



Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Annual Report 2022

Connected Strategies for
Sustainable Communities



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EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
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Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Eireann
Project Ireland
2040



LCDC
Le Comitee de Developpement Rural
The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development - Europe
investing in rural areas

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithé
Our Rural
Future

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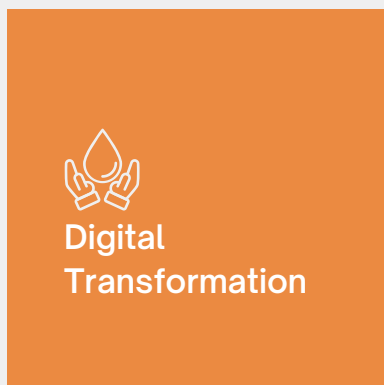
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Empowering
Local communities



Nature
Nurture
Innovation &
Culture



Company Details



Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

Company Name:

County Kilkenny LEADER
Partnership Clg.

Date of Incorporation:

18th March 2008

Address:

8 Patricks Court
Patrick Street
Kilkenny

Registration:

Registered in Ireland
No.454899
Charitable Status No: CHY18191
Charity Registration No. 20069346

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Company Board Members

| Name | Representation |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dennis Drennan (Chairman) | Social Partner |
| Liz Dermody | Social Partner |
| Ger Mullally | Social Partner |
| Cllr Eamon Aylward | Local Authority |
| Cllr John Brennan | Local Authority |
| Richie O'Brien | Statutory Representative |
| Martha Bolger | Statutory Representative |
| Suzanne Campion | Statutory Representative |
| John Burke | Community Representative |
| Pat McAuley | Community Representative |
| Rory Williams | Small Business |
| Kevin Mahon | Kilkenny Tourism |
| Hollie Kearns | Co-op Community Sector |
| Kate Carroll | Co-op Community Sector |

Chairman's Overview

It has become almost a repetitive cliché to start these reports by claiming that the year has been remarkable: both for the unexpected challenges that the Company was presented with, and for the nimble and hugely effective response of the Board and staff of KLP to those events. The past year was no different, the Covid 19 Crisis had subsided, but the Russian - Ukrainian War brought significant numbers of displaced people and refugees to Ireland, and to County Kilkenny.

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) team led the Company response to that particular challenge. Similar to the Covid 19 crisis the staff group as a whole supported 'meeting and greeting', providing basic needs and contributing to the longer-term care and employment, preparation of Ukrainian people as they settled.

The LEADER team had a very busy year too. The 2017- 2021 programme wound up with a couple of Covid Crisis induced interim years. Along with the myriad of very valuable smaller projects, several initiatives stand out, including the mainstreaming of the Nore Vision project as a separate organisation: the Nore Catchment River Trust. The success of Piltown's Broadband for *Our Community* in developing a community owned fibre network and being recognised with high profile national and EU awards, was a phenomenal development. Also, noteworthy is the growing national profile of the Graiguenamanagh Outdoor Activity Hub - and many others at different scales. The team is now hard at work on the drafting of KLP's Local Development Strategy for 2023- 2027.

One of the biggest strategic changes in 2022, was the successful application for the Local Area Employment Service (LAES) to cover the combined 'lot' region of Carlow and Kilkenny. Despite the need to start from scratch, the new team hit the ground running and have been very successful in the delivery of what is a challenging set of 'key performance indicators' for the programme. Elsewhere, very valuable work took place in widely divergent programmes, from TUS, the Rural Social Scheme, Rural Recreation Officer, Social Prescribing, and Primary Healthcare teams. Underpinning everything, is a very small team of administration staff who provide the essential support to allow all the development work to continue and thrive. I'd like to thank all our staff team; we genuinely value their dedication to their work.

There is a feel of the end of era about this year, as I will be retiring as Chairman at the July 2023 Annual General Meeting. I am very grateful that I had the honour of chairing the company and I thank my Director colleagues, all staff, Company Members and stakeholders for their commitment over the years.



Denis Drennan |
Chairman of the Board

"I'd like to thank all our staff team; we genuinely value their dedication to their work."

Notes from the CEO

As our Chairman Denis Drennan notes in his 'Overview' piece, significant change and some challenges have become a commonplace phenomenon to Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) in recent years. It is rare that we must search for new events or subjects to add interest to our Annual Reports. As the Chairman has mentioned many of the more high-profile or noteworthy subjects, I will not repeat the roll of honour and achievements, but will limit my notes to a few thanks.

First to my staff colleagues in the Company: it's been a pleasure and honour to witness the enthusiasm of so many of them, in the context of day-to-day work and the exceptional challenges and opportunities that presented over the year. I say this of new programme teams and well-established groups. This staff group believes in the importance of their work, and I believe it shows in the quality and extent of the results.

I would like to take this opportunity to also praise and thank our Board of Directors, both as a body and as individuals. As you'd expect, the Board takes its duties seriously and ensures that the executive, including the CEO carry out our duties to clients and funders in the correct manner. The Board also has the vision to support new initiatives that add value to the Company's position as a leader of local development,

and, also when necessary, to 'speak truth to power' to ensure the Company's work and role is respected. On behalf of the staff, I can say that both the guidance and the support are valued and appreciated.

Individually a significant number of long-term Directors will be leaving the Board at the 2023. Many of these have been stalwarts over many years. While we understand and agree with the general need for rotation of directors, on an individual basis, we will miss their acumen and experience. We would hope to see them continue to be involved with the Company in some manner.

I must mention the imminent retirement of our Chairman, Denis Drennan. Undoubtedly Denis has to be credited with the success of the company. He oversaw the growth and ambition of KLP as a development agency over a number of terms as a director and then Chairman. Personally, I will miss his advice, honesty, wisdom and leadership. I appreciated his trust and support at the inevitable times, when the Company needed to fight its corner. Denis will be eligible to remain on the Board as a Director for another year. We know he will continue to operate to his usual high level of commitment in that year.



Declan Rice | CEO

"This staff group believes in the importance of their work and I believe it shows in the quality and extent of the results."

Rural Development Programme LEADER

The KLP Rural Development Programme (LEADER) performed well in 2022. The RDP team supported forty projects including Thomastown's creative initiatives with the development of a new Jewellery School. LEADER also funded a number of Rural Environmental projects, including projects that promoted tourism on the Nore and Barrow Rivers.

With the interim programme ending, KLP began planning for LEADER 2023 - 2027. Looking forward, KLP is planning a number of consultations with communities, businesses and stakeholders as we focus on the design of the new Local Development Strategy. These consultations will empower the communities and stakeholders to shape the LEADER development process and contribute to finding new solutions to local challenges.



40 LEADER FUNDED PROJECTS 2022

**7 RURAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**
projects awarded

€422,544

**578,681
APPROVED**
for 13 Social Inclusion
**PROJECTS
FOR 2022**

€188,354

approved for 7
projects for

**RURAL
ENVIRONMENT**

€91,421

awarded to project
for

**EURI SOCIAL
INCLUSION**

€439,822

awarded to

**9 EURI RURAL
Economic
Development**

€6,000

for

**Co-op Rural
Economic
Development**

Nature Nurture

The SMART Villages Series

Nature Nurture, was initiated and funded by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP). This marked the third instalment of a four-part series that aims to empower local communities in securing a sustainable environmental future while enhancing their quality of life.

The event, organised by Workhouse Union, proved to be an enjoyable and enlightening afternoon with favorable weather, captivating speakers, engaging community contributions, and delightful food and refreshments.

Building on the success of previous workshops, KLP's Smart Villages training event, Nature Nurture, shed light on the tools available for communities to develop their own Smart Village strategies. The event emphasised the importance of empowering rural communities to shape their local visions within a balanced bottom-up and top-down development and governance process.

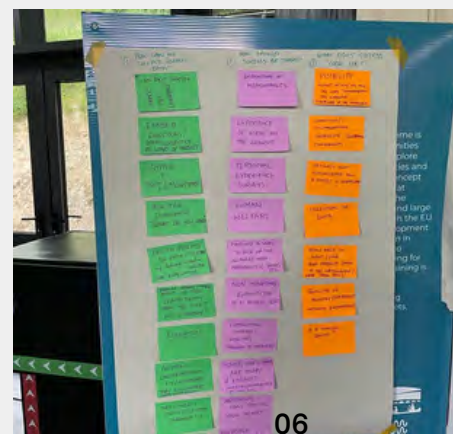
Under the guidance of renowned environmentalist and media presenter Eanna Ní Lamha as the Chairperson and MC, the event explored topics such as the Social & Economic Return on Investment (SEROI) model. Prescience Consulting introduced SEROI, enabling communities to demonstrate real financial returns and garner increased support from funders by quantifying project benefits.

Led by Prescience Consultant, Ian Dempsey, attendees actively participated in a Value and Impact workshop, engaging in discussions on defining project success, determining evaluation criteria, and collecting valuable data.

The event served as a platform for addressing pressing questions regarding local communities' contributions to environmental improvement and the value associated with environmental projects.



Empowering local communities to secure a sustainable environmental future while enhancing their quality of life



Case Study

River Tourism

KLP has a specific focus on economic, cultural, outdoor and “soft adventure” tourism especially those that promote tourism development which increases adventure/eco/water-based activity along our rivers.

Boat Trips

BoatTrips.ie is the first commercially run tour boat company ever to operate on the river Nore in Kilkenny and supported by the LEADER programme. As a unique experience, it adds substantially to the local tourism offering and complements/reinforces the branding of Kilkenny as both an international tourist destination and a home-grown staycation county. The daily boat trips not only showcase the history and heritage of Kilkenny, but do so from the perspective of the river, highlighting the role the river Nore and its users have played in the development of the city.

As an outdoor activity, BoatTrips.ie helps families and individuals to switch off from modern life and mindfully reconnect with nature. Gently forcing people to slow down to the pace of the river while witnessing wildlife such as kingfishers, otters and salmon up close.

BoatTrips.ie has also aided the refocusing of local public attention towards the unique asset that is the river Nore. Currently, plans are afoot by other entrepreneurial individuals to further utilise the river. These include Stand-Up Paddle Boarding, River Bikes and Kayaking.

The company has introduced thousands of people to the river for the first time. Thereby encouraging it's use from a recreational perspective and simultaneously promoting its protection and conservation. Find out more at: <https://boattrips.ie/>



"...the branding of Kilkenny as both an international tourist destination and a home-grown staycation county.."

Case Study

River Barrow Tourism: Graiguenamanagh

Riverboat Adventures

Riverboat Adventures, takes customers on a delightful boat journey along the River Barrow starting in Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny. Riverboat Adventures is the brainchild of Eoin Bolger, a passionate boating enthusiast. Eoin's love for boating and the river led him to start a tour service, offering affordable river cruises for up to twelve people. With the support of KLP, Eoin was able to purchase a boat and ancillary equipment to kickstart his venture.

While strolling by the riverbank is a great way to spend an evening, there's so much more to discover on the river itself. River Boat Adventures is the perfect solution for those seeking an unforgettable experience on the River Barrow. Bookings can be made here:

<https://www.facebook.com/EoinBolgerGraig/>

Go with the Flow

Feeling More Energetic? Canoe holidays, family river adventures, Valley of the Monks (self guided) and digital detox. This is just a taster of what adventure tourism operator "Go with The Flow" have on offer in Graiguenamanagh. Adventurers arrive to Graiguenamanagh by canoe where they will have plenty of time to tour the highlights and follow the Graiguenamanagh Heritage Trail. www.gowiththeflow.ie/

These are great examples of KLP supported projects which strengthen the rural region and support innovation. Rural regions face various challenges to stay attractive, competitive and maintain sustainable economic growth and promote viable communities. Our waterways have the potential to build innovative solutions and capacity in rural towns so that rural areas can overcome their inherent challenges and remain viable business locations.



"KLP supported projects which strengthen the rural region and support innovation."



Case Study

Thomastown: The Centre for Creativity and Culture

Kilkenny has a rich cultural and creative heritage in craft, having the Kilkenny Design Workshops here since 1965 and the Grennan Mill Craft school in 1981 and 2021, Kilkenny was designated the prestigious International award of World Craft Council Craft City and Region, one of only four regions to achieve this recognition in Europe.

Over the years Kilkenny has attracted designers throughout Europe through workshops producing small production runs and prototypes for industry in the areas of weaving, textiles, ceramics, furniture and silversmithing, many of whom started businesses and settled here.

Thomastown has become the hub for much of this activity. When *The Design and Crafts Council* expressed plans to expand their highly coveted jewellery courses, the availability of the vacant old courthouse known as “The Sessions House”, in the centre of the village seemed like the perfect location. Funding was sought from various sources, mainly the Rural Regeneration and Development fund, however this was not enough to proceed with the full schedule of works envisioned.

In keeping with KLP's Local Development Strategy to support the scaling up of craft enterprise, innovative and creative initiatives, KLP's board accepted an application for €400,000 for the relocation of the Design and Crafts Council Jewellery and Goldsmith Centre of Excellence to “The Sessions House”.

Partners in the redevelopment of the Sessions House included Kilkenny County Council, the DCCI, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

To further cement Thomastown's creative imprint, an application was submitted and approved for a feasibility study on the redevelopment of the vacant Bank of Ireland building located in the main street which is being proposed as the new premises for the Ceramics Centre of Excellence. This building was built around 1880 and functioned as a bank until 2018 and has been vacant since.

Close by, Jerpoint Glass, a family owned business and glass blowing studio, makes handmade crafted glassware, including wineglasses, stemware, candles, bowls, jugs and vases.

LEADER funding was approved to purchase an electrical furnace in order to reduce the environmental impact of its operations, as well as increase its production capability by providing a safer and cleaner work environment for its glass-blowers.



Case Study

SEROI Workshop

In November 2022, KLP hosted an enlightening workshop, introducing the cutting-edge planning and evaluation system known as SEROI+. The SEROI+ Collaborating across borders and the SEROI+- Smart Village cooperation project brought together LEADER Local Action Groups from Ireland (Kilkenny and Connemara), Finland, and Italy.

The four LEADER partners joined to advance the development of the Social & Economic Return on Investment (SEROI+). Drawing on accredited methodologies, SEROI+ offers a alternative approach to quantifying the social and economic return on investment.

With the help of a specially designed online calculator tool, which is currently being developed by the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, communities can now measure the value of qualitative elements like well-being, biodiversity, and culture. This innovative system empowers grant applicants and project proposers to present a comprehensive picture, incorporating both financial and numerical measurements alongside these traditionally harder-to-value aspects.

At the SEROI+ Event, attendees were introduced to the online calculator tool and participated in workshop exercises that showcased and proofed examples of planned initiatives utilising SEROI+.

This tool will be very beneficial and KLP looks forward to further developments to come.



"...a system to allow communities to calculate values on qualitative elements such as well-being, biodiversity, culture, etc..."

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme

The SICAP Programme had another very successful year in 2022. The team surpassed their SICAP goals to support over five hundred individuals into either employment, training or further services. SICAP is committed to working with a number of community groups, supporting them to grow and reach greater autonomy.

The SICAP Team has achieved remarkable success in their mission to empower clients, exceeding their annual targets. Their unwavering commitment to supporting individuals in finding employment and guiding them towards various opportunities has boosted client confidence and equipped them with essential skills for their career paths. Through personalised one-on-one sessions and group CV coaching, the team has provided valuable direction to a growing number of clients navigating career choices.

The SICAP Back to Work Enterprise team has collaborated with some amazing start-ups, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, the team has actively engaged with communities throughout Kilkenny, promoting inclusivity and equity. The Men's Shed initiative has flourished in all aspects, and the team is actively considering the establishment of Women's Sheds, further expanding their positive impact.

SICAP played a major role in the migrant crisis of 2022. The set up of the Sunflower Shop on Johns Street created a hub for information and resources to assist Ukrainian migrants integrate into life in Kilkenny. The shop was visited by Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, Larysa Gerasko. The Ambassador also met with

members of the Community/Inter Agency Forum for the Ukraine Crisis Response to hear about the work on the ground for Ukrainians arriving in Kilkenny. With the shop goals met, KLP then closed the venue, referring further migrant support from the KLP main office.

During the Savour Kilkenny Festival, The Global Kitchen Initiative was revived with a Ukrainian flavour: The Borscht Cafe pop up in Kilkenny's Home Rule Club. Food was prepared by Ukrainian chefs and served by members of the newly arrived Ukrainian community. Locals were fully immersed in the Ukrainian culture, enjoying the delectable cuisine, melodious music, and engaging conversations. This initiative was so popular that plans are underway for more pop up cafes that represent the migrant communities living in Kilkenny from around the world.

SICAP also continued the Town Ecologies initiative, which gave opportunities to new emerging architects to work with rural communities as they develop their co-design, and creative placemaking skills. As we observed, the local community demonstrated strong unity and collective action, making this initiative a resounding success.



SICAP Overview 2022



10
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
supported by **SICAP** in 2022
creating

13
JOBS



54
INDIVIDUAL
GRANTS



34
LOCAL
COMMUNITY
Groups Supported and Developed
Annual Action Plans



81
Individuals
Progressed into
EMPLOYMENT



4
Individuals
Progressed into
STATE
EMPLOYMENT
SCHEME

49
Individuals
Progressed into
SELF
EMPLOYMENT
(New Start-ups)

105
Individuals
Referred to
OTHER
SERVICES

INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED

341

Unemployed
Supported

172

New
Communities

160

Disadvantaged
Young people

120

People living in
Disadvantaged
Communities

118

Disengaged
from the Labour
Market

91

Low income
Workers

74

People with
Disabilities

72

Lone Parents

46

Travellers

5

Emerging Needs
Resettled Syrian
Families

1

Disadvantaged
Women



134
SICAP FUNDED
Life Long
Learning course
placements



332 **COMMUNITY**
INTERVENTIONS

- ✓ **66** - Support issues related to social inclusion and equality
- ✓ **74** - Building LCG capacity
- ✓ **88** - Decision making structures
- ✓ **24** - Annual Action Plans
- ✓ **48** - Support Community planning
- ✓ **22** - Implement initiatives to address social inclusion



Ballyragget 2022 Town Ecologies

SICAP Initiative

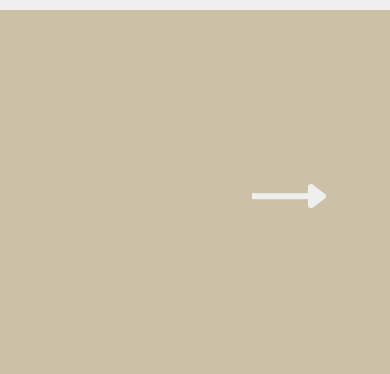
Town Ecologies

In 2022, the Kilkenny Town Ecologies project sought out the talents of Kilkenny's emerging and motivated architects to participate in a unique opportunity to develop their co-design and participatory public engagement skills within a rural context. This collaboration was led by Workhouse Union and funded by Arts Council Ireland, with support from Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) and Kilkenny County Council.

Three selected architects worked alongside local community groups, stakeholders, and a team of experts including planners, ecologists, business consultants, KLP community development officers, and creative producers. The architects participated in a hybrid of online and in-person engagement over four months.

During this time, they gained practical experience supported by mentorship and research resources. The opportunity included engagement with hard-to-reach voices, enhancing the architects' capacity in co-design and inclusion. The architects had a clear and defined role within one of the three community-led projects. The projects included the Dunnamaggin Village renewal plan, Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre Feasibility Study, and Ballyragget Town renewal process.

This successful initiative gave these emerging architects the opportunity to work on tangible outcomes for the communities involved. They gained a unique real-life learning platform, as well as developing their creative placemaking, community engagement skills and experience in rural Kilkenny.



"..creative
placemaking,
community
engagement skills
and experience in
rural Kilkenny."





Ukrainian Cuisine

SICAP Initiative

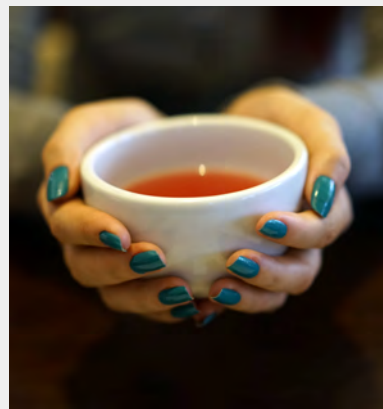
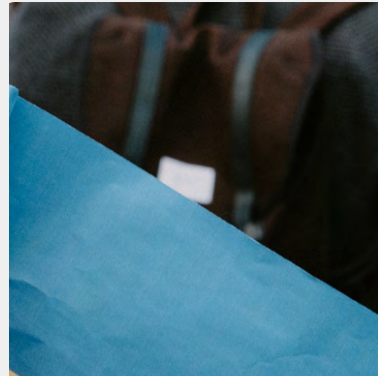
The Borscht Pop up Café

The Ukrainian community in Kilkenny with the support of KLP brought a special opportunity to locals with the Borscht Cafe pop up in Kilkenny's Home Rule Club. The event took place during Savour Kilkenny giving locals a sample of traditional Ukrainian food music and culture.

All the food was prepared by Ukrainian chefs and served by members of the newly arrived Ukrainian community. Borscht soup was on the menu. This is a soup of Ukrainian origin made with red beetroot. The atmosphere encompassed "everything Ukraine" from the food to the music and conversation.

The event was very successful and promoted inclusivity and community. The pop up cafe prompted the revival of KLP's Global Kitchens as a gathering place to bring locals and communities from all walks of life together to learn more about different cultures and enjoy delicious ethnic food.

Plans are now set to continue the initiative throughout 2023. The new pop up cafés will bring authentic flavours from Kilkenny's communities around the world. We can look forward to representation from Ireland, Lebanon, Romania, Poland, Malaysia and more! KLP is grateful for the support of the Home Rule club and the volunteers who have made this initiative a success.



"..bring locals and communities from all walks of life together to learn more about different cultures and enjoy delicious ethnic food."



Case Study

Start up Enterprise Interview

KAMBA Design

Kamba Design is a charming startup who approached KLP SICAP Development Officers for support and advice. Kamba was founded by Andrea Ngabo Woods. Her artisanship produces beautifully crafted macramé accessories and hanging art. How did she get there? We caught up with Andrea with a few questions.

Tell me a little about yourself and your background?

I am a Croatian mum of two, married and living in Kilkenny for over 7 years now. My professional background is mostly in the airline industry, ground operations and hospitality. I am also a PTSD, depression and anxiety survivor. I am 41 years young and I value "quality of life" rather than "quantity of material things", including money. I am grateful to be able to stay at home and do what I love.

How did you start your company (thinking in terms of why you decided to turn your idea into a business)?

During Covid-19 lockdown, I started doing it as a hobby, mostly to keep my mental health at its best. Knotting technique is very calming and soothing and slows down this fast and rushed life we are living in today. When everything started reopening, I had many products already mastered to perfection and the idea of staying at home, being in charge of my time, being more involved in my children's life and being in charge

of my hours was an absolutely great feeling. My husband encouraged the idea of registering the business. We both decided to cut short on many household expenditures and take a leap of faith that tomorrow will give us a good quality of life.

When did you start creating things?

During Covid-19 pandemic.

What were early influences that have influenced your work thus far?

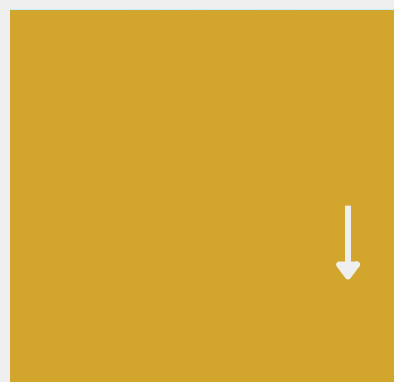
Ordinary people who made huge changes in their lives by taking that one risk in faith and now are living their best life. The internet today makes it possible for absolutely everyone to earn a main income or at least a side one, regardless of academic achievements.

What makes your company unique?

I am not unique yet but I am working towards this. At the moment, I am currently branding the company with an all new colour palette across the Kamba Design social media, website and



"..you can access advice, guidance, training and support, making it almost impossible not to succeed."



selling platforms, as well as recognisable fonts and logos. In the future, I will be narrowing down the products I make, to ones the market is mostly interested in.

I advertise as sustainable, which I take very seriously. I use all cord leftovers from bigger artworks and up-cycle them into jewellery. I also recycle the cardboard boxes I receive my supplies in, by cutting them into small pieces, decorating them and transforming them into my own jewellery display cards. You can view a video about this process on my instagram account. I also shred the paper that comes in the delivery boxes to make my own gift boxes fillings.

What advice would you give to a person starting out in their own business?

First and foremost, connect with the institutions and take all the advice and financial assistance they are offering. People overlook the fact that there are people and departments offering great help and guidance even before you start your own business, making it therefore reducing the possibility to make mistakes. From all over, you can access advice, guidance, training and support, making it almost impossible not to succeed. I have seen a few start-ups fail mainly due to impatience and I have seen many progressing slowly and with wisdom.

You will have many failures. It is great if you have someone close to support you when you have a low day. Because you will have them, not only days, but weeks too. You do not need to have a lot of money to start your own business. I was bootstrapping all the time and learned from my mistakes. Take one step at a time. Find your weak spot, then get help and training for that. The 'Start Your Own Business' course is a "must have". Earning income from your business at the beginning is not the only proof of your business succeeding.

Any advice for selling online?

Don't sign up for all the Social Media platforms at the same time. It is not as easy to become a trader on social media as it looks. "Meta" business platform is connecting Facebook and Instagram, making it easier to manage but they will ask for many details to be included before actually opening a shop on Instagram or similar.

Give ample consideration when pricing products. Don't go too low, because it is easier to give a discount by giving vouchers or even subscription discounts to attract more customers to your profile/website.

A website is a must have for anyone who wants to look professional. It will cost you, but that should be one of the first investments. I would rather struggle, than not look like a serious business. "WIX.com" platform is great for the start even if you do not know anything about software designing. You will be able to make your own website through them without paying hundreds of euros to someone to do it for you.



Case Study

Start up Enterprise Interview

ACHARA Stationary

ACHARA is a vibrant start-up founded by Mundy Walsh that specialises in modern stationery. Her gloriously colored paper would inspire anyone to sit down and write a note. ACHARA was supported by our SICAP team here in KLP. Heres a little about her story.

Tell me a little about yourself and your background?

After university, I lived in Italy for over twelve years working in editorial and art fields. I have always been interested in the power of words and after returning to Ireland during Covid, the power of the written word took on a new meaning. I searched for stationery with impactful design and colour but I couldn't find any. So I started making my own, and from there it became a bit of an obsession.

How did you start your company (thinking in terms of why you decided to turn your idea into a business)?

After I began making note cards and then notebooks, I realised I really enjoyed the process. I couldn't see anything else like it on the market and after extensive market research, I started turning the idea into a business in 2022.

When did you start creating things?

In late 2020 I started experimenting and learning about the techniques of making stationery by hand. For example, I became fascinated by envelopes and how they always seem to be an afterthought, design-wise. I wanted to make them more than that, an essential and beautiful part of the set. That is how the signature ACHARA two tone envelope came about.



"Try not to be overwhelmed. This is my motto and I have to repeat it to myself several times a week.."



Book binding followed a year later and I developed a distinctive way to bind A6 & A5 notebooks, each of which comes with its own slipcase. Both the notes and many of my notebooks can be personalised, which is another important feature of my products.

What were early influences that have influenced your work thus far?

I am hugely influenced by the Slow Food movement in Italy, which honours quality ingredients, prepared and cooked with care to be shared with friends and family. I see quality, sustainable stationery in the same way; how you can create a meaningful connection — with yourself or with others — by putting pen to paper.

After that, design and colour are my two influences. Colour-wise, I am influenced by everything I see; from packaging in the supermarket; to art in galleries; to colours on international runways. Design-wise, I love geometric shapes, such as in the Bauhaus era and mid-century graphic designers, book covers and album covers.

What makes your company unique?

A quality that makes my business unique is my belief in celebrating the handwritten word through products that are innovatively designed and sustainably made. This is at the core of what I do, alongside the benefit that writing by hand has on us, our relationships and our mental health.

What advice would you give to a person starting out in their own business?

Be brave! I'm still at the early stages and even though I feel I have learned so much (by doing a Start Your Own Business course among others) and have grown since I started, there is still so much to learn. So yes, be brave, follow your instincts when it comes to your business's ethos and plan. Try and do as much as you can yourself at the beginning, and always be open to learn from people with more experience than you.

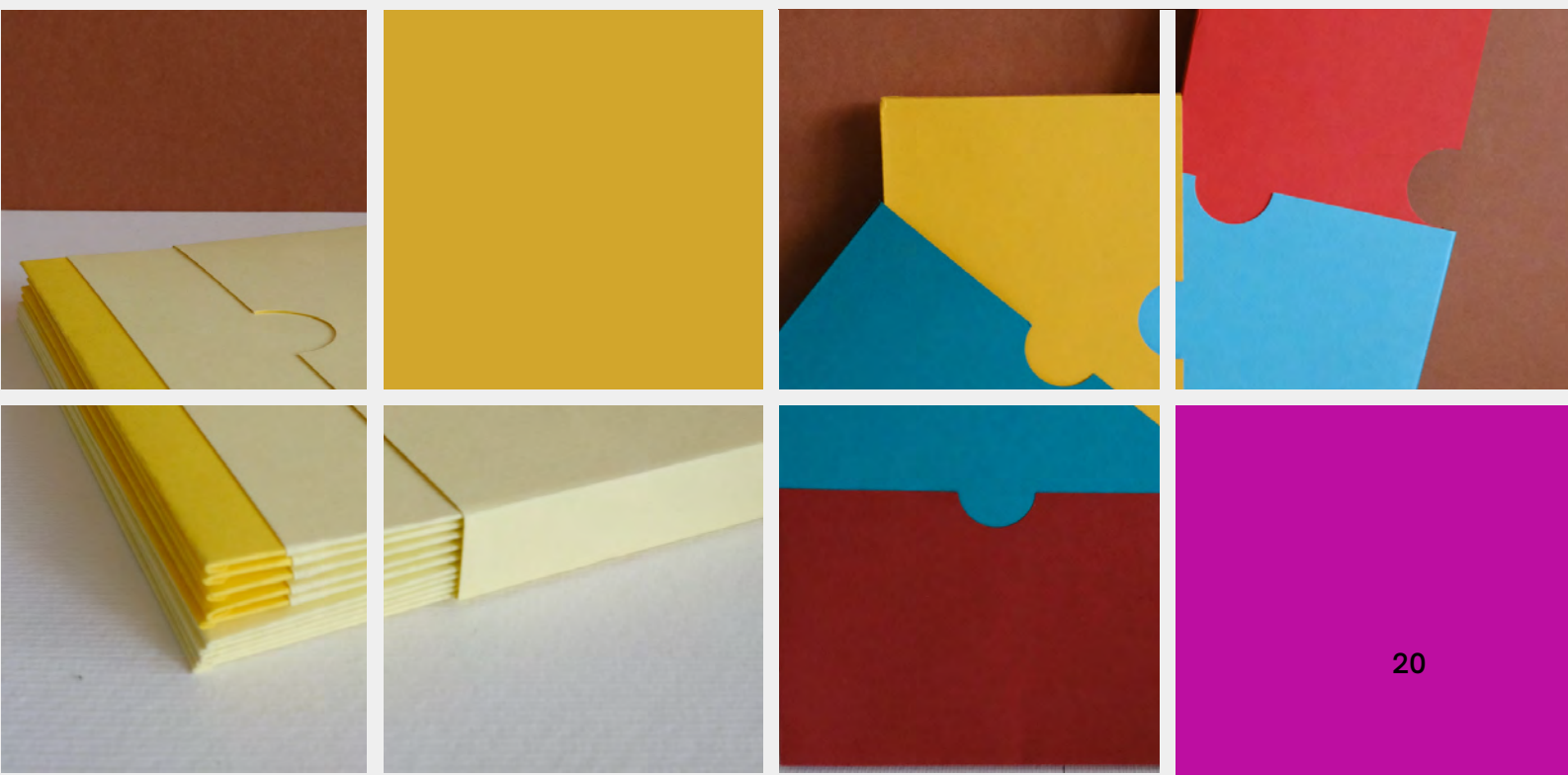
Any advice for selling online?

Really try to understand your market and this will lead you to the right selling platform for your business. There are so many ways to sell online these days—from making your own website to selling on a marketplace like Etsy—that finding the right place for your product (i.e. where it will meet an audience interested in purchasing your product) is vital. The same thing goes for where you publicise it online. There is no point wasting money on either a platform or marketing aimed at the wrong audience.

Anything to add?

Try not to be overwhelmed. This is my motto and I have to repeat it to myself several times a week (sometimes a day!). Being an entrepreneur is not easy, nor is it for everyone, and when you think about everything you have to do, how many 'hats' you have to wear, it can be overwhelming. So take one thing at a time: everything is more doable when broken down into bite-sized pieces.

Photos are the property of ACHARA



Case Study

Start up Enterprise Interview

Keva Ceramics

Keva Ceramics is a captivating start-up that beautifully blends nature-inspired, ethnic, tribal, and primitive arts in its exquisite ceramic creations. Founded by artist Éva Mária Kaszás, Keva Designs is a testament to her passion for transforming raw clay into awe-inspiring works. Here is her journey.

Tell me a little about yourself and your background?

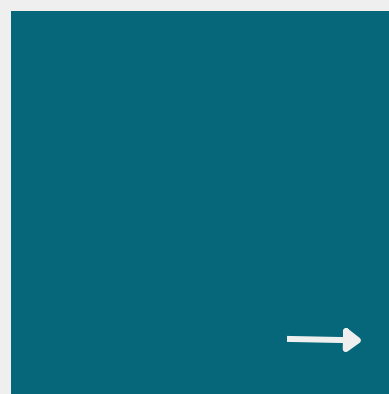
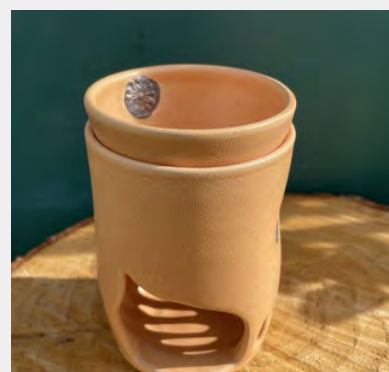
I was born in Hungary. At around age 11, I started talking about pottery. That's why at age 18, I chose pottery school. After graduating, I worked in a ceramics factory and a pottery studio. For financial reasons I went to work on cruise ships around America. From my savings I opened my studio in my home village. By 2006, my business had failed, so I went to Cyprus and then in 2007 to Ireland to pay back my debt and start saving again. I worked in a Craft Village as a shop assistant, and I also had a small studio there. I applied to the DCCol Ceramics Skills and Design Course where I graduated in 2016. Between 2016 and 2022, I was worked in Mount Juliet and then in Tim's Bar in Thomastown to pay back my college debt and save for studio equipment in Ireland.

How did you start your company (thinking in terms of why you decided to turn your idea into a business)?

This was my goal all my life. Since I moved to Thomastown, my plan was to have a studio there. Because of the history of the pottery course, I thought that the town should be full of arts and crafts. When I had



"Have or build a support group. Working alone can be very isolating. Get feedback of products from trusted people. Don't give up."



my equipment to start work, I did pottery in my free time for financial reasons. My job was so busy I didn't have enough time and energy to create, and the situation wasn't changing, so in 2022, I decided to leave. Since then, I have been working full time in my studio in my garden.

When did you start creating things?

I have been creating things all my life.

What were early influences that have influenced your work thus far?

One part of my inspiration comes from ethnic, tribal and primitive arts, which shows on my decorations and details. Other parts come from nature where I walk every day. Nature influences the shapes and colours I use.

What makes your company unique?

I wish to tell my story with my ceramics. I want to share how many times I started over and the jobs experiences I have had, just to save money.

I want to share my failures and doubts for inspirational reasons. My design is easy to recognise. I am developing and growing a range from functional to sculptural pieces.

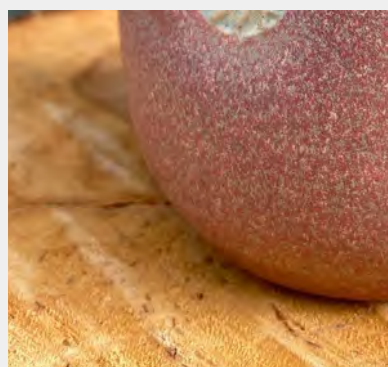
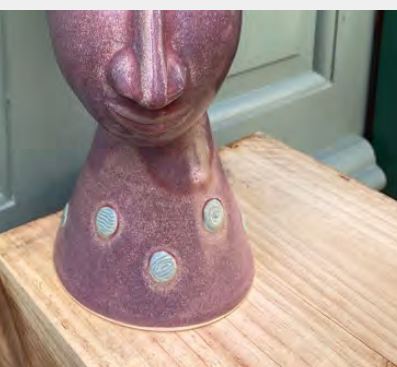
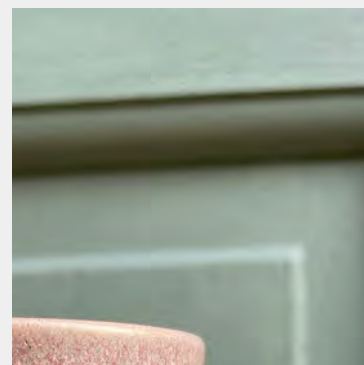
What advice would you give to a person starting out in their own business?

Have enough savings to survive the first few months or have a part time job for a safety net. Have, or build a support group. Working alone can be very isolating. Get feedback on products from trusted people. Don't give up.

Any advice for selling online?

I don't sell online yet, so I have ideas only. I would say good quality photographs and detailed descriptions of products. Have an easy to navigate web shop. build clientele, prioritise marketing and advertising your webpage.

Photos are the property of Keva Ceramics



Local Area Employment Services

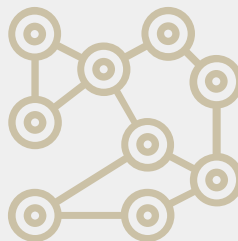
As of September 1st, 2022, KLP was granted the opportunity to deliver The Local Area Employment Services (LAES) for Counties Carlow and Kilkenny by the Department of Social Protection. With a successful kick-off on November 1st, the LAES is now fully operational, providing invaluable support to job seekers in the local area.

The LAES team is committed to assisting individuals in establishing financial independence and finding the right employment opportunities that align with their skills and interests. Our knowledgeable staff provide personalised assistance throughout the entire employment journey.

The comprehensive services go beyond the job application process. They offer tailored support to help clients overcome any additional barriers they may face, including mentoring, wellbeing workshops, health and disability support, and access to local services directories. We believe that

addressing these needs is crucial in fostering sustainable employment outcomes. We are equally dedicated to supporting employers by streamlining the recruitment process and ensuring a positive experience for all parties involved. Through our screening process, we identify candidates with the relevant skills, enabling employers to find the best fit for their organisations. Moreover, LAES assists employers with funding and individual support for upskilling their workforce in areas such as Manual Handling, Safe Pass, HACCP, Driver Theory, and more. We work closely with the Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, which offers short courses with a sector-specific focus, further enhancing the skills of job seekers.

LAES also provides assistance to employers in registering with the Department of Social Protection, facilitating access to government resources and programs. By bridging the gap between employers and job seekers, we create sustainable employment opportunities that benefit both parties and contribute to the growth of our local communities.

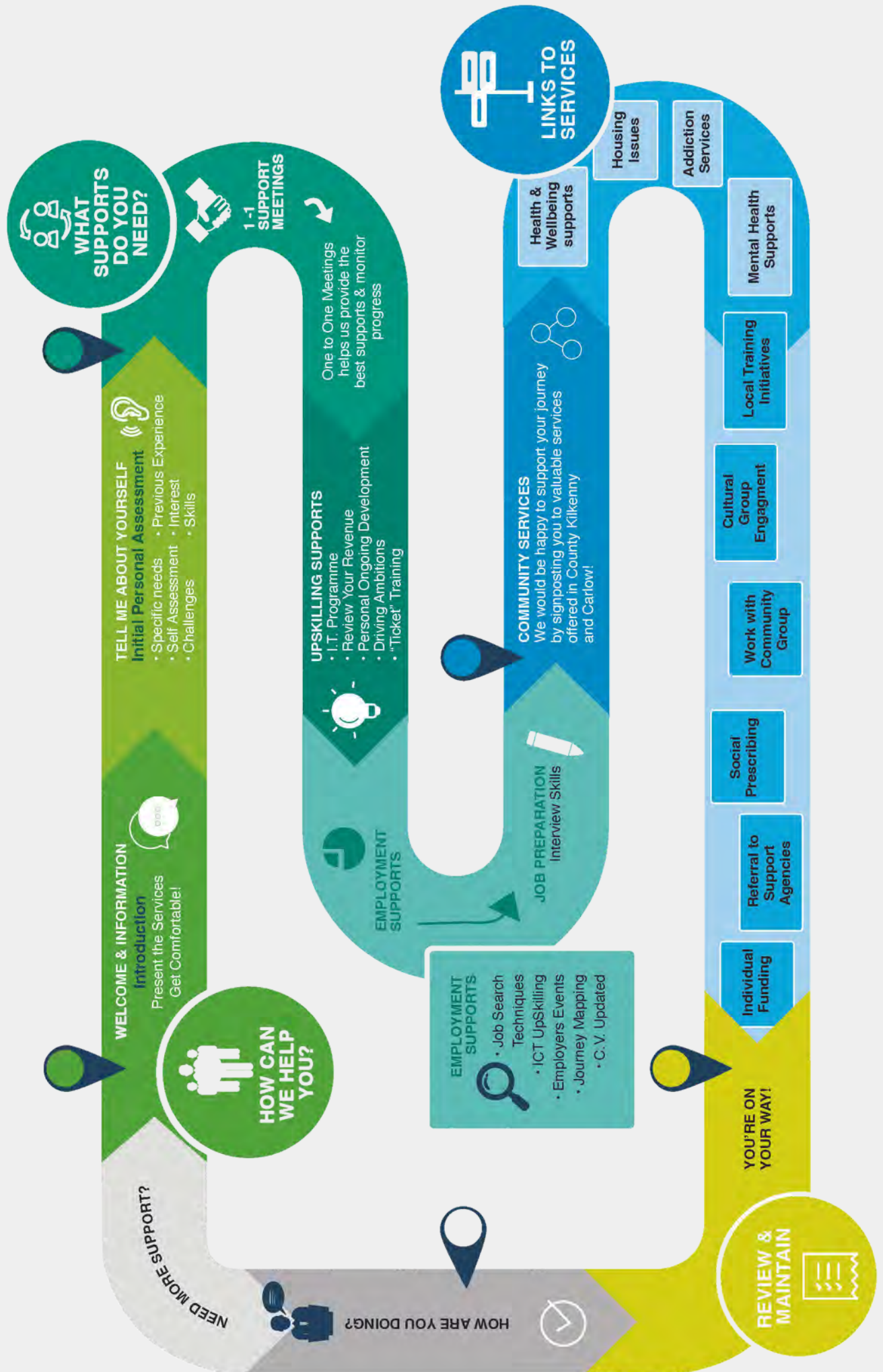


- ✓ SUPPORT & TRAINING
- ✓ JOB COACHING & MATCHING
- ✓ ONE TO ONE SUPPORT
- ✓ GROUP SESSIONS
- ✓ C.V. WRITING
- ✓ INTERVIEW PREPARATION

EMPLOYER SUPPORT



The LAES Journey



KLP Programmes & Initiatives

KLP administers a number of supporting programmes to promote wellness and improve the quality of life for the residents of County Kilkenny.

Social Prescribing Service

The Social Prescribing Service is a revolutionary approach to healthcare. We have witnessed the remarkable success of this innovative initiative as it meets the escalating demands of clients. Embracing a holistic approach, this service connects individuals with a diverse range of non-medical support options, such as community activities, arts programs, and support groups. The Social Prescribing Service has proven very popular with clients needing support to take control of their well-being. Client numbers and demand continues to grow.

Trail Kilkenny

Trail Kilkenny expanded their trail offering in 2022. The Brandon Hill Summit brought a more challenging trail for more experienced hikers. The trail covers forest tracks, country roads and hillside paths leading walkers to the Brandon Hill Summit where a stunning panoramic 360 degree views awaits.

The Woodstock Walks were also a welcome addition to the trail suite. Woodstock offers the perfect setting for a day out on the tranquil Woodstock trails. The new Waterfall Loop leads to a spectacular waterfall cascading to join the River Nore. The Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum features a rare collection of exotic trees, walled garden, rockery garden and the beautiful Turner Conservatory. The Kilmacoliver Summit Loop was upgraded with a reroute through the Coille foresty. Scenic views of the countryside makes for a great walk that takes just around an hour and fifteen minutes to complete. The Woodland Loop offers a shorter 50 minute stroll through a wonderful tree plantation.

Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme has thirteen individuals who each contribute nineteen and a half hours of their time and skills to their community. The RSS assists low income farmers with financial assistance. Members of the RSS play an important role in the maintenance and upgrades of the Trail Kilkenny trails and other community services.

Tús

The Tús initiative is a twelve month community work placement scheme providing participants with work placements, supports and career opportunities. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas. In 2022, Tús supported 136 participants, who carried out a variety of community support roles from ground keeping to social care.

Traveller Primary Health Care

The Kilkenny Traveller Primary Health Care Project has continued to implement supports to improve the health of Travellers in Kilkenny City and County. The project works through five Traveller Community Health workers and a Traveller Well-being and Awareness worker who are peer educators and are managed by a Project Co-ordinator. Throughout 2022, the Project addressed issues in the community such as: cardiovascular health, diabetes, mental health and positive well-being, child health & the social determinants of health.

Kilkenny One Parent Community

The Kilkenny One Parent Community group rebranded in 2022 and has gone from strength to strength. Activities range from coffee mornings to creative workshops and information sharing events. The group is an inclusive network of people who are parenting alone, sharing parenting or parenting following bereavement. The aim of the group is to connect, support and celebrate each other on their parenting journey.



**KILKENNY SOCIAL
PRESCRIBING SERVICE**
Improving Health and Wellbeing

OVERVIEW 2022



18-98
AGE
RANGE

of our clients
referred to Social
Prescribing Service

222

REFERRALS TO THE SOCIAL PRESCRIBING SERVICE

for the year 2022!



48%

of clients are referred to the
Service by



**HEALTH CARE
PROFESSIONALS**

57%

of clients referred to Social
Prescribing Services in 2022



were

FEMALE

43%

of clients referred to Social
Prescribing Services in 2022



were

MALE

41%

of clients referred to Social
Prescribing Services in 2022
came from



**RURAL
KILKENNY**

59%

of clients referred to Social
Prescribing Services in 2022
came from



**KILKENNY
CITY**

92%

of referrals
identify as



**LONELY OR
SOCIALY
ISOLATED**

HEALTH HOPE & HAPPINESS



NEW COURSE:

Health, Hope and Happiness
In 2022, clients were introduced to a 6 week programme that provided members with an opportunity to understand emotions and learn tools and techniques in adapting to life's challenges. The programme ended at the end of 2022.

100%

of referrals to the service
presented with a **physical or
mental condition** that was
impacting their social
engagement.

30%

of referrals to the Social
Prescribing
Service were of
retirement age



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING SERVICE OFFERS:

- Signposting to **Supports & Services**
- Information about **hobbies & volunteer services**
- Introduction to **new people & social groups**
- Options to **increase your confidence**





trailKilkenny OVERVIEW



**MORE THAN
219 kms**
of Walking trails
ranging from **EASY**
to **DIFFICULT**

**MORE THAN
100,000**

visitors to our Trails
per year from locals,
all over Europe and
further afield!



4 SCENIC RIVER WALKS

- Kilkenny to Bennetsbridge
- Freshford Loop
- Thomastown to Inistioge
- O'Gorman's Lane Loop

**214 kms
OF CYCLING
TRAILS**

North Kilkenny Cycling Loop
South Kilkenny Cycling Loop
East Kilkenny Cycling Loop
North Kilkenny Cycling Route



6 participants on the
**FOOD & CRAFT
EXPERIENCE TRAIL**

Get an exciting hands on experience and sample delicious
food and drink, as you discover the history and culture with
some of Kilkenny's most renowned craft and food providers:

Taste and Tour Highbank Orchards and Distillery
Goatsbridge Trout
Jerpoint Glass
Cushendale Woolen Mills
Jerpoint Glass
Ballykeefe Distillery



20

participants in the

**TASTE OF
KILKENNY
FOOD TRAIL**

Everything from artisan
cheesemakers and chocolatiers to
cute cafés and the most
cosmopolitan of restaurants.

**MADE IN
KILKENNY
CRAFT TRAIL**

24

stops to discover designer makers
working in willow, glass, ceramics,
textiles, paper and stone as well as a
candlemaker and jewellers working with
precious metals and gems.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU ON A TRAIL



Leading the way as
PIONEERS

of the 24km
**South East
Greenway**.
Completion
due at the
end of 2024.



**FLORA &
FAUNA**

Discover the rich flora and
fauna along the trails.
Download the **Nore Vision
Flora and Fauna Indicator
Leaflet**



**44 NEW TRAIL AUDIO
POINTS**



Look out for these new Trail Kilkenny additions
to improve accessibility and inclusivity along
the trails.



RSS OVERVIEW

13 PARTICIPANTS
on the Rural Social Scheme in County Kilkenny



4 Female



9 Male

19½ hours
a week work placement.



COUNTYWIDE PARTICIPATION

BALLYHALE: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA, ground maintenance

BENNETTSBRIDGE: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Bennettsbridge tidy towns, village enhancement

CONAHY: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Conahy Shamrocks GAA club, ground maintenance.

GATHABAWN: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Gathabawn, Gathabawn Rural Development Group, Trail and village enhancement.

GOESBRIDGE: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Bridge Utd FC, ground maintenance

GRAIGUENAMANAGH: 3 PARTICIPANTS

1 Barrow Valley Community Hub Admin
1 Barrow Valley Community Hub Astro
1 Graiguenamanagh KLP Office: Office

KILMOGANNY: 1 PARTICIPANT

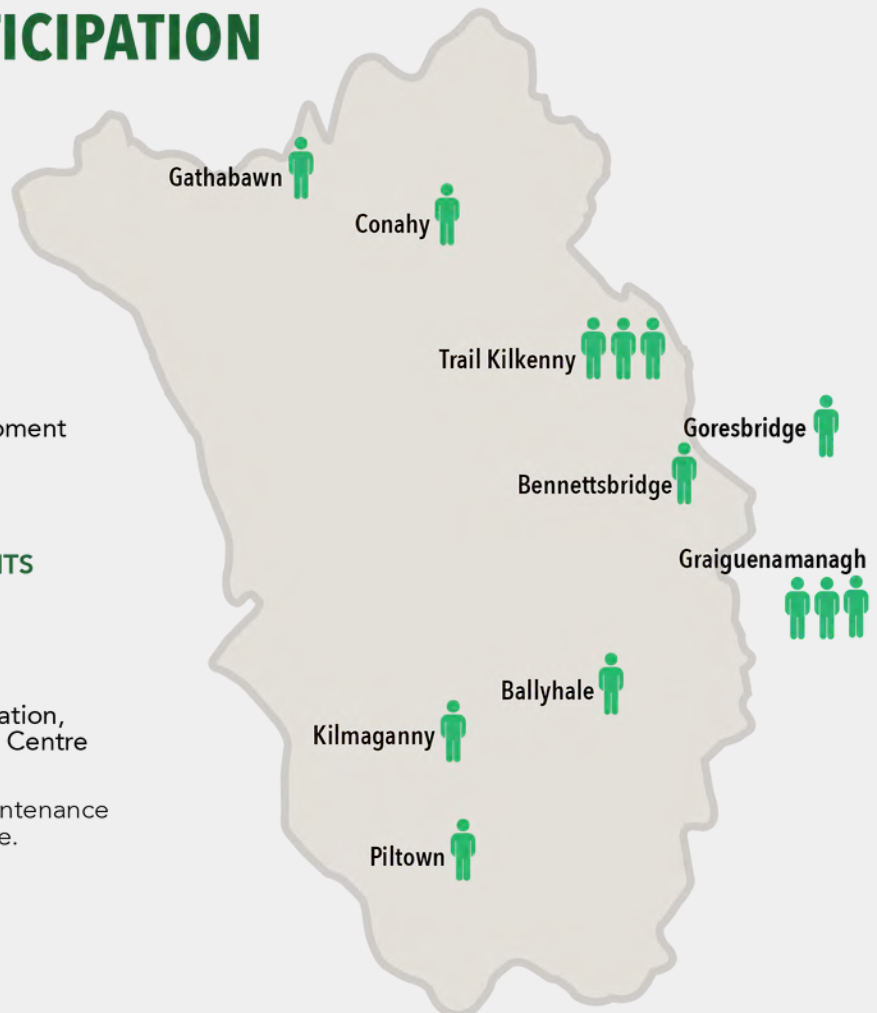
1 Kilmoganny Area Development Association, maintenance and upkeep of St.Eoghan's Centre

PILTOWN: 1 PARTICIPANT

1 Piltown Development Association, maintenance and general upkeep of Community centre.

TRAIL KILKENNY: 3 PARTICIPANTS

2 Trail Maintenance
1 Office



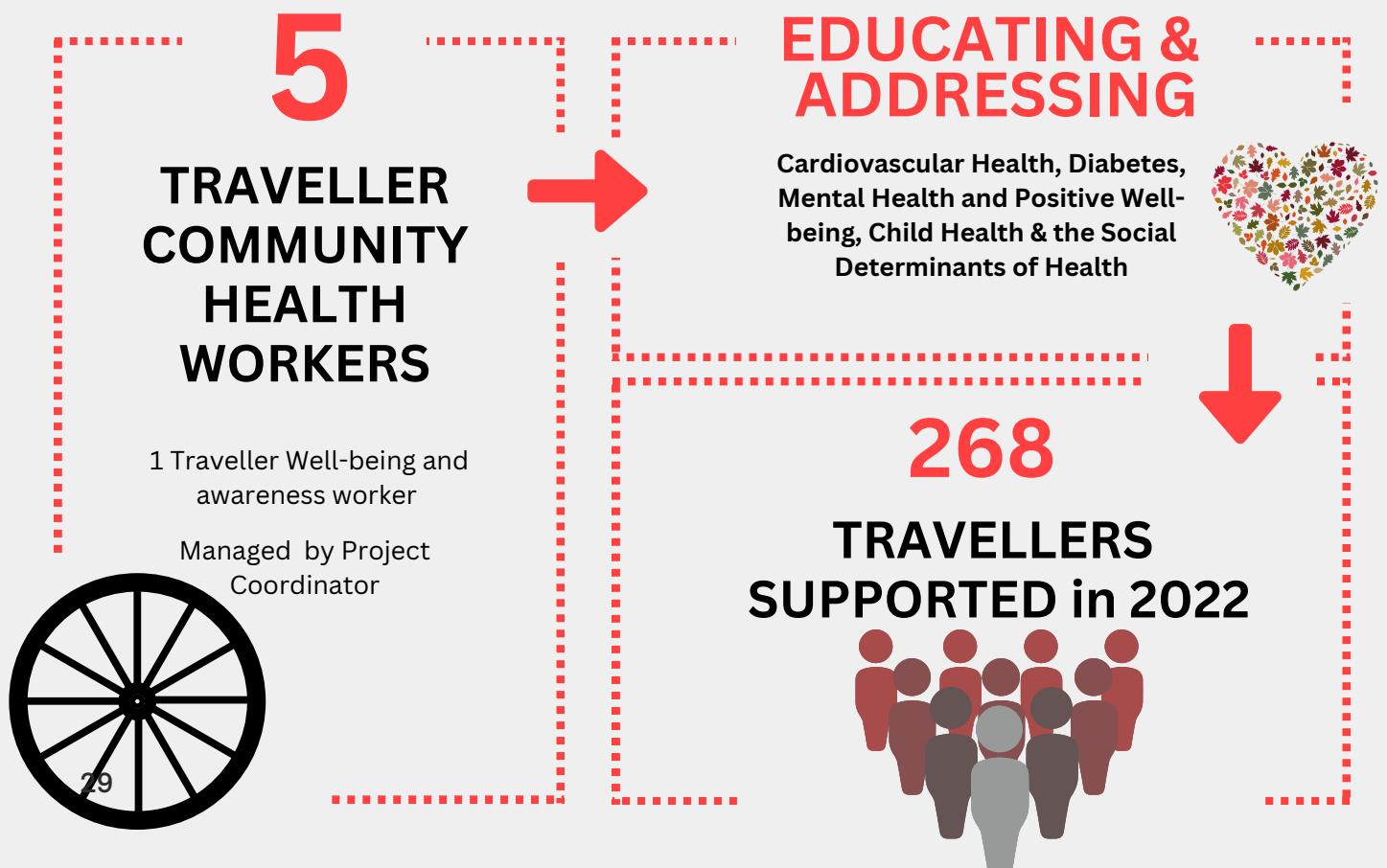
SCHEME BENEFITS

- Meet new likeminded people
- Skill sharing
- Opportunities to contribute to the community
- Financial assistance

TÚS OVERVIEW



KILKENNY TRAVELLER PRIMARY CARE OVERVIEW



KLP Governance

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

KLP Board has retained its structure as a 15-person Board, with a membership of 120 individuals. In 2023 the members will have the opportunity to nominate two community members and one business representative to the Board of KLP. This happens every three years as part of the KLP rotation policy. The company is managed via:

- Board meetings held monthly there were, twelve in 2022.
- Finance/Audit Sub-Committee which review the annual accounts and company finances monthly, there were eleven in 2022.
- The Management Sub-Committee are held monthly.
- HR Sub-Committee meetings are held based on needs relating to HR issues.
- The CEO manages the company on a daily basis, with the assistance of the Assistant CEO, Finance and Governance Manager and the LAES Manager.

SYSTEMS

KLP uses the Quick Books accounting system for its day-to-day accounts management, and Thesaurus Payroll for its salary management. KLP utilizes several CRM Systems provided by the various program funders to report expenditure, KPI's and other activities during the year.

In late 2022/early 2023 KLP looked at the option for staff time management and decided to move from TMS to a more cost effective, and simpler system from Bright HR.

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

In autumn of 2022 KLP secured the Local Area Employment Services (LAES) contract for Carlow and Kilkenny, as a result of a tendering process. This has resulted in the recruitment in late 2022 and early 2023 of sixteen additional staff. The LAES has resulted in a considerable expansion of KLP's offerings and services, in addition to geographical area. Given the number of new staff entering the company in early 2023 KLP introduced an induction day, every few months as needed, for new staff.

The induction day, explains the companies structures, ethos, governance, health and safety, data protection procedures and policies, Bright HR and the various programmes and services the company provides.

The company has a detailed procedures manual, which it updated in 2021. This is due to be reviewed and updated in 2023, based on the new LAES programme, and the outcome of tenders for the RDP and SICAP programmes later in 2023. KLP also updated its Health and Safety Statements in November 2021. Staff have been made aware of the document, where it's stored and the need to observe it. KLP staff are all fully aware also of the Company Data Protection Policies and the requirements under GDPR and all new documents, included in the company policy and procedures, are drafted with GDPR in mind.

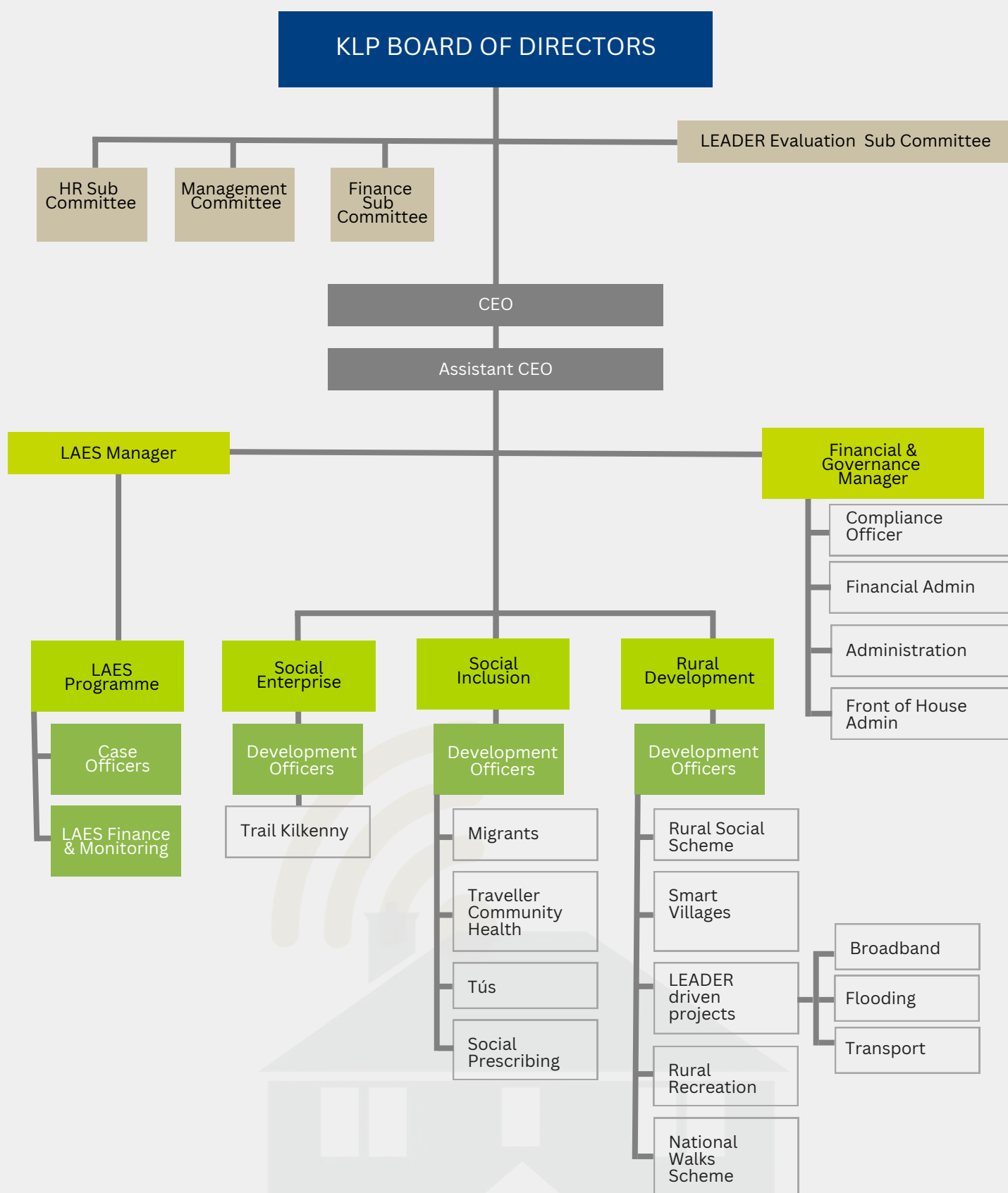
Other policies which were updated in 2022:

- KLP Risk Register, was updated and approved by the Board in July 2022
- KLP Complaints procedures were updated in March 2022.
- KLP Staff handbooks were updated with guidance from Peninsula, to take account of employment law requirements in late 2022.
- KLP Staff contracts were updated in late 2022, and currently all new staff are provided with these contracts.

Reports to its various funders, delivering programmes as per their procedure guidelines, and requirements, were delivered on time. During 2022 KLP had inspections on SICAP, TUS and RDP programmes, and are happy to report there were no major issues identified. In late 2021/early 2022 KLP secured the services of Peninsula HR, to provide guidance on HR and Health and Safety matter, to ensure that the company was keeping up to date with changing regulations and handling sensitive staffing issues appropriately.

KLP Company

Organisational Chart



In Remembrance and Gratitude

In the month of January 2022, our community suffered a great loss with the passing of two remarkable individuals who left an indelible mark on our company and the wider community. We would like to remember Patrick Lydon and Ann Gibbons, two valued members whose contributions will forever be cherished.



Patrick Lydon

Patrick Lydon was born in the Boston area to an Irish-American family. He moved to Callan, Co Kilkenny in the early 1970's. Patrick was a man of boundless ideas, unwavering ambition for community growth, and unparalleled generosity. With an exceptional blend of energy and patience, Patrick dedicated over four decades to driving community development projects in the region including: Social Inclusion, building healthy communities, the arts and the environment. Patrick played a pivotal role in the establishment and expansion of the Camphill Community in Ballytobin, which became a shining example of care for people with disabilities and sustainable living. Patrick's dynamic inspiration will forever resonate with all who had the privilege of working alongside him.



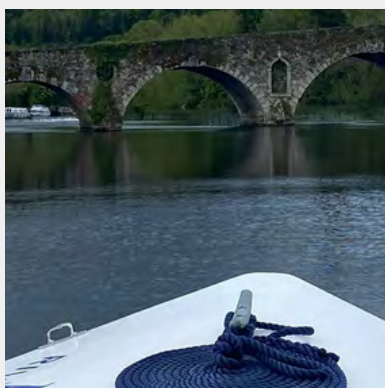
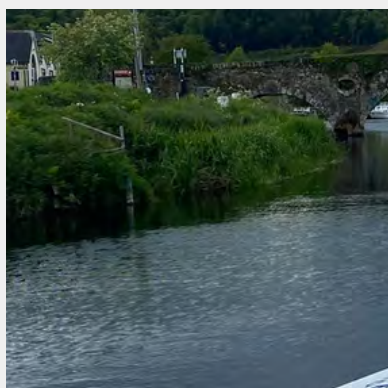
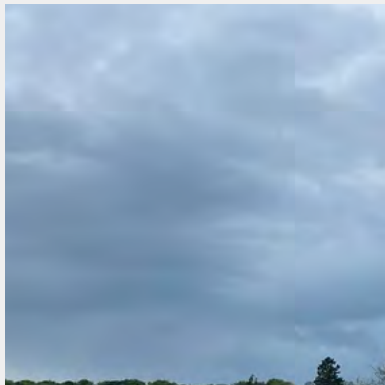
Ann Gibbons

Ann Gibbons, a dedicated member of the Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Board. Ann's commitment and service to this board were exemplary, as she tirelessly devoted herself to the betterment of our region. She also held a seat as the national chair of the IFA's Farm Family Committee. Ann was a member of the IFA's national executive and council, as well as being a founding member of the Kilkenny IFA Farm Family Committee. Ann's passion for community development and her tireless efforts will continue to inspire us as we strive to build upon the foundations she laid.

Patrick Lydon and Ann Gibbons were not only respected members of our community; they were beacons of compassion, vision, and integrity. Their absence leaves a void that can never be filled, but their legacies will forever guide us as we work to uphold the values they held dear.

May we honor their legacy by continuing to strive for excellence, compassion, and a profound commitment to the well-being of our community.

 056 7752111
 8 Patrick's Ct, Patrick St, Kilkenny
 www.cklp.ie



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