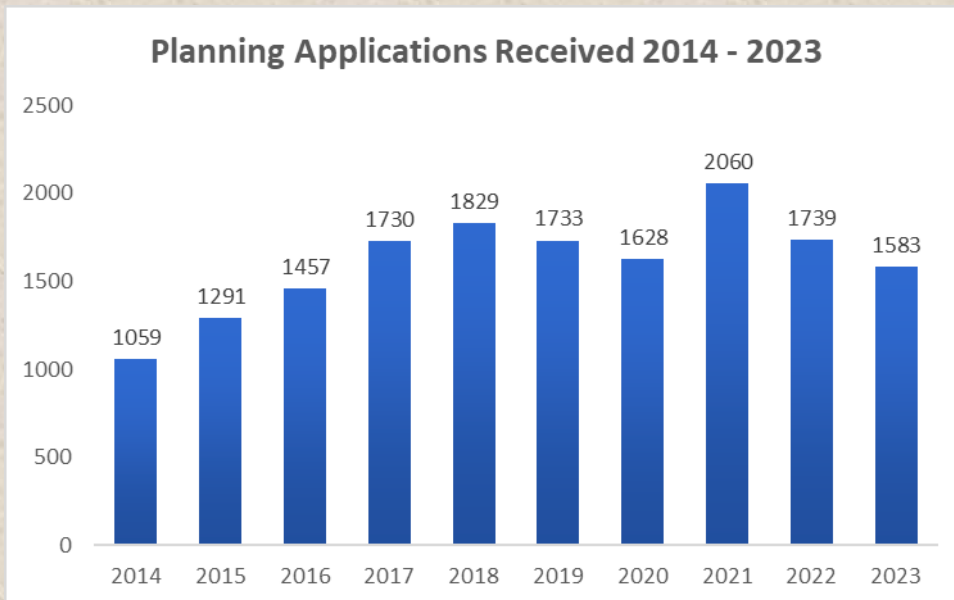
### Planning Application Statistics 2023

1583 Planning Applications received in 2023 compared with:

1739 in 2022

2060 in 2021

1628 in 2020



- 3165 Members of the public called in to the Planning Customer Service Unit Counter.
- 73 No. Exempted Development Applications received.
- 29 No. Extension of Duration Applications received.
- 345 No. Pre-planning Applications received.
- 414 No. Pre-planning Applications closed.
- 60 No. Major Pre-planning Meetings held.
- 1320 Decisions were made with 79.5% of applications granted planning permission.

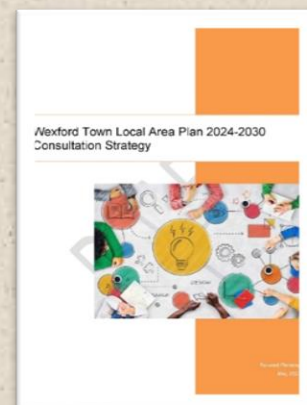
### CSO Returns - 2023 (Permissions Granted)

	<b>2023</b>
Total Number of Permissions (all uses) <i>(See circular PD 10/00 Appendix 2)</i>	712
Total Number of Dwellings Permissions (new construction houses, including one-off houses and apartments)	320
<b><u>Total Number of Units (New Construction);</u></b>	
Houses (excluding one-off houses)	779
Apartments	225
One-off houses	267

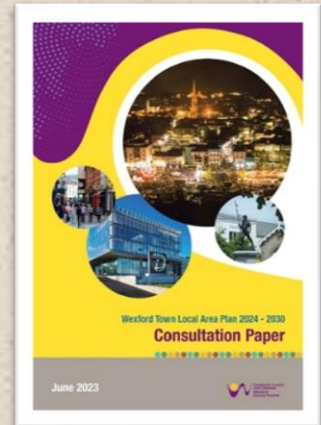
## FORWARD PLANNING

### Wexford Town Local Area Plan

*A series of meetings were held with the Members of the Borough District of Wexford to progress the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Wexford Town. The first two meetings focused on the process, function and required content of the plan. At the third meeting, held in May 2023, the proposed Consultation Strategy and matters relating to the 'pre-draft public' consultation stage, including the proposed Consultation Paper, were considered by the Members.*



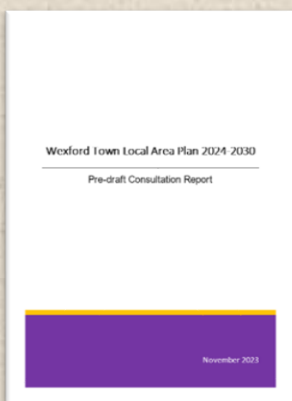
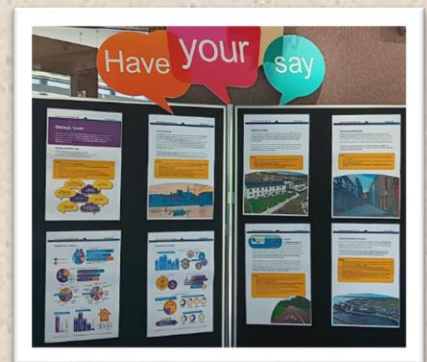
*The Consultation Paper, provided details of the plan-making process, set out the key strategic issues and provided details of how to make a submission. It was sent to hundreds of prescribed authorities, stakeholders, community groups and infrastructure providers and placed on public display.*



the

The pre-draft consultation period ran from the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 until 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Two well-attended public events took place in Wexford Town Library. A facilitated stakeholder event was also held, as well as individual stakeholder meetings with key providers such as the Office of Public Works and the Department of Education.

Over seventy written submissions and observations were received during the public consultation period, and covered an array of topics including biodiversity, sustainable transport, education, economic development and housing.



A Pre-Draft Consultation Report was then prepared giving an overview of the public and other stakeholder consultations undertaken and a summary of the issues raised. It was submitted to the Members of the Borough District of Wexford in November 2023.

At the request of the Members, a Social Infrastructure Audit was also carried out. The Social Infrastructure Audit, which was informed by a desk-based survey and an online public consultation, provides the evidence-base to identify where there is a current under provision of social infrastructure. The outputs of the audit will help to determine future social infrastructure requirements and assist in the spatial planning of the town.



The Local Transport Plan, which will inform the Local Area Plan, is being led by the Active Travel team with support from the Forward Planning team. It is progressing well with the Baseline and Context Reports almost complete. Work has commenced on the Options Report.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Scoping Report was completed and circulated to the Environmental Authorities, and the submissions received have been incorporated into the final Scoping Report. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is also underway, and the consultants have carried out their initial review and walk over of the town.

Tenders were sought to prepare a Rainwater Management Plan for the town. The focus of this plan will be on the use of nature-based solutions to manage rainwater and pluvial flooding. It will be among the first of these plans of this scale in the Country to utilise this sustainable approach which will have benefits for biodiversity and amenity as well as flood management. The plan will also incorporate a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the town. A preferred tenderer has been identified.

Tenderers were also sought to prepare an Urban Design Strategy for the town. This will include an overall Urban Design Framework for the plan area, individual Neighbourhood Framework Plans for the various sub areas which make up the plan area and detailed master plans for a number of strategic sites which will be subject to significant development (including the a South East Technological University master plan). A Town Centre First Strategy will also be prepared for the town centre. A preferred tenderer has been identified.

Other ongoing work on the Local Area Plan includes policy analysis and development, land use surveys, planning history surveys and surveys to inform the Infrastructural Assessment Report and Settlement Capacity Audit.

### **Enniscorthy Town Local Area Plan**

Consultants were appointed to carry out the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Local Transport Plan for the Local Area Plan.

### **Wexford County Development Plan Monitoring**

The implementation of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 is a key strategic focus for the Council. The Council is required to monitor the implementation of the plan, and to also monitor the effects of implementing the plan on the environment via the Strategic Environmental Assessment monitoring programme. The Forward Planning team are in the process of setting up a system to monitor the various elements of the plan and have also commenced the gathering of monitoring data.

### **Policy Support and Submissions**

The Forward Planning team reviewed and made a number of submissions on behalf of the Council including on the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal, the Sustainable and the Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Proposed Policy Approach and the later published Draft Guidelines, Uisce Eireann's Water Resource Plan and Draft Capital Investment Programme 2025- 2029.

The team also inputted to the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, the New Ross Town Centre First Plan, the Wexford Town Heritage-led Regeneration Plan and provided policy support, research and data to other Council sections. The team also arranged training in flood risk management for Council staff.



## **LANNING ENFORCEMENT**

233 formal complaints were received by Planning Enforcement in 2023 (a decrease of 7.5% on 2022).

The number of open Planning Enforcement cases at end of December 2023 was 360.

Planning Enforcement complaints relate primarily to unauthorised development or non-compliance with Planning permissions. A further 22 complaints were received where it was considered there was no role for Planning Enforcement.

371 Warning Letters were issued in 2023 relating to 199 cases. 195 Enforcement Notices were issued relating to 87 cases. Enforcement Notices are issued following complaint investigation and site inspection.

206 Planning Enforcement cases were closed in 2023 following the issuing of Warning letters, compliance with Enforcement Notices or the outcome of legal proceedings in District Court cases.

22 Planning Enforcement cases progressed to legal proceedings in relation to non-compliance with Enforcement Notices in 2023.

## **BUILDING CONTROL**

During 2023 Wexford County Council received 512 Commencement Notices for New Buildings.

National Guidelines recommend that 12-15% of new properties are inspected by a Local Authority to ensure that they comply with the proper building standards. Wexford County Council inspected 34% in 2023.

In 2023, 2 estates were taken in charge in County Wexford. This was a benefit to 55 houses across the county, as Wexford County Council then becomes responsible for the maintenance of the roads, footpaths, services and public lighting in these estates.

## **ACCESS SECTION**

### **Disability Access Certificates (DACs/ Revised DACs)**

The number of DAC/Revised DAC applications, for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023, totals 91.

<b>Applications Districts</b>	<b>Total for Districts</b>	<b>Await Assessment</b>	<b>Further Info.</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Enniscorthy	12	1	0	11	0
Gorey	29	0	2	24	3
New Ross	9	0	0	9	0
Wexford	24	1	2	21	0
Rosslare	17	0	0	16	1
<b>2023 Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>4</b>

### **Disability Proofing carried out as part of Wexford County Council Access activity**

<b>Referrals</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>LAC /PLAC/ LRD &amp; General Planning Applications</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Major Pre-Planning</b>	<b>12</b>

## **Significant Achievements**

### **Disability Inclusion Strategy**

The three-year term of Wexford County Council's Disability Inclusion Strategy has come to an end, with data for the final overarching report collated on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

The snapshot report reveals the level of activity and compliance over the lifetime of the strategy.

The development of the Power BI reporting App in conjunction with the ICT Department, over a year period, enabled this effective method of reporting on Wexford County Council activity for applicable actions under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy.

### **Purple Lights**

In a demonstration of inclusive support to highlight UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd, a building in each Municipal District was lit up in purple, a colour internationally associated with disability, including County Hall, Carricklawn; Wexford Borough District Offices; Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Offices; the Harbour Master's Building, Kilmore; The Tholsel and St. Mary's Church, New Ross and Enniscorthy Castle.

### **Have Your Say Survey**

In continuing its aim to ensure accessibility for all, the Access Section ran a "Have Your Say" survey in December, in tandem with the purple light up of landmark buildings. The survey provided the citizens of County Wexford with an opportunity to give their views on access to the Council's services, facilities, buildings, and infrastructure for people with disabilities and was open for two weeks. With 55 submissions received from across the County, we are delighted to have current data on the issues facing people with disabilities in Wexford and we will use this information as the basis for our programme of works in 2024.

### **Accessible Trails & Destination Parks Story Board**

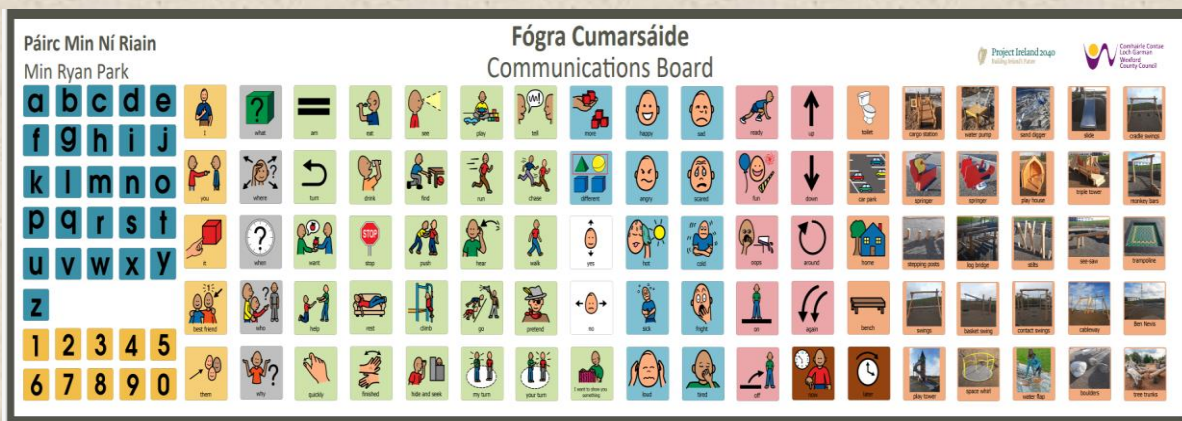
2023 saw the re-launch of the accessible story board to highlight accessible walking trails and destination parks around Co. Wexford.

The aim of the initiative is to inform of different outdoor options that are accessible in each of the five Municipal Districts of Wexford. The story board will have descriptions and pictures of the eleven trails that have been selected, helping people to understand the facilities available before their arrival, with a map also showing the locations of accessible toilets, accessible parking spaces, changing places facilities and playgrounds in addition to the parks and trails.

## Communications Boards

Delighted to inform that a pilot initiative of Wexford County Council to design and install a communication board in Min Ryan Park, the first of its kind by a local authority, will now form part of a national strategy to have these communication boards installed in playgrounds and parks throughout the Country.

Correspondence from the LGMA informs “The Department is keen to advance an action under the strategy which would see a plan developed for the installation of communication boards in public playgrounds to ensure inclusive play spaces for children, including Autistic children that may be non-verbal or minimally speaking”. This action is key for all stakeholders in the development of play spaces, and the Access Section will be available to support such plans if required.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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## A. COSTAL MATTERS

### Operations

The regularization of the public lighting system on the Barrow is ongoing, new lights have been fitted to Marshmeadows access road and Jetty. Further lighting upgrades on the site have been completed in October to facilitate new business activities.

A new traffic management system and weighbridge upgrade commenced in October and is expected to be completed in early 2024. Further clearing of the site has been completed.

KIMO International organization for coastal local authorities in the North Atlantic held its AGM in Falkenburg Sweden 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October, Wexford County Council was represented. The Council has agreed to host the next international board meeting in May 2024 in Wexford.

Wexford County Council has responsibility for Kilmore Quay, Wexford, Duncannon and Courtown Harbours, New Ross Port and a number of Piers throughout the County. Under the Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI) 2022 – 2023, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine approved 25 projects under this scheme with total construction cost of €1.79m. A number of the projects are completed, some are ongoing and some are about to commence. Wexford Co. Council must pay all non-construction costs including design, environmental reports etc.

### Beaches

*Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards:* On 19th May 2023 An Taisce announced 8 blue flags and 10 green coast awards for County Wexford.

**Blue Flag Beaches (6):** Ballymoney, Morriscastle, Ballinesker, Curracloe, Rosslare Strand and Carne.

**Blue Flag Marinas (2):** Kilmore Quay and Three Sisters Marina, New Ross

**Green Coast (10):** Cahore, Oldbawn, Culleton's Gap, Rosslare Harbour, St Helen's, Ballyhealy, Cullenstown, Grange, Baginbun, Booley Bay.

Wexford County Council revised its Beach Byelaws in 2022 that apply to 35 Beaches around the County. The Council employs temporary Beach Wardens, Litter Patrol Staff and Beach Lifeguards for the Summer Season annually.

### **Coast**

The Environment Dept monitors the coastline regularly, focussing on erosion risk areas.

Rosslare Coastal Erosion and Flood Relief Scheme: Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd Consulting Engineers is appointed to progress the scheme. Key design parameters for the scheme are being finalised.

The project website and project email are now live and can be accessed at

<https://www.floodinfo.ie/rosslarefrs/>

There is provision on the website to email the project team with specific queries. Public consultation day will be held later in Q2 2024.

Seaview, Kilmore: Wexford County Council is seeking agreement on landownership issues; this will enable a planning application to be submitted over the coming weeks.

Further correspondence was issued to OPW to progress the funding of the scheme.

Lady's Island Water Level Management Structure – An Bord Pleanála granted planning permission for this development, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2021. Foreshore licence application has been lodged and is under consideration by the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). The application is under consideration by the DHLGH.

The level of the lake was reduced in December 2023 by cutting a channel to sea; this reduced the risk of flooding in Lady's Island.

Kilmannock Drainage Scheme – this is a land reclamation and drainage scheme dating from mid 1800s, draining around 1,000 acres of land near the Great Island Power Station. Maintenance works including the installation of new outlet valves on the drainage channel were installed in early August 2023. Site inspections have confirmed that the operation of the drainage scheme has improved significantly since the valves were installed. This will be monitored closely over the coming months.

### **Ports Past and Present Project**

There is ongoing engagement with the Rosslare community, artists, and our project partners in University College Cork and two Welsh universities. This 4-year project started in 2019 and the official project end date is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

The annual Rosslare Harbour Maritime Festival took place on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

Regular updates and further information are available at <https://portspastpresent.eu/>

## **B. WATER, AIR & NOISE**

### **1. Water Framework Directive**

Under the Water Framework Directive every catchment in the county must be assessed to identify required actions to maintain and improve water quality. This work which is being carried out by Wexford Co. Co. in conjunction of LAWPRO is being supervised by the Sub-Catchment Unit of the EPA.

### **2. Water Sampling**

A Total of 344 water quality samples were taken by Wexford County Council staff from 78 sampling sites in the county for 2023 with analysis carried out by the EPA. 8 surveillance sites were sampled 8 times per year in 2023. In 2024 a total of 340 river water samples will be taken from 76 sampling sites on 36 rivers by Wexford County Council staff. 7 surveillance sites will be sampled in 2024 with analysis of all samples carried out by the EPA lab in Kilkenny.

### 3. Septic Tank Inspections

123 inspections under the National Inspection Plan were carried out in 2023. Wexford had a minimum of 130 inspections to carry out in 2023, which will result in a shortfall of 7. All work carried out is external with no requirement to enter a dwelling. Contractors are currently carrying out work on several sites to close outstanding Advisory Notices. Of the 123 inspections carried out in Wexford, 54 were passes and 69 fails. Due to time constraints, the remaining 7 inspections will have to be carried over till 2024. A minimum of 130 inspections will have to be carried out in 2024 plus the 7 carried from 2023.

Progress is being made with closing existing open files. All files up to the end of 2016 have been closed. 75 files were closed during 2023. 39 extensions of time were granted in 2023.

There are currently 55 open files for the years 2017-2022 and 44 open for 2023, a total of 99 open cases at the end of 2023.

Twenty-three applications for grant assistance have been received during 2023 of which twenty have been processed/ have been sent for payment.

Year	Number of inspections	Pass	Fail	Outstanding	Closed in 2023
2019	156	48	108	10	4
2020	111	38	73	6	4
2021	91	24	67	17	9
2022	139	50	89	13	28
2023	123	54	69	44	25

There are currently 17 cases in the Court system for failing to comply with Advisory Notices. 3 of these are for hearing and 14 are currently for mention.

25 verification inspections were carried out in April 2023 on sites which have Advisory Notices open over 2 years. In total 72 verification inspections were carried out in 2023.

All NIP files up to end of 2016 have now been closed off. 2017 has 5 open files with 1 on hold due to new N11 route selection, 4 due to assessment of public sewer for Ramsgrange. 2018 has 4 open files with good progress on 2 of these, 2 are in court. A public sewer for Ramsgrange has been approved with a connection to Duncannon. 2019-2022 figures can be seen in the Table above.

The Minister announced the following changes to the Domestic Wastewater Treatment System grant scheme on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023, following a recently completed review of the grants:

- an increase in the maximum grant available to €12,000, up from €5,000; (Up to 85% of cost of work up to max. of €12,000) and
- removal of the requirement to register the system before prescribed date of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013 in order to be eligible for a grant. The applicant must register before applying for the grant.

These changes will apply to the following 3 DWWTS grants:

- Housing (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems Financial Assistance) (under the National Inspection Plan)
- Housing (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems Financial Assistance for Prioritised Areas for Action)
- Housing (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems Financial Assistance in High Status Objective Catchment Areas)

The Department is in the process of finalising the new regulations, which will be published in the coming weeks. A circular and terms and conditions are also being finalised for local authorities.

The new regulations and grant will be effective from 1 January 2024. Where a grant process has commenced under the previous scheme, but has not been concluded, the Department has no objection to it being concluded under the new scheme, provided that all eligibility criteria are met.

#### 4. Discharge Licences

The Council currently has 92 active Discharge Licences. Six applications were received in 2023 five are currently under review to date, one has been added to the live register in January 2024. Seven discharge licences were revoked during 2023 and a few more are under currently review.

#### 5. Agriculture

Wexford County Council continues to undertake a significant number of farm inspections in accordance with the WFD. A total of 65 farm inspections undertaken because of pollution incidents or complaints, 30 of these farms were found to have non-compliances. Wexford County Council engage with landowners to undertake the necessary rectifications works through encouragement of improvement of farming infrastructure and farming practices.

Section 12 & 23 notices under the Local Government Water Pollution Act 1977-1990 were served upon on 4 individuals where 2 of these farms were cross reported to DAFM. A total of 95 Agricultural related Planning Permission Applications were assessed.

Wexford County Council continue to complete odour monitoring assessments on two separate sites for 2022 on foot of hundreds of complaints from the public. These sites included a pig farm and a composting facility where compost is produced by processing straw and animal waste. Section 24 & Section 26 notices under the Air Pollution Act 1987 have been served upon these businesses.

WFD inspections	Farm inspections	Farms with Nitrates Directive non-compliances	Section 12 & 23 notices served	Section 3 notices served
2019	60	19	5	0
2020	102	50	5	2
2021	78	45	9	0
2022	13	4	0	0
2023	46	19	2	0

## 6. Air Quality

Wexford County Council enforces air quality requirements for 3 specific types of facilities, which must be registered with Wexford County Council. These Certificates must be renewed every 3 years. On-going enforcement action is carried out to ensure sites remain certified. Wexford has a 100% compliance record in this regard for all 3 below categories in 2022.

Vehicle Refinishers: At end of 2022, 59 facilities were registered with Wexford County Council under the “Deco Paints” Regulations, which is now the largest number in the country. Wexford County Council issues Certificates of Compliance to these facilities and issues “On the Spot Fines” of €500 where illegal operators are identified on foot of enforcement investigations – see Table below. The additional facilities were identified on foot of targeted enforcement action in 2022.

Dry Cleaners: At end of 2022, 8 Dry Cleaners and 1 Medical Device Company were registered with Wexford County Council under the “Solvents” Regulations. Wexford County Council issues Certificates of Compliance to these facilities – see Table below. Due to targeted enforcement action in Q3/Q4 of 2022, a new category of facility is due to be added to this register in Q2 of 2023.

Petrol Stations: At end of 2022, 80 sites were registered with Wexford County Council under the PVE Regulations, which is the largest number in the country. Wexford County Council also issues Certificates of Testing to these facilities under these Regulations – see Table below.

No. of Certificates of Compliance Issued:

<b>Category of Facility</b>	<b>No. Issued in 2021</b>	<b>No. Issued in 2022</b>	<b>No. Issued in 2023 (to end Aug)</b>	<b>No. of On-the-Spot Fines Issued (to end May)</b>
Vehicle Refinishers	19	24	16	0
Petrol Vapour Emissions	22	22	11	N/A
Solvents	3	5	0	N/A

A national working group was established in January 2021, to develop Guidance Documents for Local Authorities to assist with the implementation of new certifications to Petrol Stations under Stage 2 Petrol Vapour Emissions Regulations 2011.

Wexford County Council is co-chair of this group, along with Waterford County Council. The WG produced two separate Guidance Documents for Local Authorities, including specific guidance on processing certifications for Petrol Stations under Stage 1b Petrol Vapour Emissions Regulations 1997 and Stage 2 Petroleum Vapour Emissions Regulations 2011. Stage 2 certification for relevant sites is required to be implemented, as are significant changes to Stage 1b certifications for all sites.

### Low Smoke Fuel Areas

The Air Pollution Act 1987 (SOLID FUELS) Regulations 2022 was signed by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications Mr Eamon Ryan and came into effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. Spot inspections have been carried out to ensure compliance with the 2022 Regulations.

## 7. Planning

The Environment Section makes an assessment and recommendations on planning applications relating to the environmental aspects of the application.

The main issues regarding the impact of planning on the environment which have arisen in recent years are as follows:

- 1) Density of housing.
- 2) Applications for extensions and upgrades of existing houses on sites where the soil is unsuitable for discharge of wastewater via a domestic wastewater treatment system.
- 3) Applications for detached granny flats and other detached ancillary accommodation.

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, 1146 files were referred to Environment from the Planning Department.

## Q1. Breakdown of planning applications referred from Planning Section to Environment

	Single dwellings	Commercial	Discharge/ glamping	Housing estates	Schools	Solar Farms	Sports	Agricultural	Compliance assessments
Q1	145	21	2	9	9	3	3	17	39
Q2	206	29	1	14	6	0	1	33	36
Q3	116	24	0	7	2	0	3	27	15
Q4	163	20	1	12	0	3	9	27	31

## 8. Noise and NAP 2019-2023

Noise complaints are dealt with on an ongoing basis. Two complaints of persistent noise pollution are currently under investigation.

The Noise Action Plan (NAP) 2019-2023 relates to general noise nuisance from large infrastructure or from motorways. Since the first plan was produced, Wexford County Council has steadily improved its resources with respect to the management of noise.

Wexford County Council submitted the Annual Noise Action Report describing all actions undertaken within the previous calendar year to the EPA in January 2022.

### **Action by Wexford County Council in 2020.**

Three stations are active in Gorey, Enniscorthy & Wexford.

**Potential Quiet Areas have been identified as below:**

<b>Quiet Areas in Settlements</b>	<b>Quiet Areas in the Open Country</b>
Redmond Park, Wexford Town	Mount Leinster/Black Rock, Blackstairs Mountain
Peace Park & Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy	Blackstairs Commons, Blackstairs Mountain
New Ross Town Park, New Ross	Bantry Commons, Blackstairs Mountain
Gorey Town & District Park, Gorey	Tacumshin Lake, Ballyhealy
Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy Town	The North Slobs (River Slaney Estuary)
Gorey Town and District Park	Drinagh Intake, West of Rosslare
Mount Carmel/New Ross	Kilbride Wood, Kilbride
Youth Centre, New Ross Town	Coolatrindle/Ruanmore, Court
	Annagh Hill, Annagh
	Croghan Mountain, Croghan

These areas have been included in the Wexford Draft Development Plan 2021-2027.

**c. WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**1. New Recycling**

Re-turn Scheme. Irelands new deposit return scheme. In February 2024 a new deposit return scheme will operate throughout Ireland. When you buy a drink in a plastic bottle, aluminium or steel can that feature the Re-turn logo, you pay a small deposit in addition to the price of the drink. When you return your empty, undamaged container to any retail outlet, you get your deposit back in full. The deposit will typically be 15c to 25c.

**2. Food Waste**

From 1 January 2024 every household in Ireland, regardless of location, will be entitled to a brown bin collection service. No matter how remote your home is, you can organise your brown bin collection service through your current waste collector. Visit [mywaste.ie](http://mywaste.ie) to learn more.

Food waste inspections without notification are currently being carried out with householders and commercial businesses.

## Recycling Services

### Bring Bank Network

WASTE CATEGORY	No. of Sites December 2023	Recycling out (End December) 2022 (t)	Recycling out (End December) 2023 (t)
Glass bottles		3772	3572
Aluminium Cans		95	91
Total	108	3867	3667

### Household Recycling Centres

Summary of Activities								
WASTE CATEGORY	Enniscorthy		New Ross		Holmestown		Gorey	
	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2022 (t)	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2023 (t)	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2022 (t)	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2023(t)	Recycling out Jan- Dec2022	Recycling out Jan -Dec 2023	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2022	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2023
Total Recycling out	588	609	650	657	860	793	506	496
Total Domestic Waste in	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	22513	3235	N/A	N/A
Daily Average Customers	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Jan-Dec	71	81	112	117	99	124	80	82

### 3. Rapid Response Crew

Our Rapid Response Crew operates out of Holmestown, with one two-man crew servicing Enniscorthy and Gorey Municipal Districts and a second servicing Wexford, Rosslare and New Ross Municipal Districts. Their headline activities for year to date are summarised below:

Activity	To end Dec 2022	Dec 2023	To end Dec 2023	% +/-
<b>Total Illegal Dumping/ Clean Ups</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>2,359</b>	<b>+3.9%</b>
Gorey *		35		
Enniscorthy *		66		
Wexford *		38		
New Ross*		29		
Rosslare		11		
<b>Total Bring Site Inspections</b>	<b>9,077</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>9,851</b>	<b>+8.5%</b>
Gorey		150		
Enniscorthy		177		
Wexford		215		
New Ross		110		
Rosslare		67		
<b>Total Ringbuoy Inspections</b>	<b>18,158</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>18,105</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>
Gorey	North	598		
Enniscorthy *				
Wexford*	South	1,086		
New Ross*				
<b>Other Works</b>	<b>5,494</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>8,418</b>	<b>+53%</b>
Gorey		96		
Enniscorthy		260		
Wexford		207		
New Ross		153		
Rosslare		42		

Other Works are as follows.

- 1- Beach and lifeguard work
- 2- Black spot checks
- 3- Town inspections every morning
- 4- Trails maintenance
- 5- Min Ryan Park maintenance and upkeep

#### 4. **Waste Facility Permits**

The Council currently has sufficient permitted facilities throughout the county, such as Clean Soil and Stone, construction and demolition sites, ATF's / End of Life Vehicles and Pay to Use Waste Compactor Unit. The full list of Waste Facility Permits and Certificates of Registration can be viewed on the Council's website.

Altogether there are 68 registered operational Waste Facility Permits (43) and Certificates of Registration (25) for premises involved in waste management activities in the County.

#### 5. **Enforcement**

The Waste Enforcement Team carries out routine (planned) and non-routine inspections of waste facilities and problem sites or site where we have received complaints. This work is done in accordance with the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) as submitted to the EPA on 28 February 2023. The 2023 RMCEI Plan allocates 6,597 routine inspections by 22 Full Time Equivalent staff members. The inspection types cover the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations; ELV (End of Life Vehicles) Regulations; Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations; Household and Commercial Food Waste Regulations; Batteries, Tyres, Mercury etc.

The Department of Environment, Climate and Communication have set national waste priorities for 2022 to 2024, a three-year target and they are.

- Tackling significant illegal waste activity,
- Construction and Demolition Activity,
- End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) & the Waste Metal Sector,
- Waste Collection – Household & Commercial.
- Producer Responsibility Initiatives and additional

## **D. LITTER/WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Total fixed penalty notices issued	TOTAL FOR 2022	TOTAL FOR JAN-DECEMBER 2023
Fines Issued (All Fixed Penalty Notice Issued)	229	212
Fines Paid in Full●	111	55
Fines Cancelled/Proceedings Discontinued/Struck Out*	83	56
Successful Prosecutions** (Litter fines & WPBL fines)	43	28
Legal Proceedings in Progress (Litter fines & WPBL fines)	49	41
Amount Collected in Fines -total	€18,530.57	€9,648.00 litter / €3,375.00 Waste – total €13,023
Amount awarded via the Court system (fines awarded) - overall	€5230	€6,210.00

- \* Other fines may be paid prior to the hearing or withdrawn for evidential or legal reasons.
- Includes income from all Fixed Penalty Notices
- Fines paid in full- data excludes fines partly paid.
- Amount collected in fines- includes part payments.

**Wexford Co. Council – National Litter Pollution Monitoring Surveys 2004-2020 Percentage of County Littered (Litter Pollution Surveys)**

Year	Litter free	Slightly littered	Moderately littered	Seriously littered	Grossly littered.
2022	24.2%	63.4%	11.3%	1.1%	0%
2021	6.9%	74.1%	15.5%	3.4%	0%
2020	9.4%	68.8%	18.8%	3.4%	0%
2019	9.8%	67.9%	18.8%	1.5%	0%
2018	10%	70.5%	17.7%	17.7%	0%
2017	18.3%	67%	14.7%	0%	0%
2016	12.10%	65.9%	21.9%	0.4%	0%
2015	10.60%	65.90%	18.43%	5.07%	0%
2014	37.40%	50.41%	12.30%	0%	0%
2013	51.92%	39.43%	7.69%	0.96%	0%
2012	26.79%	60.71%	12.50%	0%	0%
2011	7.5%	82.5%	10%	0%	0%
2010	13.2%	53.9%	28.9%	3.9%	0%
2009	0%	75.3%	21.0%	3.7%	0%
2008	9.4%	55.2%	26%	9.4%	0%
2007	5.4%	60.9%	17.4%	16%	0%
2006	0%	53%	23%	20%	3%
2004	0%	23%	56%	21%	0%

Year	Dumping Incidents Reported	Percentage Increase/Decrease	Community Clean Ups	Percentage Increase/Decrease
2019	2,925		741	
2020	3,187	Up 9%	628	Down 15%
2021	2,721	Down 15%	1,331	Up 112%
2022	2,188	Down 20%	1,023	Down 23%
2023	2,284	Up 4%	1,144	Up 12%

The reduction in reported dumping incidents is also reflected in a similar decline in attendances by the Environment Clean Up Crew to incidents.

## Litter/Waste Enforcement Activity 2009-2023 (December)

	Fines Issued	Court	Reports
2023	212	28	2284 (up 4%)
2022	229	43	2188 (down 20%)
2021	100	19	2721 (down 15%)
2020	213	20	3187 (up 15%)
2019	341	13	2758 (down 9%)
2018	324	22	3050 (up 15%)
2017	218	27	2651 (Up 12%)
2016	274	17	2,354 (up 22%)
2015	242	17	1,927 (up 11%)
2014	154	17	1,732 (up 10%)
2013	140	15	1,571 (up 21%)
2012	182	16	1,292 (down 3%)
2011	209	17	1,329
2010	370	27	1,338

## **E. CLIMATE ACTION**

All local authorities are required to prepare a plan under the “The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.” Preparation work on the development on the Local Authority Climate Action plan continued. The plan incorporates both mitigation and adaptation measures and includes the development of a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ). Enniscorthy is the Decarbonisation Zone for County Wexford. The DZ will be the focus for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity measures. Minister Eamon Ryan requested Wexford County Council to commence its Climate Action plan on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023 with 12 months to prepare, complete and fully adopt the plan.

The Plan will set an ambitious target of an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% and 50% energy efficiency by 2030. Wexford County Council will be responsible for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from across its own assets and infrastructure, whilst also taking on a broader role of influencing, facilitating and advocating others to meet their own targets.

The plan is being presented to Council for adoption in February 2024.

The Climate Action team held Information Drop-in sessions on the Draft Climate Action Plan across the 5 municipal districts between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. These were held at the libraries in Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross and the Stella Maris centre in Kilmore.

### Community Climate Action Programme

The Community Climate Action Programme funding scheme **is now open** to support and build low carbon communities across County Wexford. The fund is open to not-for-profit community groups and clubs. The closing date will be 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Funding for 100% of the cost of a climate action project is available through this scheme, up to a maximum of €100,000. Project examples could be insulation of community buildings, solar panels, bicycle parking, rainwater harvesting, community gardens / allotments, etc.

Site meetings with interested groups are ongoing, with a total of 42 groups visited to date.

## F. GENERAL

All environmental complaints are logged by the Customer Service Unit on the DASH CRM system.

**The total figures for complaints received are as follows:**

	Jan to Dec 2019	Jan to Dec 2020	Jan to Dec 2021	Jan to Dec 2022	Jan – Dec 2023
<b>Incidents</b>	<b>4749</b>	<b>4999</b>	<b>5136</b>	<b>3896</b>	<b>4235</b>
<b>Closed</b>	<b>4709</b>	<b>4865</b>	<b>5024</b>	<b>3467</b>	<b>3456</b>
<b>Closure Rate</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>82%</b>

## Control of Dogs & Horses:

The Council employs one full-time Dog Warden and one part-time Dog Warden. The main pound is Pets First Kennels, Ballycarney, Co Wexford.

Control of dogs	2020	2021 (to 31-12-21)	2022	2023 (February)–December)
Dogs collected	532	429	546	575
Dogs reclaimed	127	133	117	128
Dogs re-homed/transferred	373	267	370	404
Dogs put to sleep	32	29	51	38
Dog Fines	5	18	21	14

There are now 25 registered Dog Breeding Establishments with several applications on hand awaiting inspection.



In 2023 five horses were rehomed and one reclaimed.

### **Environment Education and Awareness**

The main aim is to promote awareness and active participation in a range of environmental initiatives.

## **School Initiatives**

### **Green Schools**

Coláiste Bríde, Enniscorthy, St Edan's National School, Ferns and New Ross Educate Together National School were awarded their first green flags on the theme of litter and waste. A further 29 schools renewed their green flag during the year bringing the total number of schools awarded the green flag to 112.



### **School Workshops**

The first-ever Wexford "Rubbish Film Festival" for Transition Year Students in Secondary Schools was held on a pilot basis this year with entries from 5 participating schools across the County, and it was a resounding success. The festival, challenged students to create a one-minute short film on an environmental theme such as, climate action, reducing waste, and sustainability, was facilitated by Createschool and supported by the Environment Section of Wexford County Council.

The Best Film and Best Poster went forward to represent Wexford at the National Awards in Co Meath on May 3rd. Fifty-two schools and over seventy entries from six counties competed for the National Awards. The festival has proven so successful that plans are already underway to expand it next year to include more schools in Wexford. The 'Rubbish Film Festival' will become an annual event that will help to raise awareness about environmental issues among young people and inspire them to take action to protect the planet.

8 secondary schools were funded to participate in a Climate Literacy Course, over 10 weeks which included in-school teacher training, resources, lesson plans and an interactive student workbook.

Workshops for both primary and secondary schools covered topics on climate action, fast fashion, biodiversity, and waste management.

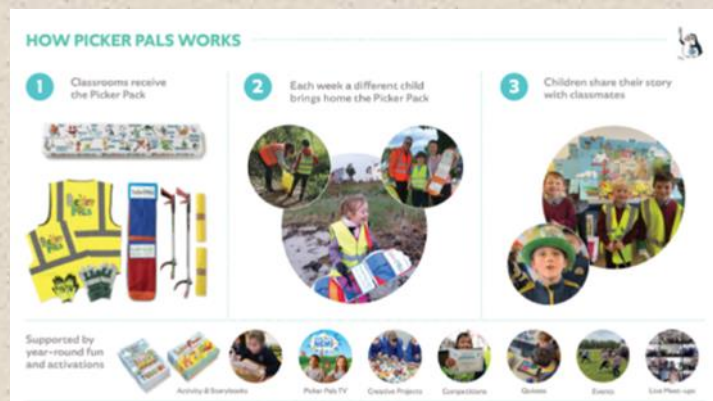
## **Linte Na Farraiige Workshop**

A Linte na Farraiige (Lines of the Sea Project) workshop was held with students from Presentation Secondary School. The workshop was facilitated by the Caro (Climate Action Regional Office) and Trinity researchers and is based around a game idapt.

## **Picker Pal Programme**

10 primary schools were funded to participate in the picker pal programme. Participating schools are sent Picker Packs which contain supplies, safety card, the Picker Pals reader Picker Power and the Picker Pals Funbook for every child.

Schools also received teacher resource materials, ongoing teacher support, access to online interactive resources, 6 Picker Pals TV episodes links sent directly to all classrooms and access to all Picker Pals competitions and projects run throughout the 2023/24 academic year.



## **Composting in Schools Programme**

9 secondary schools participated in the Composting for schools Programme. The programme aims to give schools the opportunity to explore and improve waste management via waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling.

The schools participating were Bunclody Vocational School: CBS Secondary School New Ross: Colaiste Bride, Enniscorthy: Colaiste Eamonn Ris (Wexford CBS): Gorey Community School: Meanscoil Gharman, Enniscorthy: Ramsgrange

Community School: St. Mary's Secondary School, New Ross: Selskar College, Wexford.

As part of the programme teachers from each school participated in online zoom training 1 hour per week over 5 weeks. Schools received 2 site visits that reviewed waste management practices at the school, discussed options related to waste prevention, reuse, recycling, on-site composting, and brown bin collection of bio waste. All participating schools created an action plan.

All teachers are given access to BaseCamp to avail of the resources developed for the programme including booklets, guides, instructional fact sheets, videos as well as learning resources. In addition, schools received a €300 voucher for bins, tools, and supplies to help carry out their action plans.

## **School Competitions**

### **Annual Artwork Competition**

The annual artwork competition which was open to all primary and secondary schools. The competition is an initiative run by the Environment Section of Wexford County Council in conjunction with Wexford Naturalists' Field Club. The theme of this year's competition was 'Wildflowers.' Councillor George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach Wexford County Council, presented prizes to 40 school children representing both primary and secondary schools.



Overall Secondary School Winner  
Mikolaj Perek,  
Colaiste an Átha, Kilmuckridge



Overall Primary School Winner  
Conan Kelly  
Wexford Educate Together NS

## **Christmas Decoration Competition**

171 decorations were received into the County final and displayed in County Hall. Prizes were presented to winners by An Cathaoirleach Cllr. John Fleming on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December. The overall winning decoration entitled 'The White Angel' was created by Niamh O' Connor, St Fintan's National School, Taghmon.



## **Environment Awards**

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November the Wexford County Council Annual Environment Awards were held at the Ferrycarrig Hotel. Over 250 children, community groups, volunteers, resident groups and individuals turned up on the night to see their wonderful efforts acknowledged by Wexford County Council.

On the night there were representatives from 11 schools and 63 community groups. The overall winners of the Keep Wexford Beautiful Competition were Blackwater Tidy Towns. The schools were well represented with eleven schools receiving presentations from Councillor John Fleming, Cathaoirleach. Coláiste Bríde, Enniscorthy, New Ross Educate Together National School and St Edan's National School, Ferns were all recognised for receiving their first green flag and presented with a nest box sponsored by The Wexford Naturalists' Field Club.

Coláiste an Atha, Kilmuckridge, Gorey Community School, Loreto Secondary School Wexford, Ramsgrange Community School and Selskar College were awarded certificates for their participation in the Rubbish Film Festival Programme.

Mercy School Wexford was awarded a Plaque as the overall primary school winner in the Christmas Decoration Competition 2022 in conjunction with South-East Radio for their group entry entitled 'The Christmas Tree'. The entry was created by students Tomás Meyler, Fionn Quirke and Blake Thomas.

Ramsgrange Community School was recognised for their achievements on the National stage having won the WEEE Ireland schools battery recycling national competition in the medium secondary school category, collecting more batteries for recycling than any other school in the country in that category. A grand total of the equivalent of 82,200 AA batteries were collected for recycling by the school.

Certificates were presented to Conan Kelly, Wexford Educate Together National School who was the Overall Primary School Winner in the Environment Artwork Competition and Mikolaj Perek Coláiste an Atha, Kilmuckridge who was the overall secondary school winner of the Environment Artwork Competition.

Kilmyshall National School were also awarded a Plaque for being Wexford's Cleanest School.

An Award for Outstanding Individual Contribution to Wexford's Environment was presented to Catherine Redmond and Mary Cogley both worthy winners. Tomhaggard Clean Coasts Group were presented with a plaque for winning the Community Group Snap into Action competition. Hollyfort Development Group, The Gap Tidy Towns & Heritage Group, and Askamore Community Council / Tidy Towns were also presented with awards for their participation in the North Wexford 2K.



## **Planting Grant**

84 applications were approved under the 2023 planting grant scheme. The scheme focus is on sustainable planting and pollinator friendly planting.

## **Trees for Wexford**

154 voluntary groups availed of the Trees for Wexford Scheme. 8,957 trees and saplings were distributed which included a variety of native tree saplings, hedgerow species and fruit trees.

### **National Tree Week**

National Tree Week took place from March 19<sup>th</sup> – March 26<sup>th</sup> and the theme was 'Biodiversity Begins with Trees'. 500 native saplings were distributed to schools and community groups during National Tree Week.

### **100 Million Trees Project**

4 sites were planted with 3825 native tree saplings as part of the 100 Million Trees Project.

17 / 02 /2023	Gorey Town Park	1000 native tree saplings
25/03/2023	GAA Centre of Excellence Ferns	1000 native tree saplings
19/04/2023	Min Ryan Park	500 native tree saplings
15/12/2023	The Rocks, Mauldintown	1325 native tree saplings

### **National Food Waste Recycling Week**

The National Food Waste Recycling Week ran from the 5<sup>th</sup> until the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness that food waste needs to be fully separated from all packaging such as plastic or other containers to prevent contamination at the compost and anaerobic digestion facilities leading to higher quality recycling.

Events were held at the four Household Recycling Centres and an information stand at the Climate Action Event in County Hall on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June - Gorey Household Recycling Centre
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June - Enniscorthy Household Recycling Centre
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June - Holmestown Household Recycling Centre
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June - New Ross Recycling centre, Hewittsland

Over 1200 caddy packs were distributed during the week.



### Circular Living Month

A Halloween Costume Swap took place on October 13<sup>th</sup>. It was very successful evening with 64 costumes swapped on the night. The event in association with Sustainable Enniscorthy was organised as part of Circular Living month and to promote reuse as a positive climate action that we can all do simply.



### Heritage Stewardship Fund/ Hedgerow Survey

An information talk took place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September in Wexford Library. The talk which was well attended explored the importance of the hedgerows in our landscape and their role in helping biodiversity in County Wexford. The talk shared some of the key findings of the hedgerow survey which was undertaken in 2023 following a successful funding application to the Heritage Stewardship Fund. The talk explored the species that make up our hedges, how they can be managed and protected for everyone's benefit.

### Ocean Hero Award

Tomhaggard Clean Coasts group received national acclaim after it was named Group of the Year at the Clean Coasts Ocean Hero awards ceremony on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> in Dublin. The Ocean Hero



Awards celebrate groups and individuals who make a difference to our marine environment and work to protect our local coastline and environment.

### **Snap Into Action Competitions**

Snap Into Action Competitions open to all primary schools and all voluntary groups who participate in the National Spring Clean. This competition encourages people from all walks of life to take action against litter.

Kilmyshall National School received first prize in the Snap Into Action School Competition and received a prize for €500.

Tomhaggard Clean Coasts Group were the winners in the Snap Into Action Community Group Competition and received a prize of €500. Enniscorthy Community Allotments, Enniscorthy Tidy Towns and Kilmuckridge Tidy Towns were presented with runner up award of €250.



### **Community Engagement**

#### **Some highlights**

A waste prevention / waste management talk was given to the Delightful Dollies in Enniscorthy on Wednesday 5th April. Over 70 were in attendance.


Communication with Tidy Towns groups and Clean Coasts continued throughout the year.

A family drop-in session on Waste Prevention, household recycling and waste segregation was held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May in Enniscorthy Library from 10.30 – 11.30 am.

Environment awareness stand at Bannow Rathangan Show on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July.

**Community Clean Ups**

Registrations and support for community clean ups continue.

	Date	No. of Community Clean Ups Facilitated
	01/01/23 – 31/12/23	1,054

Dog Fouling Awareness Campaign: Promotion of the ‘Bag It Bin It’ campaign continues. Stencils have been provided to Enniscorthy Tidy Towns to support their dog fouling awareness campaign.



## **Green Dog Walker**

The Green Dog Walker Campaign is continually being promoted and registrations are through the website. Packs are provided to community groups for promotion at events.

## **Anti-Dumping Initiative**

Under this Initiative, Wexford County Council received grant funding of €76,371 from Department of Environment, Climate and Communications towards the following projects:

- The School Bikes Africa Project in which old bikes are repaired by prison inmates and then transferred to Africa by the Defence Forces for use by School Students – 533 bikes so far.
- A Mattress Amnesty was held in September at the 4 Household Recycling Centres in the County. In total 1,700 mattresses were collected for recycling or 13,500 since 2018.
- Four Litter black-spot sites were cleaned up and preventative measures taken and a total of 30 tonnes of waste removed.
- Audio warning devices and electronic Variable Message Signs (VMS) were used at 8 locations promoting messages in relation to keeping recycling centres clean and asking dog owners to clean up after their dog.
- A Used Paint Amnesty was held at 3 of the Household Recycling Centres in the County during August, in all 103 No. 660 litres of used paint was collected.

## **VETERINARY SERVICES**

### **Food Safety**

Wexford County Council is designated as a Competent Authority to carry out official controls under EU Regulations in local abattoirs and small meat manufacturing premises in County Wexford in conjunction with other Agencies. There are currently 6 Approved Premises and 5 Registered Premises under Wexford County Council supervision. One of these registered Premises is in the process of being closed.

All abattoirs and small meat manufacturing premises are approved under EU food safety regulations. This approval allows these premises to trade products of animal origin within the EU.

### **Animal Health Surveillance Scheme**

The Veterinary Department operates an animal health surveillance scheme on farms contiguous to the landfill site at Holmestown. The purpose of the scheme is to use the animal health status of the herds in the vicinity of the landfill facility as a sentinel for possible human health environmental hazards.

This scheme was reviewed this year in consultation with multiple other LAs, Stakeholders and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI). Multiple issues arose including the requirement to cease sampling due to Covid-19, issues with similar programs in other LAs, and the current activity in Holmestown. Following consultation with all the Stakeholders there seems to be unanimous agreement to discuss further the best way to proceed with this program in 2024 as possible shortcomings have now been identified.

### **Zoonoses Committee**

The Veterinary Officer was a member of the South East Regional Zoonoses Committee. The committee is comprised of veterinary officers from Local Authorities and Dept. of Agriculture, and health specialists and environmental officers from the HSE. The region includes Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Carlow.

## **Animal Health and Welfare**

Animal Health and Welfare in County Wexford is dealt with in a Multi-Agency approach with Wexford Co Co, The Dog Wardens, Multiple Rescue Centres, DAFM, Garda Siochana and occasionally other agencies engaged depending on the specifics of the individual case.

### **Dead Birds on Beaches**

There was an outbreak of Avian Influenza worldwide this year. In County Wexford this resulted in a large number of dead birds on our beaches. Protocols were put in place to deal with this.

### **Dog Breeding Establishments**

There are currently 28 DBEs registered in County Wexford. These come under the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 with Wexford Co Co as the competent Authority. Inspections are carried out on these premises under the Dog Breeding Establishment Act. These Inspections are carried out by either the County Veterinary Officer or an Authorised Officer who is authorized under the Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

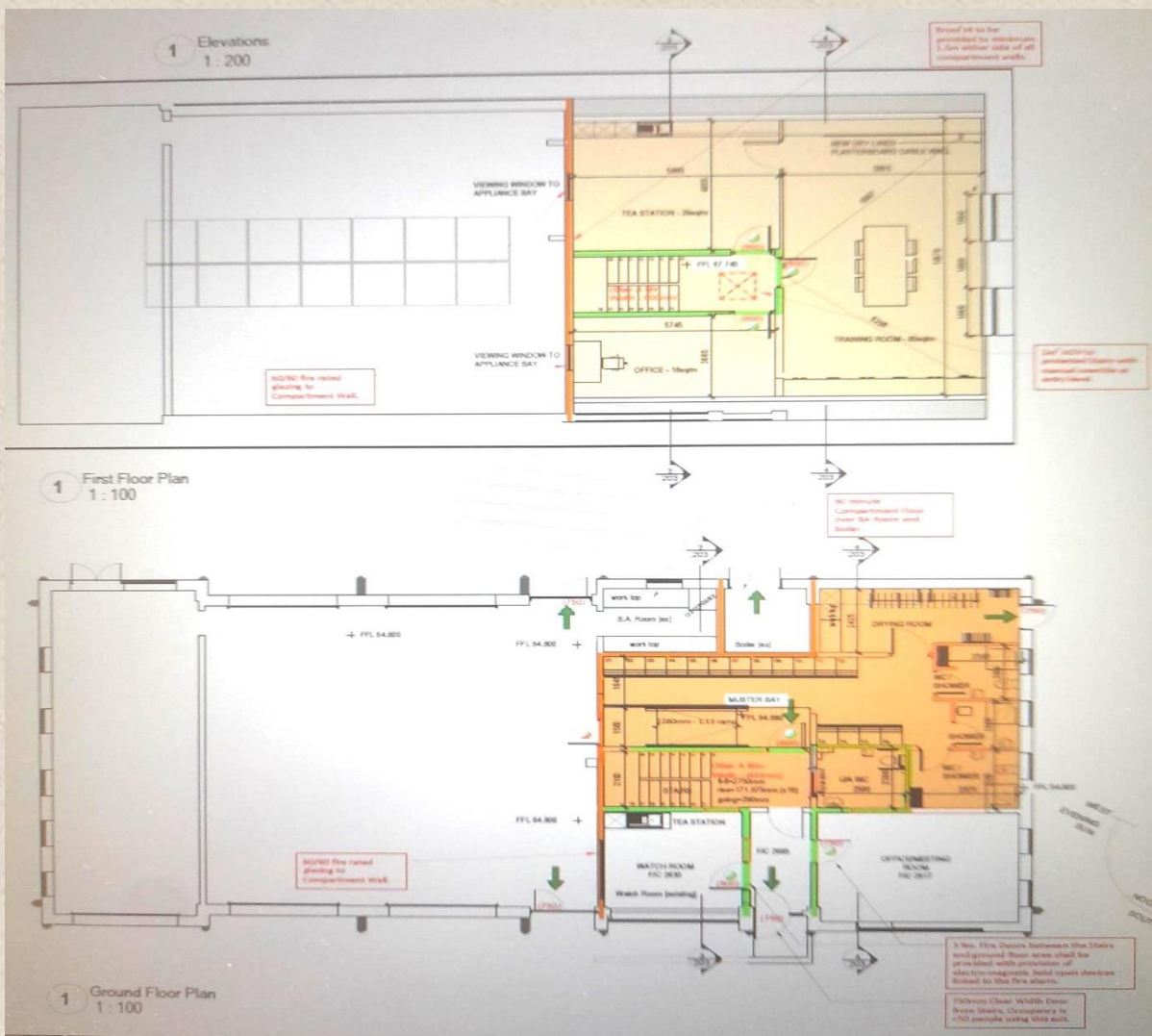
### **Dog Control**

Wexford County Council works closely with the Dog Wardens, An Garda Siochana, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and other agencies in relation to Dog Control. There are many issues here including strays, sheep worrying and dangerous dogs which are currently serious issues.

# WEXFORD COUNTY FIRE SERVICE

Wexford County Fire Service maintains five retained fire brigades located in the main towns throughout the county with a fleet 28 vehicles and 66 firefighters.

During 2023 the upgrade works to Gorey fire station began. See plans below:



Grant funding was approved for the upgrade of five appliances, road traffic collision equipment, hazardous materials equipment, and a high reach appliance in Enniscorthy.

Wexford Fire Authority has fully migrated to the ISO 45001:2018 Health & Safety Management System. This follows the successful implementation in 2015 of the international quality standard

OHSAS 18001:2007 by the fire services section in respect of its Health and Safety Management System.

### Operations

The fire service attended 1028 incidents in total during 2023. The following is a breakdown of incidents attended by Fire Brigade area:

### **Fire calls by brigade to date 2023:**

INCIDENT TYPE	WEXFORD	GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	NEW ROSS	BUNCLODY	TOTAL
<b>Fire Classification</b>						
Chimney Fire in House	27	11	14	8	4	64
Other Fire in House	11	19	16	11	6	63
Caravan/Mobile Home	1	2	0	0	0	3
Flats (1) Local Authority	1	0	0	1	0	2
Flats (2) Privately Owned	3	1	1	2	0	7
Bedsit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hospital	1	0	1	0	0	2
School	0	0	3	0	0	3
Other Institution	4	0	0	0	0	4
Factory	2	0	1	1	0	4

Chemical Plant	0	0	0	0	0	0
Storage Building/Warehouse	0	5	2	4	0	11
Shop/Supermarket	1	0	0	1	0	2
Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hotel/Guesthouse/Boarding House etc.	0	0	1	1	0	2
Place of Public Entertainment - Dance Hall, Disco, Cinema, Theatre, Bingo Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public House (incl. singing lounge)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restaurant	0	0	1	0	0	1
Petrol Station - Garage	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hazardous Substance in transit (only cases where fire was involved)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Motor Vehicle	18	13	9	9	2	51
Unoccupied Building	1	0	1	0	0	2
Agriculture Business	1	3	1	0	1	6

Forest/Bog/Grass	11	13	7	5	10	46
Ship/Aircraft	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	6	1	1	4	1	13
Outdoor Storage	2	2	2	2	0	8
Outdoor Rubbish	18	3	8	5	1	35

<b>INCIDENT TYPE</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Special Service Classification</b>						
Entrapment	4	4	5	1	0	14
Gas/Chemicals	4	2	1	0	0	7
Hazardous substances in transit not involving fire	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hazardous Substances non Transit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machinery	0	0	1	0	0	1
Miscellaneous	6	8	14	9	2	39
Other rescue	37	19	24	10	1	91
Rescue/Removal of persons from water	3	1	3	0	0	7
Road traffic accident	53	45	48	25	10	181
Water pumping/flooding	8	4	3	2	0	17
<b>False Alarm Classification</b>						
Good Intent	134	65	76	44	15	334
Malicious	4	0	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1028</b>

A competency-based training programme continued in 2023. 69 training courses were organized and attended with courses ranging from 1/2-day duration to 3 weeks in some cases. Some of the core training courses undertaken by Wexford County Fire Service were as follows:

- Breathing Apparatus Training.
- Compartment Fire Behaviour Training.
- Winch Instructors Course.
- Emergency Traffic Management Course.
- Emergency Services Driving Standard Training.
- Pump Operators Instructors Course.
- Fire Fighting Skills Course.
- Hydra Tactical Training.
- Hydra Effective decision-making Training.
- Managing Fire Safety Incidents Module 1.
- Managing Fire Safety Incidents Module 2.
- Managing Fire Safety Incidents Module 3.
- Critical Illness Stress Management Training.
- ESB Awareness Course.
- Heavy Goods Vehicle Instructors.
- High Reach Platform Courses.
- Manual Handling Training.
- Foam Courses.
- Haz-Mat Courses.
- Emergency First Responders.
- Electric Vehicle Awareness.
- Peer Supporters Course.
- Agricultural Machinery Awareness.
- Dual Purpose Inspection Course.
- Road Traffic Collision Courses.

## **Major Emergency Management**

The Major Emergency Development Programme was maintained with monthly meetings and exercises by the Development Committee. Several exercises were carried out during the year to ensure the organizations preparedness for any major events that may occur.

The dedicated local coordination centre was maintained throughout the period to cater for a major emergency response. Wexford County Council staff participated in several internal exercises with a strong focus on coastal pollution, flooding and severe weather preparedness to ensure a state of readiness.

## **Fire Safety**

Wexford County Fire Service promotes fire safety with a view to reducing the incidence and effect of fires in the home and other buildings. Education on the dangers of fire and advice on how to reduce the risk of fire occurring is provided to community groups, schoolchildren, and the public.

The Fire Service ran four fire safety campaigns during 2023:

- Summer campaign focused on Wildfires.
- Fire Safety Week.
- Halloween.
- Winter Fire Safety.

During the campaigns key fire safety messages were advertised in local papers, through the various council social media accounts and Fire Safety stands were set up in busy areas of the county's towns. Throughout the year fire safety messages were delivered to various community groups including fire safety talks and safety messages issued via local papers.



Figure 1: Firefighters providing fire safety advice at the Bannow & Rathangan Show



Figure 2: Fire Section staff manning a fire safety stand

In 2023 as part of the National Primary Schools Fire Safety Programme approximately 2000 third class students received the fire safety message. This involved firefighters visiting primary schools and presenting a fire safety lesson in the classroom.

Wexford Fire Authority is notified annually of all relevant applications to the District and Circuit Courts for Music & Singing, Dance, Club and Transfer of licences and Lottery and Gaming certificates. During 2023, 160 notifications were received.

During 2023 a total of 171 Fire Safety inspections were carried out on a broad range of premises types.

There were 178 fire safety certificate applications received in 2023.

# CIVIL DEFENCE

## Operations / Training Report 2023

### Civic Duties

Larger events covered included: Rose of Tralee festival Wexford Visit. Relay for Life, Killag Agricultural Show, Maritime/ National Services Day, Wexford Opera Festival.

Total covered = 57



### Weekly Training

All units completed weekly training to include- first aid, manual/ patient handling, AFS, welfare, Missing Persons Search, Swift Water & Flood Responder, communications, etc.

12 new recruits: Induction June 2023



## Training Courses

2023: Training included: CFR, Manual handling & People Handling, Missing Persons Search Responder, Swiftwater & Flood Responders.

EFR: 9 new EFRS qualified 2023

New Instructors: 3 x FAR, 3 x CFR, 1 x Missing Persons Search Responder

Community CFR Campile: Oct 14<sup>th</sup> hosted by Wexford Civil Defence & Healthy Ireland-Wexford. 21 community Responders certified.

## Inter-County Training Day: October 8<sup>th</sup> Killurin

Simulated light aircraft crash teams training included: Triage, Ambulance loading/ patient handling, Search, Team building exercises.

## Missing Persons Search

31<sup>st</sup> Oct: Rosslare Strand, Misper- Alzheimer's. Found safe & well.

## Community Response

Wexford Civil Defence continued to provide transport support to the patients under our care during Covid Response & requests from housing dept. Patient Transports: **32**.

## Ukrainian Response

### Transports

Transports of persons- 7 tasks.

## Major Emergency Response: Wexford General Hospital fire March 1<sup>st</sup>.

25 volunteers tasked for transport of patients from W.G.H to various receiving hospitals in the region. Minibuses, ambulances deployed. Request for welfare assistance for ambulance station. Kilkenny & Waterford City Civil Defence assisted on 1<sup>st</sup>.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>- 9 x Wexford volunteers and response from 6 Civil Defence counties. Stood down March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Total 53 volunteers, 12 ambulances, 15 minibuses and 6 jeeps. 22 patients with support staff transported.**

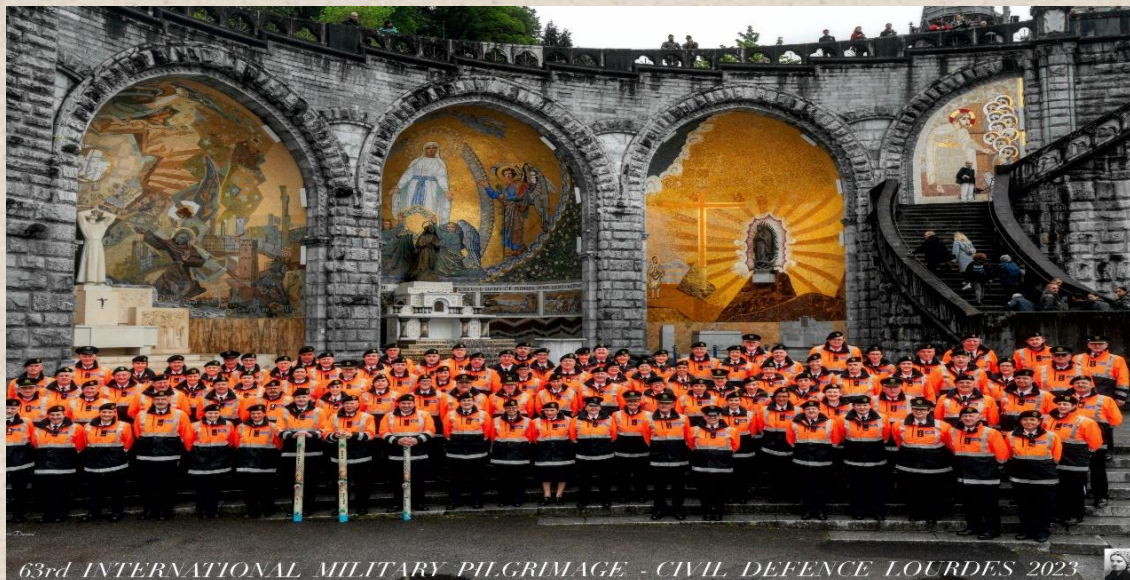
## Vehicles

**Mercedes van**- converted to welfare van: funded by Department of Defence Dormant Accounts & Wexford County Council

**Sprinter Ambulance**—Donated by National Ambulance Service

**Lourdes Military Pilgrimage May 2023**

27 Volunteers represented Wexford at the Lourdes Military Pilgrimage May 2023



**Volunteer Equipment Management System (VEMS) launched 2023**

**VEMS assists the running of Civil Defence- volunteer profile:** training, taskings, uniforms.

**Equipment:** vehicle management, rescue & recovery equipment service & maintenance recording.

**New Headquarters:** Leas Chathaoirleach Cllr. Ger Carthy announced the approval of New Headquarters for Wexford Civil Defence at the Annual Awards presentation night November 12<sup>th</sup>.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

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The Health and Safety Section continued to deliver a targeted corporate improvement programme, ensuring the continued health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, and members of the public. No enforcement action was taken against Wexford County Council by the Health and Safety Authority and the overall accident trend continues to reduce. A long term and valued health and safety officer retired in 2023 and the team welcomed a new Assistant Health and Safety Officer who had previously worked in Fire Services.

### ISO 45001 (Health and Safety Management System)

In 2023, the health and safety section successfully maintained the management system to the ISO45001 standard. This involved ongoing surveillance audit by an externally accredited body. The organisation demonstrates a structured and managed approach to health and safety with a commitment to monitored continuous improvement. Wexford County Council had a robust internal and external audit programme in place throughout the year.

### **Violence and Aggression**

Wexford County Council continues to be challenged by incidents of violence and aggression towards our employees. During 2023, the Health and Safety Section continued to monitor and intervene in such cases, working closely with the County Secretary. Incidents of violence and aggression increased during 2023 and is the focus of an ongoing campaign, with increased training and procedures available to our staff. Wexford County Council works closely with other agencies, such as the Gardai, to ensure that our employees are protected at the same time as providing an effective service to our customers.

### **Events Management**

Events across County Wexford increased in 2023. We held very well-attended and popular parades on St Patricks Day. Major events included The Market House Festival, Gorey, The Rocking Food Festival, Enniscorthy, The Opera Festival Fireworks and the Wexford Stage.



*The Rocking Food Festival, Enniscorthy*



*The Market House Festival, Gorey*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## **Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028**

The purpose of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023 – 2028 will be to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the community development of Co. Wexford, both by the Local Authority directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.



Following the announcement of the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) of the Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines 2021, Wexford County Council set up an Advisory Steering Group in 2022 to drive the formation of the new LECP.

The LECP has been developed through a consultative process with extensive contribution from the public, local community and voluntary groups, public and private stakeholders. KPMG Future Analytics has carried out the public consultation and has produced a draft plan that will be adopted in Q1 2024.

## **LEADER 2014 - 2020 Programme & Transitional LEADER Programme 2020 – 2022**

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) continued to act as the Local Action Group (LAG) for the delivery of the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, as extended via the Transitional LEADER Programme 2020-2022, during 2023.

The Transitional LEADER programme was extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 for new project approvals and extended to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 for project claims to be paid.

The LAG working in partnership with the Council, as Financial Partner, and Wexford Local Development, as Implementing Partner, ensured that all community and business groups were fully supported to advance all eligible projects.

The programme was delivered under the following themes:

Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation

Theme 2: Social Inclusion

Theme 3: Rural Environment

4 projects were approved by the LAG in 2023, with a total value of €323,759.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) & Local Action Group (LAG):

The LCDC held 9 meetings and the LAG held 6 meetings during 2023.

Key Functions of the LCDC carried out in 2023 include:

- Preparation of the Community elements of the upcoming 2024 – 2029 Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), including discussion and approval of the consultation process, High Level Goals, Actions & Objectives and 2-year Implementation Plan
- Implementation of the LEADER Local Development Strategy and approval of associated LEADER funding (Acting as LAG)
- Co-ordination and monitoring of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) through the SICAP sub-committee and bi-annual reviews
- Managing of various funding streams, including the Community Support Fund and Healthy Ireland Funding.

The LCDC monitored SICAP performance via bi-annual reviews and ongoing engagement with Wexford Local Development, the implementing partner for SICAP.

The LCDC also approved funding under Healthy Ireland and the Community Activities Fund.

## **Burial Grounds**

The Community section manages 12 open burial grounds and over 112 closed vested burial grounds across County Wexford in accordance with the Burial Ground Maintenance and Development Strategy 2017, and all relevant legislation including the updated Bye laws for the Regulation of all open burial grounds within the jurisdiction of Wexford County Council.

Access and safety improvement works under the 2023 burial ground programme of works were completed at Bunclody cemetery, Castledockrell cemetery, Clongeen cemetery and Tomhaggard vested burial ground.

## **Community Buildings**

The Community section manages at present 13 community buildings across County Wexford. These buildings allow local community groups a central designated space to meet and create a sense of community within that area.

Safety improvement works carried out at Woodbine Close Community Centre and Cois Barry Community Centre.

## **Regional Festival Fund 2023**

This funding provided by Fáilte Ireland and administered by Wexford County Council aims to support festivals and participative events that will drive domestic tourism and help to improve the visitor experience in County Wexford. 8 groups were successful recipients of the Festival and Participation Event Fund in 2023.

## **Comhairle na nÓg**

The annual AGM of Comhairle na nÓg was held in Council Chambers on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with attendees from secondary schools and youth projects. Substance Abuse was chosen by the young people as their topic of choice for 2023. Wexford County Council continues to support the delivery of the Comhairle Na nÓg programme in County Wexford in conjunction with FDYS.

Comhairle na nÓg provides a forum for children and young people to discuss local and national issues of relevance to them. Comhairle na nÓg are recognised by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth as the official structures for participation by children and young people in the development of policies and services.



*Comhairle na nÓg 2023 in Council Chambers with Comhairle na nÓg members, Chairman John Fleming, CEO FDYS Kieran Donohue and Comhairle Co-Ordinator Paula Kelly.*

### **IPB Pride of Place competition**

The two Wexford nominees for the 2023 Pride of Place Competition – Enniscorthy Community Allotments, and Clongeen Community Development were visited, by the competition judges during August. The awards ceremony was held in November 2023 in Armagh – Enniscorthy Community Allotments, was runner-up in the Community Wellbeing ‘Holistic’ category.



*Pride of Place 2023 Runner-Up Winners – Enniscorthy Community Allotments*

## **Community Recognition Fund 2023**

The Community Recognition Fund, by the Department of Rural and Community Development, is delivered by Wexford County Council on a local level. It aims to support the development of new infrastructure and facilities, in recognition of the contribution being made by local communities in welcoming and hosting new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries, in a spirit of inclusion and integration. The funding has been specifically targeted at local projects that will be used by all members of the community, now and into the future.

€1.5M has been allocated to County Wexford, for 27no. Community Group and Municipal District projects, with the funding being distributed during 2023/24. As of end of year 2023, €240K (16%) of the fund has been claimed. The fund terminates in October 2024.

<https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/supports-grants-and-awards/community-recognition-fund>

## **Enniscorthy Municipal District**

Ministerial visit to Enniscorthy Community Allotments, for launch of the Geodesic Dome training hub. €20K grant funded. (Minister Heather Humphreys, Rural and Community Development)



## **Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District**

Refurbishment of offices at Gorey Family Resource Centre, including meeting rooms and family counselling rooms. €63K grant funded. (Manager, Emer Hickey and Gorey FRC team)



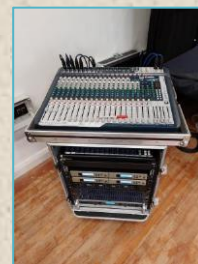
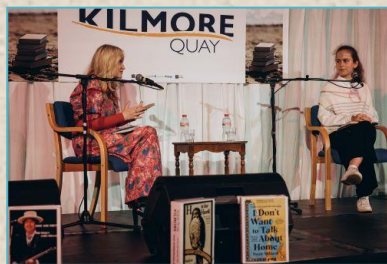
### **New Ross Municipal District**

Repair of playground at award winning Templeudigan Parish Park. €4K grant funded.



### **Rosslare Municipal District**

Write-By-The-Sea, new sound equipment. €4K grant funded.



### **Wexford Borough District**

Access 2000 Wexford, energy improvements to building. €5K grant funded.



### **Rediscovering Ancient Connections – The Saints 2019-2023**

Ancient Connections was an arts, heritage and tourism project funded by the ERDF Ireland-Wales Programme. It linked the six rural/coastal communities of Ferns, Enniscorthy and Gorey in North Wexford (Ireland), to St. Davids, Fishguard and Goodwick in North Pembrokeshire (Wales). It shared and developed connections between the regions through local community engagement with arts projects, shared culture & heritage, archaeology, community projects, destination marketing, festivals and events, enterprise development and pilgrimage.

The project was led by Pembrokeshire County Council, in close collaboration with partners Wexford County Council, Visit Wexford and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, as well as a significant number of other local partners and community groups.

The combined budget, split between both regions, was €3.85M (Phase 1 and Phase 2), a 80/20 funding split between ERDF grant of €3.08M and €770K made up of partners' in-kind cash contributions, through staff time costs and volunteer hours etc. There was a spend value in Wexford of €1.14M, which was an approx. 4/1 ROI for County Wexford.

#### Headline Project Outcomes:

- 50+ events and activities delivered, with 13,239 participations logged
- 500+ extra over-seas visitors counted to-date (despite COVID)
- Volunteer hours achieved – 11,561 hours/€148K cash equivalent (to date)
- 4no. potential new fulltime FTE jobs created. (pilgrim officer; trad skills, Ferns archaeological field schools)

- Annual archaeological field school in Ferns, including 25+ international students
- Survey and excavation reports and 'Ferns Edition' academic book published.
- Internationally renowned bee-hive skeps public art pieces shared between Ferns and St. Davids.
- Wexford Pembrokeshire Pilgrim Way route piloted and international pilgrimage symposium event with 150+ delegates held in Enniscorthy



[www.wexfordpembrokeshirepilgrimway.org](http://www.wexfordpembrokeshirepilgrimway.org)

Project closed September 2023.

<https://ancientconnections.org/project-library/> for further project legacy information



Enterprise & Innovation



Field School (Ferns)



Public Art (Ferns)

## **Healthy Wexford**

The Vision for a Healthy Wexford is where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.



The Healthy County Committee, a sub-committee of the Wexford LCDC, work to deliver this vision through an agreed workplan and with funding the Healthy Ireland Fund, with support from Wexford County Council, and through accessing other funding sources.

In line with the Healthy Ireland Framework, the committee has four overarching goals in their work:

- increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
- reduce health inequalities
- protect the public from threats to health and well being
- create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

Six key priority areas have been identified under the Healthy Ireland Framework, and these are replicated priorities for Healthy Wexford.

PRIORITY 1: Physical activity

PRIORITY 2: Healthy weight

PRIORITY 3: Tobacco free

PRIORITY 4: Sexual health

PRIORITY 5: Alcohol and drug related harm

PRIORITY 6: Mental health

## **Healthy Ireland Fund**

Round Four of the Healthy Ireland Fund 2022-2025 is currently underway with a total fund of €198,122.42 initially allocated to Wexford LCDC. While 2022 was a transitional and planning period, 2023 saw the commencement of the planned programme of works agreed based on needs analysis.

Round Four funding differs to previous rounds in that it has to focus on maximum of two Healthy Ireland outcome areas. The two outcomes agreed for Wexford are:

- Increase in % of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines
- Decrease in unconditional probability of dying (aged 30-70) from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease

### **Healthy County Coordinator**

The Healthy County Coordinator is a support resource for the delivery of a Healthy Wexford, funded by the Department of Health from 2022-2025 and based in the Community Section of Wexford County Council. The current Coordinator contract began in October 2022 and runs to 2025.

### **2023 Highlight Activity**

During 2023 the new Healthy Ireland Fund programme commenced including two new pilot initiatives – Women’s Health Through the Ages and Healthy Home Environments. Outside of the Healthy Ireland Funding other new projects included the Meet Your Neighbour Events, Country Connects and Happy to Chat Cafes. Projects that continued included Period Dignity, Not Around Us, and Community Growing. The team also supported the Dementia Bus Experience at County Hall and the Meno well Programme in collaboration with Sports Active Wexford.

### **SICAP - Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018 – 2023**

Wexford LCDC continued the management of The Social inclusion Community Activation Programme during 2023. The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration.

### **SICAP – Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2024 - 2028**

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Wexford Co. Council and Wexford Local Development signed a “Framework Agreement” worth up to 15.5 million euro for “Social Inclusion and Related Services” over the next 5 years.



The Framework agreement will facilitate the awarding of social inclusion contracts to Wexford Local Development within the 5-year period of the agreement and includes an initial Call-Off Contract relating to the national “Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme” (SICAP) 2024 – 2028 worth just over €10m.

Following a procurement process, Wexford Local Development have been successful in securing the contract for the delivery of the programme again for the next 5 years. The programme has been active in County Wexford for a number of years, and this is the third iteration of SICAP. Target groups are pre-defined nationally and include those who experience multiple inequalities namely; People living in disadvantaged communities, People impacted by educational disadvantage; People living in jobless households or households where the primary income source is low-paid and/or precarious; People who are long-term unemployed; People with a criminal history; Refugees; International Protection Applicants; People with Disabilities; Heads of One-parent Families; Travellers and Roma.

Wexford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) have also chosen 3 “Local Priority Target Groups” for a specific focus for the duration of this new programme which are:

- People living in disadvantaged communities
- People impacted by educational disadvantage
- Travellers

Promotion of climate justice, with a focus on facilitating a just and equitable transition to a greener economy and society, will also be a horizontal theme in the new programme.

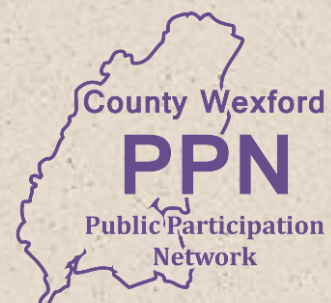
### **Traveller Interagency Group**

Wexford Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) continued its work during 2023 to ensure that the relevant statutory agencies and state supported initiatives involved in providing the full range of services to Travellers would focus on improving the integrated practical delivery of such services. The TIG sub-groups focused on developing specific actions to respond to the issues identified within the 2018 Traveller Needs Analysis Report, funded by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and Wexford County Council.

### **Wexford Public Participation Network (PPN)**

Key Achievements in 2023

- Launch of Wexford PPN Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025.
- Redevelopment of Wexford PPN website.
- Creation of Climate Action thematic group.
- Development of Community Growers events.
- Training for member groups & representatives.





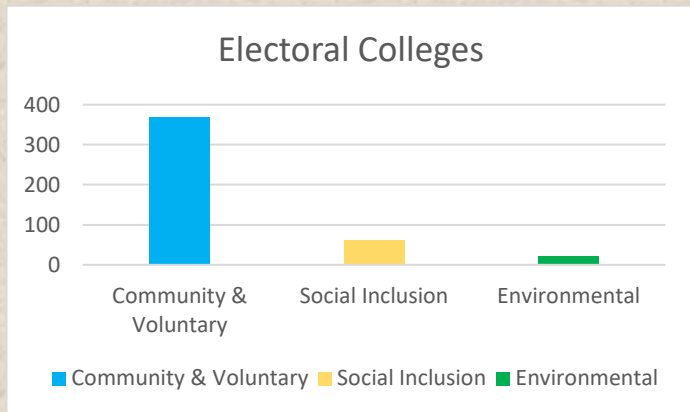
**Community Groups 2023**

**Electoral Colleges / Pillars**

Community & Voluntary – 368

Social Inclusion – 61

Environmental – 21



**Municipal Districts**

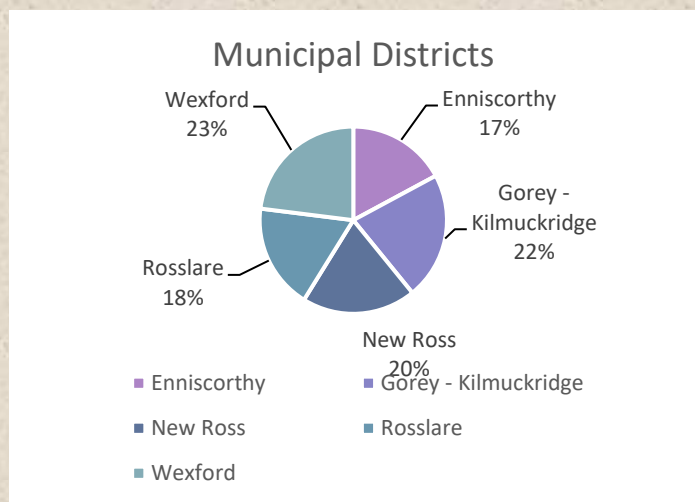
Enniscorthy – 76

Gorey – Kilmuckridge – 104

New Ross – 92

Rosslare – 79

Wexford - 99



## Wexford Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

2023 was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme (SHCP) in Wexford which marked the completion of the capital projects which included a new playground in Oilgate, calisthenics equipment in Maudlintown and accessibility works and equipment at Ferndale, Taghmon and Fairgreen playgrounds.



Minister of State for Public Health, Wellbeing and National Drugs Strategy, Frank Feighan TD visited St. Marys GAA Club in Maudlintown, Wexford Town on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 to officially launch the Wexford Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme and to meet many of the recipients and partners on the local programme.



### Other events and launches included:

- Enniscorthy Learn to Cycle Park official opening by Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy MD, Cllr. Aiden Browne on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023
- Official opening of the Calisthenics equipment at Maudlintown by Mayor of Wexford, Cllr. Maura Bell on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- Oilgate Playground official opening on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023 by Cathaoirleach of Gorey Municipal District, Cllr. Donal Kenny supported by Cllr. Willie Kavanagh
- Taghmon Camross Community Car official launch by Cathaoirleach of Rosslare Municipal District, Cllr. Jim Moore on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Enniscorthy Community Allotment's joint launch of the sensory garden and the geodome by Minister for Rural & Community Development, Heather Humphries on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023



*Oilgate Playground*



Taghmon Camross Community Car  
official launch

Many other SHCP health and wellbeing projects were delivered in the 4 SHCP areas of Enniscorthy Town, Wexford Town, Taghmon and Edermine Electoral Divisions including:

- Taghmon and Camross Community Car
- Southend & Maudlintown Pilot Retrofitting and Fuel Poverty Project
- Enniscorthy Community Allotments Sensory and Wellbeing space
- Loreto Secondary School, Wexford - Biodiversity, Wellbeing & Horticulture project
- Enniscorthy Learn to Cycle Park
- Technology Project for Older People with the HSE's Integrated Care Programme for Older People Team (ICPOP) in St. John's Hospital, Enniscorthy
- Creative Ireland funded projects including Coolcotts Drumming Workshops with Nicky Bailey and Sculpture workshops at Enniscorthy Community Allotments with artist Imogen Stafford
- Establishment of an interagency group in Enniscorthy focusing on housing estates in the town with inaugural meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November
- 'Opera For All' in partnership with Wexford Festival to make opera more accessible to more disadvantaged groups and individuals.



*Loreto Horticulture Project*



*Enniscorthy Learn to Cycle Park*



*Drumming workshops in Coolcotts*

### **Celtic Routes**

Launched in November 2019, the Celtic Routes Project was a co-funded European Territorial Co-Operation (ETC) Ireland-Wales project aiming to encourage visitors to explore new areas of Ireland and Wales. Wexford County Council was the lead Irish partner. The funding application for the project was based on six themes one of which was ‘Wildlife, Flora, Fauna and specialities’ and highlighted coastal trails and destinations in West Wales and south-east Ireland.



Celtic Routes Wexford came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 with information and project resources such as the website continuing.

### **Wexford Age Friendly Programme**

Work on the Age Friendly Programme continued in 2023 with the focus on extensive public consultation with older people and organisations which represent them.

Our partners in the Age Friendly Alliance continued to make progress in their themed areas including Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, Community Support and Health Services and Safety and Security.

Grant funding was secured under the Governments Let's Get Moving project which aims to increase physical activity of Older Person across County Wexford through supportive physical activity programmes. Social Dancing Lessons were carried out in 5 Rural community centres over the duration of 5 weeks from September to October 2023.

### **Older People's Council**

Wexford Older People's Council held 4 meetings in 2023 during which they identified priority areas of need for older people, raised issues of importance and informed and influenced the decision-making process of the Age Friendly Programme.

### **Wexford Age Friendly Alliance**

Wexford Age Friendly Alliance held 2 meetings in 2023 during which the partners reported back on progress on the action plan and discussed responses to the pandemic and other age-related initiatives or projects.

### **Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards Ceremony**

Wexford County Council hosted the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement awards on Thursday, 30th November 2023. Councillor John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council extended a warm welcome to over 250 people from across Ireland to the Model County for the awards ceremony.

The awards are about recognising and rewarding these groups and people who have put significant time and effort into ensuring projects become a reality to make a difference to the lives of the older generation.

Wexford projects were nominated and shortlisted in two categories this year. The first was in the "Age Friendly Environment Award" category. "Playful spaces for all" are a collaboration with the local community of Our Lady's Island in conjunction with Wexford County Council's "Age Friendly", "Access", "Healthy Wexford" and "Active Travel" sections to enhance the playfulness of the area across the generations to ensure age friendly and intergenerational opportunities through development of playful spaces that can be used simultaneously by all ages and abilities.

In the Age Friendly “Active and Healthy Ageing Award” category, Sports Active Wexford’s “Strong and Steady” project which is a structured evidence-based exercise program for the older generation was also shortlisted. This program is aimed at vulnerable older adults who have a fear of falling and as a result let this fear affect them in their day-to-day activities. It is a collaboration with between the Physiotherapist team in Wexford Integrated Care Team for Older People and Sports Active Wexford

### **Sports Active Wexford**

Our vision is of a county where all people are encouraged and enabled to - START to participate in some form of physical activity; - STAY physically active across the life stages; and - SUCCEED in achieving their personal goals (whether they be physical fitness, mental wellbeing, social interaction, or competition).

Our overall aim is to continue the increase in participation levels in physical activity by all Wexford people regardless of age, gender, or ability. In addition to contributing to the health of the population, we believe that the achievement of our aim has the potential to bring economic impact and the creation of social capital.

We have adopted a bridging Strategy which will enable us to take time to use up to date CSO information and the reviewing key and national plans, which will allow us to be better informed of the needs locally in line with National Policy. This will be a priority for 2024 as the LECP and Sport Ireland Strategy are now available.

We have continued to develop multi agency collaborations with our strategic partners and link our work to broader societal issues, especially where sports and physical activity can play an important role.

We have also been selected as one of the 6 National Pilot Schemes in partnership with the HSE for the National Physical for Health Officer. The role is designed to develop a Physical activity pathway to support rehabilitation of people with the identified Chronic disease conditions.

We have established the New Ross Community activity Hub as a part of Dormant accounts funding. This programme is supported for five years. We have recruited a Hub coordinator and supported the refurbishment of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and Tennis Courts in Pearse park.

In 2023 the key Outputs we achieved

- Participants in programmes 66,995

- Number of programmes delivered 801.
- Funding Received (External i.e. Sport Ireland) € 607,738
- Grant Support to Clubs & Community Groups €48535.43

### **Programme Examples**

Activator Pole programmes in partnership with Wexford Library Service, Men's sheds, Migrant physical activity support programmes, Fun in the Sun children's camps, Schools Programmes, Disability programmes, Marathon Kids, ASD Kids Cycling Camp. Strong and Steady Programme In partnership with HSE and Age alliance (Shortlisted for the Age friendly Awards 2023). Playground activity leaders programme, Creative Ireland Teenage Girls activity programme, Woodlands for Health.

Campaigns "Her Outdoors" Week, European Week of Sport, Positive Ageing Week, Women in Sport Week, Traveller Pride week, Bike Week.

Sports Active Wexford is compliant with the Governance code as a Type B organisation.



*Yoga in New Ross Library as part of Women in Sport Week 2023*

## Wexford Library Service 2023



**428,896**  
**Visits to the  
Library**



**336,987**  
**Library Loans**



**97,338**  
**eBooks  
eAudiobooks  
Loans**



**34,532**  
**Active  
Members**



**10,314**  
**New  
Borrowers**



**93,795**  
**Eduroam  
Wifi Sessions**



**1742**  
**Library Events**



**27,284**  
**Wifi Sessions**

## **Right to Read at Your Library**

### **World Book Day**

World Book Day was created by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading and is marked in over 100 countries. To celebrate World Book Day, Wexford Libraries gifted specially selected books to children of all ages during March. Forming an early habit of reading will greatly improve a child's life chances. Events were also held in all libraries to coincide with World Book Day (WBD).

### **Spring into Storytime**

Spring Into Storytime, a Libraries Ireland initiative, was delivered online and in all libraries across the country in the month of April. Fifty-eight special story times including Bedtime Storytimes were held in libraries for 1,021 preschool and primary school aged children.

### **Summer Stars Reading Adventure**

Over 2,300 Wexford children took part in Summer Stars 2023 with 7,077 children participating in 221 events associated with the programme over the summer months.

Summer Stars is an important summer library initiative which encourages children to keep reading to maintain and improve their reading skills while on their summer break. Children receive a reading card and can collect incentives throughout the summer months and a certificate of achievement at the end of the reading adventure.

Library events in 2023 included: music sessions, dancing, arts & crafts, chess, coding, magic shows, summer school provision visits, DEIS camp visits, LEGO sessions and regular rhyme time and story times. Events at other venues included outreach/visits to schools to promote the Summer Stars initiative - visits included information sessions and story times.



### **Children’s Book Festival 2023**

The festival continues to be a central focus for library services to children each October. All libraries in Co. Wexford held a successful programme of events for schools and families in 2023, hosting 42 events in total. Visits from award winning Irish children’s authors and illustrators offered schools and families the opportunity to meet some of the very best writers and artists. There were events for children from pre-school to 12 years of age. Sensory events for children with intellectual disabilities were offered in each library to ensure that there were book related events to engage all ages and abilities.

### **Family Time at Your Library**

Family Time at your Library events aim to support a family-focused approach to reading with children as part of the national Right to Read programme and to increase awareness of the benefits of reading and promote reading as a fun, recreational activity for children. More than 40 family events and activities took place in libraries during December to support the involvement of the whole family in children’s reading.

### **My Little Library Bag**

***My Little Library School Starter Book Bags*** were available free to collect from their local library for every child starting school in September 2023. Each child received a library card wallet and families were encouraged to join the library if not already members. The My Little Library Book Bag initiative is a collaboration between libraries, the Department of Rural and Community

Development, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

### **Little Book at Bedtime**

This national initiative aims to encourage all parents of young children to read stories with them at bedtime. The initiative seeks to promote reading for pleasure and to improve children's literacy. From the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, parents, and children under 4 could drop into their local library to pick up their free bedtime story book and join the library. Bedtime story books were available in English and Irish. There was a significant uptake of this initiative in County Wexford, with many families joining several new members to the library on receiving the free books.

### **New Collections for 2023**

A range of new children's library collections were launched in County Wexford libraries in 2023 including bedtime stories, stories that promote reading for empathy, sensory books and toys, story sacks and magazines with electronic reader pens and resources that support children who are learning English. Wexford Library Service has also launched a pilot collection of books to support engagement with children from the Traveller and Roma communities in County Wexford.

## **Promoting Reading for Pleasure at the Library**

### **Ireland Reads February 2023**

Libraries throughout Wexford took part in *Ireland Reads*, a campaign to get the whole country reading in the lead up to a National Day of Reading on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A programme of events celebrating reading took place on that day in all libraries in the Co. Wexford.

Irish libraries teamed up with publishers, booksellers, authors, and others for the campaign, which is part of the government's **Healthy Ireland** programme and aims to celebrate reading and all the benefits it can have for wellbeing and enjoyment.

## Literary Events in 2023

Gorey Library in association with *The Art of Reading Book Club*, The Laureate for Irish Fiction, The Arts Council and Wexford County Council held a special in-conversation event with Colm Tóibín, Laureate for Irish Fiction and Joseph O'Connor, author of *My Father's House*. A packed audience saw the Wexford-born Laureate interview the award-winning author. The event was filmed by both The Arts Council of Ireland for a special podcast, as well as segments filmed by the production team from RTE's *The Works* programme.



On Saturday 12th of August award winning author, Donal Ryan read from his most recent novel ***The Queen of Dirt Island*** in Wexford Library.

Dublin One City One Book – Andrew Hughes read from “The Coroner’s Daughter” which was selected as the One City One Book for Dublin in 2023. One Dublin One Book aims to encourage everyone in Dublin to read a designated book connected with the capital city during the month of April. Wexford Libraries partnered with Dublin City Libraries to host an author reading of the book in Wexford Library.

## Library IT Grant

### ICT Funding

Wexford Library Service was successful in securing funding of €64,000 for public facing ICT hardware. The investment, under the Libraries Capital Programme 2023-2027, will assist all public libraries in becoming more digitally inclusive, with a particular focus on supporting young people, older people, and harder to reach communities. Public libraries are accessible and digitally inclusive spaces and play a critical role in helping to support digital inclusion.

## **Inclusive Services at the Library**

### **Dormant Account Fund (DAF) Literacy Support Programmes**

The range of literacy support programmes delivered through apps and online resources continued to grow in 2023. These resources include Touch Type Read and Spell, Nessy Reading and Spelling, Reading Eggs and Mathseeds. Literacy and numeracy apps are in high demand by the public and by primary and secondary schools.

### **Services to persons whose first language is not English:**

Informal English-speaking lessons continued throughout 2023 in several libraries. Distribution of information on library resources and e-resources to newcomers continues in all libraries. Library literacy Apps for children provide children's books in languages other than English. Transparent Language Online provides online English language learning resource for speakers of over 30 other languages.

### **My Open Library Services opened at New Ross Library**

New Ross library joined Gorey library in providing the My Open Library Service in June 2023. My Open Library is open 7 days a week from 8am to 10pm, 365 days a year. It is a fully automated service with swipe access by library card and PIN. Usual library services (borrowing, returns, printing, Wi-Fi, internet access PC) are available on an automated self-service basis during My Open Library hours. At the end of 2023 there were 509 people registered for My Open Library in Gorey and 272 registered in New Ross.



## **Adult Literacy at the Library**

### **Digital Help Hub**

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB), Wexford Local Development (WLD), and Wexford County Council Library Service worked together to bring this Pop-Up initiative to County Wexford. WWETB tutors were available to help the public on a one-to-one basis. Wexford Library and Enniscorthy libraries were the venues for this popular initiative.



Digital Help Hub is an initiative of the ALL-Adult Literacy for Life national strategy. There were demonstrations on how to use devices such as phones, tablets, and laptops, how to get online and use apps and how to access multiple services like eGov, MyWelfare, the National Childcare Scheme, Revenue, SUSI and more.

### **National Literacy Month and Adult Literacy Day 2023 – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

Members of the public were invited to Enniscorthy Library to hear Dr. Aislinn Brennan and learners from VTOS Enniscorthy talk about their experiences of returning to education as adults. Wexford Library hosted an Open Morning for WWETB Literacy and Language Tutors and Learners.

## **Irish Language Services at the Library**

### **Seachtain na Gaeilge 1<sup>st</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia is an international Irish language festival and celebration of our native language and culture. All libraries in Co Wexford hosted events including a community evening of songs, stories & poetry in Gorey; a Comhrá as Gaeilge and a traditional music session in New Ross; sean nós dancing workshop and drama workshop for children in Wexford; stories with Sadhbh Devlin in Enniscorthy and stories and games as Gaeilge in Bunclody.

## **Healthy Ireland at Your Library**

The 'Healthy Ireland at Your Library' Programme is part of the national Healthy Ireland strategy the aim of which is to improve health and wellbeing by placing a focus on prevention, individual awareness and keeping people healthy for longer. The library programme centres on supporting people to become informed in managing their health, providing an enhanced collection of health and wellbeing books and magazines. Physical book stock, and both eBooks and eAudiobooks are available for the public to borrow. The aim of this programme is to support people to 'Eat Well, Think Well, Be Well'.

Wexford public libraries held several free talks, broadcast live webinars, screened recorded talks, and created many book displays throughout the county in 2023. Wexford libraries are also participants in the Healthy Wexford campaigns – ***Happy to Chat*** and ***Not around Us***.

### **START Campaign**

Maintaining a healthy weight in children is a major health challenge on the island of Ireland. The START campaign is a five-year, public awareness campaign from Safefood in partnership with both Departments of Health, Healthy Ireland, the Health Service Executive, and the Public Health Agency. The campaign aims to support and encourage parents to start making small daily changes to their children's diet and lifestyle and in so doing, get them started on their way to a healthier life.

Libraries hosted online Safefood START talks throughout the year.

## **Age Friendly Libraries**

### **Bealtaine Festival**

Bealtaine events were held in all libraries during May 2023 for the annual Bealtaine Festival which celebrates art and creativity as we age.

May Day in Bygone Days with Historian in Residence Barry Lacey was held in Wexford Library where traditions, customs and beliefs associated with May Day in County Wexford as reported in the School's Folklore Collection and accounts from local newspapers of the last century were discussed.

As part of the Poetry as Commemoration creative writing workshops across the country in 2022-23, two successful poetry workshops were held in Wexford County Archive in March, attendees creatively engaged with collections in the archive relating to the War of Independence and Civil War periods in Co. Wexford (1919-23). Poetry as Commemoration, a poetry reading event focusing on the work from these workshops was held in Wexford Library as part of Bealtaine Festival. Other Bealtaine Festival events included movies, yoga, and Activator Pole taster sessions.



### **Digital Literacy**

Age Friendly Digital Literacy Weekly classes for the over-55s took place each week for older people in Enniscorthy, Wexford and New Ross libraries. A WWETB tutor facilitates the classes.

## **Climate Action in the Library**

### **Climate Action Plan Drop in Session**

The public were invited to drop into libraries and talk to members of Wexford County Council's Climate Action Team in relation to the Draft Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan during March.

### **Citizen Science Kit Pilot Programme**

The Heritage Council launched their Citizen Science Kit Pilot Programme, an initiative to empower people living in ten counties across Ireland to collect information about biodiversity in their local area. Through the programme, people can borrow specialised equipment and use the kit, which includes nets, magnifying glasses, and swatches to help identify species and collect valuable data.



### **Public Art & Community Decarbonisation Project' Enniscorthy**

Enniscorthy Library connected with this initiative. Enniscorthy Library is now a Seed Hub, and lectures on biodiversity have been held in the library.

## Science Week

### Science Week 12<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Science Week, supported by Science Foundation Ireland, is a week-long event each November celebrating science in our everyday lives. Science Week includes a wide variety of events involving industry, colleges, schools, libraries, teachers, researchers, and students throughout Ireland. Libraries in Co. Wexford hosted varied events for both children and adults over the week in partnership with Calmast. Topics covered included our solar system, space exploration, human evolution, DNA and genetics, cosmic radiation and sports science. Children attended workshops on robotics, chatbots, laboratory magicians, bubbly science, micro:bits, science-based story times, STEM Lego and craft sessions.

## Local Studies

### Special Collections

A number of special collections were deposited with the library in 2024, most notably, the Séamus MacMathuna/Jimmy McMahan songbook collection and **a rare book on the 1798 rebellion which was published in 1799 by John Jones (editor) of Dublin.**

### **Digitisation of local newspapers**

Local newspapers from 1910-1930 have been digitised and are being made available to the public.

## Decade of Centenaries

In this final year of the Decade of Centenaries programme, Wexford County Council was granted funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media for the Decade of Centenaries Programme for 2023 for multiple projects:

### Historian in Residence Programme

The aim of the residency was to make history and specifically the events of 100 years ago more accessible and to raise awareness of the resources available through Wexford County Archives and Libraries. The intention was to create a legacy of research and cultural material for future generations.

Examples of work under the scope of the project included lectures, workshops, research, liaison with community groups and publications. The residency ran from April to December 2023. The focus of the residency was on in-person gatherings and engagement with multiple community groups across County Wexford.

The Historian in Residence gave a selection of talks in libraries and online, based on his research:

Reflections on the Irish Civil War in County Wexford from March 1923

Resources for the revolutionary period

The ending of the Civil War on 24<sup>th</sup> May and the elections on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1923

### **Physical and online exhibition based on information procured at Digitisation Days in 2021 and 2022**

In 2021 and 2022, Wexford Libraries held Digitisation/Community Archiving days. People holding documents and items relevant to the revolutionary period were invited to bring them into the libraries, to record and describe, photograph, scan and make a digitised copy of them for the Wexford Library Local Studies Collection and Archive. The items copied and recorded are being added to the collection. An exhibition was created and designed which will tour libraries in 2024. This exhibition will also be available online.

## **Public Lecture Programme**

Wexford Libraries held a series of lectures with various speakers including:

David McCullagh – Gorey Library – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June – "Crown and Harp: from Free State to Republic"

John Gibney – Wexford Library – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June – "Revolutionary diplomats, gunrunners and 'lady typists': the international aspects of the Irish revolution, 1919-1923"

John Dorney - Wexford Library – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September – "The IRA War on Entertainments, 1923"

Padraig Ó Ruairc – Wexford Library – Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September – "Irish is a Foreign Language".

Ian Kenneally – New Ross Library – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October - "Fake News & Irish Freedom"

Professor Mary E. Daly – Gorey Library – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November – "No Promised Land. Life in Ireland in the early years after independence"

## **Social History Project - "A social history of County Wexford in 1923**

This project provided an overview of what it was like to live in 1923, focusing on local stories and advertisements from 'The Echo' newspapers. Wexford County Council created a digital presentation which is available online.

## **Wexford Artists Bursaries**

Wexford County Council invited applications for Decade of Centenaries Artists Bursaries. These artists bursaries offered the opportunity to support and invest in new work developed by professional artists in all art forms based in County Wexford. Artists were asked to develop new work addressing themes of Commemoration during this period. The aim of this new work was to respond with sensitivity to the historical context of Wexford and promote a deeper understanding of the significant historical events of this period. The work encouraged reflection about the multiple identities, traditions and perspectives that are part of the overall Irish historical experience.

The artists and projects were:

- Reenagh McCall – “My Enemy’s Enemy”- development of a new piece of writing for theatre that will explore the themes of Irish identity and the recognition and acceptance of multiple experiences during World War 1 and the War of Independence/Civil War.
- Sylvia Cullen – “Balm” – a literature project whereby Sylvia wrote a trilogy of new short stories inspired by the theme of commemoration and gave a public reading of them in three local venues across North Wexford: Askamore Community Centre, Hollyfort Schoolhouse & The Shamrock Hall, Kilanerin.

### **The 1916-23 period as reflected in 25 objects from Wexford County Archive’s collections.**

The 25 objects include key documents, photographs, objects, and textiles from the holdings of Wexford County Archive. This is an invaluable opportunity to showcase some of the unique and rare items from the archive’s holdings, all of which reveal an aspect – or the story of an active participant – during this turbulent period in the county’s history. Items to be featured include a mobilisation order (30 April 1916) issued to the Enniscorthy leaders requesting them to cease active hostilities; Captain Patrick Keegan’s Irish Volunteer tunic; Máire Moran’s Cumann na mBan brooch; the Enniscorthy 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion flag; Ballykinlar No. 2 Camp GAA Board minute book (1921).

The main output will be a physical publication (with an online flipbook version) featuring a close-up image of each artefact accompanied by a synopsis of its provenance/historical significance. A launch will include a physical exhibition of items featured in the project which will take place in 2024.

## **Archive Services**

### **Collections Management**

Collections that were acquired during 2023 included a series of 19<sup>th</sup> century historic charts of Wexford harbour; account books of Dr Thomas Pierse (Medical Officer, Wexford District), 1914-33; the Mount Carmel lace and crochet collection; extant minute books for Clonroche guild, ICA (1959-2020); and the Huggard, Brennan and Murphy solicitors' collection (1800s-1970s).

### **Poetry as Commemoration**

In a collaboration with the Poetry as Commemoration project (an initiative of UCD's Irish Poetry Reading Archive), the Archive hosted two afternoon workshops in its reading room in March during which seven attendees sought inspiration to write poetry from a selection of documents, photographs, and objects relevant to the War of Independence and Civil War periods in County Wexford (1919-23). The output from this creative process was read to a public audience in Wexford town library in May. The poems were deposited in the Irish Poetry Reading Archive (UCD) and with Wexford County Archive for posterity.

The Wexford launch of the *Wicklow Gaol Comrades: A Civil War autograph book* project was held in Gorey library in November. The project – an innovative collaboration between the archive services of Wexford and Wicklow county councils was researched and written by historian Aaron Ó Maonaigh and included a short video documentary featuring excerpts from interviews held with some of the prisoners' relatives; a physical exhibition featuring the men documented in the autograph book and an accompanying publication which provides a unique insight into the lives of the men imprisoned in Wicklow Gaol during the Civil War. The exhibition will travel to various venues and the library network over 2024 with the booklet to be distributed to post-primary schools across County Wexford.



## Digitisation of Archival Collections

In line with its digitisation strategy, several collections were digitally captured and made available online during the year – including a series of minute books from the Enniscorthy Poor Law Union collection for the Decade of Centenaries timeframe (1912-23).

To facilitate enquiries relating to institutional trauma in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through a new National Centre for Research and Remembrance, the following collections were digitised – County Wexford Board of Health & Public Assistance minute books, 1921-42; County Managers' Orders, 1942-45.

## Outreach

In a continued effort to collaborate with other heritage organisations in County Wexford to display some of its important artefacts, the Archive loaned a large copy painting of Titian's *Allegory of Marriage* to the Irish Heritage Trust for display in Johnstown Castle in March. The painting by renowned Wexford artist Francis Danby was copied by him in 1838 while he was in the Louvre Museum, Paris and had been gifted to Wexford Corporation in 1939 by the granddaughter of William Gibbons who had originally commissioned Danby to execute a copy of the painting.

The Archivist featured in a short documentary, *The search for Maelruan* produced by Three Kitty Productions which was one of the winners of the Screen Wexford New Voices 2022 Awards. St Maelruan (Bishop of Tallaght who died in 792) was associated with an early medieval church in Screen and with the townland of Ballinaleck in Artramon parish. The Archive holds an unfinished replica of the original wooden carving that was discovered in a holy well at Ballinaleck in the 1750s. Parishioners from the locality visited Crossabeg church over the weekend of 12-13 August to learn more about the saint and to recount stories of visiting the house at Ballinaleck where the original carving had been on display for almost three centuries.

As part of the Comóradh 225 commemorations across County Wexford in 2023, the Archivist presented an illustrated talk on recent significant deposits in the county archive of 1798 relevance at an afternoon series of talks in August which was organised by the Rathangan/Cleariestown Heritage Group. This was an invaluable mean of publicising some unique items that will form part of a revamped exhibition in the National 1798 Rebellion Centre, Enniscorthy in 2024.

## Creative Ireland



In 2023 Creative Ireland Wexford funded 50 projects, engaged with 5,381 audience members, invested €226,240 in creative projects with artists and communities, and provided funding opportunities for 142 creative practitioners.

### **Culture and Creativity Strategy**

The Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027 was launched in February. This strategy is based on extensive public consultation held in every municipal district in the county during 2022. Emphasis will be placed on creative projects that target isolation and prioritise inclusion; there will be focus on initiatives that build wellbeing and resilience throughout the community. Resources will also be allocated to projects that celebrate the county's physical, natural and heritage infrastructure and that work to change behaviours that exacerbate climate change.

### **Cruinniú na nÓg**

Cruinniú na nÓg (a national day of creativity for children and young people aged 0-18) took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023. A total of twenty unique events were held on the day in all Municipal Districts. Events included, Spinning Plates, circus skills workshops, Anyone 4 Science, Creative Writing, puppetry and mask making, Sewing and clay Workshops, theatre music and dance workshops. Wexford had 71 entries in this year's "This is Art" competition with the entries being exhibited in Wexford Arts Centre.

### **Creative Communities Scheme**

Under the Arts Department Creative Communities initiative, Creative Ireland supported three projects this year.

Coracles on the Canal: A collaboration between visual Artist Andi McGarry, a prolific builder of project boats, and participants from the senior citizens housing association and the wider community of Rathangan and Duncormick. Using locally sourced materials, four Coracles were built on site at the McCall's Community Centre, tested and then introduced to the local Bridgetown canal for exploration.

Duncannon Harbour Walls: Artist Kate Murphy in collaboration with the Duncannon Harbour Workers, the Tidy Village Group, and the Duncannon Village Renewal Group, developed images to be painted as murals on walls in the locality. Each of the images represent a facet of fishing life and/or seaside activities in the area.

Evolve: A partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) North Wexford, Evolve was a programme that supported the recovery and wellbeing of young people attending CAMHS through art. Artists Sonya Weston and Deirdre Travers worked with a group of teenagers to produce a publication of their own design, using lino printing, mono printing, collage, painting, digital photography, and alternative photography. An exhibition of the work produced was held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October at the Wexford Mental Health Association Building.

### **Partnerships with Municipal Districts**

Enniscorthy Community Allotments Sculptures: Horticulturist and sculptor Imogen Stafford, who specialises in creating sculptures from mixed media, chicken wire and willow, worked with and involved members of ECA to create their own sculpture made of chicken wire. Using inspiration from mythology, nature, and Irish wildlife the group cut, gradually bend, twist, manipulate and build up the wire and willow to create a small piece sculpture. Then collectively they created a larger sculpture celebrating nature. There will be a launch event in spring 2024.

Éire Sign Project: Rosslare Municipal District and a group of locals and enthusiasts began work on the restoration and clearing of overgrown vegetation of the Eire coastal marker in Kilmore Quay constructed in 1943/1944. Creative Ireland funded workshops led by writer Caroline Busher with pupils from the Kilmore National School. Caroline worked with pupils to interpret the sign creatively and develop their own piece of writing inspired by the sign. Some of this writing will be presented at Kilmore Quay's Write by the Sea Festival in 2024.

Wexford Literary Trail: Wexford Literary Trail was an exploration of the town's historic laneways, streets and vistas which have inspired local writers and poets. Editor Tom Mooney led in-person trails that explored local literary heritage, a published an accompanying guide.

Summit Sisters: Working with teenage girls housed in Direct Provision Centres, Sports Active Wexford developed a creative activity outdoor adventure. The girls engaged with the countryside and beaches in County Wexford, working with artists at different points to encourage a greater understanding of and emotional connection to the local landscape.

### **Open Call Arts Awards**

Nine cultural organisations and artists' collectives throughout the county were awarded funding through Creative Ireland Wexford Open Call 2023. These awards are for innovative programmes that develop creative thinking in addressing the key strategy areas of well-being, placemaking and climate action.

X-Gap (The Gap Arts Festival): a new Christmas performance piece developed between North Wexford communities and artists Honor Heffernan and Garrett Keogh.

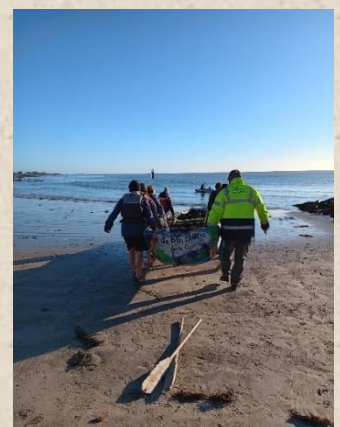
Cartlann na nDaoine (North Wexford Traditional Singing Circle): an intergenerational exploration of living and evolving local song traditions.

The Fishermen of Wexford (artist Helen McLean): the design and creation of a large new mosaic with the Wexford Tidy Towns group, to be installed at the Crescent, Wexford Quay.

Invitation to a Conversation (Sown Society): a series of multidisciplinary workshops that explore innovative and sustainable practices relating well-being to nature, creativity and community.

Trailblazers – A Way with Words (Purple and Gold Writers Collective): a trail of innovative and engaging poetry events in daytime, Wexford Town café venues.

The Ways of Water (artists Andi McGarry, Jeni Roddy, Lynn Haughton, Conall Geoghegan): boat building workshops at Kilmore Quay Community Gardens and Stella Maris Centre that use found and natural materials to address sustainable living within the adjacent watery landscape.



The Enniscorthy Time Machine (Festival in a Van): an exploration of Enniscorthy's past and future through new poems, stories and songs, focusing on social justice and climate change.

Ghost House (Spooky Before): a county-wide storytelling project that draws from supernatural, spiritual and unexplained experiences in the home to explore mental health and wellbeing.

The May Bush and The Coming of Summer (artists Michael Fortune and Aileen Lambert): an archival project that celebrates traditional May-time festivities and underlines the importance these festivities have in creating a sense of place and pride in belonging to a community.



### Live Music in Nursing Homes

Swing Song: Wexford County Council was awarded Creative Ireland Age Friendly funding to develop a workshop programme of music and poetry to four nursing homes in Wexford in 2023 over the period, July-October. Musician Melanie O'Reilly, two members of her jazz band with poet and spoken word artist Stephen James Smith



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collaborated, interweaving live swing jazz songs with poetry readings. The workshops took place in nursing homes county wide.

### Other Projects

Eco Showboat: During August, the Eco Showboat arrived on the Dunbrody Famine Ship for an evening of music, poetry and performance by Wexford artists Joe Brennan, Suzanne Walsh and Ben Mac Caoilte. Part of a five-month arts expedition along the Shannon, Grand Canal and Barrow, aboard the Mayfly, the Eco Showboat is an art project aimed at raising awareness of climate change.

The Lighthouse Project: Working with local artists Sasha Terfous and Richard Carr, and Basciville over July and August, curator Dani Gill developed a site-specific project for Hook lighthouse involving sound and spoken word performance. RTE filmed a 3-minute promo of this event in Hook Lighthouse in August, which was broadcast to promote Culture night. The new work was performed for the first time on Culture Night, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Audiences followed a free guided soundscape experience into the lighthouse, culminating in a live performance by Sasha Terfous.

The Gus Handcock Digital Photo Archive: Researcher and historian Monica Wallace created an inventory and digital collection of 100+ photographs taken by Gustavus Handcock of Coolbrook, Wellingtonbridge, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Handcock's work offers a unique perspective on life in a remote part of County Wexford on the cusp of major change.

Púcaíocht/Shapeshifting: Púcaíocht/Shapeshifting is a bilingual publication of poetry by the Wexford born poet Máire Ní Bhriain. The book describes Irish words that remain in the vernacular of County Wexford and relates to logainmeacha and aspects of the culture and nature of the county. Púcaíocht/Shapeshifting was launched on October 12th at Wexford Library.

Halloween Extreme Beat: Throughout September and October innovative percussionist Nicky Bailey from Extreme Rhythm held 10 drumming workshops each for FDYS Coolcotts and Taghmon Family Resource Centre. Nicky used his extremely visual style helped the participants to develop their drumming rhythm and sense of beat in a fun relaxed atmosphere. At the end of October, each group showcased their skills with a performance on stage with their family and friends joining in.

Timelines Tapestry: The Timelines Tapestry group built on their collaboration over the last 2 years, designing a tapestry themed around healing, renewal and peace. The eight artists and Irish tapestry weavers collaborating on this project are living and working in 7 local authority areas. The collaborative nature of this project is very unusual, as weavers are more likely to work alone.

Nearby Nature: The Nearby Nature programme supported by Creative Ireland Wexford and led by Wexford Mental Health Association is a green therapy creative project to support participants to build mental health and green therapy literacy and skills through creative engagement. Participants used Enniscorthy's landscape to explore through creative and experiential mediums

the potential that local natural spaces can have to support their own wellbeing and that of their families and the wider community. The project will complete in spring 2024.

## ARTS

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**Wexford County Council Arts Plan 2023-27** was launched in September by Sinead O'Reilly, Head of Local, Place and Public Art, The Arts Council, and Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Cllr John Fleming. Over one hundred people attended this launch including artists, community groups, key stakeholders, SETU students and elected members. This ambitious five-year plan came about after an extensive consultation process throughout County Wexford in 2023. Copies of the Arts Plan are available from the Arts Office and digital copies are available from [www.wexfordcoco.ie/arts-and-culture](http://www.wexfordcoco.ie/arts-and-culture)

**Music Generation Wexford** is an on-going partnership between Wexford County Council, Wexford & Waterford Education & Training Board and the national agency Music Generation promoting access to high quality performance music education for young people in Wexford. Music Generation works in preschool, primary school, and youth work/ community settings. Twenty-five schools were part of the Music Generation Wexford Programme for 2023 which included vocal and instrumental programmes. In addition, Music Generation delivers several youth and out-of-schools programmes in partnership with CAMHS - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, Wexford Local Development, and venues such as National Opera House and the Presentation Centre Enniscorthy. Music Generation continues to build its significant music instrument bank located in Hubs countywide.

'Seedlings' a futuristic climate change opera based on environmental themes was presented by Music Generation Youth Opera in partnership with Wexford Festival Opera at the National Opera House in July. This was a production developed as part of a series of collaborative workshops with young people from across the county. This project was supported by Wexford Festival Opera, Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, The National Opera House, and Wexford County Council.

**Arts In Health Care The 'Art Ability' programme** (Visual, Creative Writing and Music) provides high-quality long-term access to creative art experiences for people who experience long term

mental health difficulties and / or intellectual disabilities. Led by a team of five artists, it operates countywide in day care and residential settings. Running since 2003, Arts Ability is underpinned by solid partnerships between Wexford County Council, the HSE and Wexford Mental Health Association.

In 2023, Wexford County Council (Wexford County Council) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) extended the Assistant Artists in the Art Ability Programme for a further 12 weeks. The artists who took part were Brid Colloton, Jenni Roddy, and Luke Cosgrave. This initiative within the Art Ability Programme, aims to provide an opportunity for artists to develop their skills through hands-on experience working with the lead artists in a professional arts and health care environment.

**Living Arts in Schools Programme** Wexford County Council Arts Department in partnership with Wexford Arts Centre delivered its annual Living Arts Programme in schools in 2023. The aim of the programme is to provide children with an understanding and appreciation of contemporary visual art. Four selected primary schools have the opportunity to host an artist in residence for an 8 or a 15-week residency during the school year. Eight artists were employed to deliver the programme across the four schools. [www.livingartsproject.ie](http://www.livingartsproject.ie).

**Creative Places Enniscorthy** Wexford Arts Centre, in association with Wexford County Council, and a steering committee was awarded a Creative Places Award from the Arts Council in 2023. This award is for a three-year developmental arts programme in Enniscorthy and involves significant investment of over €330,000 over 3 years. Provided by the Arts Council, the award will support the development of creativity in communities throughout the town.

A Creative Places Enniscorthy Project Coordinator was appointed, and a series of meetings and consultations started with the community and arts sector in 2023. consulting with stakeholders and community representatives for the development, implementation, and delivery of the Creative Places Enniscorthy programme.

**Creative Hub** provides subsidised work, retail and exhibition which is overseen by the Arts Office and managed by Wexford Art Centre. 10 artists units are leased in the Creative Hub serving over 30 artists/creatives/craft makers arts collectives and an additional dance studio which hosts daily dance classes and yoga sessions, serving over 100 people per week who attend dance and yoga classes. A group of students from SETU School of Art and Design Wexford exhibited a collaborative installation entitled 'Severance: Rise of the Beasts,' in the Creative Hub in December 2023.

**Screen Wexford** established in 2020 Screen Wexford is a strategic partnership between the Arts and Economic departments of Wexford County Council and Bodecii Film. The aim is to develop film in County Wexford which increases indigenous and international film & TV production and provide local support and training to new and existing film and screen sector in County Wexford. <https://screenwexford.com/>

In November 2023, the New Voices 2022 Award Winners Screening Night was held in the Wexford Arts Centre:

- 'We Were There' a 9-minute short film by Leah O'Toole
- 'The Search for Maelruan' a 59-minute documentary by Andrew Kenny
- 'Lucifer is that you?' a 3-minute animation by Joseph Orr

### **County Hall Streets Exhibition Programme**

**Sift** – March 2023 - a touring exhibition of new multi-media artwork in St Davids and Wexford which opened in March and April 2023 in both countries. Exhibition came to Wexford town, ran from April to May in the Wexford County Council offices at Carricklawn. The exhibition included Wexford and Welsh artists who were commissioned to make new works part of the Ireland Wales Ancient Connections EU funded programme. which ran for 2108- 2023. The artists included John Sunderland, Sylvia Cullen, David Begley, Linda Norris, and Sean Vickery. Sift exhibition weaved together the themes of journeying, sacred places, ancestral heritage, storytelling, and longing for home through photography, animation, sound, participatory arts, text, story, glass, and light.

### **Light & Shadow** – August – Sept 2023

This exhibition showcased work from children and young adults produced during workshops and classes at the studios under the guidance of artist Jonathan Murphy.

**IRISH GOTHIC** October 2023 A major solo exhibition by Patricia Hurl In association with Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) was launched in County Hall in October to coincide with Wexford Festival opera and ran until the end of November 2023. This exhibition, selected from a major retrospective hosted by IMMA earlier in the year, presents one of Ireland's most accomplished artists, Patricia Hurl. Since the 1970s, Hurl has created work that deals with loss, pain, frustration, and loneliness. Free public and school tours were offered for both exhibitions.

### **Emergence Award: 2022-23**

As part of the biannual 'Emergence Award' for visual artists which is a partnership between the Arts office and Wexford Arts Centre, Wexford awardee Emma Roche had her solo exhibition **LOOP** which opened in Wexford Arts Centre in partnership in October 2023. The Emergence Award supports visual artists with the development and promotion of their practice. It included a stipend of €15,000, ongoing mentoring. It also partners with the Southeast Technological University (SETU) where the awarded artists' works with the students over the course of 1-02 years and can avail of college facilities.

### **Emergence Award 2024-25**

A selection panel met in 2023 and artist Blaine O Donnell was selected for the Emergence Award 2024-2025.

### **MAKE/Curate programme**

Partnership initiative between Wexford Arts Centre and Wexford Arts Office, which provides Wexford based artists an opportunity to develop their work over a period of 1-2 years, through curatorial support from invited national curators, which culminates in a solo exhibition in

Wexford Arts Centre. Wexford artist Serena Caulfield was selected in 2022 and had her sole exhibition 'Not somewhere else but here' in Wexford Arts Centre in Spring 2023

**Wex-Art** a visual arts festival to coincide with Wexford Opera and is coordinated by Tom Mooney and supported by the Arts office. The Wex-Art Map features over 20 exhibitions taking place in Wexford town representing from Oct 14- Nov 6 showcasing the work of over 70 artists based in Wexford. In addition, the Wex Arts Festival guide highlights arts and cultural events taking place over the run of the festival and is supported by Wexford Borough.

**Public Art 2023** The Arts Department continues to manage Per Cent for Art Scheme and partnered on one public art programme with Wexford's Creative Ireland Programme

**Reimagining Enniscorthy** is a public art & community decarbonisation project, which took place in 2022-23 throughout Enniscorthy town. Led by artist Elaine Harrington, it was a collaborative, place-based response to the climate crisis, and a creative exploration of Enniscorthy as Wexford's pilot Decarbonisation Zone. Activities included workshop in Enniscorthy Allotments, Community orchard planting, a series of free community workshops in Enniscorthy Allotments, Free seed hubs around venues in Enniscorthy, A Climate Cafe, biodiversity walks and a final exhibition in Presentation Arts centre in Enniscorthy in July 2023

### **Do the Little Things Public –2023**

This public artwork consisting of live beehive sculptures was designed for two locations: Ferns, Wexford and St Davids, Pembrokeshire. It was commissioned by Ancient Connections Wakes Ireland EU Programme, which was led by Pembrokeshire County Council, together with partners Wexford County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Visit Wexford.

The arts office advised Ancient Connection programme on the selection of the arts work and final installation the art works in Ferns. The artist, Bedwyr Williams,' distinctive proposal was selected

from a shortlist and connects the two communities of St Davids and Ferns through the practice of beekeeping, reflecting the medieval story of St David and his friendship with St Aidan, who brought bees back to Ireland from Wales.

**Creative Community Programme** This very popular scheme was open to community groups that are members of Wexford Public Participation Network (WPPN) as well as communities of interest that are planning art projects/ workshops that take place over a period with an artist from the Creative Community Artists Panel. The maximum award was €3,000. A further strand up to €5000 was available to community projects which supported collaboration between two or more artists and is funded through Wexford's Creative Ireland Programme. Following an open call and selection process, the total fund for 2023 was €40,700 and 14 community groups were awarded funding, who worked with 15 artists from the panel in a variety of artforms and was based across the 5 municipal districts for 2023.

**Artlinks Artist Bursaries** offers annual professional development support for emerging and professional artists in the Southeast Region with Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, and Waterford art offices. In 2023 Wexford awarded 12 Wexford artists bursaries out of total increased fund of €30,000 to support artists across all artforms Wexford.

**Small Arts Festival & Fáilte Ireland Festival Grant Scheme 2023** awarded 20 Festivals throughout the county funding under these Schemes a total of €47,000 investment in our local communities. In 2023, the Grant Scheme was broken into two strands:

Strand 1 – Small Arts Festival Grant Total Fund €25,000: This grant supports a diverse range of small arts festivals or experimental artistic events throughout Wexford County. The focus is on festivals of artistic quality and have a strong emphasis on public engagement. Also welcome are applications promoting cross disciplinary artistic collaborations and experimentation.

Strand 2 – Fáilte Ireland Festival Grant Total Fund €22,000: This strand supported by Fáilte Ireland aims to support festivals that drive domestic tourism, help to improve the visitor

experience in County Wexford, focusing on historic festivals, traditional culture festivals and festivals promoting food culture.

**County Wexford Youth Film Project** is based in St. Michael's Theatre, New Ross. The project trains young people aged 13 – 20 in the art of filmmaking and provides them with an opportunity for creative expression through an accessible and exciting programme led by filmmaker Therese Dalton. Workshops were delivered in person in various locations and culminated in a youth film festival in St Michaels in Dec 2023.

**County Wexford Youth theatre (CWYT)** is based in Wexford Town and is run by Bare Cheek Theatre Company and provides training in all aspects of theatre production including acting, writing, directing, stage management and technical theatre. Most of the stage productions are devised by the members and scripted by professional playwrights.

**Cowhouse Studios** with the support of the Wexford County Council Arts Office offers an annual two-week residency designed specifically for parenting artists. The Parenting Artist Residency makes it possible for awarded artists to dedicate time to their work by offering all the support necessary to do so. This residency supports parenting artists at this key stage in their lives, assisting them to have productive and rewarding careers as they rear their families.

**Gorey School of Arts Mentoring Programme 2022-23** awarded 22 artists this free mentoring & peer support programme for visual artists which was run by Gorey School of arts and funded by the Wexford County Council Arts Office. This Programme was held each month until May and a group exhibition was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> August in Peripheries Gallery Space.

### **County Art Collection – Outreach programme**

The Arts Office continues to partner with the Creative Schools programme and lent 6 works to Our Lady of Fatima School in Wexford town and 4 artworks to CBS Enniscorthy in 2023. This programme led by artists Laura Ni Fhlaibhin, involved trips by the school children with their

teachers to county hall in 2023 to visit the county art collection and visual thinking strategy workshops ( VTS) with the school children in order to consider the works and select for their schools . Both schools will have the work on loan for 1-2 years subject to review and artists from the collection will be invited by the arts office to meet the students in the schools and talk about their work.

**Tyrone Guthrie Artists Residencies** Two bursaries for the Tyrone Guthrie Artists Centre in Monaghan were awarded by the Arts office to Wexford visual artist Olivia O'Dwyer and playwright Megan O'Malley. This award enables two artists in all art forms who are resident in County Wexford to spend two weeks at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annaghmakerrig, the artists' workplace in County Monaghan. Each bursary covers all board and lodging expenses for a two-week period, the use of a studio, and a stipend of €300 towards expenses.

**Drama League of Ireland Scholarships** for the Drama League of Ireland's Residential Summer School which took place at the University of Limerick from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July 2023 was awarded to Kathleen Byrne (The Wayside Players Blackwater) and Elaine Jordan (Bunclody/Kilmyshall Drama Group).

**Irish Writers Centre National Mentoring Programme** Wexford Arts office continues to partner with the Irish writer's centre mentoring programme and in 2023 Wexford writers Caroline Lawless and Joy Redmond, were selected by the Irish to receive professional literary mentoring from acclaimed Irish writers of their choice.

**Wexford Culture Night 2023** Over 60 free arts and cultural events took place countywide in Wexford as part of this year's Culture Night in Wexford – a partnership between the Arts Council and local Authority arts offices in Ireland. This year's celebration focused on several live events in all 5 Municipal districts, in association with our venues and cultural organisations, across County Wexford. Highlights included 'The Lighthouse Project' in Hook lighthouse funded through Creative Ireland

**Assistant Arts Officer**

A new post of Assistant arts officer was created in 2023. This new role co funded through the Arts Councils Specialist Staffing Scheme to all local authorities will focus on the key strategic areas of expansion in youth arts, public art and arts and health, as outlined in the next Wexford County Arts Plan 2023-2027.

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information (FOI) office is responsible for the following:

- Freedom of Information
- GDPR Implementation
- Data Protection incl. CCTV
- Customer Complaints
- Ombudsman Complaints
- Irish Language Complaints
- Access to Information on the Environment
- Secretary to the Records Management Group

Type	Number of Requests 2023	Number of Requests 2022
FOI	122	117
Customer Complaint	125	87
Ombudsman Complaint	29	23
AIE	20	12
Data Access Request	15	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>252</b>

## **Issues Advanced in 2023:**

Online Data Protection Impact Assessment developed and delivered through the meta-compliance platform.

## **Proposals for 2024**

Implement an Online Submission Platform for the Annual Service Delivery Plan

## FRANCHISE

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Since October 2022, there have been significant changes in the area of voter registration. Following the passing into law of the Electoral Reform Act 2022, the previous format of Draft and Live Registers of Electors was replaced with a new Rolling Register - voters can now apply to register or update their records at any time during the year, rather than once a year as before.

The functionality on the [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) website was also expanded. Voters who wish to check or amend their details or those wishing to register to vote for the first time can now apply online.

New Provisions were also introduced in the Act in relation to postal voting, to allow for pending registration for 16- and 17-year-olds, and for registration and voting by persons with no fixed address.

Anyone who wishes to register or update their details must now submit their PPS number and Eircode which are validated by the Franchise Office, resulting in a more accurate register.

The local authority also uses online resources and liaises with other local authorities, Gardaí, Defence Forces and nursing homes to ensure that the Register of Electors is as up to date and accurate as possible.

Considerable work was also carried out during 2023 to complete and verify elector Eircode information.

A number of national media campaigns were carried out in 2023 to publicise the new arrangements for the register and to encourage the public to register to vote.

These campaigns were very successful:

At the end of 2023, there were 116,762 electors on the register, of which 113,314 were Dáil electors compared to 115,096 (111,798 Dáil electors) on the last live register before implementation of the new legislation and Rolling Register (that register effective from 15 February 2022).

***Increase in overall voter numbers +1,666***

***Increase in Dail Elector numbers +1,516***

4,803 applications for updates or new registrations were received through [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) from 13 October 2022 (implementation date) to 15 December 2023.

6,811 amendments (additions, deletions, corrections and updates) were made to the register in the period from 13 October 2022 to 15 December 2023 (average 487 per month) compared to an average of 131 per month in the preceding eight-month period.

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) work programme was agreed at the start of the year and the following projects were completed as part of the work programme for 2023.

## **Website**

The Council's main website, [wexfordcoco.ie](http://wexfordcoco.ie), underwent a technical upgrade towards the end of 2023, giving the site a more modern look and feel and providing an improved user-experience for visitors to the site. The website, which is an important information resource for both businesses and citizens in Wexford, clearly displays information on all services provided the Council. The site is now running the latest versions of software hence improving security, performance and accessibility across the site.

## **Provision of Online Services**

The provision of online services continues in accordance with the Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Service of which a key objective is that 90% of applicable services shall be consumed online by 2030.

The customer self-service portal, My Online Services, was set up in 2020 to provide the public with online access to council services. We are continuing to add online services and while registration isn't mandatory for the majority of services, it does enable customers to track what calls they have raised. Registrations on the portal have increased by 16% to almost 4,300 citizens during 2023.

Number grant applications, community recognition fund and the sports club database were added to the portal in 2023.

The CRM / Online Services team have provided additional online services, including numerous grant applications published throughout the year, to the public, through the *My Online Services* portal and additional services to staff through the *Dash Staff Portal* in 2023.

The online payment facilities were extended during the year to include payments for slipway permits, extension of duration applications, exempted development applications and litter fines.

The following remain our highest-usage online services for the public:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Submissions</b>
Environmental Complaints	5,156
Residential Parking Permits	1,533
Roads Faults	849
Illegal Dumping	827

Additional online services for staff were also provided during 2023. These included the Annual Service Delivery Plan and the Ethics Register.

### **National Disability Inclusion Strategy System**

A new application to support the management of progress of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy was developed in PowerApps. A representative from each department was set up on the system and trained in the strategy and how to set their objectives and update the system with progress on each objective during the year. Reports were also developed to fulfil the reporting requirements of the strategy.

### **Choice Based Letting**

The Choice Based Letting system allows housing applicants to select which vacant house they wish to be considered for. The aim of the system is to improve the efficiency of housing allocations. IT staff worked with housing and the suppliers to implement the system.

### **DPIA Process Automation**

**The completion of a Data Processing Impact Assessment is a requirement.**

Data Protection Impact Assessments are required to identify and mitigate against any data protection related risks arising from a new project, which may affect the organisation or the individuals it engages with. DPIAs are mandatory under GDPR for any new high-risk processing and the process allows for the identification and mitigation against data protection risks of a project at an early stage.

Metacompliance, the Council's eLearning and Policy Management Platform, was used to automate the process and approval process to ensure compliance with GDPR.

### **Loans Payable**

The loans payable system facilitates the maintenance and tracking of loans Wexford County Council have drawn down from lenders e.g. banking institutions. It passes repayment details over to the Purchase Ledger for payment and posts the relevant transactions to the Nominal Ledger. It was developed using FME and Centros Forms.

### **Geographical Information Systems**

The use of GIS across the Council was further enhanced during 2023 with the completion of several projects including:

- New high resolution orthophotography was captured and rolled out to all internal and public facing GIS
- New storyboard for accessible trails and destination parks
- Supported the development of the Rosslare Municipal District Strategic Plan by providing and analysing multiple map layers to support the plan
- Supported the planning department in the addition of new development plan maps to internal and public facing GIS
- Reporting - insight to policy and cyber security learning compliance.

### **ePlanning**

Work was ongoing on the changes required to the in-house APAS planning application management system, to interface with the national e-Planning portal. The e-PP will provide a single website for planning agents etc. to submit planning applications online as an alternative to the existing paper-based submission system. In order to provide enhanced information about individual

planning applications to the public, a new online enquiry facility known as the “Citizen Portal”, will also be made available in Q1 2024.

Most of the planning documents in the existing document management system (DMS) have been migrated to a new SharePoint document store. This process will continue until the switchover to the “Citizen Portal” version of APAS is completed, which is scheduled to occur in Q1 2024.

### **Cyber Security and Resilience**

Cyber Security and Resilience remains a top priority in the delivery of ICT services during 2023 and the following actions were completed during the year –

- End user security awareness - Metacompliance was used to delivery monthly security training to all staff. Phishing campaigns were carried out on a regular basis to promote awareness among staff.
- Mobile Device Management - The migration to Intune MDM was completed which involved a full rebuild of our corporate devices to be managed by our new MDM and allowed Zero Trust to be implemented across the network.
- Azure Hybrid Migration - The migration of all accounts to an Azure hybrid state was completed which allows the application of more cloud-based security policies and increases our security footprint to our devices protecting them 24/7.
- SD-WAN - The final MPLS fibre sites were de-commissioned and replaced with SD WAN. This has provided full visibility across all Council sites and resulted in a significant cost saving for the Council.
- New DMZ - The public facing iMaps has been migrated from the corporate network to a new DMZ. This has removed the risk of public access to our corporate network and data.

## APPENDICES

### CONFERENCES AND TRAINING ATTENDED BY ELECTED MEMBERS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Conferences 2023</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
6/7/8 January	Celtic Conferences: “The Finance Act 2022” Carlingford, Co. Louth	Ger Carthy John Fleming Garry Laffan Fionntán OSúilleabháin
3/4/5 February	Celtic Conferences “Modular Housing in Ireland” Carlingford, Co. Louth	John O’Rourke
5/6 April	The Suck Valley Way Conference 2023 “Inspiring Rural Creativity” Co. Roscommon	John Fleming Donal Kenny Garry Laffan Fionntán OSúilleabháin Frank Staples Joe Sullivan
1/2/3 December	Celtic Conferences – Irish Social Welfare System, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.	Michael Sheehan Pat Barden

<b>Date</b>	<b>Training 2023</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
7-9 February	AIR 2023 – Regional Seminar and Training Event for Members Monaghan Town	Cathal Byrne Donal Kenny Garry Laffan Michael Sheehan Frank Staples Joe Sullivan
23 February	AILG Elected Member Training Programme Module 1 “A Briefing on the Electoral Act” Tullamore, Co. Offaly (Out of Region)	Oliver Walsh Cathal Byrne Garry Laffan Joe Sullivan
25 February	AILG Elected Member Training Programme Module 1 “A Briefing on the Electoral Act” Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick (Southern Region)	Pip Breen John Fleming Michael Sheehan Oliver Walsh
2-4 March	LAMA Spring Seminar “Apprenticeship & Future Building Initiatives Recruitment & Training” Bantry, Co. Cork.	Pip Breen Cathal Byrne John Fleming Donal Kenny Garry Laffan Michael Sheehan

		Joe Sullivan Michael Whelan
23 March	AILG Module 2 Training “Local Authority Climate Action Plan – Building Sustainable Communities” Clayton Whites, Wexford	Maura Bell Garry Laffan Jim Moore
25 March	AILG Module 2 Training “Local Authority Climate Action Plan – Building Sustainable Communities” Dundalk, Co. Louth	Joe Sullivan
19 April	Connecting, Communicating and Collaborating – Irish Regional Co-operating across the EU: How Local Authorities can engage in European Programmes: Radisson Blue, Athlone.	John Fleming Garry Laffan
19/20 April	AILG Annual Training Conference,	Pip Breen

**Foreign Travel 2023:**

**New York 2023**

Cllr. Michael Whelan

Cllr. Garry Laffan

**Savannah March 2023**

Cllr. George Lawlor

Cllr. Maura Bell

Cllr. Michael Sheehan

Cllr. Donal Kenny

Cllr. Lisa McDonald

Cllr. Aidan Browne

**Hartford, Connecticut March 2023**

Cllr. John Fleming

Cllr. Anthony Connick

**Fleurus, Belgium April 2023**

Cllr. Garry Laffan

Cllr. Maura Bell

Cllr. George Lawlor

**67<sup>th</sup> London Wexford Association Dinner Dance – April 2023**

Cllr. David Hynes

Cllr. Michael Sheehan

Cllr. Lisa McDonald

Cllr. Donal Kenny

Cllr. George Lawlor

Cllr. Aidan Browne

**KIMO International Board Meeting, south of Copenhagen, Denmark. – May 2023**

Cllr. Jim Moore

Cpt. Phil Murphy

**Active Travel Study Trip to The Netherlands**

Cllr. Michael Whelan

Cllr. Anthony Connick

Cllr. Leonard Kelly

Cllr. Cathal Byrne

Cllr. Jim Moore

Cllr. Pip Breen

Cllr. Anthony Donohoe

**Dunkirk, France – May/June 2023**

Cllr. Lisa McDonald

Cllr. Jim Moore

**New Ross Municipal District delegation to Danville, California – September 2023**

Cllr. Anthony Connick

Cllr. Michael Whelan

**KIMO International AGM & Conference, Falkenberg, Sweden – October 2023**

Cllr. Jim Moore

Cpt. Phil Murphy

**London Wexford Association Event, Cricklewood – October 2023**

Cllr. Pat Barden

Cllr. Jackser Owens

Cllr. Fionntán OSuilleabháin

Cllr. Lisa McDonald

Cllr. John Fleming

Cllr. John Hegarty

**SS St. Patrick Memorial Service with Fishguard and Goodwick Council – November 2023**

Cllr. Jim Moore

## ELECTED MEMBERS: MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER BODIES

<b>2023</b>	
<b>BODY</b>	<b>ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE</b>
3 Counties Energy Agency	G. Carthy, J. Fleming
Age Friendly Alliance	Cathaoirleach Ex-Officio
Apex - New Ross Sport & Leisure Ltd.	A. Connick, M. Sheehan
Association of Irish Local Government	A. Connick, D. Kenny, A. Bolger
County Wexford Drugs & Alcohol Task Force	D. Hynes
High Performance Building Alliance	G. Laffan
Hook Heritage	M. Whelan, P. Barden
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances	G. Lawlor
JFK Trust	J. Fleming
KIMO International	J. Moore (from May 2023)
Local Authority Members Association	M. Whelan
Model County Enterprise Group CLG	B.A. Murphy
National 1798 Historical Centre	B.A. Murphy, C. Byrne
New Ross Coarse Angling Ltd.	A. Connick
Regional Health Forum (South)	D. Kenny, P. Barden, G. Laffan, C. Byrne
South East Drugs & Alcohol Task Force	D. Hynes
South East River Basin District Advisory Council	M. Farrell
Southern Regional Assembly	P. Breen, M. Bell, O. Walsh
Sports Active Wexford	G. Laffan
St. Michael's Theatre	B. Murphy
Wexford Comhairle na nÓg Steering Group	G. Lawlor
Wexford Heritage Trust Ltd.	B.A. Murphy, G. Laffan
Waterford & Wexford Educational Training Board	B.A. Murphy, M. Farrell, K. Codd Nolan, A. Browne, G.

	Laffan, L. Kelly (to 11 Dec.2023), F. Ó'Súileabháin, F. Staples (from 11 Dec.2023)
Wexford Monument Trust Ltd.	P. Barden
Wexford Swimming Pool and Caravan Park Ferrybank	G. Carthy, J. Fleming

## ANNUAL ALLOWANCES PAID TO ELECTED MEMBERS WHO HOLD PARTICULAR OFFICES

<b>Payments to Elected Members</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Representational Payments	€983,379.96
Total Annual Expenses Allowance Payments	€152,117.46
Total Local Representation Allowance Payments	€109,553.88
Total Expenses paid to Members in respect of attendances at Training Events	€26,296.57
Total Expenses paid to Members in respect of attendances at Conferences and Other Events	€9,193.54
Conference and Training Fees (Paid to Conference/Training Providers)	€7,225.00
Total Expenses paid to Members in respect of attendances at Events Abroad	€67,064.28
Total Payments in respect of the Chairperson of Wexford County Council Annual Allowance	€30,012.39
Total Payments in respect of the Vice-Chairperson of Wexford County Council Annual Allowance	€6,002.47
Total Payments in respect of the Strategic Policy Committee Chairperson Annual Allowance	€29,897.40
Total Payments in respect of the Chairperson of Municipal District Annual Allowance	€24,009.89
Total Payments in respect of the Chairperson of Borough District (Mayoral) Allowance	€12,004.96
<b>Chairperson's Allowances Payable</b>	<b>2023</b>
Chairperson of Wexford County Council Annual Allowance	€30,000.00
Vice-Chairperson of Wexford County Council Annual Allowance	€6,000.00
Strategic Policy Committee Chairperson Annual Allowance	€6,000.00
Chairperson of Municipal District Annual Allowance	€6,000.00
Chairperson of Borough District (Mayoral) Allowance	€12,000.00

## COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

<b>Title</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Total Number of Members</b>	<b>Total number of Meetings held in 2023</b>
Wexford County Council		34	15
Borough District of Wexford		7	12
Enniscorthy Municipal District		6	15
Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District		10	13
New Ross Municipal District		6	12
Rosslare Municipal District		5	12
Corporate Policy Group (CPG)	To act as a mini cabinet for Council Business, to link and co-ordinate the work of the different SPCs and to provide a forum where policy positions affecting the whole Council can be discussed and agreed for submission to the full County Council.	7	10
Transportation and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)	To formulate, develop, monitor and review policies which relate to the functions of Wexford County Council and to advise the Council accordingly.	11	2
Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)		17	5
Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)		7	3
Housing and Community		12	9

Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)			
Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)		14	5
Protocol Committee		11	1
Protocol Committee BD Wexford		4	2
Protocol Committee Enniscorthy MD		4	0
Local Traveller (Accommodation) Consultative Committee	To advise in relation to the preparation and implementation of any accommodation programme for the functional area of the appointing authority concerned.	11	4
Audit Committee	To review the Council's financial reporting practices and procedures; To foster the development of best practice in the local authority internal audit function; To review the Council's financial reports and report to that authority on its findings; To assess and promote efficiency and value for money; To review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.	5	3
Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	To have primary responsibility for co-ordination, governance, planning and oversight of local development spend, whether that spend is delivered by local authorities or on behalf of the State by other local development agencies and structures; To bring a more coherent approach to the implementation of local and community development programmes and interventions, seeking to ensure an integrated approach to local community and local development services between providers and delivery structures; To develop approaches that focus on learning and feedback, enhancing the links between practice and policy development; To explore and	19	7

	pursue opportunities for additional funding resources for the area, whether Exchequer, EU, private or other resources.		
Joint Policing Committee (JPC)	To develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Wexford County Council and its elected representatives, and the community and voluntary sector.	30	4
Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Wexford Borough District	To develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Wexford Borough District and its elected representatives, and the community and voluntary sector.	22	2
Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Enniscorthy Municipal District	To develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Enniscorthy Municipal District and its elected representatives, and the community and voluntary sector.	11	2
Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District	To develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District and its elected representatives, and the community and voluntary sector.	17	1

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT) FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the Revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year.

Note 16 allocates transfers by service division in the same format as Table A of the adopted Local Authority budget.

Expenditure By Division	Note	Gross Expenditure 2023 €	Income 2023 €	Net Expenditure 2023 €	Net Expenditure 2022 €
Housing and Building		36,761,179	41,479,044	(4,717,865)	(2,931,767)
Roads, Transportation & Safety		41,801,626	29,427,321	12,374,305	12,195,825
Water Services		12,020,788	11,452,238	568,550	848,661
Development Management		15,231,104	5,009,859	10,221,245	8,539,507
Environmental Services		15,509,465	3,360,679	12,148,786	12,543,738
Recreation & Amenity		11,125,332	1,376,961	9,748,371	9,338,286
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare		2,343,641	1,266,410	1,077,231	1,456,600
Miscellaneous Services		17,587,181	13,981,247	3,605,934	2,860,356
<b>Total Expenditure/Income</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>152,380,315</b>	<b>107,353,758</b>		
Net Cost of Division to be funded from Rates and Local Property Tax				45,026,557	44,851,206
Rates				41,057,314	39,865,776
Local Property Tax				15,272,231	14,788,968
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfer</b>				<b>11,302,988</b>	<b>9,803,538</b>
<b>Transfers from/(to) Reserves</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>(11,253,469)</b>	<b>(9,754,805)</b>
<b>Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>	<b>16</b>			<b>49,519</b>	<b>48,733</b>
<b>General Reserve at 1<sup>st</sup> January</b>				<b>85,417</b>	<b>36,684</b>
<b>General Reserve at 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>				<b>134,937</b>	<b>85,417</b>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AS AT 31st DECEMBER  
2023**

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Operational		998,707,824	956,042,779
Infrastructural		1,785,006,015	1,784,954,638
Community		65,991,083	61,192,386
Non-Operational		16,728,342	16,728,342
		<b>2,866,433,263</b>	<b>2,818,918,145</b>
<b>Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses</b>	2	<b>46,413,536</b>	<b>42,166,757</b>
<b>Long Term Debtors</b>	3	<b>113,238,136</b>	<b>101,072,090</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Stock	4	578,395	523,588
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	5	27,047,889	13,828,097
Bank Investments		53,597,147	70,917,343
Cash at Bank		7,932,174	583,794
Cash in Transit		800	800
		<b>89,156,405</b>	<b>85,853,623</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Bank Overdraft			
Creditors & Accruals	6	45,008,435	47,204,900
Finance Leases			
		<b>45,008,435</b>	<b>47,204,900</b>
<b>Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)</b>		<b>44,147,970</b>	<b>38,648,722</b>
<b>Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)</b>			
Loans Payable	7	138,173,970	138,282,755
Finance Leases			
Refundable Deposits	8	10,697,047	9,017,243
Other		50,303,028	36,356,430
		<b>199,174,044</b>	<b>183,656,428</b>
<b>Net Assets / (Liabilities)</b>		<b>2,871,058,862</b>	<b>2,817,149,286</b>
<b>Represented By</b>			
Capitalisation	9	2,866,433,263	2,818,918,145
IncomeWIP	2	48,580,817	41,733,714
General Revenue Reserve		134,937	85,417
Other Specific Reserves		789,714	484,714
Other Balances	10	(44,879,869)	(44,072,705)
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>2,871,058,862</b>	<b>2,817,149,286</b>

## STATEMENT OF FUNDS FLOW (FUNDS FLOW STATEMENT) AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2023
<b>REVENUE ACTIVITES</b>		€	€
	Note		
<b>Net Inflow/(outflow) from Operating Activities</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>(15,421,545)</b>
<b>CAPITAL ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Returns on Investment and Servicing of Finance</b>			
Increase/(Decrease) in Fixed Asset Capitalisation Funding		47,515,118	
Increase/(Decrease) in WIP/Preliminary Funding		6,847,103	
Increase/(Decrease) in Reserves Balances	<b>18</b>	<u>1,501,046</u>	
<b>Net Inflow/(Outflow) from Returns on Investment and Servicing of Finance</b>			<b>55,863,267</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure &amp; Financial Investment</b>			
(Increase)/Decrease in Fixed Assets		(47,515,118)	
(Increase)/Decrease in WIP/Preliminary Funding		(4,246,779)	
(Increase)/Decrease in Other Capital Balances	<b>19</b>	<u>(735,328)</u>	
<b>Net Inflow/(Outflow) from Capital Expenditure and Financial Investment</b>			<b>(52,497,225)</b>
<b>Financing</b>			
Increase/(Decrease) in Loan & Lease Financing	<b>20</b>	1,671,766	
(Increase)/Decrease in Reserve Financing	<b>21</b>	<u>(1,267,882)</u>	
<b>Net Inflow/(Outflow) from Financing Activities</b>			<b>403,884</b>
<b>Third Party Holdings</b>			
Increase/(Decrease) in Refundable Deposits			<u>1,679,804</u>
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>(9,971,814)</b>

## STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

### Introduction

I, Eddie Taaffe, Interim Chief Executive (CE) of Wexford County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the A/Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Wexford County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Wexford County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Wexford County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Wexford County Council.

The key sources of income for Wexford County Council are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
	€	€
Goods & Services	43,736,474	42,462,881
Grants & Subsidies	63,145,621	57,195,816
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	471,663	1,290,164
Rates	41,057,314	39,865,776
Local Property Tax	15,272,231	14,788,968

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

Income and Expenditure upward movements compared to 2022, are accounted for by increased activity across all programme groups. However, the predominant areas associated with this increase are in housing, water and economic development. A once-off

Government Grant of €2.2m towards increased inflationary costs during 2023 acknowledged the additional costs in this area to the sector.

While there is an actual decrease in transfers to reserves between 2022 and 2023 of €1.3m, the increase reported can be attributed to the net effect of a reduction in transfer from reserves in respect of the rates revaluation realignment.

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Income	163,683,303	155,603,605
Expenditure	152,380,315	145,800,067
Transfers to Capital	11,253,469	9,754,805
Exceptional Item	0	0
Surplus/(Deficit) for	49,519	48,733
Prior Year Adjustment	0	0
Opening Revenue Reserve	85,417	36,684
Closing Revenue Reserve	134,937	85,417

The performance of the operational/revenue account during 2023 resulted in a €49,519 surplus being reported for the financial year. This was largely assisted by the securing of government grants to support increased inflationary costs. The modest increased movement in the year has informed the overall surplus which results in a closing revenue reserve balance of €134,937.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

1. Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets.
2. Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
3. Long Term Debtors – housing loans
4. Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
5. Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
6. Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets Wexford County Council at the end of 2023 total €2,871,058,862 and are as follows:

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Fixed Assets	2,866,433,263	2,818,918,145
Works in Progress	46,413,536	42,166,757
Long Term debtors	113,238,136	101,072,090
Current Assets	89,156,405	85,853,623
Current Liabilities	45,008,435	47,204,900
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	44,147,970	38,648,722
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	199,174,044	183,656,428
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	2,871,058,862	2,817,149,286

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

### **System of Internal Financial Controls**

As CE of Wexford County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by Wexford County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Wexford County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

### **Financial control environment**

As CE of Wexford County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

1. Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
2. Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
3. Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
4. There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
5. Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
6. There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

### **Administrative Controls and Management Reporting**

As CE of Wexford County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

1. procedures for key business processes have been documented
2. there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
3. there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
4. there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

### **Procurement compliance**

Wexford County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

### **Internal audit and Audit Committee**

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Wexford County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Wexford County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Wexford County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and

1. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Wexford County Council.

### **Risk and control framework**

Wexford County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

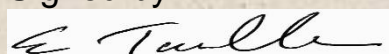
A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is currently a work programme in place to develop risk registers for each service division and these will also be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2024.

Signed by:



**Interim Chief Executive**

Dated:

7 May 2024

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RETURNS

### Performance Indicators

01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023 (Annual)

Wexford County Council

Status: Data Provided to NOAC below. NOAC will publish Performance Indicator Report for 2023 in Q3 2024

Topic	Indicator	Value	Comment
Housing: H1, H2 & H4 Approved	A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 1/1/2023	4791	
	B. Number of dwellings added to the local authority owned stock during 2023 (whether constructed or acquired)	77	
	C. Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in 2023	13	
	D. Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished in 2023	4	
	E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 31/12/2023	4851	
	F. Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a DHLGH approved scheme at 31/12/2023	1	
	A. The percentage of the total number of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2023	1.28 %	
	The number of dwellings within their overall stock that were not tenanted on 31/12/2023	62	
	A. Expenditure during 2023 on the maintenance of local authority housing compiled from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, divided by the no. of dwellings in the local authority stock at 31/12/2023, i.e. the H1E less H1F indicator figure	€1514.78	
	Expenditure on maintenance of local authority stock compiled from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, including planned maintenance and	€7346676	



	expenditure that qualified for grants, such as Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) grants for energy efficient retro-fitting works but excluding expenditure on vacant properties and expenditure under approved major refurbishment schemes (i.e. approved Regeneration or under the Remedial Works Schemes).		
<b>Housing: H3 &amp; H5 Approved</b>	A. The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in 2023 when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during 2023	<b>24.56 wk.</b>	
	B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted in 2023, averaged across all dwellings re-let in 2023	<b>€14103.36</b>	
	The number of dwellings that were re-tenanted on any date in 2023 (but excluding all those that had been vacant due to an estate-wide refurbishment scheme)	122	
	The number of weeks from the date of vacation to the date the dwelling is re-tenanted	2996.19 wk.	
	Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings	<b>€1720609.82</b>	
	A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2023		
	B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2023	1645	
	C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2023 not compliant with the Standards Regulations	91.38 %	
	D. Number of dwellings deemed compliant in 2023 (including those originally deemed non-compliant)	193	
	E. The number of inspections (including reinspections) undertaken by the local authority in 2023	1753	



**Housing: H6  
Approved**

A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2023	<b>48.08 %</b>	
The number of adult individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation on the night of 31 December 2023 as recorded on the PASS system	104	
The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2023, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	50	

**Housing: H7  
Approved**

A. (1) Total number of houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	147	
A. (2) Number of houses that achieved a BER rating of B2 or above between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	139	
A. (3) Number of heat pumps installed in those houses between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	147	
B. Total annual energy savings in MWh from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	2359.7 MWh	
C. Total carbon emission reduction tCo2 from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	882.9	



<b>Roads: R1 &amp; R2 Approved</b>	A. (a) The percentage of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	97.20 %	
	A. (b) The percentage of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	97.34 %	
	A. (c) The percentage of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	96.38 %	
	A. (d) The percentage of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	94.40 %	
	B. (a.1) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	7.57 %	
	B. (a.2) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	14.32 %	
	B. (a.3) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	41.68 %	
	B. (a.4) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	33.63 %	
	B. (b.1) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	20.09 %	
	B. (b.2) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	16.34 %	
	B. (b.3) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	29.91 %	



	B. (b.4) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	31.00 %	
	B. (c.1) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	37.03 %	
	B. (c.2) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	14.46 %	
	B. (c.3) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	21.44 %	
	B. (c.4) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	23.57 %	
	B. (d.1) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	35.34 %	
	B. (d.2) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	10.51 %	
	B. (d.3) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	29.04 %	
	B. (d.4) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	19.51 %	
	A.1 Kilometres of regional road strengthened during 2023	8.7 km	
	A.2 The amount expended on regional roads strengthening work during 2023	€2228162.00	



	A.3 The average unit cost of regional road strengthening works per square metre (€/m2)	€37.19	
	B.1 Kilometres of regional road resealed during 2023	8.2 km	
	B.2 The amount expended on regional road resealing work during 2023	€253923.00	
	B.3 The average unit cost of regional road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€4.87	
	C.1 Kilometres of local road strengthened during 2023	105.0 km	
	C2. The amount expended on local road strengthening work during 2023	€13241112.00	
	C.3 The average unit cost of local road strengthening works per square metre (€/m2)	€25.61	
	D.1 Kilometres of local road resealed during 2023	104.9 km	
	D.2 The amount expended on local road resealing work during 2023	€2687078.00	
	D.3 The average unit cost of local road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€5.04	
<b>Motor Tax: R3 Approved</b>	A. The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued) in 2023	83.18 %	
<b>Water: W1 &amp; W2 Approved</b>	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements		95.1%
	The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered	<b>98.77 %</b>	
	How many local authority registered schemes were monitored in 2023	161	



<b>Waste: E1 Approved</b>	Total number of registered schemes in 2023	163	
	A. The number of households which availed of a 3-bin service offered by a licensed operator at 31/12/2023	21012	
	B. The percentage of households within the local authority that the number at A represents (based on agglomerations of more than 500)	87.54 %	
<b>Environmental Pollution: E2 Approved</b>	A. Total number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2023	2879	
	A. Number of pollution cases closed from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	2688	
	A. Total number of pollution cases on hands at 31/12/2023	1117	
	The opening number of pollution cases carried forward from the year end 2022	926	
<b>Litter Pollution: E3 In Progress</b>	A1. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was unpolluted or litter free		
	A2. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was slightly polluted		
	A3. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was moderately polluted		
	A4. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was significantly polluted		
	A5. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was grossly polluted		
<b>Green Flag Status: E4</b>	A. The percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag	42.86 %	



<b>Approved</b>	status in the two years to 31 December 2023		
	Schools which attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2023	3	
	Schools which renewed their Green Flag in 2023	29	
	Schools which held a Green Flag from 2022 and therefore do not require renewal until 2024	22	
<b>Energy Efficiency: E5</b> <b>In Progress</b>	A. The cumulative percentage of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2023 relative to baseline year (2009)		
<b>Public Lighting: E6</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Total annual consumption of the public lighting system	2630.85 MWh	
	B. Average wattage of each public light	46.12 W	
	C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent	92.59 %	
	Number of LED lights in the public lighting system	14635	
	Number of non-LED lights in the public lighting system	1171	
<b>Climate Change: E7</b> <b>Approved</b>	1 a) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Coordinator?	Yes	
	1 b) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Officer?	Yes	
	2. Does the local authority have a climate action team?	Yes	
<b>Planning: P1</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	<b>34.04 %</b>	
	Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority i.e. buildings	1084	



<b>Planning: P2 &amp; P3 Approved</b>	where a valid Commencement Notice was served in the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 by a builder or developer on the local authority		
	Number of new buildings notified to the local authority in 2023 that were the subject of at least one on-site inspection during 2023 undertaken by the local authority	369	
	A. Number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2023	41	
	B. Percentage of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation of the plan) the decision made by the local authority	<b>68.29 %</b>	
	Number of determinations confirming the local authority's decision (either with or without variation)	28	
	A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 that were investigated	233	
	B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during 2023	222	
	C. Percentage of the cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	<b>30.18 %</b>	
	D. Percentage of the cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	<b>6.31 %</b>	
	E. Percentage of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	<b>63.51 %</b>	
	F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2023	360	



	Number of cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	67	
	Number of cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	14	
	Number of cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	141	
<b>Planning: P4 &amp; P5 Approved</b>	A. The 2023 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	<b>€27.15</b>	
	AFS Programme D data consisting of D01 - Forward Planning, D02 - Development Management, D03 - Enforcement (inclusive of the relevant Programme D proportion of the central management charge) for 2023	€4450917	
	A. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	<b>56.36 %</b>	
	B. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	<b>37.27 %</b>	
	The total number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were not withdrawn by the applicant	110	
	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of the date of receipt of the application	62	
	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period	41	



**Fire Service: F1  
Approved**

A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2023 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports	<b>€37.03</b>	
AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 - Operation of Fire Service and E12 - Fire Prevention for 2023	<b>€6070700</b>	

**Fire Service: F2 & F3  
Approved**

A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire		No fulltime service in Wexford
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	7.4 min	
C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents		No fulltime service in Wexford
D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	7.38 min	
A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes	<b>25.73 %</b>	
B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	<b>44.73 %</b>	
C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	<b>29.53 %</b>	
D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	<b>30.73 %</b>	



	E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	<b>43.13 %</b>	
	F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	<b>26.15 %</b>	
	Total number of call-outs in respect of fires from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	579	
	Number of these fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	149	
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	259	
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	171	
	Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents (i.e. not including fire) from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	371	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	114	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	160	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	97	
<b>Library Service: L1 Approved</b>	A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the local authority area per the 2022 Census	<b>2.62</b>	
	B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year	583938	



	C. Library active members per head of population	0.21	
	D. Number of registered library members in the year	27087	
	Number of visits to its libraries from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per automatic counters if used	428896	
<b>Library Service: L2 Approved</b>	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data for 2023 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	<b>€34.54</b>	
	B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 1/01/2023 to 31/12/2023	<b>€2.03</b>	
	A. AFS Programme F data consisting of F02 - Operation of Library and Archival Service (inclusive of the relevant proportion of the central management charge for Programme F) for 2023	€5661441	
	B. The annual expenditure on new stock acquired by the library in the year	€333259	
<b>Youth and Community: Y1 &amp; Y2 Approved</b>	A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme	<b>86.96 %</b>	
	Total number of second level schools in the local authority area at 31/12/2023	23	
	Number of second level schools in the local authority area from which representatives attended the local Comhairle na nÓg AGM held in 2023	20	
	A. The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2023 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	<b>14.19</b>	
	Total number of organisations included in the County Register (maintained in accordance with section 128 of the	451	



	Local Government Act 2001) for the local authority area as at 31/12/2023		
	Total number of those organisations that registered for the first time in 2023	61	
	Number of organisations that opted to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College on whatever date they registered for the PPN	64	
<b>Corporate: C1, C2, C4 &amp; C5</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The wholetime equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2023	863.22	
	A. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2023	<b>4.04 %</b>	
	B. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2023	<b>0.39 %</b>	
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2023	9744 day	
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2023	770 day	
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of self-certified sick leave days in 2023	0 day	
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of medically certified sick leave days in 2023	1824 day	
	If any staff are on long-term sick leave (i.e. a continuous period of more than 4 weeks), include a text note of the number of staff on long-term sick leave	86	
	A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023, divided by the WTE no.	<b>€3710.48</b>	
	Total ICT expenditure in 2023	€3202961	



<b>Corporate: C3</b> Approved	A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	<b>2.10</b>	
	Total Revenue expenditure from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 before transfers to or from reserves	152380315	
	A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's websites in 2023	<b>13.87</b>	
	B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2023 of the local authority's social media accounts (if any)	<b>0.66</b>	
	The cumulative total page views of all websites operated by the local authority for the period from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service or equivalent	2274008	
	The total number of social media users who, at 31/12/2023, were following the local authority on any social media sites	108176	
	The number of social media accounts operated by the local authority	50	
Indicate if there was a change to the cookie policies on the local authority sites and the date this came into effect	No Change		
<b>Finance: M1 to M4</b> Approved	A. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2019 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€-2127851	
	B. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€-873153	
	C. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€36684	



	D. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2022 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€85417	
	E. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2023 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€134937	
	F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2023 as a percentage of Total Income in 2023 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	<b>0.08 %</b>	
	G. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2023	<b>€929.61</b>	
	H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2023 excluding significant out of county/shared service expenditure		
	The 2023 Total Income figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€163683304	
	The 2023 Total Expenditure figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€152380315	
	The 2023 Revenue expenditure excluding county/shared service expenditure for the service providers of HAP, MyPay, DRHE and Dublin Fire Services and is only applicable to Dublin City, Laois and Limerick		
	A. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	89.9 %	
	A. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	90.7 %	
	A. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	102.7 %	
	B. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	84.0 %	



B. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	93.0 %	
B. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	104.0 %	
C. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	89.4 %	
C. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	95.1 %	
C. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	104.6 %	
D. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	92.0 %	
D. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	94.0 %	
D. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	105.0 %	
E. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	94.4 %	
E. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	92.8 %	
E. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	106.2 %	
E. (d) Collection level of HAP SSC for 2023		
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2023	<b>€4.83</b>	
IPB Insurance: Number of notified claims for 2023	58	
IPB Insurance: Number of settled claims for 2023	44	
IPB Insurance: Total cost of settled claims for 2023	€790264.90	
Total cost of claims settled under excess for 2023	€840	



	Self-insured: Number of notified claims for 2023		
	Self-insured: Number of settled claims for 2023		
	Self-insured: Total cost of settled claims for 2023		
	A. Overall central management charge as a percentage of total expenditure on revenue account	<b>14.54 %</b>	
	B. Total payroll costs as a percentage of revenue expenditure	<b>38.38 %</b>	
	Overall central management charge from the Local Authority FMS and defined in the Annual Budget	€22158735	
	Total payroll costs from Appendix 1 of the AFS for 2023 (including Salaries, Wages and Pensions)	€58487943	
<b>Economic Development: J1 to J5 Approved</b>	A. The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per 100,000 of population	107.98	
	The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	177.0	
	A. The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2023 per 100,000 of population	35.38	
	B. The number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2023 per 100,000 of population	16.47	
	The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2023	58	
	The number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2023	27	



A. The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per 100,000 of population	106.15	
The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	174	
A. Does the local authority have a current tourism strategy?	Yes	
B. Does the local authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes	
The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2023 per head of population	<b>€134.16</b>	
The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2023	€21991856.06	