



Chief Executive's Report

September 2020

1.Economic Development & Planning:

Economic Development

Covid 19 Business Supports €10.8 million grant aid approved

The Economic Department implemented a range of Covid 19 business supports to assist SME's impacted by the pandemic. To date **3,887 grant applications** have been received from enterprises across the range of Covid 19 supports in the Economic business support unit. Currently **2,880** micro enterprises have been approved **€10.8 million** in grant aid under Covid 19 in County Wexford.

Restart Grant Schemes

There are two schemes under the Restart Grant Covid 19 measure. The previous Restart Grant Scheme from the 22nd May to the 22nd July 2020 and the new Restart Grant Plus scheme which is currently open. To date Wexford County Council has received a total of **€15.2 million** to support business reopen under the combined Restart Grant Schemes and **3,179** applications.

Table 1 Total Applications under both Restart Grant Schemes 22nd May – 28th August 2020

Total Applications Received	Total Applications Approved	Total Applications Paid	Total Funding for Restart Grant Schemes to Wexford
3,179	2,257	€7,045,436	€15, 240, 639

Restart Grant Plus

The new Restart Grant Plus (RPG) was open for applications on the 10th August 2020 with a closing date of the 30th September 2020. The scheme has expanded the number of rateable commercial businesses who can avail of financial supports to reopen their business or maintain trading. Key new features of the scheme are:

- Increase number of employees from 50 staff to maximum of 250 employees
- Increase turnover from €5 million to €25 million (turnover of less than €100,000 per employee to max €25 m)
- Inclusion of rateable sporting organisations
- Non rateable B&B's can apply to Fáilte Ireland

In the first 3 weeks of the scheme Wexford County Council received **1,527 applications** with **735** businesses approved **€3.8 million** to date. Any business approved under the previous Restart Grant Scheme can avail of a Top Up grant for their business.

Table 2 Restart Grant Plus (RGP)

LOCAL AUTHORITY:		WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL
RESTART GRANT SCHEME STATISTICS PLUS		
	NUMBER:	VALUE:
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	771	€3,871,613.09
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	487	€2,623,187.29
APPLICATIONS PAID	248	€1,179,411.79
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	21	€0.00
Total Number of Applications	1,527	€7,674,212.17

Restart Grant

The restart project team have emailed all previous applicants to advise of the new Restart Grant Plus Scheme. The scheme closed on the 22nd July and was replaced by the RGP. WCC has received 1,652 applications with 1,522 applications approved and payments to the value of **€5.8 million** in grant aid to businesses under the first scheme. Nationally Wexford County Council was one of four local authorities to receive a second tranche of funding with an additional €1.4 million allocated.

Table 3 Restart Grant

LOCAL AUTHORITY:		WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL
RESTART GRANT SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER:	VALUE:
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	1	€2,000.00
APPLICATIONS PAID	1,521	€5,866,024.66
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	130	€0.00
Total Number of Applications	1,652	€5,868,024.66

New €16 million funding announcement for Pubs, Bars and Nightclubs

In recognition of the particular difficulties facing pubs, bars and nightclubs that remain closed the government has announced a €16 million funding package to support the sector. A new Restart Grant Top Up initiative will apply to this sector and the Economic Department are awaiting scheme details, the sector will receive:

- 40% Restart Grant Top Up to assist with reopening
- Minimum grant will increase for sector from €4,000 to €5,600 for bars
- Maximum grant will increase from €25,000 to €35,000
- Other measures include waiver of excise duty on liquor license for renewal 2020

These measures will be supported by the government's employment subsidy scheme effective from the 1st September, the commercial rates waiver and the liquidity supports under Covid 19 business supports.

Micro Finance Ireland Covid 19 Loans Second Scheme opens 31st August 2020

The Covid-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland is a Government-funded initiative to support small businesses through the current period of uncertainty, aimed at protecting jobs and allowing businesses to continue to trade. Due to the demand for funding the microfinance loan was paused in July. Wexford had 26 enterprises supported with loans to the value of €717,300 allocated. Following the announcement, of the July Stimulus package the Covid 19 loan application process is open on the 31st August 2020 and the maximum loan is €25,000. Details on www.localenterprise.ie/wexford

Expansion of Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOV's) under Covid 19

From the 8th April to the 30th September 2020 the Trading Online Voucher Scheme has been expanded to increase the level of support from 50% funding to 90% funding to a maximum of €2,500. The scheme is supported under the government's digital strategy and LEO is supporting SME's to look at alternative ways of doing business by applying technology. Funding can be towards eligible costs such as digital marketing strategies, e-commerce websites or app development. Wexford has had its increased allocation trebled last week due to demand for the scheme. Last year Wexford **received** 30 allocations but this year LEO Wexford has received 313 applications. To date **284 enterprises** received financial support with **€649,304** grant aid approved to businesses to move online In Co. Wexford. In June the scheme changed some of the eligibility criteria to facilitate the tourism and hospitality sector to apply for the trading online voucher scheme which is an important contributor to the local economy in Co. Wexford with 12% employment.

Reopening County Wexford

A new Covid 19 accelerated measures scheme targets funding through the Town and Village Scheme to increase footfall to towns and villages and implement Covid 19 requirements to protect staff and consumers.

Round 1

The closing date for applications to the Department was the 3rd July and a total of €112,500 was allocated to Wexford.

Table 4: Town & Village Round 1 Approved €112,500

Town/Village	Grant	Project
Co. Wexford towns & villages	€40,000	Coastal & Mountain villages cluster tourism marketing & training. Economic Dept, WCC. & Visit Wexford
New Ross Town	€25,000	Themed walls mural project as destination experience. New Ross Municipal District & Arts Dep. WCC
Gorey	€25,000	Public realm & destination marketing Gorey Kilmuckridge MD
Bunclody & Ferns	€22,500	E commerce platform Enniscorthy MD

Round 2

The closing date for Round 2 was the 14th August and we are currently awaiting word on funding from the Department. Projects must be completed by the 30th November 2020.

Round 3

The closing date for Round 3 was the 28th August and we are awaiting word on funding. In Round 3 the Department facilitated the inclusion of the larger towns with a population of over 10,000. This means that both Wexford and Enniscorthy town have applications submitted under Round 3. Unfortunately the funding was announced on the 7th August and with a tight deadline projects were prepared in consultation with District Managers and the Economic Department to meet the deadline. Projects must be completed by the end of February 2021.

Tourism

Visit Wexford marketing campaign supported by Wexford County Council has had a very positive response from the Tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland confirmed that Wexford was the top hotel accommodation provider for occupancy bookings in July and August nationally with a strong promotional campaign focused around family holidays and nostalgic childhood memories.

Some of the **Social Media KPIs** for this campaign during the month of July are as follows:

TOTAL AMOUNT OF NEW FOLLOWERS 2,398 (increase on 2019 +351.80%)

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS 61,670 (increase on 2019 +305.30%)

TOTAL AMOUNT OF WEBSITE SESSIONS 27,334

The autumn campaign which will be a more challenging season for the tourism sector aims to target the range of outdoor activities in the county to support consumer confidence. The theme is to get lost in Wexford in the outdoors, so it could be lost in the mountains, lost on the coastal walks etc. promoting safe destination adventures.

Visit Wexford Autumn Campaign will target Couples, Solo Travellers, Adventure, Spa, Golf, Sport, Food, Over 50's and families and friends reconnecting.

The Local Enterprise Office is working with the sector on Covid 19 business supports to sustain jobs and SME's in the sector and have supported the Fáilte Ireland tourism Covid 19 charter. The Town and Village grant aid of €40,000 funding to WCC and Visit Wexford will support the sector to work collaboratively on marketing and training.

Wexford Autumn Campaign 2020.



- **Destination Recovery Task Force**

Fáilte Ireland has established a number of Destination Recovery Task Forces for key tourist destinations as a short-term tactical response to guide the reactivation of these destinations following their closure to visitors as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The Wexford Destination Recovery Task Force held its first meeting in July and is chaired by Brian O'Flynn, Head of Ireland's Ancient East at Fáilte Ireland and key tourism employers in County Wexford. The purpose of this Destination Recovery Task Force is to co-ordinate industry and stakeholder recovery for the tourism sector in Wexford in response to Covid-19. The Task Force is expected to be in place for a period of 12-18 months and it is envisaged that it will meet initially every three weeks, with this frequency to be reviewed. The Destination Task Group will work in partnership with Wexford County Council and Visit Wexford to support economic initiatives during the pandemic.

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

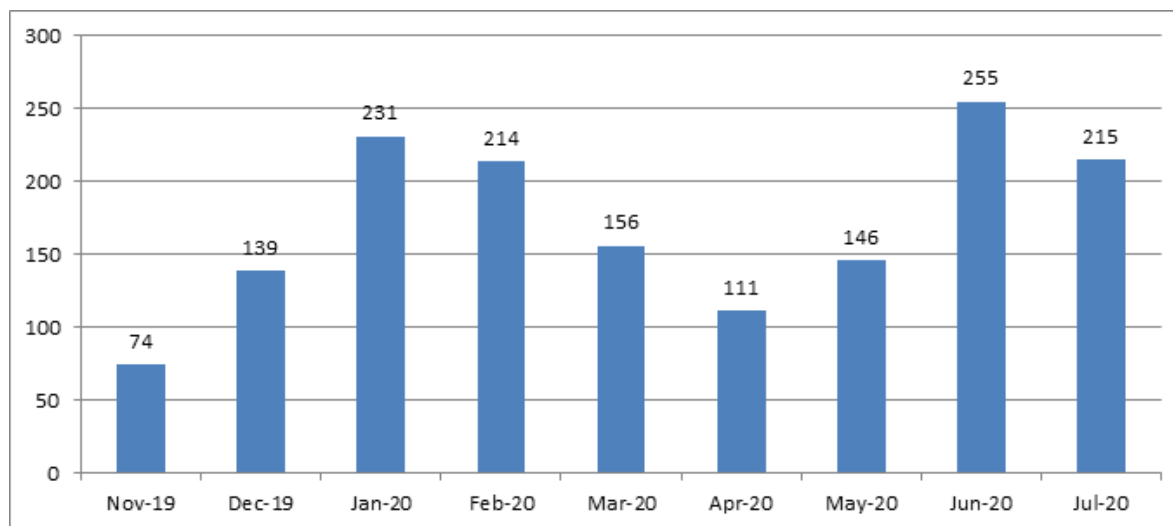
Numbers are those received up until the 25th August 2020.

No. of valid applications	96
No. of invalid applications	1
Extension of Duration	1

Development Management

Site Search

The introduction of the site search online system was brought in to help local agents in identifying planning permissions on sites they are working and for the first time to provide access to the older planning registers. The system can also be expanded to link into the policies of the new development plans when these are adopted. This free system enables agents to carry out the necessary planning history searches remotely and its use is proving to be very popular. The Planning Section will continue to improve its remote services and is back scanning older files which will also link to this service. The graph below identifies the usage but each session represents significant reductions in the time spent by planning staff obtaining this data and also represents time saved in travelling to County Hall for the agents



Forward Planning

Work continues on the County Development Plan with the pre-Draft Plan having been circulated to the members and discussions on policies taking place in special meetings at the end of July and the start of August. Further meetings will be planned before the Draft Plan is approved for public consultation.

Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

In-house Actions

Due to Covid-19, the controlled trial of new biodegradable cleaning products has been cancelled. It is hoped that the project will proceed in the future.

Natural Wexford

A Natural Wexford Sign for Lady's Island is to be installed in early September. Further signs for Forth Mountain, Shelmaliere Common Quarry, Bunclody and Ballymoney are currently being produced and will likely be installed in October. The signs will inform visitors to the area of the importance of the natural heritage in these areas. Scoping is being carried out to decide on the next locations for Natural Wexford signs.

Wex Bee Aware

Due to Covid-19 the proposed spring and summer awareness campaign did not go ahead as planned. Community groups in both Glynn and Courtown Harbour approached staff at Wex Bee Aware to create wildflower areas in their communities and they are using Wex Bee Aware/Wexford County Council signage to highlight the change in landscape management in their communities.

Derelict Sites, Dangerous Structures and Vacant Sites

Report for the months above is as follows.

- 65 property inspections have been conducted.
- 3 properties removed from Derelict Site register.
- 4 properties have carried out remedial works requested so as not to be placed on the Derelict Site Register.

- 14 properties recommended to be issued with Section 8(2) notices.
- 6 properties recommended to be entered onto the Derelict Site Register.
- 4 properties referred to Area Engineer for investigation as a Dangerous Structure.
- Report issued on Vacant Sites in Wexford town.

Heritage

Heritage Grant Schemes

The Planning Department has been successful in obtaining additional grant aid funding for Tellerought Castle to repair the remaining sections of the castle. Major Works to stabilise the castle were completed on March to enable the road to reopen. The additional €50,000 funding plus funding from the Planning Sections Heritage budget should enable the completion of the repair works to safe guard the castle for future generations.

Planning Enforcement

The number of planning enforcement cases as at 24th August including month of July 2020 is as follows:

➤ Live Cases	285
➤ Cases Opened	45
➤ Cases Closed	86
➤ District Court Cases	1

The owner of land used for the storage of end of life vehicles at Ballywilliam, New Ross, was sentenced to four months imprisonment in respect of a continuous offence relating to non- compliance with an enforcement notice.

The term of imprisonment was suspended for two years subject to the owner complying with the planning permission.

Planning Enforcement – Short Term Letting

The number of short term letting planning enforcement cases as at 24th August 2020 is as follows:

➤ Properties located on web sites	56
➤ Areas included are Courtown, Tara Hill, Gorey Town, Coolgreany, Clonattin, Ballymoney, Ardamine, Kiltennel, Craanford.	
➤ Live Cases on Apas	9
➤ Cases Closed	6
➤ No. of warning letters served	10
➤ Form 15 submitted	3
➤ Form 17 submitted	1

Disability Access

Disability Access Certificates (DACs) Validated:

The number of DAC applications valid, for the period from 01/01/2020 up to and including 25/08/2020, totals **66**, as follows:

Municipal District (MD)	No. of Valid DAC Applications per MD	Awaiting Assessment	Further Information Sought	Granted	Refused
Enniscorthy	9	0	1	8	0
Gorey	14	0	6	8	0
New Ross	6	0	0	5	1
Wexford	31	1	5	25	0
Rosslare	6	0	0	6	0
Totals	66	1	12	52	1

Disability Proofing carried out as part of WCC Access activity:

Referrals	Total
LAC/PLAC & General Planning Applications	70

2. Special Projects:

SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORT – August 2020

- Min Ryan Park, Wexford:** Works on the park are substantially completed and the Park was opened to the public on 15/06/2020. Works on public lighting installation are nearing completion. Award of the skate park contract is anticipated before end of this week. The official opening, scheduled for August 29th, has been postponed due to Covid restrictions.
- 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 due in the coming months.
The detailed design of the access road and new automated railway level crossing is expected to be go to tender in September 2020, with works due to commence in early 2021. 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.
- Crescent Quay:** Works are substantially completed with minor snagging items to be closed out in the coming month.
The total outturn cost of the works contract was €2.57m. These works were part funded by a €1m grant from the ERDF.

4. **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 new pedestrian bridge;
 - The management and progressive transformation of the Leisure Centre Car park;
 - The creation of new urban blocks for infill development.

A presentation was made to the Enniscorthy MDC July meeting setting out the next steps for the project including the development of a master plan for Templeshannon that will co-ordinate the public realm works and the development of the proposed new urban blocks within Templeshannon. A Brief for services is substantially completed and will be advertised in September.

The preliminary designs, environmental studies and planning documents for the proposed pedestrian bridge have been delayed by the Covid 19 emergency restrictions. A completed preliminary design and bridge options report is now expected by the end of September, following the completion of site investigations works on site in September.

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

5. **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 has been delayed by the Covid 19 restrictions. The recent lifting of restrictions will allow this procurement process to advance. This tender is a competitive procedure with negotiation. It is envisaged that it will take circa. 3 months to fully conclude the tender process and finalise the tender report.
6. **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. A design team was appointed in April 2019, the preliminary design has been completed and Part VIII approval was obtained on 13th January 2020. Detailed designs and tender documents for the works contract are progressing. The tender date for works has been impacted by Covid 19 and tenders will be invited before end of August. Works are expected to commence on site in January 2021.
7. **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 and is to issue in the coming months.
8. **High Hill, New Ross:** The High Hill site is a strategic urban site, that is currently derelict, that connects John Street and the town centre with the 12th century St Mary's Church and Cemetery. A plan for the development of a new amenity/public space at High Hill, in keeping with the Norman history of the town, was developed by New Ross MDC. A Part VIII application was approved for the preliminary design in July 2019 and the detailed design and works tender documents are progressing. Tenders for works have been advertised and works are expected to commence in November 2020.

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

- 9. 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 is expected to be advertised in October. WCC received initial RRDF funding of €95,224.00 for this project.
- 10. Carrigfoyle Activity Centre:** Works have commenced on Phase 1 (access road, car park, trails and services) and are now scheduled to be completed by Q3 2020 following closure of the site in April/May due to CoVid19.
The draft design drawings for the development of an Activity Centre building on the site (Phase 2) have been prepared by the WCC's Architect Department. The drawings are currently being reviewed by the Special Projects Office with a view to making a Part VIII application in Q3 2020.
- 11. Enniscorthy Tourism Project:** Alan Sherwood and Associates were appointed to develop a plan that will significantly enhance the tourism experience in Enniscorthy, increase visitor numbers and enhance the town's profile as part of Ireland's Ancient East.
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.
- 12. Kilmore Quay Link Road:** Part 8 approval was obtained in February 2019. Tenders for construction works have been received and a preferred tenderer identified. Works on site are expected to commence in September 2020 following delays related to Covid19 and land acquisition.
- 13. 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 has been impacted by the CoVid19 restrictions. Work re-commenced on site in mid-May. It is now expected that the external works will be completed in August with the building, landscaping and planting works to be completed in December 2020.
Tenders have been received for the playground equipment with the installation to commence on site following completion of the main works contract.
- 14. Monck Street Enhancement Scheme:** Tenders were invited for design services for improving the streetscape on Monck St. in late March 2020 and tenders were received on 27th April. Roadplan Consulting has been appointed with works planned to commence on site in Q2 2021.
- 15. 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 both projects have been impacted by the CoVid 19 restrictions and

these contracts are now expected to be put in place in Q3 2020 subject to Government requirements in relation to Covid.

Tenders for the preliminary interpretative design services for the Norman centre in New Ross have been received and an appointment will be completed later this month.

The procurement documents for detailed design services for the Dunbrody Ship enhancement works were advertised in July.

16. 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.

An advance works tender package is currently being advertised with a Q4 2020 target to commence deconstructing the tanks.

17. 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 appointment of an engineering consultancy to undertake this preliminary design is expected in Q3 2020.

18. Wexford Flood Relief Scheme: The project brief for design services for the Flood Relief Project has been advertised on Etenders. The closing date for tender proposals was 9th June 2020. A total of 7 tenders were received and are currently undergoing assessment.

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 is expected to be completed by mid-September.

19. Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme: The Enniscorthy Scheme awaits formal confirmation from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (MPER) in order to proceed to construction. The confirmation process will involve a formal review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) by the MPER. The confirmation documents which include the EIAR & NIS were submitted by WCC to the OPW in December 2019. The documents were signed off by the OPW and submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in March 2020.

The current position on the confirmation process is that a request for tender of services for environmental consultants to assist MPER with the formal review of the EIAR & NIS is currently being progressed by the DPER.

While confirmation of the scheme from the Minister is awaited, WCC will progress the detailed design and the shortlisting of contractors for the main 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 flood defences is continuing. The detailed design of the new River Slaney Road Bridge is complete. Tender submissions for short listing contractors for the bridgeworks contract were received in June 2020 and are currently being assessed. The

design of the Promenade Sewer diversions has been agreed with Irish Water and tender documents for these works have been prepared. Treatment of invasive species was carried out in June.

GREENWAYS:

- 20. Rosslare Europort to Waterford City Greenway:** Draft feasibility, route options and environmental screening documents were completed in Q1 2019 and public information events were held in Wellingtonbridge & Rosslare Strand in May 2019.

The EIAR & NATURA Impact reports were delayed due to CoVId19 and are now substantially complete with the CPO drawings and schedules being finalised. The draft application to An Bord Pleanála will be submitted to WCC for review by the end of August with the application to be published in September.

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

- 21. 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 on behalf of the other Councils.

An application for funding for the project, submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on the 28/11/2018 was successful and €8.0m in grant funding was approved by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in June 2019.

Tenders were received for detailed design, tendering and construction management services and a contract for design services was signed in February 2019. Site investigation, vegetation clearance works & the topographical surveys have been completed and detailed design is currently underway. It is planned to tender for a works contractor in July 2020.

Work on the rail and sleeper lifting commenced in August and is progressing well.

A Leader funding application is currently being prepared for the interpretation and animation of the entire route.

- 22. Wexford to Rosslare Greenway:** Fehily Timoney and Company has just been appointed to provide consultancy services for a feasibility study, route selection, preliminary design and environmental assessments for the development of this project.

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

HOUSING

Housing Section and Covid 19

As Covid-19 restrictions are eased, the Housing Section will continue to expand its operations. We have now commenced face to face appointments ensuring compliance with guidelines. Housing clinics have not yet started, but this is under review. Housing allocations have recommenced and are ongoing.

Housing Supply

Capital Projects

The Technical staff continued to progress and monitor all of our Capital Projects. Working with consultant teams from home has allowed many projects to proceed with funding stages and applications as can be seen in the updated Capital Schedule below. All of our live sites are back in action since Monday 18th May 2020, the sites have been inspected and revised programs for delivery have been or are in the process of agreement. New sites have been surveyed in the last week as we had procured consultancy services, confirmed funding approval and we had progressed necessary paperwork and permissions during the shutdown.

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Current Position	Comment
Ross Road	1	Enniscorthy	Under construction	Due to complete Sept 2020
The Ballagh	7	Enniscorthy	Under construction	Due to complete Oct 2020
Taghmon	18	Rosslare	Under construction	Due to complete Sept 2020
Carley's Bridge	17	Enniscorthy	Ready to commence on site	EO signed, construction to commence 31/08/20.
Ballynaboola	1	New Ross	Stage 3	Boundary & Environmental issues unresolved (no activity)
Whiterock Hill (22 units in 2 phases)	44	Wexford	Stage 3 approved for all units	Delayed tender due to Irish Water. Tender will be in 2 phases now, phase 1 to tender in Sept 2020 for 22 houses. Phase 2 depends on IW outcome
Rosetown, Rosslare	23	Rosslare	Stage 3	Awaiting approval to proceed
Ballywish, Castlebridge	11	Wexford	Stage 2	Propose CPO of land for access (no activity)
Maudlintown	12	Wexford	Stage 2	Awaiting DHPLG approval
Rosemary Heights, Ferns	8	Enniscorthy	Stage 2	Stage 2 to DHPLG Q2 2020 consultants appointed. Surveys complete, awaiting drawings from Consultants July 2020
Kileens	40	Wexford	Stage 2	Stage 2 – Higher densities. To appoint team in Q4.

Creagh East	4	Gorey	Stage 2	Consultants appointed, ESB cables – Stage 2 Q3 2020. Consultants appointed. Surveys complete except for ESB line
Ballyhine, Barntown	7	Wexford	Stage 2	Stage 2 – Q2 2020 Design team appointed. Knotweed cordoned off. Management plan in place. Site cleared and topo surveys complete July 2020. To DHPLG Sept 2020
Rosbercon	28	New Ross	Stage 2	Knotweed Management Plan in place. Architects selected Formal appointment in Sept 2020. Commence design development Q3 2020.
Wexford Street	20	Gorey	Stage 2	Demolitions complete, Appoint Design Team Q3 2020 through OGP. New programme to follow appointment of team.
Creagh West	8	Gorey	Stage 1	Stage 2 Q2 2020 resource delays.
TOTAL	249			

Pre-development Stage

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Marconi Park	1	Enniscorthy	Single stage – Contractor selected. Construction to commence in Sept 2020
5 Francis Street	1	Wexford	Sketch Design commenced Structural Survey booked for Q3 2020
Bullawn	2	New Ross	Archaeology investigations under way and initial site surveys complete. Stage 2 Oct 2020.
Marley	1	Enniscorthy	Stage 1 – not approved by DHPLG (submitted 23/05/19) not approved – on hold, no funding stream (no activity) will review in Q4
Castlebridge	1	Wexford (single stage)	TAP house, site ownership to WCC – Land transfer complete. Out to tender Aug 2020
Ballycullane	1	New Ross	Fire damaged house – Funding approved from WCC. To commence on site Sept 2020.
Newtown	1	Ferns	Site clearance approved.
TOTAL	8		

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.
Adamstown	16	New Ross	No services capacity presently, discussion with Irish Water
Tagoat	9	Rosslare	Site cleared, addressing boundaries (Stage 1 Q4 2020)
Daphney View	24	Enniscorthy	Access issues – discussion with Focus (no activity)
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 Q2 2020
TOTAL	87		

Other Projects (early feasibility)

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Newtown, Ferns	1	Enniscorthy	Site Clearance awaiting PEP to proceed with site clean up in preparation for demolitions. Assess then for HSE build or site sale. Demolitions Q3 2020. Site clean-up tendered
Adamstown	2	New Ross	Demolition of old house required, demolition Q2 2020. CPO commenced, in newspaper. Single stage Q2 2020 awaiting CPO action.
Monomolin	4	Gorey	Services and enabling works 2020.
Lacken (TAP)	1	New Ross	Single stage approved, Partial funding required from WCC. Tender Q4 2020
Belvedere	6	Wexford	To go to next Municipal District meeting July 2020
TOTAL	14		

Part V Acquisitions

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Millquarter, Knockmullen	18	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	Due to be delivered Q3 2020
Roxborough Manor, Mulgannon	22	Wexford	14 units to be delivered Q3 2020, 8 units to be delivered Q2 2021.
Clonard	6	Wexford	To deliver by end Q4 2020
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	18	Enniscorthy	To deliver 2021/2022
An Glasan, Enniscorthy	5	Enniscorthy	4 units to deliver 2020, 1 unit to deliver 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin Ph 3	6	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	6 units to deliver by Q4 2020
TOTAL	75		

Turnkeys

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Belvedere Road	7	Wexford	To deliver Q4 2020
Michael St, New Ross	3	New Ross	Delayed on site.
Ard Uisce, Whiterock Hill	19	Wexford	1 unit delivered. 18 units to deliver Q1 2021
Whitewater Estuary, Ballyhack	3	New Ross	To deliver Q3 2020
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	50	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis from 2021
Clonattin Upper, Goreybridge	8	Gorey Kilmuckridge	To deliver Q4 2020
Ballynaglogh, Blackwater	16	Enniscorthy	DHPLG approval received Mar 2020. To deliver 2021.
Bridgetown	12	Rosslare	DHPLG approval received Apr 2020. Expected to deliver Q4 2021
TOTAL	115		

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			
Fort Road, Gorey	11	Gorey	To be delivered Q3 2020
Clonard Road	20	Wexford	4 to be delivered Q4 2020
Cluid			
Greenville Lane	52	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis in 2020 and 2021
Pairc an Aird, Coolcotts	67	Wexford	DHPLG approval received May 2020.
Tuath			
Rocksborough, Drinagh	85	Wexford	20 units to be delivered Q4 2020, remainder will deliver over Q1 and Q2 2021
Old Forge Road, Milehouse	59	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis in 2020/2021
Gleann an Ghairdin	9	Gorey	To deliver Q1 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin	24	Gorey	To deliver Q4 2020
Peter McVerry Trust			
Tuskar House , John's Gate St Wexford Town	12	Wexford	CAS Funding. To deliver Q4 2020
TOTAL	319		

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Enhancement Programme – Community Centres and Buildings 2020

Wexford LCDC were allocated €190,698 under the Community Enhancement Programme – Community Centres & Buildings 2020 during August. A total national budget of €5m grant funding is being made available by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Government's July Stimulus package. The €5m funding is separate to the €2m funding (Wexford €68K) under the 2020 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) which was launched on 22nd June. It is targeted at measures that seek to stimulate local economies, while enhancing facilities in disadvantaged areas. The fund will be administered by LCDCs in a manner consistent with previous iterations of the CEP. Grant aid of between €1K and €5K is available, with Gorey Mens' Shed also supported to acquire a permanent residence.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The SICAP sub-committee met in August to consider the mid-year check, and recommended acceptance of same. The delivery of SICAP in 2020 to-date has been 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. In light of this, the Mid-Year Review process was revised, while at the same time maintaining good practice in terms of programme governance and management. Checking progress to-date and providing timely support where difficulties were identified during the first part of the year. 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.

Burial Grounds

Major walkway improvement works were completed in Summerhill Cemetery, Enniscorthy Town recently, which will facilitate greater access for people of all levels of mobility and improve the visual appearance of this facility.

A total of €17K in Burial Ground maintenance grants have been allocated year to date. The purpose of the grant scheme is to allow the Council to contribute financially to local voluntary groups such as Resident's Associations, Tidy Village Groups etc., & individuals who carry out burial ground maintenance/improvement works, and incur expenses associated with that work within Wexford County Council closed vested burial grounds.

Pride of Place competition

Glenbeg Point, Ardamine and Kilmuckridge were nominated as the County Wexford representatives in the 2020 IPB Pride of Place Competition in the Housing Estates and Islands and Coastal Communities categories, respectively. This prestigious competition is administered by Co-operation Ireland, which works to promote and encourage interaction, dialogue, and practical collaboration between the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as part of the on-going peace process. The purpose of the IPB Pride of Place competition is to acknowledge the fantastic work being done by communities all over the island of Ireland. It is recognition of the work being done to create viable, vibrant and visible communities. Competition judges virtually visited both groups during August, with the result due to be announced in November, 2020.

PPN

Wexford PPN put together Covid19 re-opening support packs for PPN member groups to assist with re-opening. These packs included sanitising gel, safety posters, floor markings, hazard tape as well as a copy of the Pobal Guidance documents for Community Groups. The cost of these packs was funded by Wexford County Council through the Covid19 Emergency Fund. There was a great response from PPN members and packs were well received. To date 69 packs have been distributed.



The Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022 has been finalised and is available on Wexford County Council website. A formal launch of Healthy Wexford is planned for Autumn 2020. This launch will be accompanied by new social media platforms for Healthy Wexford.

The Community Mental Health Fund Small Grants Scheme, supported by the Department of Health, will launch in early September and will provide an opportunity for not-for-profit local community, voluntary, sporting, arts and youth groups to apply for funding to deliver actions or projects which are in line with the Mental Health theme of Healthy Ireland. The total fund for Wexford is €30,000, with grants ranging from €2,000 to €5,000. Further details and application forms will be available on Wexford County Council website in early September.

As part of a Regional Healthy Ireland Action, Wexford will be part of a Virtual Positive Ageing Week at the end of September - September 28th to October 2nd 2020. There is a dedicated facebook page which will provide details of all events and activity - <https://www.facebook.com/Positive-Ageing-Week-2020>

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Joint Policing Committee meeting scheduled to be held in August has now been re-scheduled to Tuesday the 15th September 2020 at 10.00 via Teleconference.

Town and Village Renewal Programme (TVR) 2020

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, recently announced the expansion to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for 2020, with each Local Authority now entitled to submit up to 10 applications (increased from 6 previously).

Following advertisement, 21 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) were received and a series of online workshops held with representatives of community groups to identify eligible projects for the 2020 scheme.

EOIs are currently being developed into full applications to be lodged with the Department. The closing date for the Standard Scheme has been extended to 30th September 2020.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Meeting

An LCDC meeting was held on 17th July via teleconference and included updates on SICAP, Healthy County Committee, Age Friendly Ireland National Pilot regarding Assistive Technologies Telehealth and the Community Preparedness Strategic Plan.

Local Action Group (LAG) Meeting

A LAG meeting was held on 17th July with updates on LEADER programme reports including LDS Budgets and Programme data, Project Extension & Resolutions, with recommendation under a Community Call proposal.

19 Projects were presented following recommendation from Independent Evaluation Committee with LEADER grant funding totaling € 939,952 approved at the meeting under the Community & Economic themes.

LEADER

There was 1 claim received for Article 48 pre-payment check and returned to the implementing partner, Wexford Local Development. 4 other claims totaling €70,252.43 were checked and authorized for payments to fund projects.

Sports Active

Waterford Wexford HSE Mental Health Services Announce launch of first Integrated Exercise Practitioner for Mental Health



As part of the “Sláintecare” 10 year programme to transform Ireland’s health and social care services and as an addition to existing funding commitments towards its implementation, a €20 million Sláintecare Integration Fund was launched in March of this year. The Integration Fund focused on supporting the development of existing and new best practice projects that are capable of being scaled nationally. 477 proposals were received and 122 were successful. Among successful submissions nationally was **“The Exercise Effect”**, providing professionally led and community-based physical activity interventions for people with mental health difficulties in Co. Wexford.

The submission collaborated on by Paula Lowney, HSE Mental Health Services, Fran Ronan, Sports Active Wexford, Dr Suzanne Denieffe and Dr Evan Matthews, Waterford Institute of Technology that met criteria of (1) demonstrating innovative ways in which citizens can engage in their own health, (2) representing best practice in the management of chronic diseases and caring for older people, and (3) will encourage innovations in shift of care to the community or promote hospital avoidance.

Return to the Water Programme

Swim Ireland have a list of Tier 1 Training Facilities – these will be considered “Education Hubs” with status to deliver Swim Ireland Education as part of the return to water roadmap for Swim Ireland Education. These Education Hubs will have practical elements education and training available from September 2020, as per government guidance. Sports Active are delighted to support the Apex New Ross in their selection as a Tier 1 Training facility (one of nine in the Ireland) to support the return and delivery of their Learn to Swim Programme.

In addition, Sports Active has supported Bunclody Community Swimming Pool to reopen on July 8th, and learn to swim programmes for the community in August, with the support of the Get Ireland swimming Programme.

Open Water Training sessions

In partnership with Swim Ireland we have started four six week open water swimming programmes for Adults, three in Courtown and one in Curracloe. These sessions are due to run until the end of September and are aimed at those who would like an Introduction to open water swimming.

We also held an Intensive Open Water Week for 8 – 19 year olds in Courtown from August 17 – August 21.

COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme

Sports Active Wexford COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme

Sports clubs in County Wexford can now apply for COVID-19 Club Small Grants of up to €1,500 through Sports Active Wexford,

The COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme is part of a series of COVID-19 related funding schemes from Sport Ireland, following the announcement of €70 million of funding by the Government to support the sports sector in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme will be implemented by Sport Ireland’s network of Local Sports Partnerships and will provide assistance to local clubs with covering costs associated with the reopening of sports clubs. This scheme is separate to the Sports Club Resilience Fund, which will be delivered through National Governing Bodies. The COVID-19 Club Small Grants can be used to

support COVID-19 related expenditure dating from 2nd May 2020 onwards (Date of publication of Government roadmap to recovery).

INTERREG – Celtic Routes

The most recent google analytics information on our website www.celticroutes.info has shown that there have been 20,366 visitors with 53.58% viewing from the USA and 35.04% viewing from the UK. The social media contractors have reported a Total Opportunities to See of: 22,767,693 on both print and social media avenues.

Social and Other Media activities (Working Word)

As some travel restrictions remain in place in Ireland and the UK due to the coronavirus crisis, Working Word and the Celtic Routes Partners continued to work collaboratively to respond appropriately. As advised, Working Word stopped proactive press opportunities specifically for Wales and have not written any press releases. At the start of May, Working Word focused activity on British and Irish social media partnerships and Celtic Routes partners approved this new approach. This limitation ceased in mid-July, and all media activities are being re-scheduled to recommence at the end of July 2020.

New Video

A Covid-19 friendly video has been produced and uploaded to the website, and is used for social media purposes.

ENVIRONMENT

The consultation period for the new Harbours and Piers Bye-Laws has ended and a number of submissions have been received. The Manager's Report will be submitted to the next SPC meeting for consideration at the end of September.

The total number of waste complaints received by WCC has increased slightly to 3227 over 3117 for same period last year. The number of Clean Ups required to be completed by the Environmental Clean Up Crew up to the end of July is 2041 (up 3% on the period for 2019). Following a number of adjournments there are 11 cases listed for hearing in September before the District Court with a further 32 cases listed.

The Litter Management Plan is currently under review and it is expected that a draft will be available for discussion in the autumn.

The Environmental Clean Up Crew and other Environment Section staff have been carrying out beach inspections and manning beach entrances to advise the public about the COVID-19 Pandemic Regulations Restrictions. The beaches opened up again after June 8th and the crews are carrying out normal beach servicing work – beach cleaning, minor repairs, ring buoy inspections and liaising with Wardens, Beach Lifeguards and Litter Patrol Staff. The Beach Litter Patrol Staff and Beach Lifeguards will cease operations in a few weeks at the close of a very busy summer season.

There has been consistent advertising over social media regarding dog fouling, illegal dumping, man in the van illegal operators, using bottle/can recycling sites and how to deal with your waste.

The Environment Section has supported clean ups across the county by small groups and families. The National Spring Clean took place in June with the easing of restrictions. The Tidy Towns Competition was cancelled for 2020. Judging for the Keep Wexford Beautiful competition took place over July and August. The results will be revealed at the Annual Environment Awards ceremony later this year.

The measures announced in the Anti-Dumping Initiative 2020 (Grant €95K) – Mattress Amnesty, Clean Ups of black spots, CCTV use, Man in the Van Initiative and a number of other measures will get up and running over the next few months.

- The Council has launched a new Anti-litter Campaign "Calling out Litter Louts" focussing on personal responsibility for acts of littering and making this socially unacceptable.
- The Mattress Amnesty will take place from Tuesday 21/7/2020 to Friday 18/9/2020 no Saturdays. A charge of €2 applies and a limit of 5 mattresses per vehicle and one visit per

vehicle applies. This is to spread the number of customers attending at any one time in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Works are continuing on Capital Department approved Projects at Kilmore quay, Slade, New Ross and Fethard On Sea.

Piers and Harbours	
Coastal Erosion	Coastal staff are assessing recent damage to the coastline caused by the unusual summer storms, Storm Ellen and Storm Frances
New Ross Port	Pilotage operations have resumed in New Ross Port since 26 th August when buoyage was upgraded. A new Harbour Master has also been appointed
Harbour and Beach Bye Laws	The closing date for submissions in terms of the Draft Harbour Bye-Laws has passed and are being assessed. The 2005 Beach Bye-Laws are currently under review

LIBRARIES, ARTS & ARCHIVES

Libraries, Archives and Arts Report to Wexford County Council, September 2020

LIBRARY SERVICE

Response to Covid-19

The “**Browse & Borrow**” service from County Wexford libraries continued in August in line with national guidelines. This service offers the public a library visit of short duration to browse/return/borrow stock. Visitors can also use a computer/wifi or printing facilities. Services are available by appointment which allows for socially distanced use of library buildings. The service was extended in August offering a dedicated time each day, at 10.30am for seniors and vulnerable people to visit their local library. In July and August 12,000 persons visited County Wexford libraries. The library service continues to provide public information using various online platforms and a host of online activities for adults and children.

The **BookCall** service continued in August throughout County Wexford. Co-ordinated from Library HQ and the Mobile Libraries, this adaption of the homebound service brings items to people who are elderly or vulnerable and who are cocooning at home. These library members had the option to request books/DVDs/CDs in their chosen genre/subject area. Library staff selected the books and contacted the member to arrange a suitable time for collection. Libraries issued 1105 items to 154 persons through this service in July and August.

Heritage Week

For Heritage Week, 15th-23rd August, Wexford Libraries made 8 different programmes available online from the YouTube channel and across all social media platforms. These were:-

1. Illustrated talk on The intriguing tale of Capt. Percival Lea Wilson, Gorey by Des Kiely
2. Short illustrated video on Wexford in the war of Independence 1920–1921 by Barry Lacey
3. ‘In the News’ Items from the local County Wexford newspapers for this week 1920, 5 different posts

4. Wexperts, a family online quiz
5. Bain triail as leabhar Gaeilge i rith Seachtain na hOidhreachta/Try an Irish Language Book from Gorey Library, 8 posts
6. New Ross New Books Heritage Display
7. Tutorial on Wexford Public Library Service Digital Archive
8. Tutorial on Accessing and Downloading Wexford Public Library Service Oral History Project Recordings

In Total 58 posts reached 22,773 people of whom 767 participated.

Local Studies

The Wexford Great War Dead website has been updated with images added and records updated with new information received from researchers in Australia and New Zealand.

Digitization. The Enniscorthy Guardian Newspaper 1911-1922 has been digitized and is being made ready to add to the collection. The New Ross Standard 1910-1930 upload is in progress and the Wexford People is in the process of been digitised from microfilm and will be added to the collection in September.

Library Services to Children

Summer Stars

Almost 800 children have taken part in the national Summer Stars reading adventure in all County Wexford libraries this July and August and will receive their certificate. This programme supports children retain their literacy and numeracy levels when out of school.

Parenting Today 2020 Talks

The fourth online talk 'Literacy for Little Learners' with Dr Rebecca Long was posted on all five Library Facebook pages on Thursday July 16th. This was followed by a talk on ADHD with Lorraine and Sarahann Mooney posted on the Thursday 20th August. This series of information talks for parents is a collaboration between Wexford CYPSC and Wexford Libraries.

Adult Reader Events

The new Wexford Libraries' Online Book Club was held on Thursday 6th August. 104 people registered to attend this Facebook Group moderated by library staff at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/278963496612690/>. They read 'The Beekeeper of Aleppo' by Christy Lefteri. Some 23 participated on the night and to date 89 people have taken part. This is a new type of book club where you write and post your views, it enables people participate when it best suits them if they don't want to be part of the live discussion.

Archive Service

Acquisition

Three collections of historical significance were deposited with the Archive in August: –

Extant archival material (minutes, accounts, sailings, correspondence) relating to **New Ross Port & Harbour Commissioners (1848-c. 1980)**. The collection represents a valuable primary source on the administration and development of the quay &c. over the course of nearly two centuries. It is intended to digitise the earliest minute books (1848-1899) to facilitate remote research for the forthcoming publication of the New Ross Atlas

Handwritten diary of the events of 1919-21 written by a prominent Enniscorthy Irish Volunteer who was active during the period

Collection of **photograph albums, slides and negatives from the 1950s-60s** relating to the New Ross area.

The Archive responded to 37 research enquiries in August.

Creative Ireland

Creative Communities Jobs Stimulus Measure

The Library and Arts Department invited applications for the July Jobs Stimulus Package as it relates to the Department of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht announced in July by Minister Catherine Martin. The purpose of the funding is to boost Ireland's economy in response to the coronavirus pandemic and specifically in relation to the culture and creative sector. Suggested themes for applications include, placing creativity at the heart of economic development; innovative place-making projects in local areas; collaboration, and professional development of creative practitioners and / or organisations.

The following funding has been approved:

- VAI/Screen Ireland Professional Development: €14,693.00
- Extra for Artist Bursaries: €12,807.00
- Animation of Public Realms Creative Projects: €22,500.00

Arts

Wexford Film / Screen Coordinator Job call out

Wexford County Council sought the delivery of a contract for services for a Part-Time Film Co-ordinator in July, 2020, which will work through the Arts and Economic development departments.

The aim of this role is to develop film in County Wexford which increases indigenous and international film & TV production and provide local support and training to new and existing film and screen sector in County Wexford. The Co-ordinator will oversee the preparation of a 1 year pilot programme for film development which will develop into a three year strategic plan for the county. The Co-ordinator will work closely with the Screen Wexford Steering Committee which will consist of representatives from Wexford County Council, funders, the film and TV industry.

48 applications were received in August 2020 and 12 applications were shortlisted and are being interviewed on 1st and 2nd September 2020

2020 Wexford Culture Night Reimagined

In response Covid 19 and national guidelines Culture Night on Fri 18th Sept 2020 will share a hybrid programme of digital and physical events, continuing to champion the Culture Night legacy as a night of shared cultural experiences— making culture free and accessible to all. Audiences of all ages both here and abroad, can seek out culture online, or in their locality.

The Arts Council is the primary funder for Culture Night for the first time ever this year, driving the event's focus on equity for artists and increasing visibility of Ireland's diverse cultural landscape. County Wexford will be presenting a smaller selection of curated events that will combine physical events, if and where possible, alongside an online programme. Plans are already underway and we encourage you to take the time to explore the events that are already confirmed for this year at: <https://culturenight.ie/events/wexford/> Culture Night is supported by the Arts Council in partnership with the Wexford County Council.

Public Art- New Ross

The installation of the Per Cent for art sculpture by Artist, Caomihe Kilfeather, for the N25 Bypass was installed in August in Strokestown New Ross. . Landscaping around the sculpture will be completed in September with the official launch in October, 2020.

'Ancient Connections' - Public Art Programme Update

Wexford County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council, Wales, are delighted to announce two new artists' in residence programmes for Wexford and Wales, **David Begley** (Wexford) and Fern

Thomas (Wales) have commenced their residencies in August, 2020. These residencies will running over two years - exciting three-year arts, heritage and tourism project linking North Pembrokeshire and North Wexford. Ancient Connections is funded by the European Regional Development Fund with partners Wexford County Council and the Per Cent for Art Scheme.

Major new public art commission for Ferns and St Davids Pembrokeshire County Council and Wexford County Council have invited applications from artist/s to create two new pieces of public art, one in Ferns and one in St David's as part of *Ancient Connections* with a total maximum budget of €175,000 to include all costs.

The artworks must be linked either visually or conceptually and be made from sustainable materials. Closing date for submission is 21st September, 2020.

“Wexford in Lockdown”

The Arts and Community Department co funded the publication ‘ Wexford in Lockdown ’ which contains over 200 pages (over 1000 photos) of the people of Wexford taken by photographer Lee Robinson during the Lockdown from Day 1 to the start of Phase 2. The result is now set to hit coffee tables across the county as he launches what he hopes will serve as a definitive historical record of how Wexford negotiated the Covid-19 pandemic - his 'Wexford in Lockdown' photo book". Pre-orders can be sought from <http://wexfordphotos.com/wexford-in-lockdown-book/>

Art Ability/ Arts & Health programme with HSE CENTRES This ongoing 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 are currently, in addition to their creative writing, visual art and music online workshops/tutorials, are commencing to plan an **in-reach programme** which will involve working in a very different way to being centre based. It involves smaller groups, co-facilitation from nursing to ensure social distancing, facilitating outdoors and travelling between venues.

New outdoor Music Groups have been created at various residential units and it is envisaged to have this programme up and running across all art forms in the near future.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Weekly Training

A roadmap for Civil Defence to return to training has been completed, we are currently working on Standard Operation Guideline to ensure volunteer safety on returning to training and community events cover in August 2020.

Boat Training resumed on Wednesday 26th August.

Minimum Training Standard is priority with completion due for March 2021.

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. A small number of requests continue to be handled.

FIRE SERVICE

New Build- New Ross Fire Station

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has been advised of the successful tenderer for New Ross fire station. Department approval is required before contract can commence.

Fire Operations

There were 72 incident responses in July as detailed below.

Incident Type	Calls July 2020	Calls to date 2020	Calls to this period 2019
Chimney fire (WCC / Private)	0 / 1 (1)	88	79
Domestic fire (WCC / Private)	2 / 3 (5)	34	39
Road Traffic Accident	11	43	62
Industrial fire	2	8	7
Commercial fire	0	6	4
Assembly fire	0	2	0
Agricultural fire	0	2	1
Motor Vehicles	4	32	22
Forest/bog/grass etc	8	73	53
Rubbish	5	55	47
Non-fire rescues	5	31	19
False alarms – good intent	29	164	140
Malicious false alarms	0	1	0
Miscellaneous	2	26	46
Total	72	565	519

Fire Safety

The number of applications for fire safety certificates and Fire Services Acts inspections for the month of July were as follows:-

July 2020

Applications Received	Year to date	July
Fire Safety Certificates	65	6

Number of Inspections	Year to date	July
FSA Inspections	54	2



1. Irish Water Asset Delivery

2. Minor Capital

3. Rural Water Programme

4. Water Conservation



COVID -19

- Water Services has returned to normal service following the lifting of restrictions on non-essential construction work due to Covid - 19. Irish Water is back to business as usual.
- Water Services is carrying out its activity in line with COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Procedures issued by the LGMA.
- Office operations are working as normal 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 will follow in Q4, 2020.
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. ➤ Deferred survey works due for completion Summer 2020.
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

Untreated Agglomeration Study (UTAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arthurstown, Ballyhack and Duncannon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contractor selected. ○ Planning permission granted. ○ 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"> ○ Scheme design complete and ready to tender. Tender documents are being finalised and we expect to issue shortly. ○ 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.
Wexford Town Water Main Rehab and Gas Network	<p>Irish Water has advised it is no longer funding this project.</p>
Direct Labour Pipe Laying Crew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The direct labour crew have commenced the find and fix programme. This is designed to target specific areas of leakage within the County and is designed by our Water Conservation office. Fixes to identified leaks have been completed in the South Regional and works are currently on going in Enniscorthy Town.
Ferns Sewerage Upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At detailed design stage

2. Minor Capital



IW Minor Water Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disinfection Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disinfection upgrade project at 95% complete county wide excluding snagging. ○ Works completed at Creagh WTP. Works at Glynn WTP were commissioned w/e July 17th. Newtown WTP restarted week commencing June 15th. Snagging ongoing at various sites. ➤ Treated Water storage programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 sites in Wexford – Kilmallock bridge, Camolin and Killealy. ➤ Kilmallock Bridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be submitted for planning by summer 2020 ○
-------------------------------	--

IW Minor Wastewater Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trinity Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Generator Upgrade works expected to take place Q4 2020. ➤ Fairgreen Pumping Station, Ballycullane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Works to decommission WWTP, construct PS and rising main to connect to Ballycullane WWTP have commenced on site, and will continue during Q3. ➤ Sinnottstown Lane Pumping Station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrade works practically complete, with telemetry connection to be done in Sep to complete the project. ➤ Iona Pumping Station, Rosslare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrade works taking on place on site, with expected completion September 2020 ➤ Rosetown Village Pumping Station, Rosslare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civil, mechanical and safety upgrade works ongoing during Q3 2020. ➤ Pumping Station Rationalisation <p>Several proposals for rationalisation and decommissioning of pumping stations located close together have been submitted to Irish Water for review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosslare Aeration Upgrade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting held on site with Irish Water to discuss proposals ○ Funding sought from IW under Government Stimulus Package
IW Capital Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fixed budget of 720K for 2020 for Capital maintenance upgrades county wide. ➤ 418K of expenditure has been committed to date.
New Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ August <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 16 applications received for Water Connections ○ 13 applications received for Wastewater Connections

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. ○ Delayed due to COVID 19. Expected completion now Q4 2020. ○ Rising main works to recommence 7th September ➤ O'Rahilly View WWTP (TIC), Gusserane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow during Q3. ➤ Ballinamorrhagh WWTP (TIC), Curracloe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow during Q3.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some Water Services staff continue to work from home where possible

3. Rural Water Programme



Measure 2 - Public Health Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mullawn GWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Turbidity Meter was installed by EPS on the 26th May. Works have been completed and require inspection. WCC awaiting notification to inspect works. ➤ Killaneran GWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awaiting quotations for the engagement of a Hydrogeologist.
Measure 3 - Enhancement of Existing Schemes including Water Conservation	<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.
Measure 5 - Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bing GSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommendation to the Department at the end of the month on decision on progression. ○ Agreement to be reached in regard to Road Re-instatement before Site Investigation quotations can be sought. Site investigation quotations expected to be sought once confirmation of numbers is received. ○ Discussion with Planning proposed on results of findings of appropriate AA Report.

Measure 6 – Community Connection Networks (Water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Battlestown CWC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due to insufficient resident uptake, advised by group leader that scheme not expected to proceed. ○ Alternative solutions to resident issues currently being investigated. ➤ Ballinahask, Kilmuckridge CWC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due to insufficient resident uptake, advised by group leader scheme not expected to proceed ➤ Crosstown GSS Scheme/Orchard Lane GSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awaiting confirmation from Irish Water on takeover of both schemes
--	---

4. Water Conservation



Water Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Countywide consumption for July 2020 was on average 43.97MLD, an increase of 0.6MLD from June 2020. ➤ This is currently outside our 2020 monthly target of 41.84MLD. However, Wexford is subject to seasonal demand from Tourism, Agriculture and Industry sectors.
Leak Detection & Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leak repairs are ongoing throughout the county. 46nr leak repairs were completed by operations staff in July 2020. ➤ Planned Leak detection and subsequent repairs were undertaken in Wexford, Enniscorthy, Kilmuckridge, Bunclody and Campile areas.
Water Network Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New Ross: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coffey Northumberland connected 5nr shared services to the front main on Bewley St, restoring pressure to the properties and removing 2 nr leaks, saving 1.5m³/hr. ➤ Enniscorthy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coffey Northumberland remain stood down in Bellfield due to COVID-19 restrictions during July 2020. ➤ Rehab Submissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approved Old Dublin road works will be progressed in 2020. Coolballow is proposed to be delivered in the next phase.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

NATIONAL ROADS

M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy PPP Scheme

Covid-19 Site Closure

Works are still being impacted by the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 resulting in a slippage of the program for closing out of minor works. It is expected that any outstanding works will be completed in mid-September, subject to an updated programme from the contractor.

M11, N80 Link and N30

The M11, N80 Link and N30 are now open to traffic. Works in relation to fencing, landscaping drainage and general housekeeping will continue until contract completion.

Side Roads

Any outstanding works in relation to side roads will involve the installation of Traffic Management on a temporary basis to enable the works to be carried out safely.

Liaison Office

Wexford County Council is continuing to liaise with the public in relation to the scheme.

N25 New Ross By-Pass

Finishing works are continuing on site in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines in order to close outstanding items. A number of roads have reached substantial completion and were taken over by Wexford County Council in August. There is a five year defects period on all roads during which time any defective works that arise will be remedied by the PPP Co. It is anticipated that the remaining side roads will be substantially completed in September and will be taken over by the Council. All outstanding accommodation works will also be completed within this period. A further series of road safety audits were conducted on all roads in July to review operational conditions on the roads. Some adjustments to the design and construction of localised areas of the road network will be undertaken in the coming weeks in response to these audits and in order to mitigate potential safety hazards.

The project art piece was installed in late July alongside the Stokestown Road, en route to the Kennedy Homestead and looking onto the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy bridge. Landscaping and other amenities for the art piece will be completed by Wexford County Council in the coming weeks.

The PPP Company continues to provide operation and maintenance services in accordance with covid-19 guidelines. The 24/7 emergency contact number 1800 989090 will also continue to operate and respond to any emergencies. Wexford County Council's Project Liaison Officer remains available for consultation until the final completion of all outstanding works.

N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour

The public consultation on the constraints study and scheme options finished on the 10th of August. The project website <http://oilgate2rosslareharbour.ie> had over 30,000 views during the consultation, the project team engaged in over 300 one on one phone conversations with local residents and a total of 566 responses were received during the event. A post-consultation report has been published on the project website which provides further details on the public consultation.

The project team has reviewed and considered all of the responses received and a detailed assessment of the scheme options is now in progress to identify the option that best meets the project objectives. The project is committed to completing this assessment as expeditiously as possible in order to provide certainty on the preferred scheme option. It is anticipated that the preferred option will be confirmed early in 2021. At that time the Option Selection Report and preferred scheme option will

be published on the project website and will be presented on public display (subject to any Covid-19 restrictions). It is also intended to formally brief elected members in advance of publication.

In the meantime the project team continues to perform their duties in line with Covid-19 restrictions and government advice, and will continue to address any project queries by phone or email via the contact details provided on the project website.

N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare and Rosslare Europort Access Road

A detailed assessment of the three scheme options is in process following the completion of the public consultation in June. The three scheme options under consideration are the retention of the existing road without further improvements, a scheme of improvement measures to the existing road corridor and the development of a new offline road corridor which also utilises the Ballygerry Link Road. Full details of the scheme options and other project information are available on the project website <http://rosslareeuroportaccessroad.ie>.

The scheme options are being assessed under the criteria of economy, environment, safety, social accessibility & inclusion, integration and physical activity to identify the option that best meets the project objectives. It is anticipated that the preferred scheme option will be identified in October. The Option Selection Report and preferred scheme option will be published on the project website and will be presented on public display (subject to any Covid-19 restrictions). It is also intended to formally brief elected members in advance of publication.

The project continues to consult closely with Irish Rail and Rosslare Europort as the scheme develops in parallel with plans for the future development of the Port.

2020 National Road Pavement Schemes

The 2020 TII road improvement allocation has been received from TII.

The following schemes will be carried out in 2020:

- N30 Mountelliot Pavement Scheme
- N11 Kileen to Newtown Phase 2 Pavement Scheme
- N25 New Ross Roundabout to Clonard Great Pavement Scheme
- N11 Ferns Pavement Scheme

N30 Mountelliot Pavement Scheme

This scheme runs from the newly constructed Mountelliot Roundabout to the R731 Ballyanne junction in New Ross.

This scheme was tendered in May. The contract was awarded in August.

Works should commence in September with an 8 week construction programme.

N11 Kileen to Newtown Phase 2 Pavement Scheme

This scheme runs from the Ferrycarrig Bridge to the Maldron roundabout on the N11.

Works are progressing on the tender documents. This scheme was tendered on 19 August with a tender return date of 11 September.

Works should commence in October with a 12 week construction programme.

N25 Holmestown to Tomcool Pavement Scheme

This scheme runs from Holmestown junction to Tomcool junction on the N25.

This scheme should be tendered in September.

Works should commence in November with an 8 week construction programme.

N11 Ferns Pavement Scheme

Preliminary archaeology investigations were carried out in 2019. Further archaeological investigations are underway. These are required to be carried out in advance of the pavement scheme going ahead. These investigations were completed in July.

It is expected that the pavement scheme will be tendered in the 4th quarter of the year. Construction is likely to commence in the first quarter of 2021 with an 8 week construction programme.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS

The Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations were announced on 21 January 2020. Wexford's allocation was €17,088,007, up €2,646,207 on 2019.

Resurfacing/Strengthening

The strengthening programme (Machinery Yard) commenced in the Gorey-Kilmuckridge District on 21 February. It was postponed from 30 March to 18 May due to public health measures. The first phase of the Machinery Yard programme was completed on 18 June.

Roads completed (macadam surfacing) in the last month were:

Rathgarogue Village (New Ross District)

Coolhull to Johnstown (Rosslare District)

Belvedere Road (Wexford Borough District)

Surface Dressing Works

The surface dressing programme commenced in the Enniscorthy District on 22 June.

Roads completed in the last two months were:

Ballindaggin; Tinkerstown; Halfway House to Kiltale; Ballyrankin to Strahart; Hand Hill to Kilrush; Clonegall to Garryhasten; Dorans Bridge to Mcurry; Solsborough; Tinnakilla; Dunanore; Castle Lane; Clone Road to Killabeg; Mangan; Curraghgraique; Clohamon to Graigue Beg; and Ballynavoughran (all in Enniscorthy District)

Tomnafunshoge; Cronecribbin to Ballylacey; Limerick Hill; Burrow to Brideswell Big; Rockspring to Ballymore; Smiths Cross to Ashton; Wafers Cross to Pegs Bar; Ballyscough to Moneyboe; Ballymoty to Corbally; Killahard to Glebe; Annagh Central to Knockbrack; Annagh Central to Annagh Crossroads; Borleagh to Killinierin Graveyard; Barnland to Knockinna; Island to Banntown Bridge; Ramstown Road; Ballymurragh to Monamolin; Buffers Alley Cross to Mounthoward; Litter More to Killincooly Beg; Ballycourcy Beg; Cloolakup to Garryvarren; and Kilcavan to Cullenoge; (all in Gorey-Kilmuckridge District)

Ballyanne; Ballinlug West to Ballinlug East; Ballyhighland; Kilhile to Arthurstown; Five Roads to Dunmain; Adamstown to Raheenduff; Lacken Cross to Newtown Commons; Tintern to Curraghmore; Ballinruan Cross to Kilcloggan; Oldcourt; Rochestown Lane; Millquarter to Courthoyle; and Dunbrody Abbey to Horeswood (all in New Ross District)

Wellingtonbridge to Kilderry; Duncormick Hill to Johnstown; Poulmarl to Furlongstown; Gurlins to Ambrosetown; Killinick to Montfield; and Allenstown to Muckstown (all in the Rosslare District)

Ballywish to Ballymartin Cross; Ballymartin to Garrylough; Garrylough to Ballyfarnoge; Bulgan to Mountainmuck; and R730 Ferrycarrig (all in Wexford Borough District).

Community Involvement Schemes

Roads completed in the last two months were:

Ballyhamilton/Knockduff/Ballindaggin; and Knockduff to Bree (both in Enniscorthy District)

Ballyharty to Lannagh (Rosslare District)

Local Improvement Schemes

The Department of Rural and Community Development has approved a €329,878 grant for County Wexford for 13 lanes.

Lanes completed in the last two months were:

Ballybrittas to Bree (Enniscorthy District)

Ballinclair Lower (Wexford Borough District)

Bridge Rehabilitation Grant

Bridge repairs completed in the last two months were:

Ballycarney Bridge (Enniscorthy District)

Ballylarkin Bridge, Laburnum Bridge and Ballynahown Bridge (all in Gorey-Kilmuckridge District)

General Maintenance

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

PUBLIC LIGHTING

Public Lighting LED Upgrade

Over 7,000 lanterns have been upgraded to LED since the beginning of 2016.

It is hoped to upgrade the remaining 5,700 lanterns on ***non-National Roads*** and ***Housing Estates*** in 2020.

Design works are underway with 66% of the lanterns already designed.

60% of the lanterns have been delivered with 40% of the lanterns installed to date.

The scheme should be completed in October.

Wexford County Council applied to TII to upgrade the remaining lights on ***National Roads*** to LED in 2020. The locations are listed below:

- N11 Oilgate
- N25 Kilrane and Rosslare Harbour
- N25 Ashfield cross Roundabout
- N25 Barntown
- N25 Larkins Cross
- N25 Balinabola
- N30 Clonroche
- N80 Ballycarney
- N80 Bunclody

TII approved all schemes on 16 April.

Lighting designs have been completed.

These nine schemes were tendered in four separate Lots.

All four Lots have been awarded.

It is expected to have all nine sites upgraded by the end of October.

Public Lighting Development Fund

Additional public lighting has been or is being installed at the following locations under the Public Lighting Development Fund.

- Newtown Road Wexford Town (Completed).
- Clonard Village, Clonard, Wexford Town (Completed).
- Castlebridge Village southern end (Completed)
- Castlebridge Village -Crossabeg road. (Completed).
- Ferns Village – rear of funeral home (Completed).
- Puddle Lane, Ballycanew (Awaiting ESB connection).
- Fishers Row, Trinity Street, Wexford Town (Awaiting ESB connection).
- Marian Terrace, Camolin (Awaiting ESB connection).

- Tomhaggard Village (Contractor due to commence on week commencing 30 August)
- Kilrane Industrial Estate Access road (Lanterns installed. ESB connection applied for. Cabling due to commence in September).

5. Finance:

COVID -19

Expenditure on 2020 spending programmes has now largely returned to pre-covid levels and services are being delivered. The COVID 19 emergency continues to impact negatively on the finances of Wexford County Council across all income sources. In addition unplanned emergency expenditure on our response to the crisis is now in the region of €900k.

Details of the 6 Month (27th March to 27th September) Rates Waiver scheme for businesses eligible for the waiver as set out in circular Fin 11/2020 have now being applied to rate accounts in the county. At this point a total of 3,477 rate accounts have being adjusted for the waiver and the total value of the waivers is approx. €10m. The reimbursement of these funds is expected to be received during September. In the meantime revised statements have been issued to the ratepayers and it is hoped that arrangements can now be put in place to pay the remaining balances of the accounts.

57 Mortgage Customers have now applied for the 3 Month Mortgage Break since it was implemented on 20th April as an option for customers struggling to pay their mortgages to the council. An online application is available on the Council's website to facilitate these applications. Following **Circular 18/2020 of 26th June 2020** the mortgage payment break for local authority borrowers was extended from 3 to 6 months. To date 25 of the customers on the 3 month break applied to have their Mortgage break extended. Details of the scheme are available on the Council's website.

Circular 19/2020 dated 6th July notified local authorities of revised employment related eligibility criteria for RIHL (Rebuilding Ireland Housing Loans) applications to account for the impact of the COVID-19 situation, particularly for applicants who were in receipt of the PUP (Pandemic Unemployment Payment) or the Temporary Wages Subsidy Scheme (TWSS). There has been no change to the position/requirements as noted in this circular. However, as these payments are to cease on 1st September and convert to the EWSS (Employment Wages Subsidy Scheme) the council has sought clarity on how this might change the requirements of Circular 19/2020 and await a response in this regard.

Q2 Finance Report – to 30th June 2020

The Q2 Finance Report has been circulated to members. There is a reported further deterioration in the revenue position for this quarter as opposed to the surplus reported for the same period in 2019. The position for June 2020 is informed by the onset of the COVID health emergency and it is not possible at this point to predict what the final year end position will be in light of the continuing uncertainties of the situation. The finances and cash flow of the council is being carefully monitored and managed through the crisis and every effort will be made to minimise the negative impact. A further update will be provided when the Q3 position has been established.

Budget 2021

Work is now commencing on the preparation of Budget 2021 and the first statutory decision in relation to same is included on the agenda for the September meeting. Members will be required to make a decision on the local variation factor for Local Property Tax and a full report has been issued to members to facilitate their consideration of this decision. A public consultation exercise is required as part of the preparation for this decision and details of same are included in the report. A preliminary budget is also required to be completed and submitted to the DHPLG and a copy of this is also included in the LPT report. At this point the information in this preliminary report are indeed very

preliminary and until the detail of the budgets and income expected to be available for informing the budget for 2021 becoming clearer the figures in this preliminary report are subject to large fluctuations.

It is expected that the finalisation of Budget 2021 will be a difficult process in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID public health emergency and every effort is now being made to inform a budget that will allow services to be maintained within the constraints presented by the financial difficulties facing the council and the county.

Cash Flow/Overdraft

Following council approval at the June meeting to an increased in temporary borrowing by way of Overdraft from €13m to €30m to deal with COVID related potential cash flow difficulties ministerial sanction has now been secured for this increased overdraft level. Ministerial Sanction is now in place for borrowing by way of overdraft in the amount of €30m for the period to the 31st December, 2020.

Audit Committee/Audit

The Audit Committee held its second meeting of the year on 2nd September. The next meeting is scheduled for October. The Local Government Auditor, Catherine Tuohy met with the Audit Committee at their meeting on 15th July to discuss the 2018 Accounts and associated Audit Report.

The 2019 Audit of Accounts by the Local Government Audit Service formally commenced on 10th July. This year's audit will be completed in line with government restrictions and guidelines as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

**Tom Enright,
Chief Executive.**