



Chief Executive's Report

February 2021

Economic Development & Planning:

Economic Development

Covid 19 Supports €25.5 million

The Covid 19 financial grant aid supports approved for businesses in County Wexford across the range of Covid 19 Measures by the economic department was €25.5 million in 2020 during an unprecedented year. A number of SME's embraced the e-commerce supports to move their business online and increase their customer base. Small businesses generate significant employment to the local economy and demonstrated great resilience during these challenging times. A number of LEO clients in the export area actually buckled the trend and increased their market share particularly in the life sciences and technology sectors. It is hoped to have the final LEO Wexford 2020 performance metrics report for job creation and enterprise development for the members next month.

Restart Grant Schemes Report

The Restart Grant Scheme was introduced in May 2020 by the Government to assist businesses who operate from rateable premises, with the cost of re-opening or keeping a business operational. The Restart scheme has been replaced by the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) implemented by Revenue. The following is the final report on the scheme following the final returns to the Department 31st December 2020.

Two schemes were in place in 2020 with **4,458 applications, an approval rate of 94% and €22.5 million allocated to support SME's in County Wexford.** With the subsequent 30% top up for those businesses affected by business closure 6,655 payments were made.

1. Restart Grant 1 Scheme was open for applications from 22nd May 2020 to the 22nd July 2020. With 2,193 applications and €7.5 million paid to business during Covid 19.
2. Restart Grant Plus Scheme was open for applications from 10th August 2020 to the 31st October 2020. With 2,265 applications and €14.9 million allocated.

RESTART GRANT 1 SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS PAID	2065	€7,544,023.50
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	128	N/A
GRAND TOTAL FOR RG1	2,193	€7,544,023.50
RESTART GRANT PLUS SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS PAID	2116	€14,984,735.51
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	149	N/A
GRAND TOTAL FOR RGP	2,265	€14,984,735.51
TOTAL RG1 AND RGP	4,458	€ 22,528,759.01
RESTART GRANT PLUS 40% TOP UPS PAID - WET PUBS		
NUMBER	81	*
RESTART GRANT PLUS 30% TOP UPS PAID - ALL BUSINESSES		
NUMBER	2116	*
TOTAL NUMBER OF PAYMENTS	6655	*€ 22,528,759.01

*Top Up Grant Payments are included in the RGP grant value.

Municipal District Restart Grants Applications

The Restart Grant applications correlated with the town centres and the number of commercial rateable properties under the Restart Grant Scheme criteria.

Municipal District	Number	%
Wexford	1,293	29
Gorey –Kilmuckridge	1,033	23
Enniscorthy	872	20
New Ross	738	17
Rosslare	431	10
No Eircode provided	91	2
TOTAL	4,458	100

Business in the Community Ireland

World of Work



In 2021, the Economic Development Section is working with Business in the Community Ireland and Colaiste Abbain to provide a Skills @ Work Programme to 2nd Year Students. The programme will entail 4/5 online sessions due to current restrictions. The planned programme content is outlined but will be altered as necessary.



Women in Business Network

Leo Wexford will kickstart the 2021 programme for female entrepreneurs with an event on the 28th January with guest speaker Paula Fitzsimons founder of Fitzsimons Consulting. Paula is the national coordinator for the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) research project in Ireland and was appointed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade, and Employment to the SME and Entrepreneurship Taskforce in 2020.

She is also the driving force behind Going for Growth Programme supported by Enterprise Ireland and KPMG and the ACORNS programme supported by the Department of Agriculture. Both programmes support female entrepreneurship which is one of the key pillars of the County enterprise plan for SME growth in County Wexford.

The second Women in Business network event is scheduled for the 25th February and will feature Larissa Feeny, founder of the award-winning Accountant Online who will speak about her journey from sole practitioner to a firm of Chartered and Certified Accountants serving over 1,800 clients across Ireland and the UK. Larissa leads a team of accounting professionals who work both remotely and in offices in Dublin and Letterkenny.

A pioneer in using cloud technology in accountancy, the company has won many awards, most recently in 2020, winning the Irish Accountancy Awards for overall 'Practice of the Year'. The event will showcase how to apply technology to service based enterprises to pivot grow and scale business.

Training

Last year was unprecedented with the impact of the pandemic requiring new approaches to the delivery of the Local Enterprise office supports. The LEO adapted its services to provide online training to assist SME's, with supports on digitalisation, e commerce, financial planning, leadership capability and meeting the challenges of Covid 19. Despite Covid 19 the LEO office assisted almost 2,000 people on their training and mentoring programmes. The 2021 Spring training schedule is now live on LEO.

Local Enterprise Office
Training Schedule 2021
January - May

Full programme, pricing, and bookings available at:
www.localenterprise.ie/training

Contact: info@leo.westfords.co.ie or 053 919 6020

JANUARY
 Brexit Case Study 14/01/2021
 Start Your Own Business 19/01/2021

FEBRUARY
 Customs Workshop - Preparing for Brexit 01/02/2021
 Facebook for Business - Beginners 01/02/2021
 LinkedIn for Business Clinic 03/02/2021
 Start Your Own Business 04/02/2021
 Introduction to Lean 04/02/2021
 Branding Your Business 05/02/2021
 Brexit Clinic 08/02/2021
 Relaunch Your Business Post Covid-19 09/02/2021
 Canva for Social Media 09/02/2021
 Management of Stress in a Time of Crisis 12/02/2021
 Facebook for Business - Advanced 15/02/2021
 Trading Online Voucher Seminar 18/02/2021
 Enhance Your Own Business 19/02/2021
 Facebook for Business Clinic 19/02/2021
 Wellbeing Clinic 22/02/2021
 Twitter for Business 23/02/2021

MARCH
 Instagram for Business 01/03/2021
 Trading Online Audit & Review Clinic 01/03/2021
 Sales Skills 04/03/2021
 Website Advice Clinic 05/03/2021
 Start Your Own Business 09/03/2021
 Introduction to Email Marketing 09/03/2021
 How to Get Paid On Time Clinic 10/03/2021
 Trading Online Voucher Seminar 23/03/2021
 How to Tender Successfully 24/03/2021
 Tax & VAT for Small Businesses 25/03/2021
 Social Media Strategy for Business 25/03/2021

APRIL
 Working with a WordPress Website - Advanced 07/04/2021
 Start Your Own Business 08/04/2021
 QQI Training Delivery and Evaluation Level 6 09/04/2021
 Enhance Your Own Business 14/04/2021
 Costing & Pricing Your Product or Service 15/04/2021
 Customer Service & Complaint Handling 15/04/2021
 Big Red Cloud Computerised Accounts 20/04/2021
 Trading Online Voucher Seminar 28/04/2021
 Business/Finance Clinic 29/04/2021

MAY
 How to Start a Podcast Workshop 04/05/2021
 Successful Cash Collection by Telephone 05/05/2021
 Visual Storytelling 07/05/2021
 Introduction to Google Ads 17/05/2021
 Using Social Media to Drive Your Tourism Business 20/05/2021
 Negotiation Skills 21/05/2021
 Sales & Marketing Clinic 24/05/2021
 Presenter Masterclass for Business 25/05/2021

Local Enterprise Office

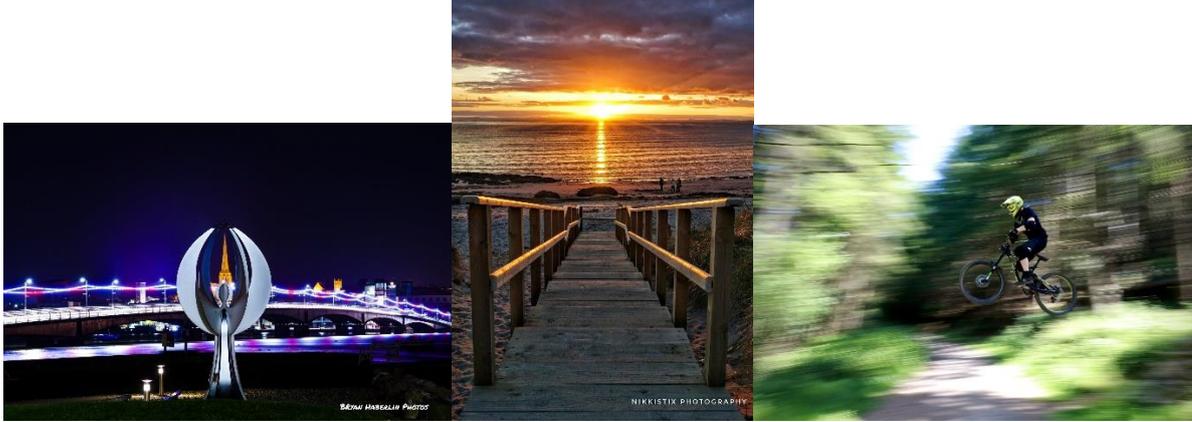
Irish Government
 Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
 LEOS funded by the Irish Government

European Union
 European Regional Development Fund

Tourism

Visit Wexford held a photographic competition in the later end of 2020. The Photography Competition was launched in local newspapers, as well as social media with an aim to curate a bank of photos promoting content for tourism marketing and promotion of the County.

Almost 400 entries were received with amazing images from around the county. Below are the 3 finalists. The photograph of Kilmore Quay by Nikki George was the winning photograph in the competition. The Autumn Photography competition resulted in 52,748 impressions on Social Media.



While it is very hard to predict what the season will look like this year the consensus is that Staycations will be the main focus. It is felt that the season will be like 2020 but may start a little earlier than last year. Visit Wexford will focus once again on a Domestic Tourism campaign.

When the time is right Visit Wexford will promote the many safe outdoor adventures to explore, see and do for families, young professionals, and the mature generation in Ireland's sunniest destination County Wexford. This Domestic Campaign will include National Radio, Press Advertising, as well as Digital and Social Media Advertising and promotion.



Cllr. Ger Carthy Chairman, Wexford County Council; Cllr Michael Whelan, Chairman Economic SPC & members of Visit Wexford at the launch of the summer campaign on Curracloe Beach

BUCANIER Project



The 3 year Bucanier project is coming to an end as the Ireland Wales ERDF EU funded programme is finalised. The project aimed to promote joint trade opportunities, job creation and the development of innovation through the creation of clusters and networks in 3 key disciplines with third level and enterprise agencies.

The BUCANIER Closing event showcase will be held to highlight the key learnings of the project with presentations from the project partners in Ireland and Wales. An academic paper has been produced and presented at a conference in Italy and the project will be submitted in an academic journal on the value of clusters to developing an innovation mindset with SME's. The virtual event is on Wednesday

the 27th of January 2021. Details on the performance metrics will be available at the next meeting following the closing event. To date job creation targets were met and over 302 SME's engaged on the programme.

JAN
27



BUCANIER Closing Event

Wed, Jan 27, 14:30 GMT

Free order no. 1559647867 placed
on Thu, Dec 17, 09:43

Planning

COVID 19 Response – Planning Department

The Planning Department is open and operational but there is restricted, by appointment public access to the Department. Most contact continues to be managed through post, email or phone

Planning Applications

Numbers are those received from the 1st January 2020 until 31st December 2020.

No. of valid applications	1439
No. of invalid applications	189
Extension of Duration	32
Exempted Development Declaration	85

Numbers are those received from the 1st January 2021 until the 15th January 2021.

No. of valid applications	48
No. of invalid applications	4
Extension of Duration	3
Exempted Development Declaration	1

Pre-Planning Applications

In November, 2020 Wexford County Council developed a new online preplanning meeting request service which can be accessed through the council's website at https://wexford-self.achieveservice.com/en/service/Pre_Planning_Meeting_Request.

Numbers are as follows up until the 15th January 2021.

No. of open pre-planning requests	21
No. of pre-planning meetings completed	N/A
Average waiting time to meeting	N/A days

Forward Planning

Draft Wexford County Development Plan 2021-2027

The public consultation period for the Draft Plan ended on Wednesday, 9th December 2020. One hundred and seventy submissions were received and these are currently being processed. Many of the submissions are very detailed and cover multiple issues. The submissions can be viewed online at <https://consult.wexfordcoco.ie/>.

The next stage will involve a detailed review of all submissions and consideration of amendments that should be made to the plan arising from the submissions. The Members will receive a written report from the Chief Executive which will list the names of persons who made submissions and summarise the issues raised in the submissions. The report will also give the response of the Chief Executive to the issues raised and his recommendations for proposed amendments to the draft plan. The Members will then consider the Chief Executive's Report, together with the draft plan, and decide whether the plan should be amended.

If the Members decide to make amendments to the draft plan and these amendments are material in nature the amendments will then be placed on public display for a period of 4 weeks. Submissions may be made during this period. This will be followed by a further Chief Executive's Report which will be considered by the Members prior to the adoption of the plan.

Building Control (01 January – 15 January 2021)

➤ Validated Commencement Notices	15
➤ Number of Building Control Inspections:	0
➤ Validated Cert. of Compliance on Completion:	3
➤ Number of Taking in Charge reports sent to the Districts:	0

Heritage

Applications have been invited for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structure Fund. Applications have begun to be submitted and the Department has agreed to extend the closing date in light of Covid-19 restrictions. The closing date for receipt of applications by Wexford County Council has been extended to 19th Feb 2021.

Planning Enforcement

The number of planning enforcement cases as at 15th January 2021 is as follows:

➤ Live Cases	278
➤ Cases Opened	9 (monthly)
➤ Cases Closed	13 (monthly)

Disability Access

Disability Access Certificates (DACs):

The number of DAC applications received in 2020 totalled **114** of which **92** were validated.

Disability Access Certificates received since 1st January this year are **7** of which **5** were validated.

The following chart outlines the current status for DAC applications including items from year end 2020:

Applications - Districts	Total for Districts	2021	Await Assess.	Further Info.	Granted	Refused	To be reviewed
Enniscorthy	14	1	1	3	10	0	0
Gorey	20	1	0	0	18	0	2
New Ross	11	1	2	0	8	1	0
Wexford	38	0	5	1	32	0	0
Rosslare	9	2	1	0	8	0	0
2020 Totals	92	-	9	4	76	1	2
2021 Total Valid applications	5	5		4	1		

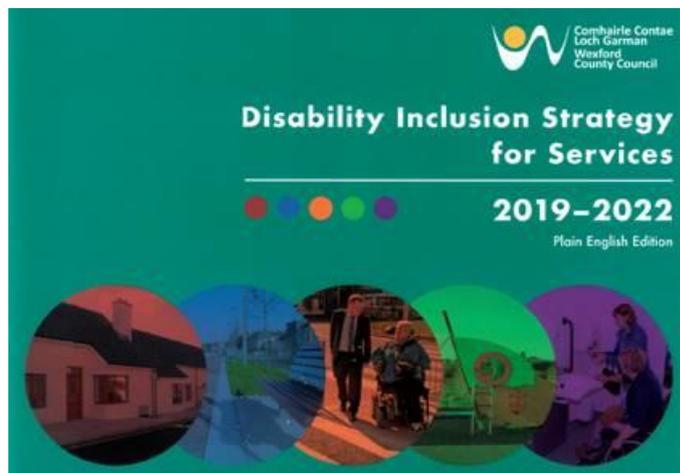
Disability Proofing carried out as part of WCC Access activity.

Referrals	Total
2020 LAC /PLAC & General Planning Applications	100
2021 LAC /PLAC & General Planning Applications	4

Access Activity Update

Implementation Plan

The continuation and commitment of Wexford County Council to our Disability Strategy was clearly established in August 2020 with the publication of our latest and revised set of Actions.



Special Projects:

Min Ryan Park: Works on the park are substantially completed and the Park was opened to the public on 15/06/2020. Public lighting is now operational. Sole Sports and Leisure have been appointed to construct the skate park and MUGA on a design and build basis. Works are planned to commence on site following relaxation of the current Level 5 restrictions. The works are hoped to be complete by Q2 2021, but this will depend on the starting date.

Crescent Quay: Works are substantially completed with minor snagging items currently being addressed.

Carrigfoyle - Trails: The access road, car park, trails and services works at Carrigfoyle (Phase 1) were substantially completed in December. The site was opened to the public on 18/12/2020 with the exception of the moderate trails. This trail has been upgraded and is due to be opened next week when works are completed.

Enniscorthy Technology Park Phase 1: Works are substantially completed with snagging items still to be addressed. Discussions are on-going with IW in relation to taking the on-site wastewater pumping station in charge.

Gorey Town Park: Niall Barry & Co. Ltd was appointed for the construction of the re-development works at Gorey Town Park in March 2019. Works commenced on site in May 2019 and was impacted by the CoVid19 restrictions in 2020. Works are currently suspended due to Level 5 restrictions, with approximately two months' work left to completion following recommencement. Tenders have been received for the playground equipment with the installation to commence on site following completion of the main works contract.

South East Greenway: Part VIII planning for the project is complete and a Section 85 agreement has been signed by Wexford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, and Waterford City and County Council, to enable Wexford County Council to act as the lead authority for the project. The initial €8.0m grant allocation approved in June 2019 was increased by €7.7m by the Minister in November 2020, bringing the total project grant funding to €15.7m.

The New Ross to Waterford railway line was formally abandoned in September 2020 and a Works Licence for the construction of the Greenway has been received from CIE and signed by WCC. The rail and sleeper lifting contract work commenced in August and all of the rails and sleepers from the abandoned railway have now been removed to storage in Rosbercon. Final site clearance and fencing works to be undertaken as part of this contract will be completed when the current Covid 19 Level 5 restrictions for construction sites are lifted.

The detailed design for the scheme is progressing. A number of tender packages are being prepared and advanced in line with the programme for the project. Tenders have been received for the initial contract for the urban sections in New Ross and Waterford. Tendering for subsequent works packages is programmed for December and throughout Spring 2021. Works are expected to commence for the initial contract in March 2021 and to be completed by October 2021 (subject to Covid 19 restrictions). The works on the entire Greenway are due to be completed by December 2022.

Trinity Wharf: Planning approval for the Trinity Wharf masterplan was granted by An Bord Pleanála on 30/04/2020 and a decision on the related foreshore application is expected by April / May 2021. The tender documents for the proposed access road and new automated railway level crossing were advertised in October 2020 and 8 tenders were received by the closing date of mid-December. The

tenders are currently being assessed and the works are expected to commence on-site in early 2021 subject to Covid 19 restrictions.

Grant aid of €2.028m has been secured to date for the scheme under the 1st Call for URDF projects and a further application, in response to a 2nd URDF Call for Applications, was submitted at the end of May 2020.

New Ross Fire Station: Approval has been received from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to award the works contract for the New Ross Fire Station. A contract with the preferred tenderer will be signed in January 2021 and works are expected to commence on site in Qtr 1 2021 subject to CoVid19 restriction.

Wexford Arts Centre: Funding has been approved by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for an extension and renovation of the Wexford Arts Centre. Detailed design and tender documents for the works contract are completed and tenders for works were received on the 2nd October 2020. The tender assessment is now complete and the tender report has been submitted for Departmental approval prior to the award of contract. Works will commence as soon as possible after relaxation of current Level 5 restrictions.

High Hill, New Ross: The High Hill site is a strategic urban site, currently derelict, which connects John Street and the town centre with the 12th century St Mary's Church and Cemetery. A tender process for works at High Hill advertised in Q3 2020 has being terminated without an award of contract, as the tendered sum significantly exceeded the budget allocation for the proposed works. A tender review is currently underway and retendering of the works will be advertised in January 2021.

An application for RRDF funding for this project, as part of the New Ross tourism project application, was successful.

Kilmore Quay Link Road: Following delays related to CoVid19 and land acquisition, the works commenced on site in November 2020. Works are currently suspended due to Level 5 restrictions. There will be approximately 4 months left to completion upon recommencement.

Monck Street Enhancement Scheme: Preliminary design is on-going but site investigations works have been impacted by the current level 5 restrictions. This will impact on design completion and the tender date, as will the suspension of the current private building works underway on the street. It is now planned to target September 2021 to commence street works and to complete in advance of the Christmas shopping season.

New Ross Public Realm – Phase 1: Removal of Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks: Fehily Timoney & Co has been appointed to provide engineering services to Wexford County Council for the removal of the oil tank structures on the quay and the development of public realm works on the site. Site investigation works and inspections of the site and tanks are complete. A contractor has been recommended for the Advance Works Contract (Removal of Tanks) and works are expected to commence in early 2021 following the award of the contract. The site commencement for the tank removal is postponed until Covid-19 restrictions for construction works are eased. A Part VIII Planning application will be lodged in Q1 2021 for the development of the public realm works on the site.

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.

No tenders were received in response to an open tendering competition, advertised in October/ November, for design services for the development of the masterplan, preliminary design and preparation of applications for planning and statutory consents. WCC will now move to a negotiated procedure to seek the required services. This process is expected to take 2 to 3 months. The ground investigation works were completed in late October / early November. The preliminary design and bridge options report will be completed following review and assessment of the results of the SI works.

An application for URDF funding was submitted for the project under the 2nd call for funding in May 2020.

John Street Building Regeneration Project: WCC was successful in securing RRDF funding to design a redevelopment of the old grain stores at John Street, New Ross. It is planned to convert these buildings into a high quality enterprise hub. A design team was appointed in April 2019 and initial surveys and investigative works have been completed. A CPO drawing and schedule, for the acquisition of the necessary lands, is currently being prepared by the Planning Section, with the CPO process due to commence in the coming weeks.

Esmonde Street: RPS consulting engineers have been appointed to provide design, planning, tendering and construction management services for public realm improvement works at Esmonde Street. Initial design work commenced in mid Feb 2020 and a Part VIII planning consent process was advertised on 13/10/2020. Planning consent was approved at the WCC December meeting. WCC received initial RRDF funding of €95,224.00 for this project. The project will now proceed to detailed design.

An application for category 1 RRDF funding was submitted for this project in December 2020.

Carrigfoyle - Activity Centre Building: The planning stage design drawings for the development of an Activity Centre building on the site (Phase 2) have been prepared by the WCC's Architect Department and a pre-planning application has been completed. A Part VIII application has been submitted. A stage 1 pre-qualification brief for the design team services was advertised in December and is due to be returned by the 10th of February 2021.

Gorey Market House: 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. The tender assessment process was delayed by the CoVid 19 restrictions. This tender is a competitive procedure with negotiation. The negotiation process is underway with qualified tenderers and when this is concluded, the tender assessment report will be prepared.

Mechanics Institute: John Creed & Associates were appointed in March 2020 to undertake design, tendering and construction management services for essential maintenance works at the Mechanic's Institute. Tenders were advertised in November 2020, with a works contractor expected to be appointed in February 2021 and commence on site in March 2021 subject to CoVid 19 restrictions. There is a timeframe of 6 months for completion of construction works.

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

WCC has secured RRDF category 2 funding for the development of a cluster of tourism projects within the county.

Design services are currently being procured to develop new visitor experiences at the INHP and the Hook Lighthouse and to bring the projects to 'shovel ready' status. This will include preliminary design, environmental assessment, preparing applications for planning and related development consents, detailed design and tendering for works contracts.

The appointment of design services teams for the INHP has been impacted by the CoVid 19 restrictions and an award of contract has not been possible to date.

Tenders for the environment services required for the Hook project are currently being assessed and an award of contract is expected later this month.

A contract for preliminary interpretative design services for the Norman centre in New Ross has been progressing and work is substantially complete.

An advance contract for detailed design services for the Dunbrody Ship enhancement works was tendered in July/August but no tenders were received by the closing date.

Enniscorthy Tourism Project: The Enniscorthy Tourism Plan report was presented to the Enniscorthy MDC at its July meeting and set out the phased development of a new tourism project of scale centred on the Castle that will have the capacity to significantly improve tourism visitor numbers to the town and link with associated tourism projects to be developed at the Irish National Heritage Park, Hook Lighthouse and the JFK / Dunbrody in New Ross. A tender brief for design services to prepare the preliminary design and planning consent applications required for Phase 1 of the project is currently being prepared.

Courtown Coastal Protection & Beach Nourishment Scheme: Following the completion of a Coastal Engineering Feasibility Study to investigate the development and provision of major infrastructural coastal works in Courtown to reinstate the north beach, tenders are being invited for the preliminary design of coastal protection structures and beach nourishment to restore the natural amenity and tourism asset to Courtown and Co Wexford.

The invitation to tender for engineering services for the next phase for preliminary design and statutory consents process for the project yielded no submissions in Q3. A subsequent invitation has been issued with the closing date in mid-December 2020. RPS Ltd are appointed to undertake the Preliminary Design and Statutory Consents phase of the project.

Rosslare Europort to Waterford City Greenway: Draft feasibility, route options and environmental screening documents were completed in 2019. The EIAR & NATURA Impact reports were delayed due to CoVid19 and are now substantially complete with the drawings and schedules being finalised. Further local public information processes were undertaken at Rosslare Strand and Belview which have now been completed. The planning application to An Bord Pleanála is being finalised and we would expect to make a submission in the coming month.

An application for funding was submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 28/11/2018 but was not successful.

Wexford to Rosslare Greenway: Fehily Timoney and Company 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. It is planned to submit a development consent application to An Bord Pleanála in 2021.

Crescent Quay – Dredging: Design services for engineering assessment, environmental and foreshore consent applications for dredging works at Crescent Quay have been advertised on Etenders. Tenders are currently being assessed.

Old Dublin Road Business Park, Enniscorthy: A plan for enhancing the Old Dublin Road business and commercial area in Enniscorthy is to be prepared by landscape architects that will allow for packages of works to be developed and advanced on a phased basis subject to funding. Tenders for design services are currently being sought. A submission for aspects of the project will also be made under the NTA's the active travel programme.

Enniscorthy Sports Hub: Tenders for the detailed design, procurement of works contractor and construction management of the Sport Hub building were received in December. Tender assessment is on-going with an appointment to follow in the coming month. Works contracts are expected to be advertised in June with a contractor to commence works in September 2021.

Fáilte Ireland Destination Towns Project: Following an application to Fáilte Ireland for the Destination Towns Scheme in late 2019, the maximum grant of €500,000 was awarded for the New Ross Destination Towns Project in early 2020. The aim of the Project is to develop New Ross as a destination by improving wayfinding, promoting and connecting local amenities, developing a night-time economy and increasing dwell time in the area. This Project is complimenting the delivery of the South East Greenway and the New Ross By Pass to promote New Ross as a Norman Heritage Town. This is being done by means of way finding signs, street name plates, promotion and awareness of walking trails and the provision of a visitor information kiosk on the Quay.

Flood Defence Schemes

Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme: The Enniscorthy Flood Defence scheme requires formal confirmation from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in order to proceed. This is a statutory requirement under the Arterial Drainage Acts.

The confirmation process involves a formal review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) by the DPER and a public consultation process.

The confirmation documents for the scheme, including the EIAR & NIS, were signed off by the OPW and submitted to the DPER in March 2020.

DPER completed the public consultation on the 28th August 2020. DPER completed the review of EIAR & NIS and sent a request for supplementary information to the OPW on the 06/11/2020. WCC are assisting OPW with this request. The Scheme Design Consultants Mott MacDonald are preparing a Response Report for the OPW which is to be issued by the 31st March 2021.

While confirmation of the scheme from the Minister is awaited, WCC will progress the detailed design, the shortlisting of contractors for the main construction works, and the attainment of all necessary licences and legal agreements required for the construction works. Some advance works will also be carried out, including archaeological excavations, diversion of services and treatment of invasive species.

The detailed design of the new River Slaney Road Bridge is complete. Tender submissions for short listing contractors for the bridgeworks were received in June. The assessment is to be completed mid - February 2021.

The legal agreement required for the diversion of Irish Water services has been completed, Archaeological licences are in place, the bridge agreement with Irish Rail is being progressed, the application for the foreshore lease and foreshore licence is being progressed with the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government - public consultation on the foreshore application finished on the 15/12/2020. The Foreshore Licence is expected to be issued in June 2021.

Wexford Flood Relief Scheme: The project brief for design services for the Flood Relief Project was advertised on Etenders in early 2020. Seven tender submissions were received by the extended closing date of the 9th July 2020. A tender assessment has been carried out and a recommendation was issued to the Commissioner of the OPW. An appointment is expected in Q1 2021 on conclusion of the tender assessment procedures.

RPS Ltd was appointed in March 2020 to undertake a wave and water level modelling study to support the main Flood Scheme. The draft report has been issued to Wexford County Council and the OPW for review. It has been determined that more details survey data is required to complete the modelling study and these surveys will be undertaken in Q1 2021. The report will be completed following this work.

Housing, Community, Libraries, Arts, Emergency Services & Community:

Due to Covid-19 we have returned to level 5 restrictions which were introduced in early January 2021. This has impacted on our construction programme. Sites that were not sufficiently advanced have been temporarily closed in line with government restrictions. However, our Technical staff continues to progress and monitor all of our Capital Projects. Working with consultant teams remotely has allowed many projects to proceed with funding stages and applications as can be seen in the updated Capital Schedule below.

Although it has been a challenge for the Housing Section we continued to provide the following critical services during the pandemic:-

- 1) Essential Repairs
- 2) Homeless Services
- 3) Allocations

Housing Staff are focused on providing essential services to the most vulnerable. We operate in teams for the following reasons:-

- Allow social distancing
- Prevent any possible spread of infection throughout the entire Housing Staff
- To maintain a presence in the main office for the core working hours

Private Residential Tenancy inspections (*classed as non-essential*) have been suspended for the time being. However, where there is a specific urgent request it will be considered in accordance with Covid 19 Guidelines.

HAP and Rents continue as normal. The Grants Section continues to process applications. However, in the absence of inspections actual activity is greatly reduced. The Area Housing Officers are processing all Housing Applications and the Tenant Liaison Officers are dealing with anti-social behaviour issues as they arise. Housing allocations are ongoing.

Housing Supply

Capital Projects

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Current Position	Comment
Ross Road	1	Enniscorthy	Under construction	To complete Feb 2021 awaiting ESB connection and drying out.
The Ballagh	7	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	Under Construction	Will complete in Q2 2021. Site closed due to Covid 19
Carley's Bridge	17	Enniscorthy	Under Construction	Due to complete Q2 2022. Site closed due to Covid 19
Ballycullane	1	New Ross	Under construction	Under Construction due to complete Q4 2021. Site closed due to Covid 19
Whiterock Hill (<i>deliver units in 2 phases</i>)	44	Wexford	Stage 3 approved for all units	Tender for phase 1 (22 Units) Q1 2020.
Rosetown, Rosslare	23	Rosslare	Stage 4	Tenders received Dec 2020. Stage 4 - Recommendation to contract to DHPLG Jan 2021. Funding shortfall to be agreed
Kileens	40	Wexford	Stage 1	Stage 2 in Q1 2021 for Phase 1 for 25 units.
Creagh East	4	Gorey	Stage 2	Stage 2 to DHPLG in Q1 2021 Planning is in place.
Ballyhine, Barntown	7	Wexford	Stage 3	Stage 2 approved by DHPLG. Allocation requires further savings. Review houses and proceed to Part VIII Q1 2021
Rosbercon	28	New Ross	Stage 2	Design to be finalised Q1 2021 Present sketch proposals to New Ross members on 10 th Feb 2021.
Wexford Street	28/32	Gorey	Stage 2	Full Design Team appointed. Site investigations underway. Site closed due to Covid 19. Stage 2 Q2 2021
Creagh West	8	Gorey	Stage 2	Seeking Stage 2 Q2 2021 Securing site following surveys. Timber Frame construction.
Bullawn	2	New Ross	Stage 2	Stage 2 submitted 20 Nov 2020. New OT report, revise house for Special Needs. Re-submit Stage 2 Q1 2021.
TOTAL	226			

Pre-development Stage

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Marconi Park	1	Enniscorthy	Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Approval for additional funding required prior to signing construction contract. Start date subject to sites re-opening.
5 Francis Street	1	Wexford	Sketch Design and Detailed survey commenced. Consultants tendering presently. Single Stage Application to be lodged with DHPLG in Q1 2021
Marley	1	Enniscorthy	Stage 1 – not approved by DHPLG (submitted 23/05/19) not approved – on hold, no funding stream (no activity)
Castlebridge	1	Wexford (single stage)	TAP house, Sign contract and commence on site Jan 2021. Funding secured. To commence on site once lockdown is lifted.
Newtown, Ferns	1	Enniscorthy	Site clearance approved.
TOTAL	5		

Longer Term Projects

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Clonard	26	Wexford	Site cleared March 2019 – inner relief road in design by others, awaiting road design.
Tagoat	9	Rosslare	Site cleared, addressing boundaries (Stage 1 Q2 2021)
Daphney View	10	Enniscorthy	Access issues – Review and develop smaller site with access. Feasibility Feb 2021
Thomastown Road, Rosbercon	10	New Ross	Feasibility for suitability of the site will follow once Rosbercon is progressed.
Bride Street	2	Wexford	Demolition and enabling works.
TOTAL	57		

Other Projects (early feasibility)

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Adamstown	2	New Ross	CPO complete. Demolition of old house in Q2 2021. Single stage Q2 2021.
Monomolin	4	Gorey	Services and enabling 1works 2020. Confirm capacity availability Q1 2021
Lacken (TAP)	1	New Ross	Single stage approved, Partial funding required from WCC. Tender Q4 2020
Belvedere	6	Wexford	To go to a Municipal District meeting in 2021
TOTAL	13		

Part V Acquisitions

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Millquarter, Knockmullen	18	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	18 units complete
Roxborough Manor, Mulgannon	22	Wexford	14 complete. 8 units to be delivered in Q2 2021
Clonard	6	Wexford	Delayed until Q2 2021.
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	18	Enniscorthy	To deliver 2021/2022
An Glasan, Enniscorthy	5	Enniscorthy	3 units complete. 2 units to deliver Q4 2021 and Q1 2022
Gleann an Ghairdin Ph 3	6	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	Delayed until 2021 due to change in Planning
Creagh Demense	4	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	Construction commenced. To deliver Q1 2022
TOTAL	79		

Turnkeys

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Belvedere Road	7	Wexford	To deliver Q2 2021
Ard Uisce, Whiterock Hill	19	Wexford	1 unit delivered. 14 units ready for snagging – will close Jan 2021. 4 units to deliver Q1 2021
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	50	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis from 2021
Ballynaglogh, Blackwater	16	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	Commenced onsite. To deliver 2022.
Bridgetown	12	Rosslare	Not on site yet. Expected to deliver 2022
Ard Uisce, Whiterock Hill	5	Wexford	Delay onsite, expected to deliver March 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin, Gorey	4	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	Delay onsite, expected to deliver Q3 2021
Roxborough Manor, Mulgannon	-7	Wexford	Withdrawn. New expression of interest (EOI) to be submitted
Creagh Demense	39	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	Construction commenced. To deliver Q1 2022
Clonard Road	20	Wexford	4 units to deliver Q1 2021
TOTAL	172		

Turnkey proposals received by Wexford County Council are assessed by the Internal Housing Committee.

Approved Housing Bodies

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Cooperative Housing Ireland			
Pairc na Dara, Coolcotts	34	Wexford	9 units to deliver Q1 2021
Cluid			
Greenville Lane	52	Enniscorthy	To deliver in 2021
Pairc an Aird, Coolcotts	67	Wexford	Under construction. To deliver Q3 2022
Tuath			
Rocksborough, Drinagh	85	Wexford	28 units delivered. Remainder will deliver over Q1 and Q2 2021
Old Forge Road, Milehouse	59	Enniscorthy	25 units delivered. 21 units to deliver Q1 2021 and 18 units to deliver Q2 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin	9	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	To deliver Q1 2021
Clonattin	6	Gorey / Kilmuckridge	CAS Funding. To deliver Q1 2021
TOTAL	312		

Homeless Services and Support Unit (HSSU)

Wexford County Council's Homeless Services and Support Unit (HSSU) is part of the south east regional in terms of providing services and supports to vulnerable people. The region is the biggest region in the country comprising of 5 councils, namely, Waterford (Lead Authority), Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary.

The south east region operates a regional **Homeless Prevention & Support Project**. The project priorities homeless preventions by way of applying early interventions, mediation and prevention measures to those presenting seeking homeless services/emergency accommodation.

The HSSU operates between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday and provides a range of services and supports to persons who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Co-ordinator along with a multi-disciplinary team, heads the Unit up.

They provide a care and case management model of support to people who present by working with them on a client specific support plan. This identifies the services or supports that the clients need to help them deal with issues and improve their chances of sustaining future tenancies by bringing these supports with them.

It is important to point out that the figures below represent the total number of calls to 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 661 calls to the HSSU in 2020, of which:

- 330 calls sought and received advice and information to housing and homeless prevention;
- 175 calls were support into emergency, short, medium and long term accommodation as well as tenancy sustainment, supported by the placefinder service;
- 122 calls were not eligible at the time for housing/homeless services. In these cases the HSSU assisted and advised the caller on regularising their situation;
- 34 calls were received where it was not possible to complete a full assessment at that time.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AGE FRIENDLY

Telehealth

Work is progressing on the national Telehealth pilot which Wexford Age Friendly are working on with the HSE, Waterford IT and Tunstall Emergency Response. Clinicians from Wexford Hospital from the disciplines of Diabetes, COPD and Chronic Heart Disease, through technology provided by Tunstall Emergency Response, are able to monitor patients they discharged from hospital. The use of the equipment by the patients and the monitoring provided by Tunstall allows earlier discharges and shorter hospital stays. If any medical issues arise, these will be flagged by the system and appropriate action taken by the clinicians. 22 patient referrals were made by clinicians during late December and January with patients now starting to use the equipment from the comfort of their own homes. Research into the pilot project and interviews with the users will be conducted by Waterford IT and the findings published in a final report.

Tablets for Nursing Homes

Working in collaboration with the HSE (Health & Wellbeing) to support older people and enable them to use technology to link with family and loved ones during the pandemic, Wexford Age Friendly have purchased 6 Acorn tablets with grant funding from the HSE. The Acorn tablets purchased are designed specifically with older people in mind and include full support for users.

Our Age Friendly Programme Manager, Ann Marie Laffan is working with 3 Nursing homes in the county to roll out these devices and ensure they receive the necessary support and assistance. The Nursing Homes are Middletown House Nursing Home (Courtown), Oakfield Nursing Home (Courtown) and Knockeen Nursing Home (Barntown). With funding provided under the Keep Well campaign it is planned to extend this initiative to additional nursing homes in the county in the next couple of months.



Storytelling by phone for older people - The 'Tale-a-Phone Exchange'

As part of the Government's Keep Well campaign, Wexford Age Friendly and the Arts Office are offering older people in the county the opportunity to receive a phone call from renowned storyteller Joe Brennan.

The 'Tale-a-Phone Exchange', will be a chance to hear one of Joe's wonderful traditional stories in the comfort of their own home. Each Exchange, lasting 20 minutes, will be unique to the person receiving the call.

Joe will have a chat with the person receiving the call first and from this he will decide on what story to tell. 'Each call will be different and even where the same story is told, that telling will be unique to that person,' says Joe. 'No two tellings of a story are the same. The listener, and the circumstances of the exchange, shapes the telling of the story.'

This is a new approach to storytelling and the first time in Ireland for sharing traditional oral stories in this way. It is a great opportunity to reach people who have been isolated from so much because of the pandemic. To book a call, contact Ann Marie Laffan, Age Friendly Programme Manager on 053-9196680. Phone calls will commence from the first week in February and continue through to the end of March.





February Report (19th December – 20th January 2021)



Work is progressing on the local 'Keep Well' Community Resilience Funded activities, in collaboration with our colleagues and partners across the county. While some activities are in planning, others are progressing and unfortunately with current restrictions some have been delayed.

Some examples of current activity happening includes the following;

- **Community Check In** – a non-contact neighbourly check in project in to focus on isolated or vulnerable in our communities. This project is a collaboration with Wexford PPN and provides an invitation to connect through a check in card which provides a local contact, and also details of the Community Call.
- **WexfordTogether Radio Programme** – a weekly programme, commencing on 14th January, in collaboration with South East Radio providing light entertainment along with some of the main 'KeepWell' messages and resources. Inclusion of radio in the local 'Keep Well' activity is to reach an audience that may not be online.
- **Keeping Active with Sports Active Wexford** – a suite of supports from Sports Active Wexford to help all keep well including online classes, sharing of apps, couch to 3k, and older adult exercises. Again a mix of methods used to promote and highlight including a focus on those not online through local media.

In addition to funded activity, we continue to highlight supports and resources available locally and nationally through our social media presence and engagement with partners.

At the last meeting of the Healthy County Committee it was agreed to review current activity on the Strategic Priorities outlined in the Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022. This review is currently underway and following same will help to guide the work focus for the committee during 2021. In tandem, the new challenges that have emerged as part of the recent pandemic will also be considered by the committee for committee focus in 2021.



Healthy Ireland Round Three funded activity continues to be impacted by Covid 19 and the current restrictions are significantly impacting for all actions.

Local Economic and Community Plan High Level Goal 1

To foster the culture of educational attainment and lifelong learning in County Wexford and provide opportunities to develop educational and workforce skills, to improve work readiness and access to employment.

Wexford Science Festival - Youth Train Wexford Living Lab Co-Creation Project

This year, as part of Wexford Science Festival, we were required to do a Co-creation project. The resulting six-week Co-creation project with a group of students from Youth Train Wexford, explored energy and its generation, focusing on renewable energy and the choices to be made so that energy generation is effective, appropriate and sustainable. Michelle Maher, Scientist co-ordinated this co-creation project with Youth Train Wexford and encouraged students to explore these topics in a very practical and hands-on way. In the spirit of science experimentation and exploration, the learners aged 17-21 were equal co-creators and were key to shaping the programme and learning outcomes. Learning skills such as critical thinking, accepting failure as merely a setback, team working, creativity and communications permeated the content and approach.

You can view a short video/slideshow showing some of the student's creations/work in this link [Youthtrain - YouTube](#). (There is no soundtrack) The students made a number of model cars using various energy sources and then held a race day.

Participating students clearly increased confidence in their manipulative practical skills after completing the hands-on workshops. Students also displayed a greater appreciation and understanding of the role that science has played in developmental and socioeconomic advancement. Student feedback:

'It was really interesting. We designed rockets powered by household liquids and air-powered too. This prepared us for the design of racing cars and wind turbines to look at renewable energies and designs for the future.'

'The skills we used were teamwork and communications. We had to be creative and to share ideas. They did not always work but we learned from them. Perseverance was key to getting our results.'

2020 Town and Village Renewal Scheme

7 locations across County Wexford are set to benefit from approx. €800k in funding for a variety of community-led projects. The welcome news was announced on the 8th January 2021 by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, when she provided details of grant allocations totaling more than €15.4 million to 147 towns and villages across Ireland under the *2020 Town and Village Renewal Scheme*.

Summary of projects approved in County Wexford:

Village	Project Summary Description	Amount Approved
Boalavogue	The restoration of the vacant National School into a digital hub and Community Centre and creating an onsite landscaped garden.	€97,934
Ballymitty	The construction of a multi-functional Community Resource and Enterprise Centre that will support community activities and social enterprises including a digital hub, performance venue, community café and shop.	€200,000

Taghmon	Development of a Digital Hub; Walking Trail restoration and village square public realm upgrade.	€97,547
Clongeen	Refurbishment of Community Centre to facilitate the development of a remote working hub; a training facility, weekend markets; study hub and community café.	€100,000
Clohamon	Restoration of a vacant school into a multi-purpose community centre with digital-hub / training facilities, solar PV, and playground.	€100,000
Riverchapel Courtown	Creation of a 2km Maritime Walking trail from Riverchapel linking to Courtown with picnic areas.	€100,000
Our Lady's Island	Creation of a tourism experience, to include bespoke Information panels; waymarked ancient pilgrimage path; heritage lighting for the Castle and Leaning Tower.	€100,000
Wexford Total		€795,481

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Meeting

A meeting of the Local Community Development Committee is scheduled for the 18th of February 2021 via MS Teams.

Local Action Group (LAG) Meeting

A meeting of Local Community Development Committee acting as the Local Action Group is scheduled for the 18th of February 2021 via MS Teams.

LEADER

The total project value of the 18 Enterprise projects approved at the December LAG was €1,017,000

There were 10 grant payments worth €236,976.

Public Consultation on Draft Intoxicating Liquor Bye-laws 2020

In accordance with Section 200 of the Local Government Act, 2001, 21st December 2020, Wexford County Council gave notice of the intention to introduce Bye-Laws for the regulation and control of the consumption of intoxicating liquor within the jurisdiction of Wexford County Council.

The closing date for submissions and observations on the Draft Intoxicating Liquor Bye-laws 2020 is **4.30pm; Monday, 22nd February 2021**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The SICAP sub-committee commenced consideration of the 2020 End of Year Performance Review during January, with a final recommendation due to the LCDC during February. The delivery of SICAP in 2020 was impacted on due to COVID-19 and the restrictions and challenges that this has brought to both the LDCs and LCDCs in their delivery and overseeing of the programme. It is recognised that the End of Year Reporting Process will be the more critical one for 2020 as it will tell a better story of the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of SICAP.

Community Enhancement Programme – Community Centres and Buildings 2020

Wexford LCDC allocated funding of €190,698 to 68 groups under the Community Enhancement Programme – Community Centres & Buildings 2020 on the 26th November, 2020.

COVID19 Emergency Fund 2020 (round 2)

Wexford LCDC were allocated €59,396 under the COVID19 Emergency Fund 2020 (round 2) in December, 2020. Closing date for receipt of applications is the 12th February, 2021, with all project due for completion by 31st August, 2021. The LCDC will consider applications at their meeting on the 18th February.

Comhairle na nÓg

The 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Funding request were submitted to Pobal in January.

SPORTS ACTIVE

Funding: We are delighted to have been awarded from Sport Ireland our Core grant for 2021, to total of €327,741.

Area of Work /Strategic Goal	
Community Support	In partnership with WLD, we are hosting an information evening which supports clubs and groups in applying for grants.
Keeping Well campaign	We are a part of the “Wexford Together” group set up within Wexford County Council, as a part of this campaign we have been involved in the weekly radio broadcast with South-East Radio, promoting information about keeping well at home specifically for Older adults.
Couch to 3K	There are currently 105 participants signed up to our virtual couch to 3km programme which started Monday 18 th of January and will run for 6 weeks. All participants will receive a participation pack by post.
Online Exercise Classes	HIIT with Theresa Roche takes place on Mondays from 6-6.30pm and Yoga with Sarah Dunlea on Wednesdays from 6.30 – 7.30pm. Videos are emailed to all participants so they have an opportunity to do the class in their own time or repeat it again during the week. Classes are running on a four week block with options to pay €2.50 for one session or €10 for all four. There are 20 people participating in the yoga class and 15 people in the HIIT class.
Weekly newspaper exercises	We are currently promoting weekly exercises in the local newspapers targeted the target groups are Older Adults, Operation transformation and people with disabilities. Through the Keeping Well campaign.
Exercise DVDs	Exercise DVDs are currently advertised for older adults that can be posted out.
Autism in Sport Workshop	18 Development Officers and tutors from Wexford GAA, Leinster Rugby and Sports Active Wexford participated in an Online Autism in Sport Workshop delivered by the Cara Centre.

MoveMENT MoMENTs	We are working with Frank Fahey from FitWalk Ireland to develop a seven week functional fitness exercise series. This pilot programme will be delivered to members of Men's Shed around the county starting in February and is aimed at introducing easy short slots right through to longer sessions that will increase the fitness levels of participants so they can easily manage the physical challenges of daily living. Each week participants will receive a video of the exercises, for those who are not good with technology there will be a paper form of the exercises. Funding from last year's HSE grant will be used on this initiative.
Grant allocation to Upgrade Disability Facilities at the Apex.	We have granted through the Dormant accounts application for 2020, New Ross Sport And Leisure €17462, to upgrade their disability hoist and changing facility within the Apex.
Slaintecare	The IEP has begun the third block of exercise programmes. In line with government restrictions, the IEP is running exercise programmes via telehealth with a current case load of 17 participants each week.
COPD Peer and Exercise Support Group	A committee meeting for Wexford COPD Peer and Exercise Support group was held in early January and it was decided to set up a Zoom account for the group, to enable weekly exercise classes to resume in the next few weeks. Sports Active Wexford will fund the cost of 16 weeks of classes and our tutor Theresa Roche will deliver these. The funding for this is from 2020 HSE grant.
Havenview	A series of workout sessions have been developed for the residents of Havenview Intellectual Disability Rehab Unit. The session can be done from seated/standing, with no equipment and from the comfort of the resident's room. The residents will receive weekly updates during the current lockdown.
Coaching Children Workshop	Coaching Children is currently being delivered virtually to Wexford GAA coaching staff.
Information Evening	Saw in partnership with WLD held an information workshop on supporting clubs and groups in making applications for sports funding 46 clubs and groups attended.
Safeguarding Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Safeguarding 1 Courses have been completed on Zoom with a total of 48 participants
Staff training and upskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 staff attended the 4 day Lunch time online conference with I-PARC 2021 (Irish Physical Activity Research Collaboration) "Collaborative action for physical activity promotion: opportunities presented by COVID-19" • One member of staff has started the Sport Ireland Accelerate Management Programme and continues with this for six months. • Social Media training has been organised for staff and will commence in February.

ENVIRONMENT

A. COVID-19 RESPONSE

Throughout the second lockdown, work has continued in line with the CCMA's guidance document of 21st October, 2020. Office based staff are now working an alternate teams pattern to minimise attendance, ensuring that the office is covered while increasing physical distancing. All staff have the resources to work remotely while not physically in the office.

Outdoor staff continue to work to ensure the Civic Amenity Centres, Rapid Response Crews, Environment and Dog Warden Services remains operational. Staff continue to monitor beach/coastal carparks.

B. COASTAL MATTERS

Harbours -

Contracts have been signed the provision of Waste Collection Services and Electrical services for the piers and harbours throughout Co. Wexford. These consolidated services replace the current arrangements and should create a cost saving over the next 2 years.

A tender for Hydrographical Surveying of the ports and harbours has been posted on eTenders. The competition closes on the 8th February with the expectation that a contract will be in place by the end of March.

The Pilot Boat Services tender has closed, review of submissions will commence early January.

Piers and Harbours Byelaws 2020 were adopted at December's monthly meeting by the elected members, they are due to come into force on 01st February 2021.

A new slip-way barrier was installed at Courtown Harbour, in December 2020.

C. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

All public conveniences are open.

Minor refurbishment works to Curracloe Public Convenience and major refurbishment works to Carne Public Convenience have been completed.

D. 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 is being overseen by the Sub-Catchment Unit of the EPA.

2. Water Sampling:

85 sampling sites in the county have been identified by the EPA for sampling 5 times per year with the subsequent analysis carried out by the EPA. 11 surveillance sites are being sampled 12 times per year.

3. Septic Tank Inspections:

A total of 112 domestic waste water treatment systems (DWWTS) were inspected throughout 2020. The programme was stalled throughout the first lock down with inspections recommencing in the summer. 67% of the systems failed the first inspection.

19 grants for remedial works for septic tanks were paid in 2020 amounting to €64,296.57. The new system of grant payments has removed the means testing and has increased the grant to 85% of the cost of works to a maximum of €5,000. 12 applications have benefitted from the new scheme.

Two people were found guilty of failing to maintain their DWWTS on the foot of a statutory inspection. The Judge has adjourned sentencing in order to find a solution to the pollution issue rather than simply fining the guilty parties. Seven further cases are before the court for failing to complete remedial works.

4. Section 4 Discharge Licences:

The Council currently has 104 active Discharge Licences. Two new applications have been received and a number of licence reviews have been completed.

Invoices for the annual statutory Fee for discharge licences were dispatched in September.

5. Air & Noise:

Air quality monitoring is carried out at a number of locations in the county. Noise complaints are dealt with on an ongoing basis. Two complaints of persistent noise pollution are currently under investigation.

Proceedings have been initiated against the owner of a Pig Farm in Kilugger, Killinick for an persistent offences that contravene air pollution legislation.

E. WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. Landfills:

Holmestown Landfill remains temporarily closed. Environmental monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure continues at both Killurin and Holmestown in accordance with the conditions of our waste licences.

The Household Recycling Centre at Holmestown continues to provide recycling services to members of the public as well as a disposal service for other waste streams such as residual waste, bulky waste, segregated food waste, garden waste and waste paint.

2. Recycling Services:

Bring Bank Network –

WASTE CATEGORY	No. of Sites December 2020	Recycling out (End December) 2019 (t)	Recycling out (End December)2020 (t)
Glass bottles		3233	4219
Aluminium Cans		78	108
Total	108	3311	4327

Household Recycling Centres –

Summary of Activities								
WASTE CATEGORY	Enniscorthy		New Ross		Holmestown		Gorey	
	Recycling out Jan-dec 2019 (t)	Recycling out Jan-dec 2020 (t)	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2019 (t)	Recycling out Jan- Dec 2020(t)	Recycling out Jan- decl2019	Recycling out Jan - dec 2020)	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2019	Recycling out Jan-Dec 2020
Total Recycling out	519	644	698	766	654	1011	463	572
Total Domestic Waste in	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2101	2786	N/A	N/A
Daily Average Customers Jan-Dec	2019 60	2020 69	2019 113	2020 119	2019 101	2020 138	2019 72	2020 87

Due to net operating costs increases, an entry charge of €2 was introduced to all household recycling centres on 13th June 2017.

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 and New Ross Municipal Districts. Their headline activities for year to date are summarised below:
(Breakdown by district to be provided for next month)

Activity	<i>To end December 2019</i>	<i>December 2020</i>	<i>To end December 2020</i>	% +/-
Total Illegal Dumping/ Clean Ups	3132	219	3144	+0.38%
<i>Gorey *</i>		25		
<i>Enniscorthy *</i>		68		
<i>Wexford *</i>		40		
<i>New Ross*</i>		86		
Total Bring Site Inspections	2735	805	5995	+119%
<i>Gorey</i>	<i>North</i>	449		
<i>Enniscorthy</i>				
<i>Wexford</i>	<i>South</i>	356		
<i>New Ross</i>				
Total Ringbuoy Inspections	11,381	1338	16,056	+41%
<i>Gorey</i>	<i>North</i>	398		
<i>Enniscorthy *</i>				
<i>Wexford*</i>	<i>South</i>	940		
<i>New Ross*</i>				
Other Works	3758	298	5,125	+36%
<i>Gorey</i>		21		
<i>Enniscorthy</i>		120		
<i>Wexford</i>		67		
<i>New Ross</i>		90		

**Including Towns*

4. Food Waste

The Food Waste Regulations 2013 are in force in all towns with >500 population. They impose obligations on Waste Collectors and householders. Collectors must provide separate bins for collection of food waste and householders must segregate their waste by either using “brown bins” provided by their waste collection company; composting at home, bearing in mind that certain food wastes cannot be composted, or bringing it to an authorised facility. Householders in all towns and villages to whom the regulations apply were visited by Council staff as part of our ongoing information

campaign. Food waste is now accepted at all four household recycling centres. The locations where the food waste regulations apply are outlined on map which shall be uploaded to the council's website shortly.

5. Waste Facility Permits:

We currently have seventeen Clean Soil and Stone sites in operation; eight construction and demolition sites, eight End of Life Vehicles and twelve 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 62 registered operational Waste Facility Permits and Certificates of Registration for premises involved in waste management activities in the County.

6. Enforcement:

The Waste Enforcement Team carries out routine and non-routine inspections of Waste Facilities and problem sites in accordance with the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) as required by the EPA. The 2020 inspection plan and 2019 return were submitted to the EPA on 15 February 2020. The RMCEI Plan allocates 1,578 route inspections by 25 Full Time Equivalent staff member. 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, etc.

The national waste priorities for 2020 were;

1. Illegal Dumping/ unaccounted for waste, which includes scrap cars sites, unauthorised Man in Van collectors, etc.,
2. Construction & Demolition activities, includes management of waste on construction sites.
3. Use the waste presentation bye-laws to check household are dealing with their waste, including ensure collectors are continuing to roll out of the household brown bins.
4. Tracking the flow of waste data submitted on AER returns by collectors and facilities.

7. Mattress / Furniture Amnesty

This year's initiative was another success. Due to the pandemic all mattresses were taken in at Holmestown Waste Facility between 21st July and 18th September to avoid the queues of previous campaigns. Over 2,500 mattresses were collected.

F. LITTER MANAGEMENT

The Wexford County Council (Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-laws, 2018 came into effect from the 2nd January, 2019. From this date, anyone contravening the bye-laws will be liable to a fixed penalty of €75.

Complaints regarding litter are now being handled through the Customer Service Unit. Environment was the first section to use this central system.

Any evidence collected from littering incidents is used in bringing action under the Litter Pollution legislation. It has been noted that less evidence is being recovered. More transactions have moved online and people are removing waste that may incriminate them. The use of CCTV has been halted due to restrictions imposed by the Data Protection Commissioner. The local press regularly reports on such cases. We will continue to target illegal dumping black-spots and the county's roads throughout the year.

LITTER FINES	TOTAL FOR 2019	TOTAL FOR 2020 (to Dec 2020)
Fines Issued	341	213
Fines Paid in Full●	143	78
Fines Cancelled/Proceedings Discontinued/Struck Out*	140	47
Successful Prosecutions**	13	20
Legal Proceedings In Progress	28	22
Amount Collected in Fines (directly/following proceedings)	€26,728	€11,795

* Other fines may be paid prior to the hearing or withdrawn for evidential or legal reasons.

- A large number of fines are paid in instalments and these are not reflected in the statistics.

Most Court cases are successful, but it can take up to a year or more for a case to be heard in the District Court. There is currently a backlog of cases before the courts at the moment due to the number of adjournments over the last few months.

In November two littering cases were heard. Fines of €200 were imposed in both cases along with costs totalling €500. Cases due to be heard in January have been adjourned until March at the Judge's behest due to the high incidence of Covid-19 at the moment.

Litter Enforcement Activity 2009-2018

	Fines Issued	Court	Reports
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
2009	345	15	1,906

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 – Dec 2017	Jan – Dec 2018	Jan to Dec 2019	Jan to Dec 2020
Incidents	3600	4609	4749	4999
Closed	3526	4563	3737	3610
Closure Rate	98%	99%	78%	72%

Control of Dogs & Horses:

The Council employs one Dog Warden and an acting Dog Warden for holidays and relief. The main pound is Pets First Kennels, Ballycarney, Co Wexford.

Control of dogs	2019	2020
Dogs collected	776	490
Dogs reclaimed	152	111
Dogs re-homed/transferred	544	339
Dogs put to sleep	77	29
Dog Fines	19	4

There are now 31 registered Dog Breeding Establishments with a number of applications on hand awaiting inspection.

To 31st December, 2020, 35 equine were impounded (as against 50 in total for 2018). Most of the equine impounded in 2019 have been re-homed. No horses have been put to sleep in 2019 or 2020.

Environment Education and Awareness:

Our aim is to promote awareness and active participation in a range of environmental initiatives.

Green Schools: An Taisce has circulated guidance documents for each of the green schools themes to help schools continue with their green schools programme safely.

Holmestown Household Recycling Centre: All school visits to Holmestown have been postponed due to Covid 19 restrictions. The tour outlines the energy saving technologies used, how landfills are managed, a birds of prey display and a tour of the recycling site.



School Workshops: Online workshops will resume once schools reopen. Themes covered will include biodiversity, marine environment, litter & waste and recycling.

Annual Environment Artwork Competition: It is hoped to run the competition in 2021 if it is deemed safe under current government guidelines. The theme will be 'Wildflowers' and competition will be open to both primary and secondary schools.

Greener Christmas Competition: Details of this on-line competition was circulated to all schools in December. Schools were asked to submit their best green Christmas Tip. The competition was open to both primary and secondary schools. Winners will be notified in January.

Trees for Wexford Campaign: The trees for Wexford Campaign received 150 applications. All groups will be notified of collection dates for trees in February (depending on Covid restrictions).

Environment Awards: The annual awards took place on South East Radio on Thursday 10th December. Winners of each of the 11 categories were announced live on air by the Chairperson of the Districts and Strategic Policy Committees. Blackwater Tidy Towns were the overall winners for 2020. Videos of each of the winning entries were tweeted on WCC's twitter account once they had been announced.

Community Clean Ups: Registrations for community clean ups are continuing. Registrations will be accepted from family group and individuals according to current government guidelines.

Planting Grant: The 2020 Planting Grant Scheme was advertised in June and is now closed. 54 applications were received and all approved the maximum grant of €300.

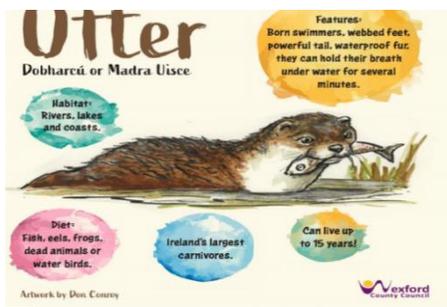
Christmas Tree Shredding: Wexford County Council arranged for the FREE shredding of Christmas trees at 7 locations throughout the County between the 1st to 9th January, 2021.

Local Waste Prevention Grant: The 2020 scheme was announced in early June. 11 applications were approved the maximum grant of €500 under the 2020 scheme. Projects funded included prevention of single use items, upcycling, food waste prevention workshops. €5,500 was funded across all projects in 2020.

Community Engagement: Community talks are postponed during Covid 19. Contact with community groups is ongoing.

Leader Funding: Leader Funding has been approved for a community training programme entitled 'Understanding my Area's Biodiversity'. The objective of this training programme will be to inspire people to take action for biodiversity in their local area. It is about improving the public's knowledge of what biodiversity is and thus encourage them to consider increasing biodiversity in their local community areas like gardens, green spaces, and derelict areas and preserve existing biodiversity rich habitats.

Blue Flag Education Activities: A series of social media posts depicting some of our coastal fauna was circulated on social media as part of blue flag education programme. A series of 15 posts which included otter, Common Tern, shells, whales hoped to help us engage with the coast during lockdown.



Dog Fouling Awareness Campaign: A series of images and messages have been put out on twitter to encourage all dog owners to pick up after their dog and dispose of the poop bag responsibly. The Green Dog Walker Campaign was promoted during January and received over 500 pledges in 4 days. Due to the huge volume of interest, unfortunately at present we are out of stock. Registrations will reopen once our stocks have been replenished.



General

The Council's essential Environmental Services in Waste Management, Environment Clean Up Crews, Public Conveniences, Harbours & Piers,

Pollution Investigation, Environment Wardens, Dog Warden Service, Coastal Management, Environment Education & Awareness, Waste Water Treatment Systems National Inspection Plan, Waste/Water and Litter Enforcement, Climate Change Adaptation and more are all operational during the current COVID-19 Pandemic Level 5 Restrictions with staff working remotely where possible.

- Coastal
1. The Wexford County Council Harbour & Piers Bye-Laws 2020 were adopted at the December meeting of the Council. Draft Wexford County Council Bye-Laws 2021 are expected before the Council in the first quarter of the year.

Waste Management

1. Visitors to the Council's 4 Household Recycling Centres were up for 2020 with average daily visitors up by 75% at Holmestown Household Recycling Centre.
2. Almost 4,000 tonnes of glass bottles/jars and metal cans were recycled through the Council's network of bring sites around the County, up 30% on 2019.
3. Clean ups of incidents of illegal dumping were down just over 1% on 2019.

Education & Awareness

1. The Council provided facilities at 7 locations around the County for the shredding of Christmas trees from households during January, 2021.
2. There was a very positive response to the relaunch of the Green Dog Walker Scheme through social media in January – an initiative to promote good dog owner behaviour concerning dog fouling.
3. The Trees for Wexford Campaign received 156 applications using the new online CRM system. The trees are expected to be distributed in February.

Response to COVID

In line with Government guidelines on Covid-19, all libraries in the country were remained closed to the public with online and book call services only. The Book Call service enabled those who were elderly or cocooning to receive a delivery of library books and materials to their homes. The book call totalled in excess of 90 requests these were evenly split between the north and south of the county. Membership rules continued to be relaxed so that people could join the library online at www.librariesireland.ie/join-your-library, get a virtual library card and PIN and use the e-resources without visiting the library.

The Library Facebook pages were used extensively to promote online services, resources and information during the month of January and reached a large audience totalling 30,608.

Online events and services were promoted through our e-Newsletter. A further e-Newsletter was sent to school contacts with information most relevant to teachers and students.

Ireland Reads Campaign

Ireland Reads is a new national campaign to encourage as many people as possible to get reading. The campaign will run throughout February, leading up to 'Ireland Reads Day' on February 25th. Ireland Reads is about promoting the power of reading for enjoyment and wellbeing, combatting lockdown by encouraging everyone, young and old, to get back into the habit of reading and regularly setting aside time to sit and read a book, a poem, a comic, a newspaper, whatever works for them! We want everyone to experience the joys of reading - and to share their experience with family, friends and bookclubs online.

A national promotional campaign will launch in early February and run throughout the month leading up to 'Ireland Reads' Day on February 25th.

Keep Well Campaign

Wexford Library Service has been allocated funding under the Keep Well Campaign – Switching Off and Being Creative. #KeepWell

Projects due for delivery in early 2021 include:

- A reading and creative writing project for students in a special educational needs environment.
- Launch of the OMI Vista Mobii light projection units with an array of activities for Adults with Dementia.
- Launch of the Sensory collection of Toys Technology and Training for children with special needs.
- A programme to assist parents to stay connected through story-time.
- A Creative Photography project and exhibition.

Libraries will also be involved in the delivery a national "Grow It Forward" campaign which is a positive, action-orientated programme that uses the hook of food growing to empower people to a healthier, more sustainable and resilient life.

Keep Well Campaign Clever Little Handies, Wexford Libraries launched a series of 4 weekly workshops incorporating baby sign language, early literacy development and social support and resilience development for parents/carers and their babies. This programme began on Thursday 21st January and will be extended further by the end of March 2021.

Keep Well Campaign Literacy and Art workshop series with Sarah Webb and Alan Nolan, Consultation has commenced between the authors and artist Sarah Webb and Alan Nolan, teachers in St Patrick's school Enniscorthy and Our Lady of Fatima School Wexford and Wexford libraries. The aim of the programme is to support the children to stay connected and support their mental health through a series of online workshops incorporating storytelling, creative writing and art tutorials. Most importantly they will be delivered in a way that ensures maximum fun, interaction and engagement for the children, the teachers and SNA's supporting the work in class when restrictions allow.

Library App

Wexford County Council Public Library Service now has its own library app. The Library App is available on both Google Play and the Apple Store, search for Wexford Libraries and download. The new app offers full access to the library catalogue and to the individual library user's account. The app lets the library service connect and engage with current members and reach potential new members. The new app is contactless, safe and hygienic it allows library members to simply tap the item they wish to borrow with their smartphone, without the use of any additional hardware. Users will also be able to search for library events in their local library.

The funding for the app was approved by DRCD as a use for part of their provision for the 2020 Healthy Ireland budget.

Parenting 2021

Skills to help children recognise and manage their feelings of anger, sadness and worry. The first Parenting Today 2021 workshop for parents and carers was launched on Thursday 21st January with author and primary teacher Emma Cahill. The recording is based on Emma's book 'Under the Mask' and aims to support families to reassure and help their children learning coping skills. Questions submitted by parents were answered by clinical psychologist and NUIG lecturer Dr. Malie Coyne and Today FM health expert, Fiona Brennan. This programme is an initiative of Wexford Library and CYPSC Wexford (Children and Young People's Services Committee)

Right to Read

Literacy and Reading development

Nation Creation Programme, This programme was made available to all DEIS schools in County Wexford from their local branch library. The workshop series helps children to build good friendships, re-socialise and settle back into school life. These workshops develop literacy skills, creativity, promote empathy and celebrate difference and acceptance. Themes such as migration and refugees are explored sensitively with the children. The programme is a series of 4 online workshops where children work together inventing new countries with laws, languages, flags and customs. Co-funded by Wexford County Council and Dormant Accounts Fund.

Hello Heroes Programme was initially developed for children from Courtown Direct Provision Centre in association with Gorey Youth Needs and Gorey Library. The programme has now been opened to all primary DEIS schools in County Wexford. It aims to boost self-esteem, empower children and provide an appreciation and celebration of difference. The workshops build literacy skills through fun creative writing, group discussions, drawing and storytelling. Co-funded by Wexford County Council and Dormant Accounts Fund.

Engineers Week Workshops are being offered for Engineers Week in February and March. All library branches will contact local schools to offer an online workshop where children learn all about flight and aeronautical engineering. 150 children will receive kite making kits to experience hands-on aerodynamics forces.

Sensory Toys and Assistive Resources Collection, this new collection of toys and assistive software has been established to respond to the growing demand for intervention services for children and young people with extra needs. It will help parents, health care professionals and teachers in working together to support the children in their care. The service offers children many different toys, tools, games and equipment to develop skills, increase confidence and promote independence. This collection, of some 170 items has been carefully developed in collaboration with therapists working in the local community. This project was grant aided by the Department of

Rural and Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund and will be formally launched when libraries re-open.

Down Syndrome Ireland See and Learn, Research was carried out with local and national organisations into how Wexford County Council Public Library Service can support local families of young children with Down syndrome. Plans are in place to source kits for all library branches to support the See & Learn language and literacy development programme. The kits will be supported by an introduction and training video for parents and carers as part of Parenting Today 2021.

Story and Rhyme times continued online from all branch libraries throughout January, supporting families and pre-schools with early literacy development. Each library offers at least one session each week, preparing, presenting and filming their story times while complying with all copyright and conditions required by publishers.

TTRS, Nesy Reading and Reading Eggs, five new Literacy Online Programmes and Apps, Wexford Public Libraries extended its range of literacy support programme for families, schools and adults in January 2021. The licences for TTRS, Nesy and Reading Eggs, allow an additional 520 children or adults in County Wexford take these courses at home, in school or in the library to build their literacy skills, reading and typing competence. Students can access these courses from their PC or download the apps to their tablets or phones. Suitable for all ages, these are useful to those who experience reading and writing difficulties; adults needing help with literacy skills and people learning English as a second language.

Dyslexia Association of Ireland, Wexford Public Libraries has partnered with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland to give information, advice and support to enable the development of joint library and DAI online supported reading groups for children with dyslexia across County Wexford. Library staff shared their experience and used the opportunity to highlight library resources available, e-books and e-audiobooks and sets of dyslexia friendly reading materials available for loan from all 5 branch libraries.

Wexford Libraries' Online Book and Writing Clubs

Wexford Libraries' Online Book club is a private Facebook group that hosts a book club discussion each month. The online book club has over 220 members from all over the county.

Local Studies and Genealogy

There were 20 local studies enquiries during January and 4 genealogy enquiries.

ARCHIVES

Collections management

The Archive dealt with 34 research enquiries via email, telephone and post during January. The service continues to conduct detailed research for enquiries where possible in an effort to facilitate researchers while the reading room remains closed under the current restrictions.

Outreach / Digitisation

The Poor Law Union series of minute books for the workhouses in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey are one of the most accessed collections among the county archive's holdings, and the volumes continue to be digitised on a phased basis for remote research. The first 30 volumes of digitised minutes (1840-62) for Gorey poor law union were made available on the county archive website during January which has facilitated remote access for the first time to two of the most requested subjects covered by this period – the famine years and the Earl Grey assisted female emigration scheme (1848-50).

A further 30 volumes (1862-81) were digitised in mid-January and will be made available online in early February.

The first 12 volumes of minutes for New Ross poor law union were digitised in late January.

ARTS

Spring 2021 online training supports for Artists

Wexford County Council Arts Office is currently supporting and delivering the following online training initiatives for artists and creatives some of which are funded and supported by Creative Ireland

(a) Digital Up skilling programme for Artists, festivals

The Arts Office offered a free 7 week digital up online skilling programme for Wexford based artist's, creatives, arts festivals etc. which took place in January 2021 delivered by Wexford artist and folklorist Michael Fortune. Due to extremely high levels of interest – over 50 people applied – The Arts Office will run a repeat Digital Up skilling programme for February 2021.

(b) Friday Fixes are back

An open call went out in January 2021 for a new 7 week online programme aimed at writers, facilitated by Irish Novelist and Screenwriter Cat Hogan. Invited guest speakers will cover a broad selection of themes e.g. The Submission Process for Plays/ TV and Film, Bursary and Grant Applications and how to manage your finances as a freelancer and Standing Your Ground as a Professional Artist.

(c) Artist's Mentoring Workshops – 2020/2021

Free mentoring programme. From 10 applications, 6 artists based in Wexford County have been selected for a series of free Mentoring Workshops to be delivered by Curator and Cultural Consultant Eamonn Maxwell over a four month period from Nov 2020 – Feb 2021. These mentoring workshops support artists in their practice and aim to address artists' specific needs working in a professional environment.

New Short Filmmakers Funds in Film, Documentary and Animation

The aim of this annual award is to provide funding and support to emerging filmmakers based in the County Wexford region looking to develop ambitious and creative narrative short films. Screen Wexford in association with Wexford County Council Arts Office and Bodecii Film selection panel (which comprised two film industry experts and Screen Wexford Coordinator, Linda Curtain) awarded 3 Short Making Teams in the categories of short narrative film, documentary and animation. The award consists of €2,500 per film, mentorship from leading industry professionals, lighting equipment hire valued at €1500 from film lighting company 'Teach Solaris' and some project management support from Screen Wexford

David Begley – ‘Ancient Connections’ Community Residency Ferns

As part of the Ancient Connections Wexford Wales programme and supported through Wexford’s Per Cent for Art Programme, Residency Artist, David Begley, is currently working on a 10 week workshop programme which includes the digging and preparation of a Monk’s garden in St. Edan’s Primary School, Ferns. David will deliver this programme to the school in spring 2021, exploring ancient herbal remedies and biodiversity, restrictions allowing. David has made contact with local farmers in the Ferns area for research on his film which will be part of the residency exploring ancient history and connections in farming practices across Wexford and Wales.

Music Generation

A partnership between WCC, WWETB, and the national agency Music Generation promoting access to high quality performance music education for young people in Wexford county working in preschool, primary school and youth work/ community settings. All musicians worked physically in the schools from October – Dec 2020, however, the schools programme has ceased due to COVID 19 regulations and tutorials are now taking place online with the teams of Music Generation Wexford Tutors and participating schools where it is possible. The High Street Opera Zoom which is an online opera workshop returned on Saturday 23rd January with Elizabeth Drwal. This workshop aimed at 8+ year olds encouraged them to develop their voices and musicianship while exploring creative responses to opera.

Art Ability/ Arts & Health programme with HSE centres.

This on-going programme supporting people with mental health / intellectual and physical disabilities across 9 HSE centres countywide continues to adapt the arts programme due to COVID 19. The Centres, in addition to their creative writing, visual art and music online workshops/tutorials, ran **in-reach programme** which involved the artists working in person in the centres. It involved smaller groups, co-facilitation from nursing staff ensured social distancing, and facilitated outdoors activity and travelling between venues. New outdoor Music Groups have been created at various residential units and currently this programme is being extended across all art forms.

Creative Ireland

Creative Ireland Programme for 2021

The recently published *Creative Communities Interim Review* makes clear that Creative Communities Strand of the Creative Ireland Programme has brought about closer collaboration between cultural and creative disciplines and in many cases enhanced collaboration and impact across the local authority. The Culture Team comprises members from various Departments across the local authority including Libraries, Arts, Archives, Community Development, Planning, LEO, Architects, Tourism and Municipal Districts.

A total funding allocation of €160,161 (€145,161 core funding + €15,000 Cruinniú na nÓg funding) is being provided to allow Wexford County Council to deliver collaborative creative projects of scale, innovation and ambition in 2021. Cruinniú na NÓg the national day of creativity for children will be held on Saturday 19th June 2021.

County Wexford’s Culture and Creativity Strategy runs from 2018-2022 and the additional funding allocated in 2021 will allow the local authority to work with creatives and local communities to deliver an inclusive programme based on the actions detailed in the strategy. All events and programmes will be delivered in compliance with public health guidelines.

COVID Care Concerts

A further series of Mobile Music Machine Covid Care Concerts funded by Creative Ireland in partnership with Wexford Mental Health Services, with the support of South East Community Healthcare Health and Wellbeing and Wexford Mental Health Association will be run in February 2021.

These concerts were postponed from January 2021.

To aim of the concerts is to provide emotional and psychological respite to residents, patients and staff in some of the most vulnerable communities in the county that have been deeply impacted by Covid-19.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Weekly Training

Weekly training finished on week 15th December. Due to COVID19 Level 5 restrictions we have postponed returning to weekly training until Week 25th January.

Covid 19 – Response

Wexford Civil Defence has being tasked to provide support to the Community Forum helpline in County Hall, HSE and Department of Defence since week 23rd March 2020.

Patient Transports

We have received 1 patient transport requests December, transport to Waterford Regional Hospital.

January, we have provided to date 6 patient transports to include, Whitfield Clinic Waterford, Waterford Regional Hospital, St Vincent's Dublin and the Mater Hospital Dublin.

HSE Test Centre PPE

Due to increased numbers of tests carried out in the Wexford Covid19 Test Centre, we are were asked to pack a further 5000 PPE packs for the HSE, delivered to them on 23rd December.

MOW Packs

Volunteers packed and distributed 400 older people packs for Meals on Wheels and Community Development Section.

Blood Banks – IBTS

We will support the Blood Bank in Enniscorthy from Sunday 17th January to Thursday 20th with 3 volunteers.

Additional Funding

We have received additional funding of €6,000.00, the funding will be spent on equipment needs identified as part of the Wexford Civil Defence Development Plan 2020 – 2022. Then equipment to be funded will be rechargeable lighting equipment and large search torches.

New Training Headquarters

We continue to look for a suitable training Headquarters for the Wexford Civil Defence. This is becoming a priority as the current lease will expire in two years on our current premises.

FIRE SERVICE

The Fire Service Capital Programme 2021-2025

The New Ross fire station is ready to go to construction at a cost of €1.7m. The Gorey fire station Upgraded/ Refurbished is approved to proceed through 2021/2022 at a cost of €0.5m. One fire appliance has been allocated to Wexford in the next tranche of appliances. A further spend of €12 million (approximately 20-25 additional appliances) is proposed for the period 2024-2025. The precise breakdown of this spend will be finalised at a later date.

COVID-19

The fire service operational training is kept under constant review and will be updated as required.

Fire Operations

There were 75 incident responses in December as detailed below.

Call statistics

Incident Type	Calls December 2020	Calls to date 2020	Calls to this period 2019
Chimney fire (WCC / Private)	6 / 10 (16)	132	127
Domestic fire (WCC / Private)	2 / 8 (10)	59	58
Road Traffic Accident	7	85	110
Industrial fire	0	11	9
Commercial fire	0	7	7
Assembly fire	0	4	3
Agricultural fire	0	4	3
Motor Vehicles	3	51	43
Forest/bog/grass etc	2	89	71
Rubbish	4	92	74
Non-fire rescues	6	55	31
False alarms – good intent	23	283	272
Malicious false alarms	1	6	2
Miscellaneous	3	49	92
Total	75	927	902

Fire Safety

The number of applications for Fire Safety Certificates and Fire Services Acts inspections for the month of December were as follows:-

December 2020

Applications Received	Year to date	December
Fire Safety Certificates	115	14

Number of Inspections	Year to date	December
FSA Inspections	89	3



1. Irish Water Asset Delivery

2. Minor Capital

3. Rural Water Programme

4. Water Conservation



COVID -19

- Water Services is carrying out its activity in line with COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Procedures issued by the LGMA.
- Office operations are continuing with staff working both remotely and in the office and so are available to answer any queries. General queries still go through Irish Water 1850 278 278.

1. Irish Water – Asset Delivery



Capital Schemes

Enniscorthy Network Upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Survey works are now complete and design of the hydraulic model for the sewerage network is underway ➤ Design work for rehabilitation/upgrade works to follow in early 2021.
Enniscorthy Intake Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New water intake and pumping station at Clonhasten. ➤ Planning permission was granted in September 2019. ➤ Tender documents are now complete and with Irish Water to issue a tender. ➤ Dates for tender and construction are not known until an Irish Water commitment on funding is known.
Wexford Drainage Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete drainage model of the Wexford Town foul drainage system. ➤ A full detailed hydraulic model identifying all pipelines and infrastructure and deficiencies in the network. ➤ Consultants Nicholas O'Dwyer appointed by IW. ➤ Drainage infrastructure survey works commenced in Wexford Town and Castlebridge. ➤ Stage 2 completion Spring 2021.
Fethard-on-Sea Sewerage Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preliminary Design for the project now complete for issue to contractor for design and build. ➤ Irish water has advised that due to budget constraints, this project has been re prioritised and will not go to construction in the near future. A new delivery date is yet to be decided.
Gorey Regional Water Supply	<p>Gorey RWSS - To be upgraded and new 8 ml/day WTP and 7,500m³ reservoir provided at Ballyminaun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning granted to upgrade borehole sites and build new WTP at Ballyminaun. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CPO completed ○ Contract awarded to Glan Agua ○ Operational date early 2022 ➤ New Treatment plant and storage site at Ballyminaun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construction began October 2019. ○ Onsite Reservoirs complete and new treatment plant under construction ○ Borehole works commencing September 2020

<p>Untreated Agglomeration Study (UTAS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arthurstown, Ballyhack and Duncannon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning permission granted. ○ It is expected that contracts to commence works will be signed within the next two weeks ○ Irish water has advised that due to financial constraints, this project will not be awarded until November 2020 at the earliest which will impact on delivery of the scheme ➤ Kilmore Quay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tender documents have been issued and tenders are due to be returned in February. ○ Land acquisition finalised ○ Planning permission granted ○ Irish water has advised that due to financial constraints, this project will not be awarded in 2020 and a new delivery date is yet to be advised.
<p>Wexford Town Water Main Rehab and Gas Network</p>	<p>Irish Water has advised it is no longer funding this project.</p>
<p>Direct Labour Pipe Laying Crew</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The direct labour crew have commenced the find and fix programme. At present they are connecting the new main on the old Dublin Road in Enniscorthy which allows the find teams the opportunity to build up a body of work for the fix teams. The current works are being funded through the Government stimulus package.
<p>Ferns Sewerage Upgrade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Design works are on hold subject to funding being made available from Irish Water.

2. Minor Capital



IW Minor Water Schemes

- **Disinfection Project**
 - Disinfection upgrade project at 98% complete county wide excluding snagging.
 - Snagging ongoing at various sites.
- **Treated Water storage programme**
 - 3 sites in Wexford – Kilmallock bridge, Camolin and Killealy.
- **Kilmallock Bridge**
 - To be submitted for planning by late 2020

IW Minor Wastewater Schemes

- **Trinity St WWPS Upgrades**
 - Contractor appointed for replacement of change-over switchgear and generator control panel with works expected to take place Q2 2021.
 - Generator exhausts and foul pumps manifold to be replaced Q2 2021.
- **King's Bay WWPS, Arthurstown Upgrades**
 - Contractor appointed for Phase 1 of upgrade works including site fencing and new valve chamber, expected to take place Q1 2021.
- **Invest to Save – The Cove/New Haven, Rosslare**
 - Funding secured under the Invest to Save programme will be used to decommission New Haven WWPS and divert flows to The Cove. Works are currently underway on site.
- **Stimulus Funding - Pump Upgrades**
 - Pumps will be upgraded to smart pumps at Distillery Road, Carcur and Crosstown WWPS in Q1 2021 to improve efficiency and reduce the frequency of blockages and sump cleaning.
 - Pumps will be upgraded to smart pumps at Ballygillane Big and Small WWPS in Q2 2021.
- **Stimulus Funding – SCADA Upgrades**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New SCADA telemetry will be added to four WWPS at New Ross Town and Bunclody. Works began on site during December and will continue in January 2021. ○ Upgrade of existing SCADA will take place at Spring Valley WWPS, Enniscorthy and Crosstown WWPS, Wexford.
IW Capital Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Wexford monthly CM budget in Q1 will be 108k/month. The Q2 to Q4 monthly budget will be advised towards the end of Q1.
New Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 applications received for Water Connections ○ 3 applications received for Wastewater Connections ➤ Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5 Water Connections sent for tapping ○ 8 Water Connections made
Non Irish Water Small Capital Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Somer's Way Pumping Station, Ballycullane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decommission WWTP, construct PS and rising main to connect to Ballycullane WWTP. ○ Rising main works are now completed. ○ ➤ O'Rahilly View WWTP (TIC), Gusserane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow during Q1 2021. ➤ Ballinamorrhagh WWTP (TIC), Curraclloe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow during Q2 2021. ➤ Radharc na bhFánaithe WWTP (TIC), Killanne <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site improvement works currently underway on site. ➤ Annesley Court WWPS (TIC), Camolin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design and site surveys have been completed for decommissioning of the existing WWTP and construction of a new WWPS to be connected to the public sewer network. ○ Tender processes are now complete and contractors are appointed.
DPI Resolution Scheme for Water Services Infrastructure	<p>Funding was granted by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for the resolution of Developer Provided Infrastructure (DPI) Issues at 4 number estates in Wexford. Works to progress at these sites to remove the DPI and connect to the public network in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle Close, Oulart- Connection application made • Mountain View, Ballindaggin- Connection enquiry made • Gleann na gCaor, Monagear- Connection enquiry made • Cois Cuan, Arthurstown

3. Rural Water Programme



<p>Measure 2 - Public Health Compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Killaneran GWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awaiting quotations for the engagement of a Hydrogeologist. Contact made with NFGWS for recommendations regarding appropriate Hydrogeologist.
<p>Measure 3 - Enhancement of Existing Schemes including Water Conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blackstairs GWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Works on the By-pass infrastructure required for the treated water tank at the treatment plant in Corrageen, Rathnure have been rescheduled until 2021. ○ Investigative works for the relocation and replacement of Caim reservoir are on-going with consultations with Planning Dept.
<p>Measure 5 - Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bing GSS - Community Waste water Connection (CWwC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correspondence was received by the Dept. on 13th November ○ A response is being prepared by the Chairman of WCC based on the 70 houses signed up to participate in the scheme
<p>Measure 6 - Community Connection Networks (Water)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Battlestown CWC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correspondence has been made with the scheme for written confirmation of its viability ➤ Ballinahask, Kilmuckridge CWC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correspondence has been made with the scheme for written confirmation of its viability ➤ Orchard Lane GSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter received 22nd December from Irish Water confirming Orchard Lane GSS Scheme has been taking in charge.
<p>Measure 8 - Individual wells (private or household wells)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual Well Grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Dept. revised the scheme which forms part of the funding investment under measure 8 of the Multi Annual Rural Water Programme in June of last year. ○ Claims under the previous Individual Well and Septic Tanks Grants will no longer be accepted by the Dept. after the 30 March 2021.

4. Water Conservation



Water Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Countywide consumption for December 2020 was on average 40.31MLD, this is a decrease of 0.91MLD from Nov 2020. Wexford YTD average is at 41.78MLD, which is below our target average of 41.84MLD.
Leak Detection & Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Leak repairs are on-going throughout the county. 42nr leak repairs were inspected and completed by operations staff in Dec '20.➤ Planned Leak detection and subsequent repairs were undertaken in Enniscorthy, Rosslare, New Ross and Carrigbyrne in Dec '20.
Water Network Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Rehab Submissions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tranche 5 proposals were forwarded to IW for 2021 funding. Funding has been approved for Coolballow Rd in Wexford, Rectory Rd in Enniscorthy, Dromgold boosted line, Enniscorthy and the Kilmore Link Rd, Fardystown. The remainder of the proposed schemes are awaiting further review by IW.➤ Find and Fix:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Find resources were concentrated in Enniscorthy during Dec '20, due to an increase leakage in the WSZ. This Direct Labour crew has had funding approved to continue in 2021. This find crew will be moving to Carrigbyrne WSZ next.○ The additional contractor Find crew continued in Gorey North DMA during Dec '20. Funding for this crew is yet to be approved by IW to proceed in 2021.○ Direct Labour Fix crew were in Enniscorthy in Dec '20 and are preparing to complete repairs in New Ross and Gorey Areas.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

NATIONAL ROADS

N25 New Ross By-Pass

All side roads have now been taken over by Wexford County Council for operational and maintenance purposes, while the PPP Company will continue to provide operational and maintenance services for mainline roads in accordance with the PPP Contract. Some localised and minor outstanding works and snagging will be completed in the coming months in accordance with Covid-19 restrictions. Wexford County Council's Project Liaison Officer remains available for consultation until the final close out of all project related matters.

N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour

The 97 separate option combinations that have been developed from the seven primary option corridors are currently being appraised to identify the preferred road-based scheme option. This includes a study of the existing road (Do-Minimum Option) to assess its ability to meet future transport needs, particularly in terms of safety and capacity, and a study of options for online upgrades and improvements that could be made to the existing road (Online Management Option) to meet future transport needs. Where possible, targeted and localised surveys are also being carried out in strict accordance with Covid-19 restrictions to further inform the appraisal process.

In tandem with this process the project is also studying other alternatives that could also possibly meet future transport needs, including public transport options (road or rail). A study of the needs of vulnerable road users (cyclists and pedestrians) is also underway to ascertain how their needs can be best addressed. Potential transport demand management measures are also being assessed to identify the role that enhanced public transport services (bus and rail) could play in meeting future transport needs. This also includes a study of the impact that possible changes to remote working patterns could have on future travel demand. Transport modelling for the project is also being updated in response to the ongoing post-Brexit expansion of ferry services at Rosslare Europort and the significant increases in freight volumes using the Port. Combined with the ongoing instability in traffic patterns due to Covid-19 restrictions, these factors have added to the complexity of the transport modelling process for the project which is critical to the selection of the optimal transport solution. The proposed transport solution will also need to demonstrate that its development would be compatible with the achievement of targets for carbon reduction and sustainability in the transport sector, and would deliver value for money for the proposed investment of public funds.

An interim information brochure will be published in February to provide the public and elected representatives with a comprehensive update on progress on all aspects of the option selection process. The project team continues to engage with the public on any queries that are submitted.

Rosslare Europort Access Road

The design and environmental assessment of the scheme is progressing following the confirmation of the selected scheme option in December 2020. Surveys and investigations required to inform this process will also progress in the coming months subject to Covid-19 restrictions. As the design and environmental assessment develops the project team will also start direct consultations with property owners and residents potentially impacted by the scheme. It is anticipated such consultations will commence during the summer and again will be conducted in adherence with any relevant Covid-19 guidelines. It is anticipated that a planning application will be prepared for submission towards the end of 2021.

The scheme is being developed to deliver a high level of integration with Rosslare Europort's approved Masterplan development, the Rosslare Europort to Waterford Greenway project, the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Road Project, and the N25 Ballygillane Roundabout Road Project. The project team will continue to liaise closely with all of these projects to develop a high quality, integrated multi-modal transport solution for Rosslare Harbour and Rosslare Europort.

National Road Pavement Schemes

2020 Pavement Schemes

N30 Mountelliot

Construction work commenced in October 2020. The drainage and footpaths works have been completed.

Pavement works recommenced on 20 January and should take 4 to 5 weeks to complete.

N11 Kileen to Newtown – Phase 2

Construction works commenced on 16 November 2020.

The deep excavation works were completed before the end of 2020 including the barrier replacement on the northbound carriageway.

Drainage works were completed on 22 January.

Pavement works commenced on Monday 25 January and should be completed within 4 weeks, if weather permits.

2021 Pavement Schemes

N25 Holmestown to Tomcool Pavement Scheme

A Letter of Acceptance was issued on 8 December 2020.

Drainage works are due to commence on 25 January 2021.

Pavement works will commence within 4 weeks once the contractor has completed the overlay work on the Kileen to Newtown scheme. This may commence earlier if the HRA layer cannot be laid on the Kileen to Newtown scheme due to adverse weather.

N11 Ferns Pavement Scheme

TII Archaeologists are working on tender documents for the archaeology monitoring.

This should be tendered by the beginning of February.

Tender documents for the construction contract are being reviewed at present and should be completed by the end of January. The scheme should be tendered in February.

Construction is likely to commence in the second quarter of 2021 subject to approval from TII to award the contract. The contract duration will be 8 to 10 weeks.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS

Resurfacing/Strengthening

The 2020 strengthening programme of 74km was completed on 10 December 2020. The Municipal Districts are currently compiling a schedule of roads to be strengthened in 2021.

Strengthening work is not considered essential or critical transport infrastructure work under current Covid guidelines, so all preparation work in relation to these schemes is currently suspended.

Surface Dressing Works

The 2020 surface dressing programme of 110km was completed on 3 September 2020. The Municipal Districts are currently compiling a schedule of roads to be surface dressed in 2021.

Active Travel Measures

Co. Wexford received €1,351,098 funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 31 August 2020 for 28 projects. The majority of these projects were substantially completed by 18 December 2020.

Wexford County Council submitted a proposed list of 2021 Active Travel projects to the National Transport Authority for consideration on 21 January 2021.

Climate Change Adaptation Measures

Co. Wexford received € 460,000 funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 31 August 2020 for 16 projects. The majority of projects were substantially completed by 18 December 2020.

Winter Maintenance

The 2020/2021 winter maintenance commenced Monday 12 October 2020. There have been 48 planned treatments of salt to Priority 1 & 2 routes up to 22 January 2021.

General Maintenance

Drainage, patching and road surface repair works ongoing in all Districts.

Finance:

Annual Financial Statement 2020

Work is now commencing on the preparation of the 2020 Annual Financial Statement/Final Accounts. This will include appropriate recording of the exceptional adjustments to record the government covid subventions and various business supports grants that occurred during 2020. The preparation of the annual accounts will take a number of months to complete but it is expected that the Council will meet the submission deadline of the end of March.

Capital Programme 2021 – 2023

Work is progressing on the preparation of the next 3 Year Capital Programme, 2021 - 2023 and it is planned to have this ready for consideration of members for the March meeting.

Rate Accounts 2021

Rate Demands for 2021 are currently being prepared for issue. Circular Fin 01/2021 setting out the terms of the 3 month Rates Waiver recently announced by government for 2021 was received on 27th January and is currently being reviewed for application to customer accounts. It should be noted that this 3 month waiver has modified eligibility criteria and accordingly is a separate, standalone waiver scheme from the 2020 Waiver and will therefore be more tailored than the 2020 Rates Waiver scheme. Details of the 2021 scheme will be circulated to members to assist with any queries they might receive in relation to same.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee will meet again on 25th March and will be further developing their work programme for 2021.

Cash Flow/Overdraft

The Council continues to operate in overdraft, Ministerial Sanction is in place for borrowing by way of overdraft in the amount of €20m for the period to the 31st December, 2021. The Public Health emergency continues to impact on cash flow with figures for January 2021 down on the same month in 2020. The government support funding has eased pressure on cash and there has been no use of the overdraft facility in the first few weeks of 2021.

**Tom Enright,
Chief Executive.**