

# Waterford City & County Council

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## Mayor's Foreword

As Mayor of the City and County of Waterford, I am heartened to present this Annual Report 2020, as I believe it embodies everything that makes Waterford a great place to live, work, invest and do business. The cooperative manner in which the people of Waterford, the staff of Waterford City and County Council, the wider statutory, cultural, community and voluntary sector and the elected representatives all worked together in 2020 was exceptional.

The level of service delivery provided across all sections of Waterford City and County Council was maintained and additional services were also brought on board to respond to the many challenges faced by society. In particular, I want to commend the work of the Community Call in responding so rapidly to the needs of the most vulnerable in society and providing physical and social supports to those most affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

I am heartened to see that while our front doors were closed many vital and essential services carried on and adapted quickly to an online and virtual experience.

As Mayor of Waterford City and County Council, I worked with the executive to ensure our meetings were maintained and moved back onto a formal basis as quickly and efficiently as possible ensuring our essential decision making function was in place.

I would like to thank Michael Walsh, CE and his Management Team, all of the staff of Waterford City and County Council and my fellow Councillors and Oireachtas members for working through this most difficult and extraordinary year. Waterford is a stronger and more cohesive place as a result of our collective resilience and determination.



**Cllr. Damien Geoghegan**  
Mayor of Waterford City  
and County Council-Plenary Mayor

## Chief Executive's Foreword

I welcome the opportunity to look back on the work of Waterford City and County Council during 2020, a year in which we were faced with a major and rapid change to our established way of working. As an organisation we responded quickly and efficiently and remained focused on our core function which is the delivery of public services to the people of Waterford.

Throughout 2020, our priority remained focused on protecting the health and well being of the people of Waterford and our own staff alongside the delivery of essential services. As an organisation we worked with our business community to provide supports and protections which would mitigate the impacts of restrictions and loss of revenue.

We worked with national government to ensure the rapid roll out of financial supports and adapted our own policies and procedures to facilitate society and business to operate where permitted. We have to acknowledge also the exceptional support of Government in financial terms to the local authority sector, without which we would not have been in a position to sustain services.

We continued to progress our ambitious infrastructure investment programme and accessed national funding for a wide range of projects including the Greenway extension into City Centre, planning grant for the North Quays SDZ, in excess of €2.5m investment in Rural Economic Development alongside significant policy development in Climate Change. 2020 saw Waterford Council begin a new development planning process with significant community engagement despite COVID-19 restrictions.

I want to thank the staff of Waterford City and County Council for a year in which we showed the true meaning of public service. I want also to thank the elected members and the senior management team for continuing to provide leadership throughout this extraordinary year in the history of Waterford City and County Council.



**Michael Walsh**  
Chief Executive of Waterford City  
and County Council



## Mission Statement

Our mission is to make Waterford the best possible place for its entire people and for those who wish to live, visit, work or invest here.

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# YOUR COUNCIL



Waterford City and County Council is committed to improving the welfare of Waterford. The organisation operates with the values of democracy, inclusion, integrity, quality, transparency and accountability. Putting people first, we are committed to delivering a broad range of services efficiently and effectively. Waterford City and County Council works under the framework of a wide range of legislation and regulations that governs how we do our business.

**Mayors & Cathaorligh:**



**Cllr. Damien Geoghegan**  
Mayor of Waterford City and County Council-Plenary Mayor



**Cllr. James Tobin**  
Cathaoirleach of Dungarvan & Lismore District



**Cllr. Eddie Mulligan**  
Deputy Mayor of Waterford City and County Council



**Cllr. Pat Nugent**  
Leas Cathaoirleach of Dungarvan & Lismore District



**Cllr. David Daniels**  
Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Waterford



**Cllr. Seáníe Power**  
Cathaoirleach of Comeragh District



**Cllr. Mary Roche**  
Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Waterford



**Cllr. John O'Leary**  
Leas Cathaoirleach of Comeragh District



## Plenary Council 2020

Name	Party	Electoral District
Liam Brazil	Fine Gael	Comeragh
Declan Clune	Independent	Comeragh
Ger Barron	Labour Party	Comeragh
John O'Leary	Fianna Fáil	Comeragh
Seáníe Power	Fine Gael	Comeragh
Tom Cronin	Fianna Fáil	Dungarvan / Lismore
Declan Doocey	Fine Gael	Dungarvan / Lismore
Damien Geoghegan	Fine Gael	Dungarvan / Lismore
Pat Nugent	Fine Gael	Dungarvan / Lismore
Séamus O'Donnell	Independent	Dungarvan / Lismore
John Pratt	Labour Party	Dungarvan / Lismore
Thomas Phelan	Labour Party	Dungarvan / Lismore
James Tobin	Fianna Fáil	Dungarvan / Lismore
Conor D. McGuinness	Sinn Féin	Dungarvan / Lismore
Joe Conway	Independent	Tramore & Waterford City West
Jim Griffin	Sinn Féin	Tramore & Waterford City West
Susan Gallagher	Green Party	Tramore & Waterford City West
Joe Kelly	Independent	Tramore & Waterford City West
Lola O'Sullivan	Fine Gael	Tramore & Waterford City West
Eamon Quinlan	Fianna Fáil	Tramore & Waterford City West
Jody Power	Green Party	Waterford City East
Davy Daniels	Independent	Waterford City East
Pat Fitzgerald	Sinn Féin	Waterford City East
Eddie Mulligan	Fianna Fáil	Waterford City East
Mary Roche	Independent	Waterford City East
Adam Wyse	Fianna Fáil	Waterford City East
Breda Brennan	Sinn Féin	Waterford City South
Frank Quinlan	Fine Gael	Waterford City South
John Hearne	Sinn Féin	Waterford City South
Donal Barry	Independent	Waterford City South
Séamus Ryan	Labour Party	Waterford City South
Jason Murphy	Fianna Fáil	Waterford City South

## Principal Officers

Chief Executive	
Michael Walsh	Chief Executive
Directors of Services	
Fergus Galvin	Roads, Water & Environment
Ivan Grimes	Housing, Community & Emergency Services
Kieran Kehoe	Corporate, Culture HR & Information Systems
Bernard Pollard	Head of Finance
Michael Quinn	Deputy Chief Executive & Economic Development and Planning
Senior Officers	
Jane Cantwell	City and County Librarian
John Croke	Project Resident Engineer
Niall Curtin	Chief Fire Officer
Billy Duggan	SEO Economic Development
Ian Fitzpatrick	SEO Procurement
Jack Doyle	Head of Information Systems
Catherine Horan	SEO Housing
Carmel Hourigan	SEO Human Resources
Gabriel Hynes	Senior Engineer Roads
Paul Johnston	Senior Resident Engineer Housing
Rupert Maddock	Senior Architect
Pat McCarthy	Senior Engineer Water
Eamonn McEaney	Manager/Curator Waterford Treasures
Liam McGree	Senior Planner
Raymond Moloney	SEO Environment
Donal Murphy	Financial Accountant
Bryan O'Kane	Management Accountant
Don Tuohy	SEO Community
Richard Walsh	Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office

## Regulation of Lobbying

On commencement of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015, each public body with Designated Public Officials is required under section 6(4) of the Act to publish a list showing the name, grade and brief details of the role and responsibilities of each "Designated Public Official" of the body. The purpose of the list is twofold:

1. To allow members of the public identify those persons who are Designated Public Officials; and
2. As a resource for lobbyists filing a return to the Register who may need to source a Designated Public Official's details.

## Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

SPCs are local authority committees whose membership includes elected councillors, representatives from business, trade unions, environmental/conservation groups and community and voluntary members. It is the task of the Strategic Policy Committees, as committees of the council, to advise and assist the council in the formulation, development and review of policy.

SPCs have no remit in relation to routine operational matters regarding the delivery of services. The SPC system is intended to give councillors and relevant sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policy making process from the early stages.

Waterford City & County Council operates 5 Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), each served by the relevant Director of Service. The Chairs of the SPCs are selected by the Council at the AGM. The SPCs are sub-committees of Waterford City and County Council and must abide by the Standing Orders and rules of procedure of the council.

## Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

### Michael Quinn – Director of Services

#### Membership: Elected Members

Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan (Chairperson)
Cllr. Conor D McGuinness
Cllr. Declan Clune
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan
Cllr. Gerard Barron
Cllr. Mary Roche – appointed June 2020
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Pat Nugent

#### Sectoral Representatives

David Lane	Trade Unions
David Walsh	Business
Garrett Wyse	PPN Social Inclusion
Gerty Murphy	PPN Community & Voluntary
Jennifer Harris	PPN Environment
Kevin Kiersey	Farming

#### 5 SPC meetings were held in 2020

- 29<sup>th</sup> January
- 26<sup>th</sup> May
- 22<sup>nd</sup> July
- 28<sup>th</sup> October
- 2<sup>nd</sup> December

#### The following topics were discussed:

- North Quays and other capital projects
- Economic Incentive Schemes
- COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan
- Waterford City & County Draft Development Plan 2022-2028
- Casual Trading Byelaws
- Waterford City & County Retail Strategy 2020
- Pilot Shop Front Improvement Scheme
- INTERREG Project- Local Flavours
- Waterford Digital Strategy



## Environment, Biodiversity & Climate Change SPC

Fergus Galvin – Director of Services

### Membership: Elected Members

Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald (Chairperson)
Cllr. Jim Griffin
Cllr. John Hearne
Cllr. Susan Gallagher
Cllr. Ger Barron
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan
Cllr. Breda Brennan
Cllr. Joe Kelly

### Sectoral Representatives:

Tom Hogan	Trade Union
Alan Walshe*	PPN – Environment – Resigned in September 2020
Obianuju Ekedozie	PPN – Social Inclusion
Brid O’Heir	PPN – Community & Voluntary
Laura O’Brien-Forbes	IFA

\*New Representative to take up in February 2021 – Ms. Ithel McKenna, Irish Wildlife Trust

### 3 SPC meetings were held in 2020

- 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2020
- 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2020
- 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

### The following topics were discussed:

- Climate Adaptation Strategy and Climate Action Charter (Presentations)
- Single Use Plastics Policy (Agreed to refer to Plenary Council)
- Report on Re-municipalisation of Refuse Collection Service
- Norovirus
- Wind Turbines off the Waterford Coast
- Light Pollution and Insects
- RMCEI Plan 2019 – 2020
- EPA Water Quality 2013 – 2018
- Draft Litter Management Plan 2021 – 2024
- Air Quality Report
- Climate Action Progress Report
- Report on Control of Dogs 2019
- Waste Action Plan for the Circular Economy
- Report on Environment Education Activities
- Electric Vehicle Charging Point Strategy
- Discussion on Upland Burning

\* Notice of Motion referred to Plenary Council – Cllr. O Cathasaigh - WCCC declares a climate and biodiversity emergency and shall establish a Climate Action Committee comprised of elected members and representatives

\*\* Notice of Motion – T. Hogan, Trade Union Rep – Wexford – Waterford-Limerick Corridor

## Planning SPC

Michael Quinn – Director of Services

### Membership: Elected Members:

Cllr. Thomas Phelan (Chairperson)
Cllr. Liam Brazil
Cllr. Tom Cronin
Cllr. Davy Daniels
Cllr. Seáníe Power
Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. James Tobin

### Sectoral Representatives:

Sean Carey	Construction Federation Ireland
Niall Harrington	Business
John Galloway	PPN Environment
Donal Lehane	PPN Social Inclusion
Mary O’Halloran	PPN Community and Voluntary
John Heffernan	IFA

### 4 SPC meetings were held in 2020

- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020
- 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### The following were among a number of topics discussed:

- Waterford City & County Development Plan
- National Marine Planning Framework
- City & County Retail Strategy

## Transportation & Infrastructure SPC:

Fergus Galvin, Director of Services

### Membership: Elected Members:

Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell (Chairperson)
Cllr. Joe Conway
Cllr. Joe Kelly
Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Jody Power
Cllr. Declan Doocey
Cllr. Jim Griffin

### Sectoral Representatives:

Thomas Holden	Development/Construction
Marian Walsh	Business/Commercial
Elaine Mullan	Environment
Farid Ahmad Mohamman	Social Inclusion
Jim Farnan	Community and Voluntary

### 3 SPC meetings held in 2020

- 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2020
- 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 (held on Zoom)
- 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 (held on Zoom)

### The following policies/bye-laws were reviewed and discussed:

- Parking Permits
- Active to School
- Cycle Network Plan
- Waterford Area Transport Strategy
- Waterford City Development Plan
- Local Link - Bus Shelters/Bus Routes
- Motor homes & Campervans

### Review of bye-laws:

- Harbour
- Beach
- Control of Parking

## Housing, Community, Culture, Sport & Recreation SPC

Ivan Grimes, Director of Services

### Membership: Elected Members:

Cllr. Adam Wyse (Chairperson)
Cllr. Donal Barry
Cllr. Breda Brennan
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness
Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Jason Murphy

### Sectoral Representatives:

Richie McDonald	Construction Industry
Una Dunphy	Trade Union
Mike Farrell	PPN Environmental
Vince Rellis	PPN Social Inclusion
Rosemary Kennedy	PPN Community & Voluntary

### 4 SPC meetings were held in 2020

- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020
- 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

### The following were among the topics discussed:

- Differential Rent Scheme
- Housing Grant Allocations
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Vacant Homes Action Plan
- Expansion of Library Services
- Supporting Waterford Communities Grants
- Arts Practice Grants
- Arts Festivals Grants
- Waterford Walk of Fame

## Councillors Attendance

Councillor	Total Meetings Attended 2020*	Total Meetings Held 2020	*Note
Cllr. Ger Barron	19	36	
Cllr. Donal Barry	29	32	
Cllr. Liam Brazil	33	36	
Cllr. Breda Brennan	31	35	
Cllr. Declan Clune	23	33	
Cllr. Joe Conway	27	30	
Cllr. Tom Cronin	29	34	
Cllr. John Cummins	7	11	Elected to Seanad Eireann March 2020
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	33	37	
Cllr. Davy Daniels	28	31	
Cllr. Declan Doocey	26	30	
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	47	51	
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	44	45	
Cllr. Jim Griffin	28	29	
Cllr. John Hearne	29	32	
Cllr. Joe Kelly	34	35	
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan	33	34	
Cllr. Jason Murphy	29	30	
Cllr. Pat Nugent	29	32	
Cllr. Marc O'Cathasaigh	3	3	Elected to Dáil Eireann February 2020
Cllr. Séamus O'Donnell	37	46	
Cllr. John O'Leary	31	31	
Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan	49	50	
Cllr. Thomas Phelan	40	41	
Cllr. Jody Power	28	32	
Cllr. Seánie Power	39	41	
Cllr. John Pratt	36	36	
Cllr. Eamon Quinlan	29	31	
Cllr. Mary Roche	24	28	Co-opted in February 2020
Cllr. Séamus Ryan	30	31	
Cllr. Matt Shanahan	2	2	Elected to Dáil Eireann February 2020
Cllr. Laura Swift	2	2	Co-opted February 2020 & resigned on 6/5/20
Cllr. James Tobin	27	33	
Cllr. Adam Gary Wyse	40	46	
Cllr. Susan Gallagher	22	23	Co-opted June 2020
Cllr. Frank Quinlan	19	23	Co-opted June 2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>1132</b>	<b>Includes JPC and CPG</b>

\*Meetings included: Plenary Council, Municipal & Metropolitan Districts, SPC's, CPGs and JPC's.

## Councillors Payments for Training & Conferences 2020

Councillor	Conferences	Training	Total Payments
Cllr. Ger Barron			€-
Cllr. Donal Barry			€-
Cllr. Liam Brazil			€-
Cllr. Breda Brennan			€-
Cllr. Declan Clune	€390.66	€449.45	€840.11
Cllr. Joe Conway	€552.89	€734.40	€1,287.29
Cllr. Tom Cronin	€777.64	€1,224.11	€2,001.75
Cllr. John Cummins		€465.75	€465.75
Cllr. Davy Daniels		€467.54	€467.54
Cllr. Declan Doocey			€-
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald			€-
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan		€892.06	€892.06
Cllr. Jim Griffin			€-
Cllr. John Hearne			€-
Cllr. Joe Kelly		€441.30	€441.30
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness		€508.91	€508.91
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan	€543.93	€800.90	€1,344.83
Cllr. Jason Murphy	€540.34	€935.71	€1,476.05
Cllr. Pat Nugent			€-
Cllr. Marc O'Cathasaigh			€-
Cllr. Séamus O'Donnell			€-
Cllr. John O'Leary	€583.59	€1,351.00	€1,934.59
Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan			€-
Cllr. Thomas Phelan			€-
Cllr. Jody Power			€-
Cllr. Seánie Power		€288.09	€288.09
Cllr. John Pratt		€727.29	€727.29
Cllr. Eamon Quinlan	€513.23	€369.72	€882.95
Cllr. Mary Roche			€-
Cllr. Séamus Ryan			€-
Cllr. Matt Shanahan			€-
Cllr. Laura Swift			€-
Cllr. James Tobin		€488.15	€488.15
Cllr. Adam Gary Wyse			€-
Cllr. Susan Gallagher			€-
Cllr. Frank Quinlan			€-
<b>Total</b>	<b>€3,902.28</b>	<b>€10,144.38</b>	<b>€14,046.66</b>



# PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES



## WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Waterford City & County Council continues to develop its presence across a range of social media channels with strong audience figures on Twitter and Facebook (where we have 15,330 followers). The web and social media function is aligned with the Communications Office, giving a wider scope for communication across all service areas.

Our main website, [www.waterfordcouncil.ie](http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie), continues to perform strongly, with the emphasis being on up-to-date relevant information and easily accessible online services. 2020 saw an increase of 3.5% in overall traffic with interactive services such as the Planning search facility, Housing Appointments booking system and the online payments facility all showing significant increases when compared with 2019.

Several other websites/functions were established and/ or enhanced during 2020, including the COVID-19 Business Support Hub, improvements to the online Housing applications booking calendar, and the new 'Shop Waterford Support Local' social media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Another initiative, "This is Waterford" was undertaken, where we developed a social media campaign and a calendar.

Social media saw further growth across all channels, with even more departments using social media to convey a positive image of Waterford. Why not visit our Libraries page or Shop Waterford's page on Instagram!

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION



## Irish Office

As with all other services, the COVID-19 pandemic also affected the work of the Irish Office during the year. Many in-person events and activities had to be cancelled and other services moved online.



### The Official Languages Act, 2003

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, the Irish Office continued to support the delivery of services through the Irish language under the Official Languages Act and other legislation and through Waterford Local Authorities' Language Scheme 2018-2021.

A total of three complaints were made by members of the public to the Office of the Language Commissioner in relation to Waterford City & County Council in 2020. The complaints related to English-only Coronavirus signage erected in the Gaeltacht; English-only signage in Waterford City and the Irish language option on the Council's main phone line. The first of these complaints was dealt with to the satisfaction of the Language Commissioner's Office; the second complaint related to signage which was not erected by the Council and the third complaint was still being dealt with at year end.

## Seachtain na Gaeilge

Most of the planned programme of events and activities to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge in March had to be cancelled at the last minute, with the exception of a small number of storytelling events for children that took place in the Libraries before lockdown, in collaboration with Waterford Childcare Committee Ltd and Waterford Library Services. Other events that took place with the support of the Irish Office were Storytelling and Crafts for Children with Muireann Ní Chiobháin in Dungarvan Library and a Lón na Gaeilge for Council staff in the City.

## Irish in Festivals

The Irish Office's Tionól na nDéise lecture series continued in 2020 as part of the **Tionól Niocláis Tóibín** festival in An Rinn in February. Local poet and writer Áine Uí Fhoghlú gave a fabulous talk on sean-nós "**Songs and singers from bygone times**". The Irish Office also supported a number of on-line Irish language/bilingual events during the **John Dwyer Trad Weekend** in the City in October.

Unfortunately, planned Irish language events during the **West Waterford Festival of Food** in Dungarvan in April and the annual **Daonscoil na Mumhan** summer school in Coláiste na Rinne, An Rinn fell victim to the pandemic restrictions.

## An Ghaeltacht

The Irish Officer continued to work with Co. Waterford's Gaeltacht community during the year, including serving as secretary of the board of local community-development company, **Comhlacht Forbartha na nDéise**. Work continued on the implementation of the Language Planning Area's seven year Language Plan, within the COVID-19 restrictions.

## Gaeltacht Scholarship

Unfortunately, the Irish Office did not present student scholarships through the Gaeltacht Scholarship Scheme in 2020, as Coláiste na Rinne was unable to provide Irish language summer courses due to the pandemic.

## Dungarvan as a Gaeltacht Service Town

Coiste Dhún Garbhán le Gaeilge (of which the Irish Officer is a member) continued the work of developing an Irish Language Plan for Dungarvan as a Gaeltacht Service Town under the Government's 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language. The research phase of the process was completed under the guidance of Language Planning Consultant, Dr. Vicky Brady and Dr. Noel Ó Murchadha, TCD.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used, including a call for submissions, a general language questionnaire, focused sectoral questionnaires and interviews with focus groups and individuals. Research was carried out in person up to March and on-line later in the year, with more than 500 responses received. The results of this research, plus analysis of Census Data was used to compile a Research Report, which will form the basis of the Language Plan itself.

Youth members of Coiste Dhún Garbhán le Gaeilge organised and produced the bilingual **Péacóg Arts Festival** for Young People in November, funded by Creative Waterford. The festival, which was originally scheduled for August, had to be deferred and moved on-line due to the pandemic.

## Placenames Committee

The Council's Placenames Committee continued its work during the year, with meetings taking place by video conference. Names were approved for a total of fourteen housing developments, following consultation with both private developers and the Council's Housing Department.

## Schools' Field Names Project

Due to the restrictions it was not possible to add new schools to the Schools' Field Names Project, which the Irish Officer is working on in collaboration with the Archivist and the Arts Office, with the support of the Creative Waterford programme. Focus instead turned to the design and building of a website to make the information collected to date available to the participating schools and to the public in general.



## WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

Waterford City and County Archives works on an ongoing basis to ensure the preservation and access to the records and archives of Waterford City and County Council and to document the story of the people of Waterford. Through its Records Management Services it provides support to the work of Council departments to facilitate the provision of services and compliance with legal requirements and ensure that the delivery of services is documented in a transparent and accessible manner. Every effort was made to meet these requirements within the restrictions of public health guidelines due to COVID-19 in 2020.

### Decade of Centenaries

The Archives Service continued to work with the Heritage Officer as part of the Decade of Centenaries Committee to develop projects and support research on the Decade of Centenaries in Waterford. In 2020 a new book on Waterford born, Richard Mulcahy titled **"We Shall Win This War" Richard Mulcahy: A Military History** by Pat Taafe was launched by Paul Kehoe, TD and Minister of State at the Department of Defence on 22<sup>nd</sup> February as part of a daylong conference on Richard Mulcahy held in the Large Room, City Hall.

Following a welcome from the Mayor, Cllr. John Pratt, the opening address was given by John Bruton, former Taoiseach and EU Ambassador to the United States; Dr. Pat McCarthy spoke on the Making of a Revolutionary and the author Pat Taafe spoke about Richard Mulcahy's role in General Headquarters and the War of Independence. James Ryan spoke about the Ryan family of Wexford and of Min Ryan, wife of Richard Mulcahy. David McCullagh, Journalist, Author and Broadcaster spoke about Richard Mulcahy as a Politician, Party Leader and Minister and Kate Manning, Principal Archivist spoke about the papers of Richard Mulcahy while Gabriel Doherty of UCC discussed writings on Richard Mulcahy and his legacy. This was an extremely well attended event and attendees included members of the Mulcahy and Ryan families, including, Elisabet Birney, daughter of Richard Mulcahy.

A series of talks on the 1920 Local Elections **Waterford and the 1920 Local Elections: Fighting for a Voice and a new Ireland** was held as an online event and made available on the Council website on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020 using the Waterford City and County Council YouTube Channel.

The talks were introduced by the Mayor, Cllr. Damien Geoghegan and Dr. Pat McCarthy spoke about the 1920 elections and Waterford City Council; Joanne Rothwell, City and County Archivist spoke about Waterford County Council; Aindrias O'Cathasaigh, author of **Ainm na Saoirse: Gaeilge Dháil Éireann 1919-1922** provided a talk on the Irish language and Local Government in this period; Heather Laird, author of **Subversive Law in Ireland** spoke about the Dáil Courts; Dr. Emmet O'Connor spoke about Waterford Labour 1917-1923 and Christina O'Connor spoke about Cumann na mBan in Waterford.

A Community Commemorations Fund was advertised and made available to support community projects on the Decade of Centenaries. A report on projects supported by the Decade of Commemorations Committee was issued to local newspapers in December 2020.

### Exhibitions and Talks

A project **"Is Cuimhin Liom/I Remember"** was developed and launched in May as part of the Bealtaine programme of events. Older people were invited to share their stories of living through other events and the resilience they developed so that their experiences could help others cope at this time and they could contribute on the theme of **"Together Waterford is Stronger"**. Stories were shared through the Waterford Call to Chat service with the assistance of the Waterford Older Peoples' Council.

The stories were also shared on the Council's This is Waterford website <https://thisiswaterford.ie/i-remember-is-cuimhin-liom-project/>

Throughout 2020 the Archive maintained an active presence on the Waterford City and County Archive Facebook page and participated in the #WhereInWaterford and #KnowYour5km #Waterford5km programmes with a series of images and questions for the public to participate in. The Archive also participated in the #ExploreYourArchive and #lovelocalarchives campaigns to open up archives to the public online through the Facebook page.

### Diverse Waterford Oral History Project

The Archives Service and the Library Service are working with Creative Waterford to develop an Oral History Project to facilitate and support communities and individuals in collecting the diverse voices and stories of Waterford. In 2020 the focus was on providing additional training and on future plans as it was not possible to record additional interviews.



On 31<sup>st</sup> October Tomás MacConmara provided an online talk **Druids, Púca and the Banshee** about oral traditions and the importance of recording oral history. This was made available on the Archive and the Library Facebook pages. It will also be available as an online talk on a forthcoming website for the Diverse Waterford project. On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December an online training session **Collecting Waterford Memories** was provided on Collecting Oral History by Tomás MacConmara to elected representatives, community groups and individuals about the process of recording Oral History and about participating in the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project.

## Placenames Project

Due to the restrictions it was not possible to add new schools to the Placenames Project which the Archive is working on in collaboration with Oifigeach Gaeilge Chontae Phort Láirge and the Arts Office with the support of the Creative Waterford programme but instead focus turned to the design of a website to make the information collected to date available to the public and to the schools.

## Visitor Services

The Archive was closed to the public throughout much of 2020 due to restrictions but continued to respond to queries by e-mail, telephone and by post and there were 132 queries responded to.

## Records Management

File deliveries were paused from March to May 2020 but resumed in May on a weekly basis.

Work continued in 2020 in collaboration with IS staff to review the file structures of departments and improve the storage of files held electronically. File indices are being updated with the newly issued retention recommendations of the National Retention Policy for Local Authorities in Ireland.

Waterford City and County Council is a member of the review team of for the revision of the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records produced by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

# COMMUNITY AND SPORTS SERVICES

## Data on Performance Measures achieved during 2020

Performance Indicators – Objective – Maintain and improve on 2019 outcomes	
National Service Indicator	No. of visitors to LA operated facilities
2019 outturn	160,518
2020 targets	162,999
2020 outturn	64,352

Service Indicators	No. Of groups registered with PPN	Percentage of local schools and youth groups involved in Comhairle na n-Óg
2019 Outturn	646	90
2020 Target	655	90
2020 outturn	744	90

## Community Services

1. Support was provided for communities through the **Supporting Waterford Community Grant Scheme** whereby local sports clubs, tidy towns, residents associations and community & voluntary groups are financially assisted to ensure sustainability. 404 applicants were eligible (an 11% decrease on 2019) and €195,500 was allocated in 2020 for this initiative.

2. On behalf of the LCDC, the Community Department administered a variety of grant schemes funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2020. Under the **Communities Enhancement Programme** for disadvantaged areas, €64,039 was allocated to various projects across city and county by year end. Under the **Community Enhancement Programme Community Centres** which provided capital grants towards the maintenance, improvement and upkeep of community centres and community buildings, €167,006 was allocated in total to 41 organisations. The **2020 COVID-19 Emergency Fund** provided grants to groups that were participating in the **Waterford Community Call** effort in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Priority was provided to organisations which incurred costs on direct delivery of frontline services to people, such as Meals on Wheels and other similar activities. €73,177 was allocated to 42 registered groups. Under the Healthy Ireland Fund, the **Community Mental Health Small Grant scheme** aimed to support innovative, cross sectoral programmes and initiatives which support and improve the mental health of priority population groups. This grant was available to not-for-profit local community, voluntary, sporting, arts and youth groups in Waterford City and County, to support the delivery of actions aimed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups. €30,000 was allocated to 9 organisations.

3. In 2020, the Community Department continued to support **community buildings** which are in constant use by local communities and volunteer groups.
4. Waterford has a proud record of participation in the **Pride of Place Awards**. 2020 saw Waterford represented at the National Pride of Place awards with Dunhill Tourism Walking Trail LTD CLG and the Larchville Lisduggan Combined Residents Association at the first awards ceremony to be hosted virtually. Both groups put together strong entries with Dunhill Tourism Walking Trail LTD CLG being placed as runners up in their category. The PPN have nominated the Deise Women's Shed and Rathgormack North Waterford Community Development and these groups will present Waterford in the 2021 Pride of Place Awards.
5. 2020 was another strong year for Waterford **Comhairle na nÓg**. The main project delivered by members was the creation of a Communitree app for young people to use. This was presented at the AGM in October and very well received. Members of Waterford Comhairle took part in various national consultations during the year. 90% of local secondary schools and youth clubs participate in the Waterford Comhairle.
6. **Public Participation Network:** Membership increased by 15% in 2020. 744 member groups are now registered with the PPN. The Community Department part-funds and supports the work of the PPN. The Council was a lead partner in the annual Community Awards, organised by the PPN online in 2020 due to the pandemic. These awards give recognition to the work of communities across the City and County.
7. **Joint Policing Committee:** Waterford has a proactive JPC which has been addressing various issues to make Waterford a safer place for all. In 2020 Commissioner Harris attended the March meeting and gave a presentation in relation to proposed changes to Garda divisions. Due to the pandemic only two JPC meetings were held in 2020 but the JPC Steering & Oversight Committee continued meeting throughout the year to oversee the objectives and ensure implementation of various facets of the 2020 Annual Work Plan. As part of the work plan, numerous campaigns were held during the summer months, e.g. Phishing, Vishing and Cyber Crime awareness campaigns as well as campaigns to promote reporting of domestic and elder abuse. The An Garda Síochána and Waterford JPC Youth Awards were held in February. This event recognised the contributions that young people in County Waterford are making in their communities.



JPC Committee 2020

8. **Age Friendly Alliance:** The Waterford Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2022 was launched in December 2017. The nine thematic sub-groups that were formed to lead out the delivery of the actions highlighted during public consultations continued their work throughout 2020. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 saw a large body of work undertaken by the Waterford Older Persons Council including a lot of supports for older people to ameliorate the impact of COVID-19. The membership of the Waterford Age Friendly Alliance comes from many public and non-public organisations including the Public Participation Network, Local Link, Dungarvan Care of the Aged, Waterford City & County Council and Waterford/Wexford ETB.
9. **Community Festival Grants:** The Community Department continued to support community festivals during the year, though many were cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. 34 festivals were allocated funding from a budget of €34,350.
10. **St Patrick's Day Festival:** The theme for the 2020 festival was to be "Passion for our Planet". Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the parade was cancelled on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

- 11. Traveller Inter-agency Group:** This grouping of relevant statutory agencies and state supported initiatives involved in providing the full range of services to Travellers has its focus on improving the integrated practical delivery of such services. The Waterford Traveller Interagency Group aims to find ways of securing better outcomes for Travellers and improve the use of resources allocated across Government departments for Traveller-specific measures. Waterford TIG met ten times in 2020, five meetings were held between the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 and discussed COVID-19 specific issues within the Traveller Community. Notable outcomes/actions included the development of a combined Needs Analysis and Strategic Plan for Waterford which is almost complete but encountered delays because of the pandemic and restrictions. Funding for this initiative was received from the HSE National Lottery Funding and from other agencies. The Inter-agency group secured funding for the 'Yellow Flag Programme' which has already been rolled out to three Waterford Schools and with a commitment to fund at least a further two Schools over the next three years. The 'Yellow Flag Programme' is a progressive equality and diversity initiative for primary and secondary schools which promotes and supports an environment of multiculturalism and diversity.
- 12. Migrant Integration Strategy:** In early 2018, Waterford City and County Council and Waterford Local Community Development Committee established an Inter-agency Task Group to respond to the call made under the **National Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future**. Local Authorities are responsible for establishing a Migrant Integration Forum and updating their integration strategies. Following the recruitment of a consultant to initiate a Migrant Forum, preliminary meetings with open invitations took place in Dungarvan and Waterford City. Subsequent meetings and consultations with a variety of migrant groups resulted in the formation of a Migrant Forum with eighteen seats. The official Forum launch took place in February 2019. The role of the Forum is inter alia, to contribute to the development of an integration strategy for the entire county. A working group comprised of representatives from various local organisations continued to meet in 2020 to support the development of a strategy. Consultants were recruited to develop the Waterford Migrant Integration Strategy 2021 – 2024 but unfortunately due to COVID-19 the launch could not take place in 2020 and will now take place virtually in April 2021.
- 13. COVID-19 response:** The Community Department were to the fore in respect of the Council response to the COVID-19 pandemic. From March on, staff were fully involved in leading out responses, e.g. supervisory report to the Community Call helpline; active engagement in the provision of care packs to those in need; supporting the Community Response Forum; organising grants schemes to mitigate the impact of COVID on individuals and communities; supporting the Healthy Waterford initiative to progress COVID responses and leading out on the Staying Connected and Keep Well initiatives.
- 14. The Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC),** an independent subcommittee of the Council, continued to meet and deliver on the Community element of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). This provides the basis for a more coherent, streamlined and co-ordinated approach to local and community development programmes. The LCDC has primary responsibility for planning and oversight of local development spend. Public and non-public bodies from local government, state agencies, local communities, development, social, and economic interests are represented on the LCDC. The LCDC met nine times during 2020, with a quorum achieved at each sitting. The April and May meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19 and the meetings for the remainder of the year were held by way of Zoom. In 2020, the Health and Well-being LCDC subgroup which reports to the LCDC at each LCDC meeting, continued the work of the Healthy Waterford initiative that has taken place over the past number of years. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, funding for a number of actions was reallocated to other actions including the #InThisTogether- Waterford's Response to COVID-19 initiative. A key action completed was research that highlighted and celebrated the response of the community, voluntary and statutory groups in Waterford to COVID-19 during the first lock down that began in March 2020. The report also explored the impact of the Community Response Forum and role the CRF played in the facilitation and coordination of this local response. The Healthy Waterford Co-ordinator was instrumental in facilitating a coherent response to COVID-19 demands in 2020. The Skills Enhancement LCDC subgroup met on a number of occasions in 2020 to consider initiatives to address the skill gaps existing in Waterford. Particular focus was given towards advancing the "Skills to Advance" initiative locally. Consideration was given to the need to ensure coordination in the delivery of training and up-skilling by the various providers in Waterford in 2021. The LCDC SICAP subcommittee carried out regular reviews of the implementation of the SICAP programme being delivered by the Waterford Area Partnership and reported back to the LCDC at each meeting.

**15. Social Inclusion:** The Social Inclusion Community Activation Fund (SICAP), worth €1,120,415 to the City and County in 2020, continued to assist disadvantaged communities and individuals. In 2020 65 local community groups and 584 individuals were assisted. The emerging need addressed was substance misuse. The programme is delivered by Waterford Area Partnership and progress is monitored by the LCDC through both the work of the main committee and the LCDC SICAP subgroup. The Programme Implementer adapted its actions in response to COVID-19 demands including the provision of additional supports to disadvantaged communities and employment and business supports.

**16. Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 – budget €7,522,763.** During 2020, the LCDC, acting as the Waterford Local Action Group (LAG) progressed the delivery of the local development actions approved in the Local Development Strategy for the rural community. 9 LAG meetings were held. 36 payments were made to project promoters during 2020 totalling **€ 1,167,078.58**. These investments create economic, environmental and community benefits including the creation of additional new jobs through new initiatives and business expansion. Throughout 2020 there were 4 Public Targeted Calls for projects, 8 evaluation committee meetings, 12 public meetings across the County and 3 Community training initiatives progressed. The Waterford Local Action Group (LAG) was ranked number 1 nationally in 2020 for project delivery (payments).

## Sport and Recreation

One of the key objectives of WCCC in relation to sport is to increase participation in sport and physical activity by supporting the development of sports facilities and promoting active communities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sports facilities had to close on numerous occasions due to government restrictions and user numbers were restricted when the facilities could open. There were 64,352 visitors to LA operated facilities in Waterford in 2020. With the exception of Williamstown Golf Course the remaining sports facilities had a decrease in users in 2020.

### Williamstown Golf Course

2020 brought only a slight decrease of users of the facility as the golf course was able to remain open for a longer period than other sport facilities. The course was only closed for 12 weeks during the entire year, seven weeks in the first lockdown and for five weeks from mid October to end of November. There were 309 members of the municipal golf course in 2020, which was a slight decrease of 6% since 2019. Although many activities had to be cancelled during the year Williamstown Golf Course was able to host 9 societies during 2020.

### Regional Sports Centre

Waterford City and County Council continued to upgrade the facility in 2020, such as the installation of more pathways on the pitch and putt course so as to improve accessibility for our customers. A number of events were cancelled at the RSC due to COVID-19 and with only elite matches allowed with no spectators due to Government guidelines usage of the facility fell by 60% from the previous year.

### Dungarvan Sports Centre

Due to the pandemic the centre was only open to the public for 12 weeks in 2020 but the local schools continued to use the facility when school was in session.

### Carrickpherish Sports Hall and Community Facility

As local clubs and organisations were not active due to restrictions, the facility had a large decline in users, only 2,900 during 2020 compared to 20,660 in 2019.

#### Play facilities:

- Mount Sion Play-park. Partial funding was secured from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs towards a Play-park on the grounds of Mount Sion G.A.A. Club. Plans to deliver the park were progressed as a joint venture between Mount Sion G.A.A. Club and Waterford City & County Council and the play-park was formally opened in September 2020.
- Dungarvan Skate-park. Progress was made towards the provision of a new skateboard facility in Dungarvan. It is intended that the facility will be in place by the end of 2021.

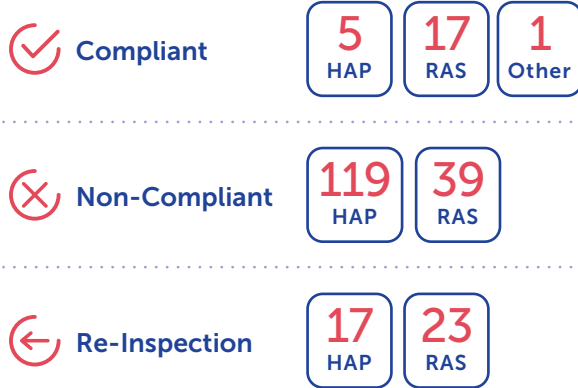
### Waterford Sports Partnership and Waterford City & County Council

Both partnered successfully on a number of projects during the year including the Carrickpherish Community Sports Hub, National Bike Week, National Recreation Week and National Play Day.

# HOUSING

## Housing Stock

### Inspection of private rented dwellings:



### Inspection of Local Authority own stock

In 2020, Waterford City & County Council carried out 2,261 planned and reactive inspections of our housing stock.

As a result of these inspections 1,867 improvement works and 1,571 planned improvement works carried out to ensure our properties comply with the Rental Standards.

WCCC had 95 properties re-let following extensive repairs & upgrades to ensure full compliance with the Rental Standards.

In addition WCCC carried out 523 inspections on potential acquisitions, leased properties, mortgage to rent.

### Choice Based Letting 2020



**28,125**  
CHOICE BASED LETTINGS  
WEBSITE PAGE VISITS



**238**  
ADVERTISED  
FOR YEAR 2020



**1,677**  
APPLICANTS WHO  
EXPRESSED AN INTEREST

## Housing Adaptation Grants

Grant Scheme Amount	Number of applications approved	Value of 2020 applications
Housing Adaptation for People with a Disability. Max. €30,000	50	€525,413.81
Mobility Aids Scheme Maximum €6,000	51	€283,942.28
Housing Aid for Older People Maximum €8,000	52	€239,703.73
Disability Adaptations to Housing Stock	72	€508,241
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>€1,557,300.82</b>

## Housing Applications

Housing applications	Total Number of Applications Year 2019	Total Number of Applications Year To Date 2020
Applications received	1,077	1,118
Applications assessed (incl. files carried forward from previous month(s))	1,355	1,317
Applications validated (incl. files carried forward from previous month(s))	718	817
Approved for social housing supports following interview with applicant	734	753

## Housing Applications Payments

Housing Assistance Payment	Cumulative no. of HAP Tenancies Set up to date	Cumulative no. of Active HAP Tenancies at this date
HAP Tenancies	3,812	2,127

### New Builds



70

LA New Build

78

AHB New Build

11

Part V-New Build

159

TOTAL NEW BUILD

0

DHPLG funded LA Voids – limited to capped ceilings under Rebuilding Ireland

159

ALL BUILD TOTAL

### Acquired



32

LA Acquisitions

18

AHB Acquisitions

50

ACQUISITION TOTAL

### Leasing Total



76

LEASING TOTAL

45

RAS

636

HAP

1,125

TOTAL 2020 OUTPUT UNDER REBUILDING IRELAND

108% 2019 TARGET ACHIEVED BY END Q4 2020

## Homeless Services

2020 saw further reductions in homeless numbers in Waterford which is due to a combination of factors including a commitment to a collaborative and integrated approach to homelessness from Waterford City & County Council, the HSE and the Homeless Service Providers. This collaborative approach together with a focus on homeless prevention, early interventions, tenancy sustainment and supported exits for homeless clients have all been contributing factors to the reducing numbers.

Emergency Accommodation (EA)	Jan 2020	Dec 2020
Number of single individuals in EA	70	51
Number of Families in EA	2	1

Excerpt from the DECLG Returns

**Waterford Integrated Homeless Services (WIHS)** had over 3,744 callers to the centre during 2020 and remained open during the COVID-19 restriction periods to provide a service and support to those who found themselves homeless or facing homelessness. WIHS is a multi-agency collaboration between Waterford City & County Council, the HSE, Focus Ireland and South East Simon Community and is effectively a one stop shop where all services are working in partnership and combining resources and expertise to prevent homelessness and provide immediate supports and services to those who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

Waterford Integrated Homeless Services (WIHS) (Opened 25th February 2019)	2020
Number of callers seeking services in WIHS	3,744
Number of homeless presentations to WCCC Homeless Team	1,267
Number of Formal Homeless Assessments carried out	762

### Homeless Assessments

**1,267** households sought homeless supports from Waterford City & County Council during 2020, which was a slight increase on the 2019 figure of 1,219.

Of the 1,267 who presented, **762** received a formal Homeless Assessment. Family breakdown accounted for 33% of presentations, followed by sofa surfing/living in overcrowded households at 15%. Notice to quit or termination of tenancies accounted for 8% of presentations during 2020.

**76%** (578) of those who received a formal homeless assessment were categorized as single and **24%** (178) were in the family category.

**51%** (383) of those who received a formal homeless assessment were prevented from having to enter emergency accommodation by carrying out prevention work including family mediation, intervention work and the use of the HAP Place Finder service as an alternative to emergency accommodation. As a result of this work only 19% (147) had to avail of temporary emergency accommodation during 2020.

### HAP Place Finder Service

The HAP Place Finder service was introduced in Waterford in November 2018 to assist homeless and potential homeless households to find accommodation and offer financial support with the deposit and first month's rent where households have low incomes. This service has been a key component in achieving high levels of homeless prevention and in accommodating more exits from temporary emergency accommodation in Waterford.

HAP Place Finder Service	2020
Number of tenancies in place at 01/01/2020	117
Number of tenancies created during 2020	195
Number of tenancies in place at 31/12/2020	312

Of the 195 tenancies set up in 2020, 75 (38%) were families and 120 (62%) were single adults. The Place Finder service has been critical to homeless prevention with 65 families and 90 single adults prevented from entering emergency accommodation by providing them with the Place Finder service. It has also been a key component in exiting homeless clients from emergency accommodation with 10 families and 34 single adults being supported to exit emergency accommodation to a HAP Place Finder tenancy.

### Housing First Programme

A very visible and noticeable change in Waterford City again during 2020 was the significant reduction in the number of people sleeping rough which is as a direct result of the implementation of the National Housing First Programme.

Housing First Programme	Tenancies
Number of Housing First tenancies in place at 31 Dec 2020	26

The National Housing First Programme aims to provide accommodation with wrap around supports to address complex housing and health needs, including mental health and addiction needs of people experiencing homelessness and improve their access to appropriate healthcare through enhancing housing first tenancies, strengthening integrated care pathways and providing supports towards community reintegration.

This national project will see 30 Housing First tenancies in place in Waterford by June 2021.

**COVID-19 Pandemic:**

2020 was a very challenging year for all with the arrival of an unforeseen pandemic and was particularly challenging for our homeless clients and homeless service providers alike. A collaborative approach between the HSE, Waterford Council and the Homeless Service Providers was taken to ensure that all service users were kept as safe as possible and it is a testament to the fantastic measures taken by all service providers that Waterford reported only 1 COVID-19 positive service user during 2020.





# CREATING A GROWTH CULTURE



# Economic Development

## Rural Economic Development:

Throughout 2020, the Rural Development Section has progressed a number of strategic objectives which resulted in applications being approved under the following funding streams:

### Rural Regeneration & Development Fund

The proposed Cappoquin Town – Regeneration and Renewal project successfully secured €1.2m grant funding under Category 2 of the RRDF Scheme. Works were also commenced on the delivery of the €3.7 million Category 1 project focussed on the re-development of Mount Congreve Gardens.

### Town & Village Renewal Scheme – Accelerated Measure 2020 and Main Scheme 2019/2020

In 2020 Waterford received approval of €807,972.81 grant funding to deliver 21 Town Village Renewal Scheme Projects. In light of the impact of COVID-19 on rural communities some of the proposals were focused on completing a number of public realm instalments which will assist to continue and maintain the current culture of community engagement whilst also complimenting the natural features of the various locations by encouraging people to utilise the outdoor recreational amenities in their areas. The approved project proposals are varied from the development of a Rural Tourism App, Ecommerce platforms, public realm works such as signage, seating, planting, footpath works, bus stops, market tents, marquees, to the proposed development in Tramore where the funding is to be used to repurpose Railway Square as an outdoor market space to accommodate popup market and opportunity space for commercial and social events surrounding former Railway Station building.

Within the 21 projects are 5 main TVRS projects:

1. **Aglish** – Pedestrian safety measures, upgrade works to community hall; installation of finger posts and tourism and heritage signage. Grant approved €68,509.
2. **Dungarvan** – The development of a strategic framework and implementation plan for Dungarvan. Grant approved €53,784.
3. **Knockanore** – The installation of IT infrastructure within the community hall to create a remote hub; the installation of a bus shelter; and the installation of tourism information signage. Grant approved €56,856.
4. **Clashmore** – Upgrade of community building facilities (The Heritage Centre and the Old School House) in Clashmore and installation of tourism signage and marquee. Grant approved €85,446.
5. **Stradbally** – design and installation of a biodiversity park. Grant approved €88,615.00.

We had also commenced delivery of the 5 2019 approved Town Village projects, grant value €500,000;

1. **Cappoquin** – Public Realm Improvements
2. **Bunmahon** – Service Site Area for development at Strand
3. **Fenor** – Roads Bowls area surfacing, Lawn boules site and public realm works
4. **Dunhill** – Public Realm works with improved access to Anne Valley Walk
5. **Lemybrien** – supply & Installation of Playground



## Local Flavours – EU Interreg

In 2019 Rural Economic Development teamed up with our Tourism team to participate in an EU INTERREG Local Flavours Programme, looking at sustainable rural economic development approaches through heritage, culture and tourism. 2020 saw major progress in the project with €40,000 secured under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure. Work commenced on the development of an app to help visitor's access rural Waterford along with a Visitor Experience Development Plan. On-line meetings continued through the year with European Project Partners.

Waterford is a county rich in assets but the majority of visitors visit urban centres using rural areas as transit zones mainly due a lack of cohesive experiences and poor branding and marketing.

**As part of a cross departmental team participating in the EU INTERREG Local Flavours Programme, funding was sourced to create:**

- 1. A Visitor Experience Development Plan** – intended to enable Rural Waterford to create and promote coherent visitor experiences creating a distinct identity that can be used to drive visitor footfall.
- 2. Waterford Discovery App** – will allow the visitor to immerse themselves in the heart of rural Waterford. Both elements for delivery in 2021.

These schemes were supplemented by funding under the CLÁR programme, the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) fund as well as the LEADER programme delivered by Waterford Local Partnership.



## Economic Development

### North Quays

During 2020 almost €9m in funding for the North Quays infrastructural works project was drawn down from the Urban Regional Development Fund (URDF) and National Transport Authority's Sustainable Transport Measures Grant. This has enabled significant progress be made on the infrastructural works, progressing through planning to tender stage. In June 2020 tenders were received for the Waterford North Quays Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) for the main contract works. The main contract includes the Transport Hub, Sustainable Transport Bridge and SDZ Access Infrastructure.

Various site acquisitions have been concluded and two enabling works contracts for Utility Diversions and Demolition and Site Clearance works along Abbey Road and Dock Road have also been completed.

In July 2020 Falcon Real Estate Development Ireland Ltd was granted planning permission by Waterford City and County Council for almost 130,000 sq m of development within the Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone, comprising mixed use commercial building for tourism, retail, food & beverage and leisure, 15,000 sq m of office space, five residential buildings with 300 riverside apartments, 220-room 4-star hotel and conference centre, public open space, public realm and greenway connectivity.

The private development is progressing and in December 2020 under Section 183 of Local Government Act, 2001 Waterford City and County Council agreed to dispose of lands at Michael Street, Waterford City and Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone to Falcon Real Estate Development Ireland Ltd.



### City Centre Access Project

**A number of projects were completed as part of the City Centre Access Project.**

- Hennessy's Road, Brown's Lane, Castle Street Improvements were completed in 2020.
- WIT to Colbeck St Green route - Detailed design ongoing.

## Local Infrastructure & Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

- As part of the €4.7m funding allocated under the LIHAF Scheme in 2017.
- LIHAF Kilbarry Project is now complete with link road and infrastructure now in place to facilitate up to 2,000 units, first phase of housing to commence in 2021.
- LIHAF Gracedieu – funding approved.

## Tramore Public Realm Works

Following on from the announcement in November 2018 of an allocation of €1.35m under the URDF work, construction commenced in 2020. This funding will substantially improve Tramore town centre, assist commercial activity, improve image and create a high design quality public realm that is respectful to the town's historical legacy while asserting a fresh image to reinvigorate the core of the town. This project is scheduled for completion in 2021.

## Festivals and Events

There were 75 festivals and events supported by Waterford City and County Council to the value of €1,286,458.

## COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2020



Launch of Waterford COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan by outgoing Mayor Cllr. John Pratt

In response to COVID-19 and the impact it had on people and businesses across Waterford, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan was developed and implemented by a group of economic agencies led by Waterford City and County Council and including Waterford Local Enterprise Office, Waterford Chamber, Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber, Visit Waterford and Waterford Business Group.

The plan focused on a number of key sectors most impacted including SMEs, retail and hospitality in urban centres and the rural economy. The plan was adopted by Waterford Council on June 24<sup>th</sup>. The overarching mission of the plan was 'getting people and businesses back to work in Waterford City and county.

## The following was achieved during the implementation of the plan:

- As an immediate response to the pandemic an online Business Support Hub was established to signpost all the necessary supports and information.
- Waterford Council has paid over €11.5m to local companies under the Re Start Grant, RSG Top Up and RSG+ with an average value of €4,502.
- Waterford LEO approved 592 local SMEs for a Business Continuity Voucher totalling €1.4m.
- 336 businesses successfully applied to Waterford LEO for a Trading on Line Voucher (TOV) totalling €781,540.
- 3 Waterford companies were funded under Enterprise Ireland's COVID Online Retail Scheme with an average national grant of €36,700.
- 21 applicants were supported in their applications to Micro Finance Ireland in the amount of €503,420.
- 474 businesses availed of Waterford LEO's COVID Mentoring supports and 1,003 availed of COVID training. This is separate to those that would have availed of similar supports provided by Waterford Chamber and Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber.
- Waterford Council waived the annual \$254 licence fee for outdoor seating for 60 local businesses. Outdoor seating was also supported through an Outdoor Seating Grant where 33 applications totalling €46,197 have been approved.
- €140,000 was secured through Towns & Villages funding designed to assist towns and villages in recovery effort from COVID-19 under 3 calls in July & August.
- The Shop Waterford Support Local campaign was launched in May which in addition to a strong online presence in partnership with [waterford.fyi](http://waterford.fyi), has also included print media features and WLR radio advertising. The campaign is being rolled out in partnership with Waterford Chamber and Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber. The campaign has also focused on encouraging the uptake of Shop Waterford vouchers.
- [eWaterford.com](http://eWaterford.com) e-commerce platform developed and now managed by Waterford Chamber.
- Local Tourism Recovery Taskforce established with Fáilte Ireland and domestic tourism campaign developed for 2020. A review of 2020 is currently taking place which will inform plans for the 2021 campaign.
- €30,000 funding was awarded by Fáilte Ireland under the Reignite Programme for 'Illuminate Waterford'.

## City & Town Centre Management

### Vibrant Urban Centres

#### Rates Incentive Schemes

During 2020, the Economic Development Section continued to operate the Rates Incentive Scheme to bring new businesses to the city and town centres. The Rates Incentive Schemes were introduced in 2013 to attract new businesses to occupy vacant premises across Waterford City, towns and village centres. Over the life of the scheme 60 applications were received and 40 were successful. The 40 businesses supported under the initiatives outlined below, helped to support between 103.5 and 111.5 jobs across Waterford.

Summary of Applications Received to Date 2013-2020								
Scheme	Waterford City		Dungarvan		Tramore		Level 3 and 4 towns	
	Applied	Successful	Applied	Successful	Applied	Successful	Applied	Successful
Arts, Crafts, Artisan	24	18	6	2	4	3	6	5
Retail Fit Out	10	6	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
Office Fit Out	4	3	1	1	2	1	0	0
Non Competing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

#### Shop Front Improvement Scheme

In 2020, a Pilot Shop Front Improvement Scheme was launched and 16 businesses across Waterford City centre were successful in their application for a total of €20,000 funding. The aim of the scheme is to support business owners to enhance the appearance of commercial premises in the city centre.

In partnership with Waterford Local Enterprise Office, Waterford City and County Council supported 5 local business owners to participate in Retail Excellence Ireland's Retail Management Development Programme, which is considered the most influential and formative retail management development programme in Ireland.

#### Retail Management Development



Image: Launch of sponsorship of places on REI Retail Management Development Programme with Lisa Grant, Waterford Council, David Walsh, Waterford LEO and Maeve Cooke, The Book Centre.

#### Retail: A Fresh Look



Image: Speakers and event organisers at Retail: A Fresh Look

Waterford City and County Council in partnership with Waterford Chamber and AIB Bank hosted 'Retail: A Fresh Look' in March to brief local retailers on insights into customer behaviour in retail trends and data trends. CEO of Retail Excellence Ireland, David Fitzsimons, briefed the 80+ attendees on the future of retailing.

## Purple Flag

Waterford received its first Purple Flag accreditation awarded by the Association of Town and City Management in 2015 and has continually been successful in annual assessments of the Purple Flag zone.

Having Purple Flag accreditation signifies that Waterford has been recognised as an 'area of excellence, especially in the evening economy' – making Waterford an ideal place to explore. It recognises the standards and appeal of the city centre along with the entertainment and cultural attractions. The night time economy is seen as an important asset both economically and culturally. Via Purple Flag and its stakeholders, Waterford City and County Council is committed to developing the 'Evening and Night Time Economy' ensuring a focused long term approach with a clear strategy, integrated policies and a successful multi-sector partnership to ensure a safe vibrant experience for all.

## Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) is a member of one of the world's largest educational non-profits, helping prepare young people for their futures by delivering hands-on, experiential learning in entrepreneurship, employability, financial literacy and the value of STEM.

Junior Achievement works in partnership with Waterford City and County Council to complement the work of schools by recruiting and training staff volunteers who work with students to inspire and motivate them to make the most of their education. Junior Achievement volunteers help students to make connections between what they learn in school and how it can be applied in the real world. Through volunteers sharing their enthusiasm and experience, young people gain an understanding of the important role that education will play in shaping their future. Members of Waterford City and County Council staff are encouraged to partake in this worthwhile programme and help make a difference in a child's life.

## Tourism

**The tourism and hospitality industry in Waterford has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nationally, there was an 85% decrease in revenue in 2020 with the loss of 160,000 jobs. This impact has been most significant for indoor attractions and hospitality.**

However, many chose to holiday in Waterford in 2020, focusing their stay on the wealth of scenic outdoor locations and activities on offer here. The numerous beaches and trails throughout the county experienced large visitor numbers, particularly in July & August when national travel restrictions were lifted. This increase in the use of outdoor amenities brought its own challenges as popular locations were crowded at times and litter, car parking and availability of toilets became problematic.

The challenges experienced by the tourism sector in 2020 are ongoing and supporting Ireland's largest indigenous industry and biggest regional employer continues to be a priority for the Council in 2021.

## Visit Waterford

Visit Waterford is a stakeholder group responsible for the overall marketing and promotion of Waterford as a tourism destination. The success of Visit Waterford is based on stakeholder participation in time and paid membership, a significant portion of the management and running of the organisation is on a voluntary basis. Visit Waterford also receives support and funding from Waterford City & County Council.

Visit Waterford's first domestic campaign "**Waterford, You're Invited, Come and See**" launched in June 2020. This brand awareness campaign ran on TV, in print, radio and digital channels, and revolved around the unique products on offer in the city and county. The campaign tied in with Fáilte Ireland's marketing campaign, which also aimed to grow domestic holidays in Ireland. Targeted audiences across Ireland saw the new campaign which encouraged visitors to uncover the natural beauty and hidden gems that Waterford has to offer in terms of culture, scenery, adventure, activities and entertainment.

**The summary below highlights the main results of this marketing campaign achieved in 2020:**

- 4 week TV Campaign on Virgin Media – 3.5 million views
- 10 week Display Network & YouTube Ads – 2.4 million views
- 1 week Ireland AM In Show Promotion – 667k reach
- 4 week Facebook Competition (Radio Partners) – 625k reach
- Travel Blogger collaboration – 341k reach
- 4 week Radio Campaign – National & Local Stations - 1.3 million reach

**Throughout 2020 Visit Waterford also worked on a number of additional initiatives which included:**

- Filming for **County by County** – USA Broadcast in Q1 2021
- Fáilte Ireland US Sales Partnership
- Canadian Fam Trip – Jan 2020
- Holiday World Travel Show Dublin – Feb 2020
- World Travel Market – Nov 2020
- Waterford Hot-Air Balloon Rebranding
- Visit Waterford Website update

**Fáilte Ireland Business Supports Accessed in Waterford in 2020**

Scheme	Number of Businesses
Fáilte Ireland Safety Charter	144 Registered (101 Completed Charter)
Adaptation Fund	142 Submitted Applications (111 processed & paid)
Restart Grant for B&B's	14 Submitted Applications (12 processed & paid)

Building on the success of Fáilte Ireland's domestic marketing campaign in 2020 a new RTÉ television series in association with Fáilte Ireland, 'No Place Like Home', featured Waterford and included scenes from the Waterford Greenway and the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark.

**Discover Ireland / Ireland's Ancient East website:**

- The Waterford page was the most viewed landing page for Ireland's Ancient East in 2020.
- Since June 2020 there were 1,831 trade referrals to Waterford businesses via their listing on [www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie)

**Tourism Information**

The Council continues its annual support of Tramore and Dungarvan Tourist Offices, Lismore Heritage Centre and Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark to ensure that visitors to Waterford can access information throughout the County.

**Fáilte Ireland**

The Council continues to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to ensure that Waterford is best placed to access opportunities that present through the National Tourism Development Authority. Information sharing, participation in workshops and alignment with Ireland's Ancient East brand ensures that Waterford continues to have a strong presence in Ireland's Ancient East promotion and development plans.

**Funding Awarded in 2020:**

- €25,000 for the development of Ireland's Regional St. Patrick's Day Celebrations 2021.
- €30,000 for Illuminating Waterford at Winterval 2020.
- €500,000 for Destination Towns Programme in Waterford City which includes enhancements to the Viking Triangle, improved animation and way-finding throughout the city centre.

The **Tourism Recovery** Taskforce was established in May 2020, a critical and urgent working group dedicated to the recovery of the tourism sector. The Council are active participants in the Tourism Recovery Taskforce, Industry Activation sub-group and Marketing sub-groups.

This year, the Council also facilitated the provision of tourist information at the Bishop's Palace following the temporary closure of the Fáilte Ireland Tourist Office in Waterford City.

**Waterford Garden Trails**

Throughout a very challenging year for the 12 gardens and great houses along the Waterford Garden Trail, a Facebook campaign highlighted the rich heritage of a visitor attraction that was a unique and safe experience under restrictions. Facebook followers grew an average of 3-4% monthly; with an annual increase in followers of 40%. The top 2 most engaging posts were on Fairbrook House & Gardens, Kilmeaden, and a feature on Abbey Road Gardens, Ferrybank and the Helping Hand Waterford Charity with a combined reach of 11.5k.

Many gardens found that although they had to close for extended periods, their visitor numbers were greater than previous years due to the spacious outdoor locations available for recreation. The gardens successfully adapted their offerings with initiatives such as marriage ceremonies in Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens and free admission to Mount Congreve Gardens in celebration of Grandparents Day.

## Mount Congreve

Considering the gardens only opened for 18 weeks as opposed to 49 weeks in 2019, Mount Congreve had a good year. Overall visitor numbers decreased 60% but paying visitors only decreased by 24%. This was mainly due to the closure of the Waterford Greenway entrance and moving to an online booking system.

Year	2020	2019
Total visitors	18,377	48,037
Paying visitors	17,025	22,536

The gardens themselves benefited from the restricted opening period as a lot of extra work was carried out in the dry weather of April and May when staff are usually busy welcoming visitors. Fallen trees were removed; lawns re-seeded and extensive planting took place.

Online booking went from less than 10% to over 90%, a welcome outcome from COVID as it helps with planning and control without taking from the overall experience for the visitor.

The pandemic led people to rediscovered enjoyment and appreciation of nature as they sought to escape into the great outdoors. Mount Congreve's offering of vast gardens, beautiful scenery and space to safely enjoy a day out undoubtedly contributed to what can overall be described as a successful year, given the circumstances.

The proposed RRDF development of the new visitor attraction in Mount Congreve has been delayed due to COVID. The ambition and focus of this project is to deliver a world class visitor attraction to complement the world class garden.

## Munster Vales

Waterford City & County Council is part of a tourism marketing initiative between Tipperary, Cork and Limerick Councils with a focus on walking and adventure activities in the five mountain ranges, Knockmealdowns, Comeraghs, Galtees, Nagles and Ballyhoura. A Strategic Tourism Development Plan 2020 – 2025 developing the tourism potential of the Munster Vales was launched to support new and existing tourism opportunities. The Strategy aims to maximise partnerships, providing opportunities for local businesses with joined up products and experiences across the Munster Vales region. [www.munstervales.com](http://www.munstervales.com)

## Celtic Routes

The Celtic Routes Project is a cross Irish Sea set of partners comprising Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority with Wicklow County Council, Wexford County Council and Waterford City & County Council in order to deliver a tourism heritage project that will boost visitor numbers and spend. The project has been developed to address the transitory nature by combining the natural, cultural and heritage assets in Ireland and Wales to increase visitor numbers (both day visitors and overnight) to the benefit of the economy in both Ireland and Wales. The Project is partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund via the Ireland Wales Cooperation programme 2014-2020. [www.celticroutes.info](http://www.celticroutes.info)

## Waterford Greenway

Most of the events and festivals which have become synonymous with Waterford Greenway, since its opening in 2017, could not take place in 2020. In January, Waterford Greenway was a shortlisted finalist in the Irish Independent Reader Travel Awards 2020 in the category as 'Ireland's Favourite Local Attraction'.

In September, Waterford Greenway became the first Irish Greenway to attain Green Flag status. The Greenway joined another Waterford winner, Kilbarry Nature Park in being awarded the An Taisce Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces. The Green Flag award recognizes the work undertaken by the Council in the everyday maintenance of the Greenway, ensuring its excellent standards are maintained for the people of Waterford and beyond. Since opening in 2017, visitor numbers to the Waterford Greenway have consistently reached approximately 280k per annum.



The following are the key trends relating to Waterford Greenway social media in 2020:

## Facebook

Number of Facebook followers has grown from 31,082 in January to 32,630 in December. The overall increase for the year was 5%.

Number of followers	
January	31,082
December	32,630

## Twitter

Number of Twitter followers has grown from 5,320 in January to 5,868 in December. The overall increase for the year was just over 10%.

Number of followers	
January	5,320
December	5,868

## Other Greenway Developments

**Bilberry to City Centre Greenway Link** – Detailed design completed.

**Waterford to Tramore Greenway** – funding approved for feasibility study on route selection and planning phase.

**Dungarvan to Mallow Greenway** – in conjunction with Cork County Council funding received for feasibility study for 76kms of Greenway between Dungarvan and Mallow.

**Kilkenny Greenway** - Construction underway on the 24km route which will run from New Ross to the North Quays in Waterford City which will join with Waterford to Dungarvan Greenway.

## Waterford Recreational Trails

Waterford City and County Council continued to work with state agencies, local communities and key stakeholders to promote and develop high quality outdoor recreational amenities, in particular walking and cycling trails, under the Walk Waterford and Waterford Trails initiatives. A number of recreational trail projects were funded under Project Ireland 2040 funding and rural development programmes including the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Town & Village Renewal Scheme. During 2020 funding was announced for and/or works commenced or continued for trail projects which included:

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Funded Projects:

- Development of Walk Waterford promotional material including new Walk Waterford brochure, trail maps, video and photography
- Nire Valley Walks upgrade and improvement works
- Abbeyside Coastal Walk project
- Enhancement of Lady Louisa's Walk and Round Hill Loop Walk, Lismore
- The ongoing development of St. Declan's Way Pilgrim Path
- Waterford Estuary Walks initiative-Passage East, Cheekpoint and Faithlegg
- Continued development of Waterford on road cycling trails and EuroVelo 1 Atlantic Coast cycling route
- Anne Valley Walk Improvement Works

### Town and Village Renewal Scheme Funded Projects:

- Completion of Crough Wood Walk extension from Crough Wood entrance to Mahon Bridge
- Development of shared walking and cycling path from the Waterford Greenway at Kilmeaden WSVR to Kilmeaden Village
- Ardmore Cliff Walk upgrade and improvement works
- Dunmore East Coastal Walk extension from Portally Cove to Ballymacaw Cove

### Other projects and funding mechanisms:

- Feasibility and planning for Cappoquin Amenity Hub under RRDF funding
- Funding was secured through the Department of Transport under the Carbon Tax 2020 fund for a feasibility study on a potential Greenway from Dungarvan to Mallow in collaboration with Cork County Council
- NTA funding was secured for a feasibility study of the proposed Waterford to Tramore Greenway
- A number of other trails and outdoor recreation projects are at early stages of concept and planning

## Waterford Treasures

### Waterford Museums of Treasures

Following a hugely successful tourism season in 2019 when over 80,000 fee paying visitors visited Treasures Museums, the pandemic caused havoc in 2020. After the shutdown on the 13<sup>th</sup> March and the subsequent cancellation of all booked tours from both the domestic market and the international market, visitor numbers plummeted. While being permitted to open during the summer months and again in the run up to Christmas the impact of COVID-19 on visitor numbers was particularly alarming as the museum is heavily dependent on international visitors.

### Irish Silver Museum

Despite this major upheaval a small cohort of staff remained working behind the scenes and the museum acquired two substantial donations of Irish 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish silver, rare 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish furniture and a stunning collection of Irish miniature paintings. The value put on the two collections by the Revenue Commissioners was €600,000 for one collection and €2.5 million for the second. Thanks to these two collections and those collections of Irish silver gifted over the last four years Waterford Treasures now has one of the largest collections of Irish historic silver in the world.

Thanks also to the generosity of Noel and Stephanie Frisby and the support of the Chief Executive and Waterford City and County Council, Waterford Treasures were able to open The Irish Silver Museum before Christmas. Located at the Deanery, Cathedral Square it is the only dedicated silver museum in Ireland. To complement the displays and to create a more holistic visitor experience the very talented and highly successful gold, silversmith and diamond mounter Paul Sullivan opened a very stylish retail shop and workshop in the Deanery.

### Irish Museum of Time

Likewise, thanks to the outright donation of the largest collections of Irish clocks and watches in the world, Waterford can boast the only horological museum on the island of Ireland. The new museum which will feature timepieces from all over the island is located in the former art gallery in Greyfriars. The building has been completely refurbished inside and out and fitted-out at a cost in excess of over €700,000. Almost all of the money for this project was donated by private individuals with one single donor very generously gifting €400,000 towards the refurbishment and fit-out cost.

Both new museums will be officially opened in 2021 once it is safe to do so and the government ministers invited to perform the opening ceremony are available to travel to Waterford.

Throughout the first lockdown, thanks to the support of WLR, Waterford Treasures was able to broadcast a series of over 80 five minute features on some of the more important objects on display in the museum. In August the museum staff with the financial support of Creative Waterford organised a re-enactment of the Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife, the most important marriage in Irish history, to mark the 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event that took place in the Viking Triangle on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1170. Unfortunately because of the second wave of the virus the planned big event had to be continuously scaled down so that by August we were limited to capturing the re-enactment on video while respecting the social distancing regulations. The event will feature on RTE television in 2021.

Work was also progressed on the development of the cafe/restaurant in the Bishop's Palace and it is planned to have a new licensee operate the concession when the museum reopens after the 2021 lockdown.

With the development of the new museums, Waterford Treasures began the process of re-branding the museums to ensure that the market was fully cognisant of the entirety of the visitor attractions in the Viking Triangle. It is planned to develop a Freedom of Waterford visitor pass that allows the visitor, at a discounted rate, have access to all the attractions in the Viking Triangle thereby helping to increase visitor dwell time in the city with all the consequent economic spin offs from this.

We are optimistic that when we re-open the new offering will ensure that Waterford will be well placed to capitalise on the expected huge surge in international tourism. We will be able to go to the market with something new and very different as both new attractions are fitted out to the highest international standard.

## Local Enterprise Office

### Financial Grants

- **Feasibility Studies** – 9 approved to the value of €114,300;
- **Priming Grants** – 13 approved to the value of €319,469
- **Business Expansion Grants** - 10 approved to the value of €267,391.50
- **Agile R&D Grants** – 1 approved to the value of €30,818
- **Technical Assistance Grants** – 14 approved to the value of €22,272.46

### Other Supports and Activities

- **Business Continuity Vouchers** – 592 applications approved to the value of €1,392,343

- **Trading Online Vouchers** – 460 approved to the value of €1,096,677
- **Enterprise Training** – 113 training events with 1,858 attendees
- **Business Mentoring** – 679 participants
- **Student Enterprise Programme** – 12 secondary schools 694 participants
- **Local Enterprise Week** – 17 Events with 247 attendees
- **Brexit** – 8 workshops with 80 participants
- **Lean4Micro** – 8 businesses approved (value €44,600)
- **Micro Finance Ireland** – Assisted 25 businesses with applications – 21 approved to the value of €503,420



In 2020, Tramore Town, supported by the LEO, was a winner in the Bank of Ireland Begin Together Awards (previously the Enterprise Town Awards). Pictured at the presentation were (Back l to r) Laura O’Keeffe (Bank of Ireland); Lynda Lawton (Waterford Chamber); Larry Breen (NearForm); Anne Cheasty (Tramore Tidy Towns), and (Front l to r) Pamela Pim (Bank of Ireland); Jacqui Gaule (Local Enterprise Office).

# Cultural Services

## Arts

2020 was an extraordinary year for artists.

While formal and structured arts groups, performers and venues were hit hard there was room for optimism judging by the output of individual artists (all art forms) and in new digital work methods and collaborations.

Towards the end of Q1 all public interactions in the arts were either suspended/cancelled or re-imagined. Examples of the former would be Piano Day and the opening of the new Gallery - the latter would be Poetry Day Ireland, with over fifty events brought to the public online in early April (the biggest online Poetry Day Ireland event in Ireland).



The year was topped and tailed with the annual arts grants process for which the budgets remained unchanged from the previous five years. Again online applications were delivered with the 2021 process being streamlined and improved after feedback from the 2020 programme.

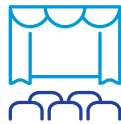


56

Applications for Arts Practice Grants of which

37

were funded



€165,000

received by Venues



€90,000

received by Artists and Arts organisations/groups

The vast majority of normal Arts Administration ran relatively smoothly including aiding the transition between live and online presences for artists. The Council were commended for taking the initiative, early on, to keep up our commitments for financial support to Arts programmes.

The Arts Service also undertook a series of projects aimed at up-skilling technology, up skilling artists and artist's wellbeing including a six week drop-in project on Friday evenings in May/June.

Partnering with Garter Lane and also [Artlinks.ie](http://Artlinks.ie) the arts service delivered a series of talks, lectures and lessons as well as investing and loan outs of Virtual recording packages. Part of this initiative included greater direct access or artists to the Arts Service.

On top of all of this traditional support methods were again employed across all art forms through employment opportunities, bursaries, other grants and programmes where viable. Significant supports were offered under Arts in Education, Arts in Health, Youth Arts, Literature and other art form specific programmes and partnerships.

Further investment was made into the conservation programme for the valuable and significant art collection by both City and County arts services. Three major donations were finalised and facilitated: – The John Sexton Donation of eight important works of art, the David Sheehan donation of a Father Jack Hanlon painting and the long term loan of the Mary Palliser painting from Saskatchewan in Canada.

With the aid of the Culture department a premises for the storage of the Collection was identified and the initiative is slated for delivery in 2021.



20

Art Conservation pieces in total



3

Major Art Donations



10

Artworks in Total

One of the biggest playwriting projects in Ireland – spanning five years – moved on to a 2nd stage with the appointment of Ireland’s premier playwright, Gary Mitchell, commissioned to edit a book of new Southeast Plays – 16 in all including an Opera.

The Theatre in Dungarvan was the subject of a professional audit for safety and ‘green’ friendly equipment (LED technology).

Waterford City & County Council applied to the Arts Council for a new stream of funding based around a 4 County youth research programme, GOMA Gallery and Rogue Gallery also applied to the Arts Council for COVID funding for both studios and gallery safety spaces.

Consultation got underway for a new inner City premises for Rogue Gallery and Studios.

Culture Night moved fully online for 2020.

Music Generation Waterford, part of Ireland’s National Music Education Programme led by Wexford and Waterford ETB in partnership with Waterford City and County Council entered its third year and a COVID remote access programme was developed and delivered starting in April. Interviews were also held for the Waterford Director and the Council was delighted to re-appoint the incumbent director Shauna McCullogh.

The JOLT Dance festival was postponed in November and moved to the new year.

A new online grant system was developed (following feedback from 2019) and delivered successfully including Waterford’s 1st fully online adjudication for Arts Practice Grants. Arts Festivals applications also used this system.

The OPW and Waterford City & County Council awarded a per cent for art public art commission to Una Sealy RHA, for an exciting contemporary portrait with strong Waterford links.

Waterford was part of the national Platform 31 programme with the Arts Council to create a network for and support a mid career artist with a significant bursary.



## Waterford Cultural Quarter

### Murals for Communities

Murals for Communities, a Creative Europe funded programme progressed into its second and final year. Murals for Communities examines how mural art can be used as a method to engage communities in disadvantaged or disconnected societies. Waterford City and County Council is the lead partner, taking on the responsibilities of project managing the two year programme. Activities including three mural art festivals took place during 2020 in Waterford, Heerlen (the Netherlands) and Kaunas (Lithuania). The Walls Project delivered festivals on behalf of WCCC, resulting in six murals. For further details see [www.muralsforcommunities.eu](http://www.muralsforcommunities.eu) including Handbook, methodologies, guides and festival details.



Image: Mural by Decoy at Jenkins Lane ©WCCC Murals for Communities

The Quaker Trail guide was developed during 2020 and celebrates the impact of the Quaker community on the economic and social fabric of the O’Connell Street area of Waterford. The guide describes the various families who developed trade in glass, brewing, shipbuilding and retail as well as Jacobs Cream Crackers and contains a walking trail for locals and visitors [www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie](http://www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie)

Animation of the streetscape was hampered in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic; however some interventions took place including temporary street closures on O’Connell Street over a number of summer weekends to allow businesses to use the outdoor spaces. Flags were hung from posts to further enhance WCQ branding and windows were dressed for Winterval. Waterford Walls artists Aches and Maser created a mural on 7 Thomas Street, sponsored by WCQ. CreateFest, Waterford’s Festival of Creativity took place as an online festival and hosted talks on creativity, on particularly examining the impact, challenges and opportunities posed by the pandemic.

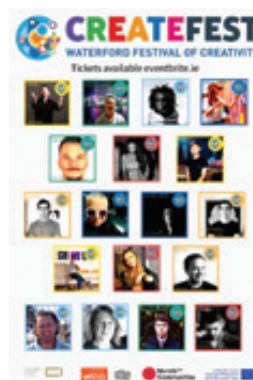


Image: CreateFest panel 2020 ©Waterford City and County Council

An ambitious application was made and presented to the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) by WCCC to develop public realm improvement plans and to revitalize a number of vacant buildings in the O'Connell Street area which will progress the aims of making Waterford a place of excellence for communities to work, live and play.

Partnership with WIT continued in 2020 with the Departments of Architecture and Design. WCQ, WCCC Economic Department and WIT began a co-sponsored PHD researching **the Innovation Ecosystem in Cultural Quarters**.

In Q3 2020 discussions began to progress preparations for the WCQ Strategic Plan 2021-2025. WCQ Steering Committee made up of representatives of residents, business and creatives as well as WCCC councillors and staff carried out research and discussion leading to a draft document in 2020, to be adopted Q1 2021.

### Creative Waterford Open Call 2020



74

Total Open Call Applications

15

Successful Open Call Projects supported

€31,790

Total Open Call Grants

### Creative Waterford Culture Team Projects



15

Culture Team Projects supported

€46,570

Total Creative Ireland funding for Culture Team Projects

### Creative Waterford Additional Projects



11

Additional Projects funded

15

Total Creative Ireland Additional Funding

€77,000

Total Open Call Grants

### Creative Ireland (Waterford) 2020

Creative Waterford delivers Creative Communities on behalf of Creative Ireland each year since 2017. In 2020 funding was given to a total of 41 projects exploring a wide variety of topics including examination of use of recycled plastics and bodhran making in schools, archive collection in Lismore, podcasting, thatching, photography, creative writing and much more.



Image: Bodhran making ©Waterford City and County Council. Photographer: Patrick Browne

Additional funding was also made available to support the arts and creative communities to explore and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and courses such as media skills and product promotion were put in place as well as a programme developed by T.V. Honan of Spraoi to examine resilience.

A particular success was a series of concerts provided by Mobile Music Machine and Blackwater Valley Opera Festival. Via Creative Waterford funding, they performed concerts outside 10 residential care homes in nursing homes from Cappoquin to Dungarvan to Ferrybank and in HSE settings to very appreciative audiences.



Image: Mobile Music Machine performs St Carthages House, Lismore ©Waterford City and County Council. Photographer: Patrick Browne

**Cruinniú na nÓg 2020**, Ireland Festival of Creativity for children and youth was hosted online due to COVID-19 social distancing regulations.

Creative Waterford in partnership with Waterford Libraries hosted over 30 online events from June 2<sup>nd</sup> through to June 13<sup>th</sup> including Coder Dojo, Dance, Mindfulness for Kids and Calmast science projects. The main aims of the 2020 festival were to encourage children to participate on creative projects as well as working on their mental and physical health.

**Statistic: 1472 children attended online workshops.**



## Library Services

Our Libraries support learning, provide information and actively contribute to the social, economic, cultural wellbeing of communities. In 2020, Library services via the branches were restricted by Government guided national Levels. The Library branches were closed for 19.5 weeks and offered a contact and collect service for 6 weeks.

## Libraries Online

The use of **online resources** from Waterford Libraries exploded in 2020. There were 62,835 **e-newspaper** issues read through Press Reader, 36,737 **languages sessions** viewed through Transparent Languages and 15,132 **emagazines** downloaded through RBDigital. Usage of the **online learning portal** Universal Class rose by 109% with 16,211 videos/ lessons viewed.

Waterford Libraries saw our users of our **ebook app**; Borrow Box increase by 98% with 53,506 downloads. Waterford Libraries members have been extremely busy readers and ranked the third highest in usage figures per head of population for ebooks / audiobooks in the country.

During January and February 2020 the **social media** platforms of Waterford Libraries reflected the busy pace of our branches. Since Library doors closed in mid March, Waterford Library staff worked hard to promote online resources, communicate news, council messaging and new services through the Library social media platforms and website. Video content, featuring local musicians, historians and tutors as well as Library's staff proved hugely popular, with thousands of views monthly. The growth of the Library social media channels is a testament to the creativity and dedication of the Library staff. When library users relied heavily on online services, entertainment, engagement, the Library social media channels were a way to reach out and communicate Library services.

The **library website** was also well positioned to provide online access to information, resources and events. A variety of new sections were published to contain content such as video galleries for story times, poetry and music, downloadable activities, video tutorials, talks, presentations, workshops and other useful resources. There were a total of 107,182 views of the website in 2020, which was an overall increase of 34.84% from 2019.



152,258

Visitors to Waterford Libraries



€1.85

Annual expenditure on stock/head of population



158,521

Items issued for books



945

Events held by Waterford Libraries



7,143

Internet sessions used



182,114

Items issued for other

### Facebook



5,017

followers

19%

increase

85%

Reach growth

### Twitter



5,323

followers

7%

increase

89%

Reach growth

### Instagram



1,668

followers

20%

increase

## COVID-19 Community Call Helpline

In order to alleviate the difficulties posed by both COVID-19 and the subsequent restrictions, The Community Call with a Community Response Forum was established at national level and rolled out at local level by Local Authorities. The Community Call was hosted by Waterford City and County Council. Staff from Library Services, Community and Human Resources were initially tasked with call centre duties. The centres were also supported by key HSE personnel. 32 Library staff were directly involved in Community Call Work. Call Centre operators took requests from the public on a variety of COVID-19 related issues. A Community Support Dashboard was developed by the Council's GIS team to co-ordinate volunteer efforts across the City and County.

From the 30th of March to the 20th of September 1,158 calls were received on the dedicated phone lines. The highest volumes of requests by type were for information at 25%, HSE supports at 20%, Collection and delivery of essential items at 19%, volunteering at 12% and social isolation supports at 12%.

Three Library staff were assigned calls to vulnerable HSE clients. Two Library staff were redeployed to the HSE.

**Call to Chat** was a joint initiative with Library staff and the Older Peoples Council which began in March 2020 and ran until June 2020. 111 calls were answered from vulnerable adults across Waterford City and County.

Waterford Library Service ran a very successful **Book Delivery Pilot Programme** in the Tramore Area between Mon 27 April and Friday 22 May 2020 in response to the closure of the Library Branches during the First National Lockdown. The Programme was co-ordinated from Carrickphierish Library. A team of 4 staff phoned Library members who were cocooning and offered them the chance to have Library books delivered to their home address in Tramore. Over 230 Library members were contacted and 68 availed of the service. A total of just over 400 items were delivered.

## Highlights of Library Activities

A new **Online Book Club** was established through the Waterford Libraries Facebook page and now has 210 members. Regular posts promote discussion on books available through the library's ebook app and shared book recommendations to enhance home reading and promote the enjoyment of reading.

The **NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre International Women's Day Celebration** and Waterford Women's History Exhibition featuring the Roses from the Heart Bonnet exhibition took place in Central Library. The Centre was also celebrating 25 years in Waterford and the launch was filmed by RTE.

**Work Matters at the Library** worked with the Waterford Local Enterprise Office to roll out Social Media for Business workshops and with the Waterford Integration Services, WWETB and Waterford Area Partnership on delivering the Shakti SEAM+ social enterprise programme for migrant women.



Library staff produced and edited well over 80 **online storytime videos**, including some as Gaeilge and Lámh storytime. This generated tens of thousands of views online on Facebook, YouTube and the Library website.

For Positive Ageing Week, **Dungarvan Library was virtually launched as the Age Friendly Library** for Waterford Libraries by Mayor of Waterford City and County Council, Cllr. Damien Geoghegan with the Age Friendly Champion, Anne Dykes. Speaking at the launch, he praised the library services and welcomed Age Friendly Libraries.

A **new Digital Hub** was launched in Central Library with expert guest speakers who addressed aspects of innovation, technology, design thinking and creativity. The event was organised by Europe Direct Waterford in partnership with Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford City and County Council, Institute of Designers in Ireland and the Southern Regional Assembly.

**Healthy Ireland at your Library** ran 18 free events throughout the year covering all topics on health and wellbeing with 1,904 attendees/ views. Highlights included Pilates and mindfulness workshops and a series of nutrition webinars with dietician, Gillian McConnell.

In October Central Library hosted the unique **Art of the People installation** in the ground floor windows of the building. The exhibition was organised by Waterford Europe Direct Information Centre as part of Well Festival programme. The installation celebrated art making and art makers in Waterford and was curated by T.V. Honan.

Tramore Library started an **online Scrabble club**. Players register with the library and then play against each other online, weekly.

To promote the Library selection of Christmas picture books, crafts and storybooks, Carrickphierish staff put together **Christmas Activity Bags** for children visiting the library during our reopening in December 2020.

The **Right to Read programme** supported literacy development with 125 class visits, 22,228 class novels borrowed; 27 Spring into Storytime online events with 19,500 views; 77 Summer Stars online events with 36,000 views and 463 participants; 10 Children's Book Festival online events with 2809 views; and finished with 23 Family Time at Your Library online events with 6804 views.

To celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge in March, five classes (approx. 145 pupils) attended Portlaw Library for **Bingo as Gaeilge**.

Innovative Literacy through Lego workshops were run throughout the Library service as well as a pilot Fighting Words programme in Central Library through the **Reader in Residence** placement which was funded by Waterford City and County Council and the Dormant Accounts Fund.

## Outreach/ Connections

In early 2020, a national advertising campaign was launched and asked everyone to **take a closer look** at what their Library has to offer. The campaign culminated with a **Leap into Libraries** open day on the 29<sup>th</sup> February. Waterford Libraries invited members of the public to visit Dungarvan, Ardkeen and Central Library to find out about all of the services that the Library service has to offer. Brenda O' Donoghue and the RTE Radio 1 team visited Dungarvan Library to record an interview with Tracey McEaney and Dungarvan Library users.

Migrant Families, took part in an **Art Programme** with Sean Corcoran of The Art Hand. The workshops were held in Central, Tallow, Cappoquin and Dungarvan Libraries. The programme was funded by Waterford City and County Council and the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Dungarvan Library staff contributed to the Dungarvan and West Waterford **Chamber Wellness Chest** initiative by producing a video that was shared across social media and highlighted the wide range of Library services available to the public.

A **#LibraryLove campaign** was initiated when the library branches were closed following COVID Government restrictions and featured videos from local library advocates.

Europe Direct Waterford, Waterford Libraries and Waterford Integration Services came together on 10 March to organise Waterford's first **Global Women's Conference** focusing on migrant women and the Sustainable Development Goals. Almost 100 women gathered in Garter Lane Arts Centre to listen to a wide range of speakers and engage with important issues affecting migrant women and their families. The conference was opened by the Mayor of the Waterford Metropolitan District Cllr. Breda Brennan.

Creative Waterford in partnership with Waterford Libraries hosted over 30 online events in June for **Cruinniú na nÓg**. Some of these events included Coder Dojo, Dance, Mindfulness for Kids and Calmast science projects and had 1472 online attendees.

## Funding

Waterford Libraries successfully secured funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development:



€111,050.19

SMALL SCALE CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME



€25,033.42

DORMANT ACCOUNTS FUNDING PROJECTS



€15,680.66

SENSORY FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT



€4,715.23

HEALTHY IRELAND SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY



# A STRONG FOUNDATION



# Planning

## Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The process to prepare the new unitary Waterford City and County Development Plan commenced on 20th July 2020. The initial phase of this process consisted of an 8 week period during which written public submissions or observations could be made through an online consultation portal developed to facilitate and encourage public engagement with the City and County Development Plan.

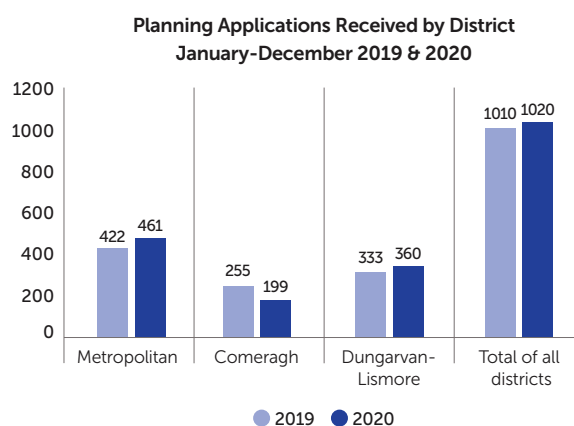
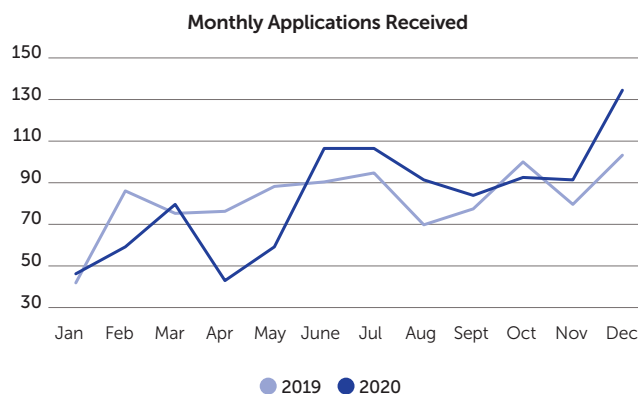
A series of online webinars were also held to maximise public consultation and involvement. Approximately 170 people attended these events. Despite current COVID-19 restrictions a total of 283 submissions were received covering a range of topical issues relevant to both the broad operations of Waterford City & County Council and the new development plan content. The Office of the Planning Regulator has commended Waterford City & Council on the quality and innovative nature of its public consultation process to date.

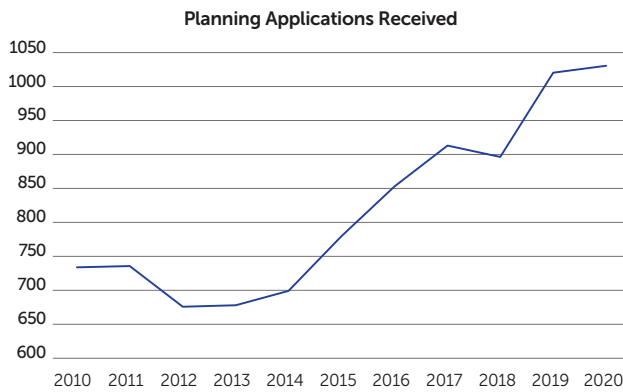
The entire process will last 104 weeks and will conclude when the new City and County Development Plan comes into effect in August 2022.

Activity	Duration	Start	Finish
Development Plan Preparation Period.	Max 104 wks	Mon 20/07/20	Fri 15/07/22
Pre Draft Plan Public Consultation.	8 wks	Mon 20/07/20	Mon 14/09/20
Prepare CE Report on submissions and submit to Plenary Council.	8 wks	Mon 14/09/20	Mon 09/11/20
Liaise and discuss with Plenary Council and obtain Resolution on CE Report.	10 wks	Mon 09/11/20	Mon 18/01/21
Prepare a Draft Dev Plan.	12 wks	Mon 18/01/21	Mon 12/04/21
Submit Draft Dev Plan to Plenary Council and obtain Resolution.	8 wks	Mon 12/04/21	Mon 07/06/21
Notice of preparation of Draft Dev Plan.	2 wks	Mon 07/06/21	Mon 21/06/21
Public Consultation on Draft Dev Plan.	10 wks	Mon 21/06/21	Mon 30/08/21
Prepare CE Report on submissions received and submit to Plenary Council for consideration.	12 wks	Mon 30/08/21	Mon 22/11/21
Resolution of Plenary Council on CE Report and Draft Dev Plan.	12 wks	Mon 22/11/21	Mon 14/02/22
Notice of Material Alterations if necessary.	3 wks	Mon 14/02/22	Mon 07/03/22
Final Public Consultation on Material Alterations.	4 wks	Mon 07/03/22	Mon 04/04/22
Prepare C.E. Report on submissions.	8 wks	Mon 04/04/22	Mon 30/05/22
Plenary Council to consider CE Report and make Resolution.	6 wks	Mon 30/05/22	Mon 11/07/22
New Dev Plan comes into force.	6 wks	Mon 11/07/22	Mon 22/08/22

A total of 1020 planning applications were received in 2020. This compares to 1010 planning applications which were received in 2019. The total number of applications received is the highest figure for a single year since 2008. The monthly figure of 133 applications received in December 2020 is also the highest monthly figure received since 2008. This monthly figure of 133 applications received is 25% higher than the next highest monthly figure of 107 applications received in that 12 year period.

Additionally, 690 applications were granted planning permission in 2020. This compares to 725 applications which were approved in 2019



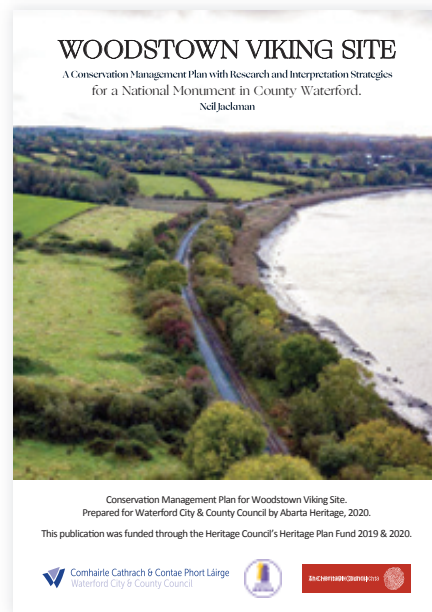


## Waterford North Quays

A planning application was approved in July 2020 for development of lands on the 7.8 hectare site known as Waterford North Quays, Dock Road, Ferrybank, Waterford. The applicant was Falcon Real Estate Development Ireland Limited. The application relates to development in Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) and is subject to Waterford North Quays Planning Scheme 2018. The proposed development comprises a €400 million mixed use development of 129,302sqm gross floor area with the potential to create 2,800 long term jobs.

## Woodstown Viking Site

A Conservation Management Plan for Woodstown Viking Site has been published and is available online with a supporting video on Waterford City & County Council’s You Tube channel.



## Conservation Grants

Waterford City & County Council received confirmation from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht that 16 applications for grant aid under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme have been approved to a combined grant aid amount of €114,000 and 2 applications received under the Historic Structures Fund were also successful – Lismore Castle for €130,000 over 2 years and Curraghmore House for €40,000 over 1 year.

# Property Management

The Property Management Department manages land and property (other than local authority houses) owned by Waterford City & County Council. This section works with various directorates in the Council to provide comprehensive land and property management service and to achieve optimum use of the Council’s Landbank and acquires land and property rights required for the Council’s various infrastructural projects.

**In 2020 the Property Management Department projects included:**

## Compulsory Purchase Orders 2020

- Airport CPO
- Greenway Extension – Bilberry to Clock Tower
- Dungarvan CPO (Causeway)
- Fairlane CPO
- Michael Street CPO
- Chapel Lane/Clashmore CPO

## Vesting Orders

We completed 10 Vesting Orders in 2020 comprising of 6 CPO’d houses in the following locations – Market Street Tramore, Bailey’s New Street, Parade Quay & Frank Cassin’s Wharf.

## Roads, Transportation & Infrastructure

### Acquisitions

- Acquisition of Lands at Carrolls Cross for improved safety junction
- Acquisition of lands at Ballyrandle, Ballinroad for Housing Department
- Commenced acquisition of Duckspool Marsh 15 acres
- Acquisition of lands at Kiely’s Cross for junction improvement
- Acquisition of land at Lemybrien for purposes of bus shelter

## Economic Development

- **North Quays Project** – Extra land for Abbey Road Realignment outside of the CPO
- **Acquisition of Michael Street Site and Investigation of Title Verification & Consequent Extra Small CPO**
- **Disposal of both to Falcon Real Estate Ireland Limited**
- **RRDF – Rural Regeneration Fund** – Continuation of Cappoquin Regeneration Programme

## Housing

- 92 houses, 14 apartments for Social Housing – Some of these houses have phased closings like Mount William development in Williamstown
- Sites – Premises at Newgate Street
- Site & Warehouses Meetinghouse Lane
- Land Convent Close, Military Road

### Total of 6 Sold

- 86 Lismore Park
- 14 William Street
- 46 St. Herblain Park
- 12 Ormonde Crescent
- 17 Ard na Greine
- 17 Orchard Drive

### Total of 7 for Housing Stock

- 40 Johnstown
- 21 Hillview, Kilmacthomas
- 22 Thomas Hill
- 15 Tramore Heights
- 3 Darby Grove, Earls court
- 75 Viewmount Park

### Total of 3 Ongoing

- 2 St. Carthages Avenue
- 18 Viewmount
- Chapel Lane, Clashmore
- 34 The Grange, Johns Hill

## Other Property Activity

- **Freeholds & Fee Simple Sales** – Property Management continues to process freehold sales and 32 new files opened in 2020.
- **Rents Payable** - Property Management section approximately 80 Rents payables comprising of car parks, cultural properties (e.g.) galleries & libraries and recreational areas such as Anne Valley Walk & Lismore Estate Walks.

## Leases

The Property Management Department manage over 140 current leases, some of which go back to the Samuel Barker Lease of 1754.

We have leased lands comprising of over 200 acres for community / sporting facilities throughout the City & County, not including Williamstown Golf Course and the RSC e.g. new playground opened at Mount Sion GAA, Rathfadden.

We completed 17 rent reviews of Leases in line with CPI in 2020.

## Licences

Property Management had 140 license files operating in 2020 from bin stores, community gardens, drama clubs to providing properties to our partners in SIMON & FOCUS.

## \$183 Disposals / Sales of Property

- 9 small disposals
- 2 large disposals
  - a) Ardmore €270,000
  - b) North Quays & Michael Street Development €9 million
- 6 Wayleaves
- 4 Leases
- 9 Fee Simple
- 5 CPO'd houses

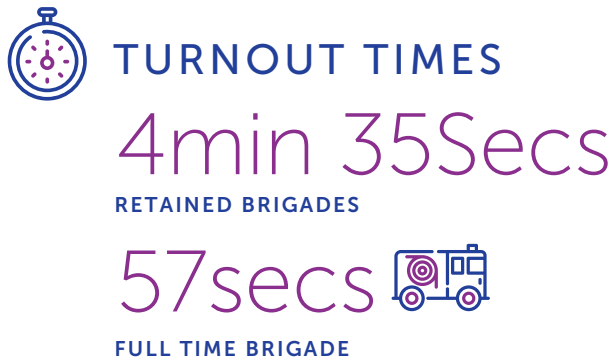
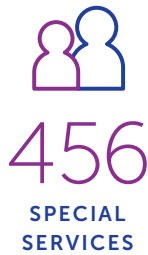
## The Viking Triangle

Property Management continues to manage the VT properties in conjunction with facilities management. During 2020 Property Management tenanted vacant units in this area. Property Management has successfully housed an exciting new placement in "Back to Basics" in 126 Parade Quay and The Nest in 127 The Quay, unfortunately business was disrupted due to COVID-19.

# Waterford Fire Service

Waterford Fire Services responds to a wide variety of emergencies as well as monitoring and advising on fire safety in the built environment.

A total of 137 persons are employed in the Fire Services, comprising Officers, full time and part time firefighters, administration support and a brigade mechanic. The service operates from 10 fire stations under the control of the Chief Fire Officer.



## Emergency Planning

In response to COVID-19, a temporary body holding facility was developed to ensure adequate capacity should existing facilities become overburdened. The regional facility for mass fatality response was readied and placed on stand by. In both cases activation was not required.

## Fire Safety

Fire safety work includes assessing Fire Safety Certificate applications, advising building owners and developers on fire safety and processing licence applications. All of this work continued during COVID-19 related restrictions in 2020.



## Building Control

The Building Control department is based within Emergency Services and is delivered from Dungarvan Fire Station. It is concerned with the delivery of Waterford City and County Council's functions under the Building Control Regulations 2007-2015.



## Civil Defence

Civil Defence is a volunteer-based emergency response organisation. Civil Defence supports the frontline emergency services, e.g. in dealing with severe weather or searching for missing people and also carries out community support activities, e.g. providing first aid cover at both local and national events. Civil Defence operates at national level under the Department of Defence with delivery of service through the local authority.

### Onsite briefing for Missing Persons Search



The following 3 exercises were carried out in 2020



Civil Defence activities during most of 2020 mainly consisted of 183 COVID-19 Response duties.

#### COVID-19 Response Duties and activities included

- PPE training.
- Vehicle preparation.
- Vehicle Cleaning and Decontamination.
- Mission Planning and Communications.
- Patient Transportation (to and from Nursing Homes and Clinical and Hospital appointments)
- Assisting the Blood Transfusion Service
- Collection and delivery of prescriptions for Customer Care Helpline.

## Roads, Transportation and Safety

Directorate - Roads, Water and Environment / Director of Services, Fergus Galvin

### Maintenance and Improvement of National Primary and Secondary Roads

In 2020 the full network of National Primary and National Secondary Roads in Waterford were audited for defects.

Kilometres of National Secondary Road Strengthened	6.5
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### Maintenance and Improvement of Regional and Local Roads

Kilometres of Regional Road Strengthened	12.3
Kilometres of Regional Road Surface Dressed	15.8
% of Non National Roads Surveyed	93%
Number of Bridges Repaired/Restored (Regional Roads)	2
Kilometres of Local Road Strengthened	37
Kilometres of Local Road Surface Dressed	60.1
Number of Bridges Repaired/Restored (Local Roads)	4

### Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport funds this scheme whereby local authorities can carry out works designed to improve road safety on regional and local roads where collision rates can be reduced or where hazards have been identified. In 2020 the Council completed 8 low cost safety schemes throughout the county at a cost of €323,000.

### Local Improvement Schemes

After a number of years the Department of Rural and Community Development reintroduced funding for local improvement schemes in 2017. This scheme grant aids improvements for non public rural roads. The Council received a grant of €258,000 and delivered 5 schemes in 2020 and these works were carried out by the Council and delivered within a short timescale to a high standard.

### Community Involvement Schemes

The Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) is an opportunity for communities to have road repair work carried out at relatively modest cost on local roads and cul-de-sacs that would not normally be included on the Council's main roadworks programme. The Council completed 5 schemes in 2020 with an allocation of €325,000.



## CLÁR

As part of Government's overall programme for Rural Development, the Council was allocated funding of €149,850 under the CLÁR scheme for small scale infrastructural projects in designated rural areas which suffered the greatest levels of population decline. Safety facilities for schools and communities including the provision of school flashing lights, upgrading of line marking and warning signage was provided for communities in designated CLÁR areas by the Council. The Council completed 3 Schemes in 2020.

## NTA Job Stimulus Projects 2020

In July 2020 the government announced a package of measures designed to stimulate a jobs-led recovery and build economic confidence while continuing to manage the impact of COVID-19 for local authorities. Waterford Council received €4,036,000 for measures to address the impact of climate change on the road network and projects to improve facilities and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. A comprehensive range of climate adaptation and active travel projects were delivered throughout the 3 districts of the County as part of this funding stream. Design work commenced on other projects and they will be progressed during 2021.

# Environment

## Presentation Park & Open Spaces

### City Parks & Open Spaces

Semi Mature Tree planting throughout our Parks and Residential estates. Sustainable environmentally friendly methods used to control unwanted weed growth. 180 linear kilometres managed and controlled kerbside weed treatment. Summer Floral Displays to include Hanging Baskets around the city. 78 Hectares of grassed open spaces maintained and managed with an emphasis on Biodiversity. Killbarry Nature Park Biodiversity initiative, promoting biodiversity in meadows. All parks remaining open and serviced during COVID-19 lockdown period.

### Tramore Presentation

Semi Mature tree planting throughout our Residential estates and Ring Road. Summer Floral Displays to include new displays at Sommerville and Monvoy Roundabouts. 26 Hectares of grassed open spaces maintained and managed in house. Tramore Boating Lake biodiversity initiative.

## Winter Maintenance

As part of the Council's Winter Maintenance Plan, the Council aims to provide an effective and efficient response to minimizing the negative impact of severe frost or heavy snow on the travelling public on the road network. It is not feasible to treat all public roads within the resources available and therefore routes are designated a priority rating of between 1 and 3 based on road classification, traffic volumes and the importance of the route.

Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes are pre-salted following low temperature warnings. Priority 3 routes are post salted as resources allow. Waterford City and County Council operates 6 demountable and 1 permanently mounted salt spreaders together with ancillary vehicles to deliver the winter service programme. In the event of snow, ploughs are mounted to the front of the salt spreaders. Grit is made available at multiple locations across the County for use by the community during prolonged periods of extreme frost. During severe or prolonged cold weather the Council's web site, radio announcements, map alerters and social media posts provide up-to-date information on road conditions in the County.

## Dungarvan Presentation

Semi Mature tree planting throughout our Parks; Public Spaces and Residential estates. 40 Hectares of grassed open spaces maintained and managed in house. 2 Hectares of the above maintained as coastal wildflower meadows. 3 Hectares maintained as a biodiversity initiative. Promoting sustainable planting within the towns environs. All parks remaining open and serviced during COVID-19 lockdown period.

## Environment:

### Litter Management – IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter)

Waterford was ranked 8th out of 37 towns – Waterford City continues to be the cleanest city in Ireland.

### Green Flag for Parks

Waterford City and County Council attained Green Flag Award status for two outstanding amenities in Waterford City and County. The Killbarry Nature Park and the Waterford Greenway.

## Veterinary Services

Regular food safety surveillance inspections, ante and post-mortem meat inspection, slaughter and animal welfare audits, traceability and labelling checks and personal hygiene audits were carried out in 2020 in accordance with HSE and WHO guidelines for veterinary inspectors during the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI). Food businesses under supervision during 2020 comprised 4 slaughterhouses and 7 meat processing establishments.

87 premises inspections took place. 39 samples were taken consisting of 12 water samples, 16 veterinary medicine residue samples, 3 microbiological food samples and 8 meat samples for Nitrate and Sulphite analysis.

Slaughter figures for the three approved slaughterhouses for 2020 were 27,719 sheep, 1828 cattle, 668 pigs and 11 goats

## Environmental Enforcement

### Illegal Dumping including C&D Waste

Tackling illegal dumping and fly-tipping continued to be a priority in 2020. These can typically be divided into two categories, small scale/domestic, consisting of less than 5 bags of waste, or larger scale waste which is more indicative of unauthorised waste collectors.

- 4 Environment Inspectors employed
- 204 litter fines issued
- 13 cases where legal proceedings have or are about to be initiated
- 191 warning letters
- 15 directions under Section 14 of the Waste Management Act
- 27 Section 55 notices
- 2 Section 18 notices

### Household Waste Management Compliance (including Brown Bin)

As part of the enforcement of the new Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste Byelaws 2018, which came into effect in December 2018, 770 households were written to seeking information on how they were managing their waste.

### End- of-Life Vehicles

Enforcement of the End of Life vehicles regulations was a national priority for 2020. Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to undertake some of the normal enforcement activities. However, a desktop exercise was undertaken by WCCC staff to identify missing or under reported waste arising from the processing of ELVs which became an exemplar for other local authorities in enforcing this waste stream.

### WEEE Regulations

Due to difficulties carrying out inspections due to COVID-19, questionnaires were sent to 140 premises which were identified as likely to sell Electrical or Electronic Equipment, to see if they were registered for the WEEE regulations. The responses to this questionnaire will inform the planning of inspections in future years.

### Mercury Regulations

The introduction of the Mercury Regulations place a requirement on dental practices to employ a dental amalgam separator to remove mercury filling waste from their waste water. A questionnaire was sent to 34 dental practices seeking information on their installation of this separator. This information will be used to plan future inspections.

### Air Quality

#### Solid Fuel Regulations – ‘Smoky Coal’

The ‘smoky coal’ ban was extended to cover Tramore town and environs from 1st September 2020. Letters were sent to 15 coal retailers advising them of this change in advance of it coming into effect. A newspaper and radio ad campaign on smoky coal was also run. 2 fines were issued for the selling of ‘smoky coal’ in a low smoke zone in 2020.

### Ambient Air Monitoring Programme

The council continued to co-operate with the EPA's Ambient Air Monitoring programme in 2020, however the pandemic restrictions prevented the roll out of a new monitoring station in Waterford. It is anticipated that this will be rolled out in 2021.

### Non Routine Inspections

A total of 2982 Environmental complaints/reports were recorded on CRM in 2020 broken down in the following categories;

- Litter 479 (decrease of 12)
- Waste (non C&D) includes fly-tipping and illegal dumping 2341 (increase of 42)
- Waste (C&D) 39 (increase of 4)
- Air and Odour 48 (increase of 17)
- Noise 75(increase of 13)
- Waste Management

### Recycling

Waterford City & County Council provide 2 Civic Amenity Sites & 66 Bring Bank Locations at which 163 tonnes of textiles, 3280 tonnes of glass, 42 tonnes of Aluminium Cans and 1.9 tonnes of Plastic Bottles were collected.

## Environmental Awareness & Education

### Tidy Towns

There was no national Tidy Towns competition in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Works continued with Tidy Towns groups wherever possible.

### Community Cleanups

Waterford City & County Council continued to support community clean ups by providing the clean up materials and collecting the bags of litter for disposal. Small groups took part in clean ups of their local area throughout the year. Participants complied with all COVID-19 restrictions.

### National Tree Week

400 native saplings were donated once again by the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte for planting in local communities.

### Waste prevention

Environmental workshops were held online and were offered to community groups and schools during the autumn months.

### Litter

A campaign to combat roadside litter took place across radio, social media and newspapers, prompting the community to call out litter louts. This campaign caught the public's attention and we received numerous requests for additional information regarding the initiative.



Waterford City & County Council continues to offer assistance throughout the year to the general public to clean up litter and illegally dumped waste from their local environs e.g. approach roads, local beauty spots, beaches and general public areas.

An anti-dog fouling campaign was promoted on social media to highlight the issue of dog litter, raise awareness about the litter fine and ask dog walkers to clean up after their dogs. The Green Dog Walker programme continued to provide a way to engage with dog owners about the need to clean up after their dog.



A series of social media messages were developed to ask people to dispose of face masks and gloves responsibly.



## Climate Action Workshops

Climate action workshops for community groups, funded through the Local Environment Action Fund Local Agenda 21 were delivered on-line.



## Waste Prevention

LAPN funding was received for a project to prevent paint waste by raising awareness about tips to purchase, store and dispose of paint to create least waste. These tips are being shared online through social media posts and videos, on radio and at point of sale in hardware and paint shops.



## Waste Awareness

A Waste Awareness Week was held 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November which provided information to the public on reusing, reducing and recycling waste. Topics included Food Waste, Greener Cleaning, Paint Smarter, Textiles



## 2GoCup

Work continued on a campaign to eliminate disposable coffee cups in Tramore, using 2GoCups. Social media posts and videos were regularly posted on our social media pages and large signs were erected at the entrances to the town to encourage use of the 2GoCups.



## Reuse Month

October was National Reuse Month and Waterford City & County Council took part in promoting a number of online tutorials, workshops, videos and podcasts. All events were listed on [www.mywaste.ie](http://www.mywaste.ie).

## Green Schools Programme

101 schools took part in the Green Schools programme. This year's Green Schools Seminars was held on-line with various themes e.g. litter, waste, energy, water, travel, biodiversity, etc. Newsletters were sent to all schools to encourage participation in the programme.

## Waterford Energy Bureau

Waterford City & County Council are implementing projects that aim to meet a 33% energy reduction target by the end of 2020. The 2019 report has reported a 23.5% energy reduction saving base on 2009 energy consumption.

Waterford City & County Council have partnered with the other LA's of the Southern Western Region in the preparation of a tender for the retro fitting of LED public lighting including 15,000 lights in Waterford. Work on the retro fit process is expected to begin in late 2021.

WCCC have joined the “Covenant of Mayors Initiative”, which is the world’s largest movement for local climate and energy actions. WCCC have pledged action to support implementation of the EU 40% greenhouse gas-reduction target by 2030 and the adoption of a joint approach to tackling mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

WCCC have prepared a strategy and funding application to SEAI for the installation of electrical vehicle charging points in Waterford. EV charging points will be located at strategic locations throughout Waterford and be part of a first phase of EV charging point installations.

WCCC are supporting communities in joining the “Sustainable Energy Communities” initiative, where funding is available through SEAI, for the development of “SEC Master Plans”.

## Animal Control

### Dog Control



Waterford City & County Council employs a Pound Keeper and two full-time Dog Wardens to enforce the provisions of the Control of Dogs Act 1986-1992 (as amended). Complaints in relation to dogs not being under proper control, straying, bite incidents etc. are investigated by the Dog Wardens. The following table outlines the numbers of dogs taken into the pound, re-homed, reclaimed and euthanised during 2020.

### Horse Control



Under the Control of Horses Act 1996, Waterford City & County Council is empowered to seize and impound stray horses. In 2020, 17 stray horses were seized and subsequently re-homed.



### Dog Licences

	Annual	Lifetime	General	Total
Dog Licences Purchased at Post Office	6,106	53	0	6,159
Dog Licences Purchased at <a href="http://www.licences.ie">www.licences.ie</a>	2,344	93	0	2,437
Dog Licences Purchased at WCCC Offices	0	0	29	29
	8,450	146	29	8,625

## Access to Information on the Environment

European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2011 (S.I. No. 133 of 2007 and S.I. No. 662 of 2011) (hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations), give legal rights to those seeking to access information on the environment from public authorities.

Received	Granted	Part-Granted	Refused
5	3	1	1

# Information Technology Services

## Objectives

Provide an accessible, comprehensive customer service platform for the public, elected members and staff, through the efficient use information technology.

Provide the tools, systems, solutions, and infrastructure to enable the staff and the business sections achieve their business objectives.

Provide a technical support service to staff in the areas of Networks, Applications, Document Management and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Use Information Technology to enhance our service to the public and to continue to improve the council's internal business processes.

## Geographic information Systems (GIS)

### COVID-19 Community Call

To coordinate the Council's response to the COVID-19 Community Call, Waterford City and County Council quickly developed and implemented a COVID-19 Community Support Dashboard. This dashboard not only allowed call centre teams to place requests for assistance with the most appropriate support groups, but also allowed supervisors and management get a complete overview of the evolving situation.

The real-time dashboard used charts, gauges, maps, contact lists, and other visual elements to help decision making, on a single screen.



A structured approach to capturing and processing Voluntary Groups, using online surveys and administration dashboards also helped ensure that only approved and vetted groups were used by the Council during this time. In addition to this contact information, for state and local agencies, was also collated and presented, along with the details and locations of GP's, Post Offices, Supermarkets, Garda Stations, and other essential services.

### Restart Grants

The GIS Section used its data analysis skills in the second half of the year to assist the Finance Department to process and pay over €15 million worth of grants to local businesses, under the Government's COVID19 support package. GIS provided analytical and data processing support to give confidence to staff working remotely, during COVID19, that monies were being paid to the right applicants and for the correct amounts. GIS also helped ensure that applications were dealt with quickly and that grants were paid promptly when the information entered into online application system, [Submit.com](http://Submit.com), were correct and met the set criteria.

### Aerial Photography

During April 2020 Aerial Photography for the County was captured by Bluesky International Limited. Imagery was captured at a 10cm resolution. The data was made available in September 2020 and is already being used by various sections to review such things as, the City and County Development Plan, and to look at issues regarding illegal dumping.

## Applications

### COVID Community Response Helpdesk

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the council implemented a Help Desk under the Community Call initiative. We used our CRM Dynamics platform to quickly develop an in-house application to record, track and report on citizen service requests. The information collected (which included the request geolocation and Eircode) was made available in real time to our GIS team who used it to place the requests with the nearest available voluntary group and to present an anonymised view of request locations.

### Business Restart Grants

The Council issued around €15m to local businesses in the second half of 2020 under this scheme. We quickly implemented and configured a third party solution to provide the link between the online grant applications and our Financial Management System.

### COVID-19 Stay Connected Application

To maintain and track contacts with the voluntary groups operating the Stay Connected initiative under the government's Keep Well campaign, we developed another in-house application on our CRM platform.

### General Systems Development

In addition to the applications mentioned above, we also continued our general development work on the CRM platform, creating and maintaining modules for the various council departments. And we continue to develop new, and maintain existing, in-house systems on a .Net/SQL platform. We also maintain and support business-critical systems provided by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) to support core Council functions such as Finance, Housing, Planning, Electoral Register, etc.

### Systems Upgrades/migrations

During the year we upgraded and migrated (to new servers) a number of critical LGMA and third party systems for Planning, Register of Electors, Housing, etc

### Mobile Applications

During the year we developed a number of bespoke mobile web apps/forms that integrated directly with applications developed on our CRM platform.

## Networks & Security

### Cyber Security

Cyber security, the protection of our IT systems, data services and communication networks, is vitally important.

Initiated Rollout of improved login security to systems.

### Infrastructure

- Delivered maximum up time and performance of Networks, Business Systems, and IT Systems across all offices for all Users.
- Kept our Network, Systems and Data safe and secure.
- Continued with Information Security Governance and development of policies.
- Upgrading of servers to provide secure and stable platform for Council Digital services.

## Continuous Improvement

During 2020, the section continued to take an agile and integrated approach to developing more efficient ways of delivering services to our internal and external customers. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council was forced to change the way activities are organised and to quickly develop new channels of service delivery.

### MS Teams

In response to so many of our staff working remotely, Microsoft Teams was deployed out to laptops across the county and beyond. Throughout the year Continuous Improvement has worked with over 20 sections to help with implementation and adoption.

### Innovation Week



The second National Public-Service wide innovation week took place in October with online workshops and webinars educating and inspiring staff. During this week teams from the Library, Water Services, I.S. and Customer Services shared their own innovative practices and stories, showing our commitment to growing innovation across the Council. Success at the national innovation awards secured €15,000 funding to progress the smart city initiative and testing of IoT sensors.

## Online Applications

A digital transformation initiative which replaces paper applications with an online system was piloted and implemented during 2020. In addition to moving application forms online, all the steps in the process were mapped and improvements made. The solution has reduced paper, time and improved the service for our customers.

The submission management software which collects, manages, and evaluates all types of submissions and applications is now available on Council and LEO websites.

The system currently has online applications for Local Enterprise Office financial supports, Economic Incentive Schemes, Arts and Festivals,

## WIRE App



Continuous Improvement worked alongside a Project Team from Human Resources and other Internal Departments to improve employee communications and engagement during COVID-19.

The app (Waterford Information Resource for Employees) which was launched in December will help employees who are feeling disconnected engage more with colleagues and the organisation.

## Digital Initiatives

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of reliable broadband services to ensure that citizens across the country can avail of remote working, education, and other essential online services.

### Broadband

Waterford is committed to supporting the National broadband plan and ensuring universal access to high-speed broadband.

The build phase for the Waterford City Metropolitan District will take place in early 2021. Surveying for the Comeragh District will start in February 2021.

### Free Public Wi-Fi

Waterford City & County Council welcomed the rollout of Free Public Wi-Fi across Waterford. The service is now available for citizens in public spaces including squares, libraries, community centres, public parks, leisure centres, sports centres, art facilities, and community and Council facilities.

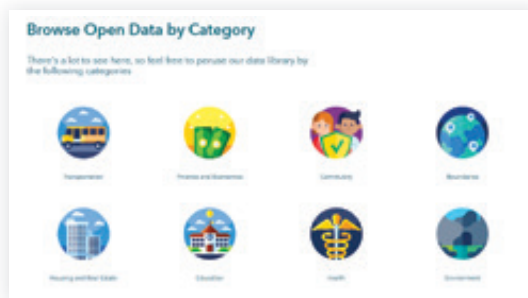


## Waterford Open data Hub launch

Waterford City & County Council launched its Open Data for a Smart City initiative 2021. Promoting innovation and transparency through the publication of Irish Public Sector data in open, free, and reusable formats.

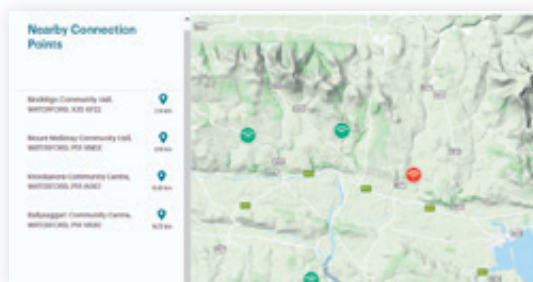
The aim of Open Data is twofold; on the one hand facilitating transparency of the Public Sector and on the other providing a valuable resource that can drive innovation. The availability of Open Data can empower citizens and businesses.

This initiative supports and encourages the growth and development of SMEs within Waterford and in doing so develop a Smart City for its citizens. Waterford Smart City will be designed to improve the quality of life of its citizens and communities – from transport and education to water, waste, and energy. These smart infrastructures demand an open culture that will benefit everyone.



## Broadband connection points

High speed broadband is now available across 4 BCP's across Waterford. Free Wi-Fi is available at these locations. A number of primary schools are also to be connected in early 2021.







# OUR FINANCES



## Financial Review – 2020

Despite the extraordinary challenges posed by the pandemic in 2020, the Council's Finance Directorate continued to promote appropriate oversight and control of the organisation's finances by ensuring that each section and directorate maintained a strong focus on prudent financial management and debt collection/management. The commencement of the lockdown in March 2020 had an immediate and dramatic impact on the Council's income not least in areas such as parking, planning, road opening licences, etc. This, and subsequent lockdowns have had a devastating impact on many of our ratepayers and other commercial customers who were forced to either close or significantly curtail their activities. Initially the impact on Council cash flows was also very significant and for a period of time, it appeared likely that the Council would have to significantly curtail its service delivery to maintain its financial stability. However, a number of Government supports and other measures were subsequently introduced over the course of the year as the pandemic persisted and these in turn helped mitigate the impact on both on the Council's finances and on our ratepayers, housing loan borrowers, etc. Details of some of the supports provided to rate payers and non-commercial customers are provided in the following paragraphs.

The draft revenue surplus for 2020 was €0.6m thus reducing the accumulated revenue reserve deficit as at the end of 2020 to € 5.2m and continues the Council's record of achieving surpluses in every year since its creation in 2014. The achievement of a surplus once again in 2020 is a very positive reflection on both the elected members and the continuous efforts of staff of Waterford City and County Council in maximising resources, achieving better value for money, maximising revenue and increasing overall efficiencies.

## Commercial Rates

Commercial rates are payable on a diverse range of commercial properties such as factories, offices, shops, hotels and restaurants. The Valuation Office determines the valuation that is to be applied to a rated property. Following the consideration of the Council budget each year, the elected members determine the rate to be levied on this valuation. The rate applied in 2020 was €0.2648.

As a support to enterprise in recognition of the impact of COVID-19, a 100% waiver of commercial rates applied for a 9-month period in 2020 to most ratepayers with the exception of a small number of categories. An application process was not required. Waterford ratepayers received a total of €14.8 million in value of rates waiver. In addition, a further commercial rates waiver will be applied in the first quarter of 2021 to businesses most seriously affected by Government restrictions.

The Council's scope to collect rates and to pursue legal remedies was severely curtailed by the COVID-19 crisis. Collections were not actively pursued during the early stages of the crises. The focus of the rates team was diverted to the re-start grant process from May to November of 2020. The rates section actively pursued rates from the sectors not significantly impacted by the restrictions during the later stage of the year.

## Restart Grants

Restart Grants provided direct grant aid to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants were based on the business commercial rates bill from 2019. Over €15.5 million grant aid was paid in 2020. The grants were paid to over 1,400 businesses trading in the County and went to help sustain businesses through this unprecedented time. The Grants of €15.5 million were paid out over two distinct Grant schemes / phases. The criteria for qualification varied between phases with differing criteria. The council resources invested in this project was considerable.

## Housing Loans

We have continued to offer solutions to borrowers in arrears and have facilitated re-structuring from shared ownership to 100% annuity.

## Financial Summary 2020 – Subject to Audit

Summary of Revenue Account	2020	2019
	€M	€M
Opening Balance at 1st January	-5.8	-6.7
<b>Expenditure for Year</b>	<b>173.6</b>	<b>134.0</b>
Transfers to Reserves	6.9	4.6
	<b>180.5</b>	<b>138.6</b>
<b>Income for Year</b>		
State Grants	93.5	53.3
Goods and Services	35.1	36.3
Local Property Tax	18.9	18.9
Commercial Rates	33.6	31.0
	<b>181.1</b>	<b>139.5</b>
Surplus (Deficit) for Year	0.6	0.9

Summary of Balance Sheet	2020	2019
	€M	€M
Fixed Assets	2,253.2	2,232.9
Work in Progress	39.3	30.6
Long Term Debtors	66.0	68.7
Current Assets	47.2	51.6
Current Liabilities	-44.9	-50.4
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2,360.8</b>	<b>2,333.4</b>
<b>Long Term Creditors</b>	<b>-115.5</b>	<b>-120.5</b>
	<b>2,245.3</b>	<b>2,212.9</b>

Represented by:		
Capitalisation Account	2,253.2	2,232.9
Work in Progress	30.3	23.0
General Revenue Reserves	-5.2	-5.8
Other Balances	-33.0	-37.2
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>2,245.3</b>	<b>2,212.9</b>



Waterford  
City & County Council  
Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Phort Láirge