



communication & information

civic participation & employment

community support & health services

social participation

respect & social inclusion

housing

transportation

outdoor spaces & buildings

Kilkenny

Age Friendly County

Annual Report 2014

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Foreword

When I first joined the board of the newly formed Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance in March 2010 I had no idea where the initiative and journey would lead. Now nearly five years on it is time to reflect on the milestones, the innovative elements of the programme and indeed the challenges that have been overcome by the dedicated team of stakeholders.

While the programme has impacted on many people old and young, as a county and a society in general, we are only just beginning to understand and learn about the impact and potential of the current ageing population. What can be delivered by older people and for older people in our society today is a new development and concept for the 21st Century.

Kilkenny City and County has been at the forefront of this development in Ireland being Ireland's first Age Friendly City. The first Irish Age Friendly Business Awards were also held in Kilkenny in 2011 with the Ormonde Hotel receiving this accolade two years running. The Service Providers Forum has been the bedrock of many of the programme initiatives and has exemplified multiagency teamwork and cooperation. One of their major projects for 2014 is the Memory Matters Genio & HSE funded project. This innovative dementia themed programme is determined to change the delivery of community services for people living with dementia, their families and carers. In doing this Kilkenny again leads the way and the project has also been selected by Genio's Evaluation Team at Trinity College Dublin to report on the project findings. All the programme partners from the Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership, the Health Service Executive, the Local Authority, all the local non-profit organisations everyone, has played their part.

Of course none of these deliveries would have been meaningful without the continual involvement and advice of Kilkenny Older People's Forum. Under the Chair of Nora Webster (2010-2015) the forum has contributed to every aspect of the programme through their dedication and constant challenging.

As we now approach the end of this five year strategy it is time to reflect on the programme journey to date and to review the final long term objectives which were documented in 2010. It is also a time to celebrate the achievements to date and to record the many success stories which are part of Kilkenny's Age Friendly journey.

Nickey Brennan
Chairman
Kilkenny Age Friendly County Alliance



How did the Kilkenny Initiative begin?

The strategy was launched in Kilkenny in March 2010, by the then Minister for Older People, Áine Brady, TD. The Kilkenny launch followed the Louth Age Friendly County Initiative and Kilkenny became the second county programme and the first Age Friendly City in Ireland.

The thinking behind the strategy for the county was informed by the WHO Guidelines an Age Friendly City (which can be applied to communities of all sizes);

What is the Thinking Behind the Strategy?

From the start the Kilkenny County Strategy was grounded in sound international research and knowledge, and based on a number of important principles agreed by the Alliance partners including:

- A recognition that older people are critical contributors to our society and a resource, not a burden, to society;
- Communities that find imaginative ways of capitalising on the diverse assets of older adults can find ways of addressing many of their complex challenges and providing much needed services;
- A commitment to the direct involvement of older people in deciding priorities, shaping actions, and bringing about change;
- An emphasis on improving the physical environment and the understanding that where we live impacts on how we live;
- An awareness that age-friendly principles and practice create environments and communities that benefit all age groups, not just older people;
- A linked-awareness that everyone has an interest in these developments, because we will all be 'older' in time, and hope to live in a community and a society that respects, includes and cares for us;
- A determination/commitment that Kilkenny will set standards and lead the way for other counties.

What's in the Plan?

The plan covered seven specific areas for action which would benefit older people, these areas for action and the plans were a result of 21 public consultation meetings. It was also very important that the right framework for getting the work done was created. The seven areas are:

- Respect and social inclusion and social participation
- Transport
- Home
- Communication and Information
- Community Support and Health Services
- Outdoor Spaces, Physical Environment and Public
- Services Civic Participation and Employment



Minister Phil Hogan TD, Nora Webster, Chair Older People's Forum, Mary O'Hanrahan, Vice Chair Older People's Forum, and Nickey Brennan, Chair Kilkenny Age Friendly County Alliance at the launch of the Annual Report 2013.

An Age Friendly County: Vision, Aims, Outcomes

The Vision

Kilkenny will be a great place to grow old in, enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. Kilkenny will be a County that enables its people to age with security, dignity and capacity to participate as citizens to their fullest potential.

Kilkenny through its involvement in the Age Friendly County Initiative will lead the way, showing how:

- People of all ages benefit when communities are designed to be age-friendly, and where older people live life to their greatest potential.
- Older people's talents, life experience and wisdom are valued and tapped into.

Our Aims

- To improve the health and quality of life of older people in the county; To increase the participation of older people in the social, economic and cultural life of the community.
- To build upon existing services and supports for older people

Outcomes

The ambition of this Strategy is that Kilkenny will be a county in which older people will:

- Live in communities that provide recreation, leisure and services that are accessible and responsive to the well being of people of all ages.
- Have the necessary information and transport to access the supports and services they need.
- Have choice and the necessary supports to live in the home and community that feels the most safe and secure.
- Feel and be involved and influential, and be valued for their life experience, talents and contributions.
- Have increased opportunities to engage and be engaged in social, cultural and recreational activities with people of all ages.
- Be informed and connected to what is going on in the county through a variety of media from word of mouth to modern technology.
- Be involved in civic, social and economic campaigns and fora that enhance quality of life and engagement in the community.
- Have improved local supports and services to help maintain mental, physical, social and emotional health and well being.

As a result of this strategy the key stakeholders have developed more effective ways of working in partnership in terms of planning, implementing and reviewing their services and supports to older adults.

The Kilkenny Age Friendly County Alliance have been documenting, evaluating and learning from every stage of this process and have been using this information to contribute to documenting best practice at local and national level.

Checking progress:

The partners have been carefully monitoring and measure progress towards achieving these ambitious aims and objectives since 2010.

At the outset, the members carried out a comprehensive study with older people in the county, this was a significant body of work conducted by a group of older volunteers in a peer-to-peer baseline study. It is hoped by the members that as the programmes reaches its final phase an updated study will be conducted in 2016 to further measure the impact of the programme and the health and well-being of older people in the county. As promised the Alliance have produced an annual report every year which highlights our performance on delivery of this plan.



Age Friendly Alliance members and stakeholders at the launch of the 2013 Annual Report

1 Respect, Social Inclusion and Social Participation

Long Term (2014-2016)

The Kilkenny Meeting Points

The Alliance will identify a suitable venue to develop a meeting place for older adults in Kilkenny city with a further two meeting places to be identified and developed at accessible points in the north and south of the county. These meeting places could provide a range of facilities and supports including:

- Information and Advice services
- Coffee mornings
- Health and Fitness programmes
- Arts/Heritage programmes
- Intergenerational programmes
- Meals
- Supports to cottage industry ventures
- A Centre for creativity

The meeting place will be run by older people and be supported by the Age Friendly County Office.



A number of spaces and places have become “hubs for older people” to meet, socialise and acquire information and advice. Existing resources and spaces have been used and services have been extended. The number of Mens Shed’s and other groups have grown and expanded their membership.

The Kilkenny Age Friendly County Office has built an extensive library of information for older people of services and information. The new St. Canice’s Neighbourhood Centre in the City has a number of services and activities for older people as does the Newpark Close Family Resource Centre, and in Callan the Family Resource Centre and Mount Carmel.

KRSP Older Adult Programme in Numbers

- 500+ older adults take part in KRSP activities throughout the year
- 300 older adult participants on age appropriate programmes run weekly
- 12 scheduled classes per week running 30 weeks of the year
- Engagement with older men resulting in the establishment of two bowling clubs



Activities

As a key stakeholder in the programme KRSP has developed and now run an extensive programme of older adult activities which is tailored for specific needs. Activities are accessible and easily adapted, people participate with their peers and there is a strong social aspect to all the classes. There are introductory levels for all classes and KRSP further extended this programme in 2014 by adding chair based classes and offering classes under the Memory Matters Callan programme. Options available throughout the year include Aqua Aerobics Classes, Swimming Lessons and Pilates. Other activities are run at various times of the year such as Pitch and Putt, Nordic Walking and Cycling programmes. KRSP have worked with Siel Bleu and other tutors to provide organised activities to older adult groups in County Kilkenny.

Bowling was introduced in 2013 when KRSP and the Watershed purchased two short mat bowling sets. An introduction to bowling session was organised for older adults in May with a team from Carlow present on the day to demonstrate the game. The activity has proven very popular and hopefully will grow from strength to strength with the formation of a bowling club.

“As a retired person living in the country, KRSP has given me an outlet where I can meet people and partake in keeping healthy while enjoying the sports activities.”

Go for Life Games

One of the groups that can prove difficult to engage in physical activity is older men. However, the older men's activities in Kilkenny proved hugely popular and the men continue to meet regularly with the aim of participating in the National Go For Life Games. Kilkenny had teams involved in the last two National games. In the 2013 games, one team won the Overall County Award and an individual member won a "Spirit of the Games" award. The National Go for Life Games provides a pathway for older adult participation which KRSP coordinates and leads at local level. Many centres are running activities independently in their own communities, day care settings and other organisations following completion of Go For Life training.



"Joined aqua aerobics and am very impressed with the results much better for me than years of physio. As the saying goes "use it or lose it" I felt I was seizing up but now have a lot more mobility. Thank you"

"I look forward to my weekly session of aqua aerobics. It is so beneficial to my "heart health" and my "aching joints" and even the social end of meeting and chatting to new people after and before the class has been great. Thanks and keep up the good work KRSP".

"The KRSP gives us an opportunity to participate in sporting activities even in the twilight years of our lives. Well done KRSP!"

2 Transport

Long Term (2014-2016)

Review of Bus Routes

The Kilkenny Age Friendly County Alliance will work with Bus Eireann and Ring a Link and others to improve routes, stop points, timetables, information at bus stops and accessibility, building on the short term initiatives and pilots run in 2011/12.

Transport has been one of the most challenging elements of the strategy to deliver. This has been acknowledged by all counties who have now undertaken the programme. The Alliance continues to work across the private, public and volunteer sector to find solutions to the complex programme which is transport.

Under the new programme for government Putting People First, a number of transport structural changes are taking place at local government. In 2015 it is expected that these changed structures supported by the local government will provide a more linked up transport system for older people in Kilkenny.



3 Home

Long Term (2014-2016)

Downsizing Scheme

The County Council in partnership with the Voluntary Housing Associations will develop an advice and assistance scheme for tenants and residents over 65 living in family sized accommodation to enable them move to accommodation that more appropriately meets their needs, where possible within the communities they live in.

This idea in 2010 was in principle ambitious and progressive. In reality older people have told us that they want to stay living in their own homes, and often it is the familiarity of their homes and their community which enables them to stay living at home for longer.

Housing audits have taken place as have advice on upgrading and ensuring that where possible grants are available to ensure homes are adapted and made more age friendly.



Home Choices and Information

The HSE, County Council and the Service Providers Forum will review the current formation, materials and processes they follow in promoting and advising 60 plus residents on the planning and choices to be made in terms of home and support. They will revise these with input from the Older Peoples Forum so that decisions made by older residents about choice of home and support can be positive, informed and planned as opposed to reactive.

The HSE in partnership with the Kilkenny County Council and Voluntary bodies will organise a series of Housing Information Days

- Planning for home
- Change of home and choice
- Home Supports and adaptations
- Technology supports for remaining at home
- Nursing Home Supports

The Age Friendly County Office will complete a review of the provision of day, supported and residential services across the county to identify gaps in service or duplication for future planning. This work will be done in partnership with the HSE, Kilkenny County Council, County Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Voluntary Organisations, Service Providers Forum and Older Peoples Forum.

The Older People's Forum at their annual general meeting provide a variety of information and stands including technology stands and information from the Health Promotion team on planning and ageing well.

A full review of day and supported care services has been undertaken by the HSE who work with the Service Providers Forum on an ongoing basis to ensure maximum benefit to local communities of older people.

Memory matters is a two year community based project across Carlow & Kilkenny which aims to prolong the period of community living for those living with dementia, particularly those with complex needs by supporting the individual and their carers. The project is one of the major elements of the programme which has been identified as a result of the original consultation with older people back in 2010.



Evidence would suggest that in many cases people enter long term care because they, or their carers, feel that there is no alternative or because they feel they cannot access the support to facilitate their loved one to stay living in their community.

One of the key objectives of the Genio Memory Matters project is to design and provide supports that are flexible and responsive to the person and the carer which will enable them to remain living at home. The project is particularly concerned with those who present with more complex needs related to the advanced stages of their dementia. This support package will be linked to a number of public, voluntary, private and community agencies in Carlow and Kilkenny which aim to develop innovative home and community based supports and alternative respite models, while maintaining social connectivity and also using assistive technology.

Training and awareness form a critical part of the project with both dementia specific and reablement training being provided for family carers, home helps, clinical professionals and members of the public. These include a media campaign and a special intergenerational schools oral history project. As the number of people living with dementia grows, it is important that their community, family, health care professionals and society in general enables them to contribute as valued members of the community. The project was launched in 2014 and will conclude in 2016.

The research which is being coordinated by Trinity College Dublin will provide much needed economic and practical evidence to support the module of home care and community supports to enable older people to grow old at home.

4 Communication and Information

Long Term (2014-2016)

The Age Friendly County Directory will form the basis of a Regional Age Friendly County directory.

From the launch of the strategy in 2010 communication has been a very important element of the project. Older people in consultation have told us that they need access to information on a regular basis which is age friendly and relevant to them.

With this in mind the Alliance have since 2010 published a weekly Age Friendly column in the Kilkenny People with updates, information and advice.

Kilkenny Age Friendly facebook page also provides weekly updates and important reports, interesting information and news of activities. The website www.kilkennyagefriendlycounty.ie is kindly provided by the IT team at Kilkenny County Council.

Chairman Nickey Brennan receives a National Award on behalf of Kilkenny Age Friendly Community Strategy from Google Ireland in January 2015.



One of the last objectives of the communication plan was the provision of a dedicated Directory of Services for Older People in Kilkenny. This plan is well advanced. Health Promotion staff in the HSE, together with the Kilkenny Leader Partnership have facilitated the publishing of this directory which should be available in mid 2015.

5 Community Support and Health Services Information

Long Term (2014-2016)

Information

The HSE in partnership with other agencies will establish a one-stop information support within existing day centre's across the city and county.

National Level

The HSE in conjunction with the supported care homes boards of management will continue to promote the benefits nationally of providing this model of care within community despite the challenges faced from the Health Information Quality Authority.

The HSE Older People Services continues to support the voluntary/not for profit section under section 39, of the Health Act 2004. In 2014 €2.4 million was grant aided across Carlow/Kilkenny area to provide a range of service including day-care, home-care, meals on wheels and visitation services. A number of new services and initiatives were also introduced in 2014 including a new Memory Clinic in St Columba's Thomastown, which is operated by the Consultant Geriatrician and Multidisciplinary Team.

The HSE are committed to the Age Friendly County Programme and are also leading partners in the Genio Memory Matters programme across both counties as cofunders with Genio Trust.



Home Care Services

In 2014 300,912 Home Help hours were delivered by the Health Service Executive either directly or indirectly by voluntary organisation or private providers funded by the HSE. This indicates a 5% increase in activity on 2013 levels. In addition to this 101,576 hours were provided through the Home Care Package Scheme (packages of more than 10 hours per week) which also increased its activity by 15% on the previous year. This represents an increase of 166 clients accessing the Home Care Package Service from Jan-Dec 2014; of these 144 were new clients. On average 1,445 clients in total availed of Home Help and Home Care Packages in 2014 which is a 14% increase on 2013. This service is critical to support independent living and the training of Home Helps and those who provide the service through voluntary organisation is ongoing.

Nursing Home Support Scheme (NHSS) 2009 (Fair Deal)

In 2014 254 applications were received, of these applications 228 were approved for Long Term Care and funded through the scheme. 58 applicants were declined Long Term Care this is a 50% increase in 2013 figure. There is a strong possibility that the increased level of Home Care Packages provided, coupled with the Multidisciplinary Assessment process now required for the Care Needs Assessment correlates to the increase number of applicants declined for Long Term Care, as the preferred option is now to support people to remain at home where possible. This is very positive as it provides some evidence that the strategic objective of the HSE to maintaining older people in their own home is being delivered.

Protection of Older People

There were 86 referrals to the Senior Case Worker for the Protection of Older People (SCW) in the Carlow Kilkenny area. The SCW accepts referrals in the catchment area in relation to alleged elder abuse and serious self-neglect in the over 65 age group. Cases where there is a serious and immediate risk to the Older Person will be prioritised for immediate response. The SCW will endeavour to carry out an initial assessment within a 6 week period. The challenge for 2015 is to secure the additional resource of a Primary Care Social Worker who will provide a Generic Social Work service to older people based in primary care.

6 Outdoor Spaces, Physical Environment

Parks and Green Spaces

The County Council in partnership with the Age Friendly County office and the Age Friendly County Alliance will conduct a Green Spaces Review, to examine how park areas, green spaces and vacant lots, could be enhanced to provide spaces and amenities aimed at attracting more older people to 'come out and stay out'. This will include elements such as:

- creating meeting spaces in public parks which are age friendly
- proposal for the development of an age friendly park café which is run by older people for older people
- developing a band stand outdoor concert venue
- designating public spaces for healthy active living programmes
- extending the walking trails already developed across the county and city with input from the Older People's Forum



Catrina Bambrick, Senior Planner and Age Friendly Coordinator Kilkenny County Council, receiving the Callan Age & Dementia Friendly Town Award from Minister Jan O'Sullivan, with Tom Costello, Atlantic Philanthropy and Rachel Condon, Planner, Callan Age Friendly Town Coordinator.

Highlights from 2014 Kilkenny County Council Improvements to Public Realm

The **Medieval Mile** was a main focus and leads from Kilkenny Castle to St Canice's Cathedral and passes via The Parade, High Street and Parliament Street.

- Provided high-quality platform entrance to High Street at the Parade Junction with a shared space concept
- Age friendly seating located every couple of hundred metres along the main High Street and Parliament Street.
- Re-pave footpaths to a similar quality as High Street in the area incorporating Grace's Castle (The Courthouse) and Rothe House.
- Provide public-realm improvements at the Dean Street/Irishtown junction, improved footpaths and street-lighting, works to improve disability access, together with rehabilitation of the area leading to St Canice's steps.

The Lady Desart Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

The new bridge spans 35metres over the river Nore and adds significantly to walking and cycling infrastructure in and around Kilkenny City. It will also assist the Council in achieving targets set out in the Mobility Management Plan adopted in 2009. The bridge was formally opened in January 2014.



The Pedestrian Bridge at Ossory Bridge

The provision of a pedestrian under bridge at the Ossory Bridge on the Ring Road completed a very attractive looped walk and complement the Council's investment over recent years in the Nore Linear Park and boardwalk.



Village renewal schemes Graigenamanagh

- Environmental upgrading of the existing streetscape using high quality paving materials and street furniture.
- Removal of existing overhead service cables together with their relocation/ replacement underground.
- Provision of new, decorative street lighting.
- Revisions to existing traffic management measures including the installation of Traffic Signals.
- Landscaping.



Ballyragget

Improvements to the north side of the street and green area works include

- Landscaping.
- ESB and telecoms ducting,
- Provision of two age friendly seats.

The village benefited from road pavement works on the N77.

Callan

- Environmental upgrading of the existing streetscape using high quality paving materials and street furniture
- Removal of existing overhead services cables together with their relocation/ replacement underground.
- Provision of new, decorative street lighting, Revisions to existing traffic management measures
- Landscaping.

Callan Before and After Work



7 Civic Participation, Employment and Income

Long Term (2014-2016)

Career Change and Senior Business Development Programme

The Age Friendly County office, County Enterprise Board and The Business of Ageing Forum will develop an information pack and training programme for retirees who wish to start up their own business in Kilkenny.

Senior Enterprise, an EU supported initiative through INTERREG IVB NWE, is specifically designed to encourage a greater involvement with enterprise by those aged over 50. Information is available on www.seniorenterprise.ie.

Locally the newly established Local Enterprise Office continues the work of the Enterprise Board in promoting senior enterprise with dedicated programmes and training for the over 50's. For more information contact them at their office at 42 Parliament Street, Kilkenny.

Civic participation like social participation and inclusion sometimes needs the support of others in the community including local government stakeholder. Taking Stock and Ageing with Confidence are two 8 week programmes for older adults devised by Age & Opportunity. Tutors have been trained with the support of many of the partners in Kilkenny Age Friendly County Programme to deliver these courses free in Carlow and Kilkenny in the past 3 years and the response from participants has been really positive.

John's story

John attended both courses in Ferrybank Library in the past year. John is a man of many talents – cooking, ballroom dancing and wood turning to name a few. He has an infectious laugh, a great sense of humour and is generous with his time to everybody. But life has thrown him many challenges... 'I had a rough time growing up, at home and in school so I left school early and didn't really get a chance to learn to read and write until I was in my forties. I had a stroke a few years ago and suffered from depression'.

The stroke resulted in John not being able to take part in ballroom dancing with his beloved wife. When he joined the Taking Stock group he met a whole new group of people.

'I realised many were in the same boat as me – the group were lovely and we got on really well together; we hated splitting up to be honest, 'I got great confidence from the group and never missed a session. I looked forward to us meeting up every week for the company. The girls that ran the courses were lovely too (Meabh, Teresa and Paula)'

John has kept in touch with others in the group, one man in particular who was recently bereaved and lives alone and they have both joined other courses to use their skills in artwork and designing leaded windows. And he is back ballroom dancing! When he completed the courses, John gave the tutors a gate that he carved from a leg of a chair – he called it the Gateway to Ageing with Confidence! Teresa & Paula share custody of the gate.



Ferrybank Ageing with Confidence group 2014

Others in the group said

*'It was the nicest time I have had in a long time'
'I have learned to speak what is in my mind'
'I am treating myself to little things that I would not have done before'
'I have learned to take time to myself. I have a lot to share with my
family and friends. We get back what we give out!'*

In April 2014, pre Local Elections, the Older People's Forum invited candidates to a public 'Meet the Candidates' debate. The outcome was an exciting example of true civic participation in action. The event was moderated by Nickey Brennan and received substantial media coverage. It was a resounding success and candidates were challenged by the older audience on the five main issues concerning older people in Kilkenny, rural isolation, transport, water charges and plans for the brewery site. The Older People's Forum also made a submission to the public meeting regarding the plans for the old brewery site as well as a submission on plans for the parade activities and other civic matters.



Members of Older People's Forum at Meet the Candidates Debate with Chairman of Kilkenny Age Friendly County Alliance Nickey Brennan



Membership Registration Kilkenny Older People's Forum/Council

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile _____

Email: _____

Organisation if any: _____

What issues are you particularly interested in? _____

Have you skills or special interests which you could contribute to the work of the Older People's Forum? (Carpentry, Administration, Teaching, Computers, & Singing) _____

Prior areas of work/experience/ occupation: (Voluntary or paid) _____

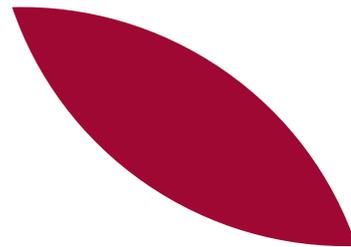
Any qualifications or particular experience _____

Would you be in a position to represent the Older Peoples Forum in your area? _____

What catchment area or group would you be willing to represent? _____

Anything else you would like to add? _____

**PLEASE RETURN FORM TO COMMUNITY & CULTURE SECTION,
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL, JOHN'S GREEN, KILKENNY**



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