

LIBRARY SERVICES

Notable Achievements

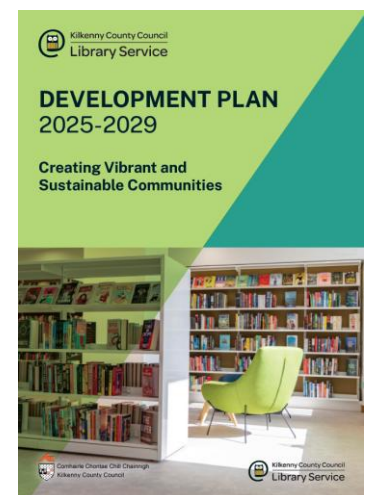
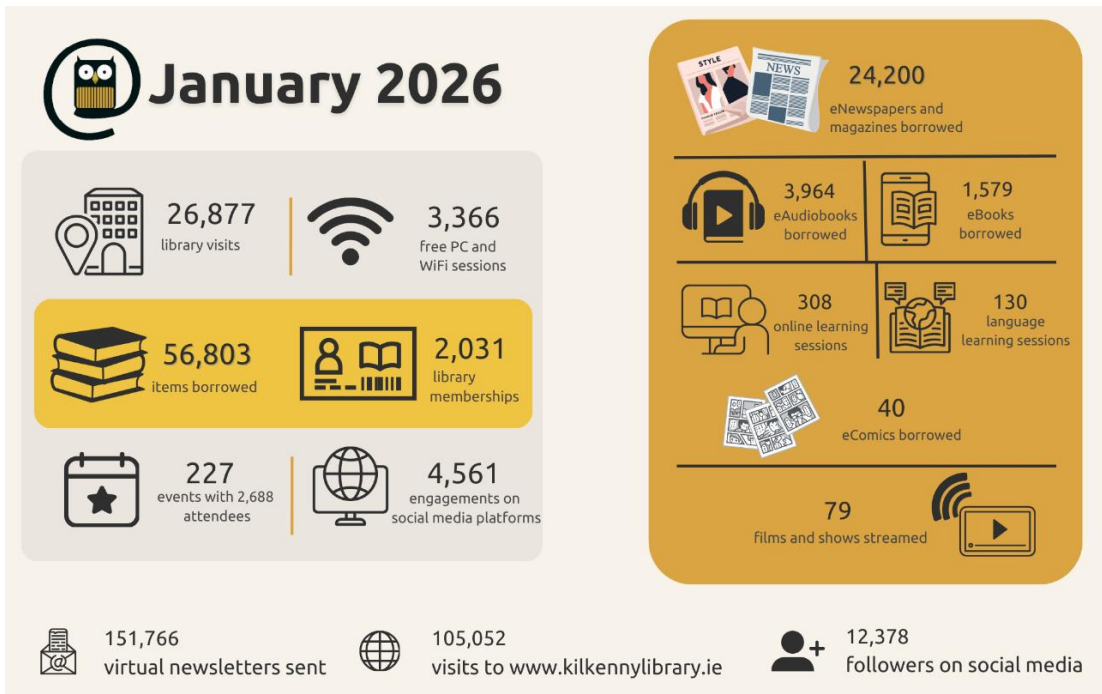
- Mayfair Library celebrated its first anniversary on 24 April 2025. By year end, it had welcomed 270,446 visitors, issued 211,764 items, and hosted 1,820 events and activities, attracting 35,597 attendees.
- A new development plan “*Creating Vibrant and Sustainable Communities 2025-2029*” was produced, setting out our strategy for the coming years to ensure libraries remain as dynamic spaces where knowledge, culture, and connection thrive at the heart of the community.
- Significant progress was made on the library in Thomastown, with all major construction works completed in 2025 and the facility scheduled to open in Q1 2026.
- 581,126 books, ebooks and eaudiobooks were borrowed in 2025, reflecting an increase of 31%.

Other Achievements

- We launched a new story trail *The Little Lost Cat’s Big Adventure in Kilkenny* at Kilkenny Countryside Park, Dunmore, offering families a literacy, cultural and healthy outdoor experience.
- Our Local Studies Department launched a digitised collection of historic charters from the Tholsel through Kilkenny Digital Archive, enhancing public access to records dating from the 14th to 19th centuries.

New Developments

- Mobile Tender specification was developed, with local firm Cahill Truck Bodies awarded the contract. Estimated delivery is Q4 2026.
- Following a successful Thrive funding application, the Carnegie Library John’s Quay is scheduled for renovation into a vibrant cultural and heritage hub.
- A new national programme - Skills for Life was launched offering people access to practical learning opportunities supporting everyday life skills.



Programming

Programming across our branch network continued to grow in scale and diversity, with more than 46,000 participants engaging in over 3,300 events.



Right to Read set out a coordinated literacy support programme for children, families, schools, Early Learning Centres (ELCs) and adults, strengthening partnerships across education and community networks delivering a structured programme of reading and literacy events throughout the year.

Home of Halloween: We delivered an engaging cultural and historic experience themed *Fire, Feast and Folklore*, offering storytelling, creative workshops, mythology sessions,

Samhain-inspired arts activities connecting children, families, and communities with Irish heritage.



Digital Takeover: We partnered with Foróige and Project 21 to deliver hands-on workshops designed to engage young people aged 14+ across rural libraries and transform library spaces into creative digital hubs where teenagers explored podcasting, virtual reality, robotics, animation tools and digital storytelling. The initiative highlighted our role as a safe, inclusive space for teens, strengthening digital literacy, confidence and their connection to local libraries.

Healthy Ireland: we delivered 53 events with 654 attendees, covering mental and physical wellbeing topics and featuring expert visits from the HSE, the Marie Keating mobile unit, and the Irish Heart Foundation.



National Library Initiatives

 **Right to Read** at your Library 1553 events
28,051 attendees

Highlights: Ireland Reads, Children's Book Festival, Spring into Storytime, Summer Stars, Family Time at Your Library, Class visits & Bookclubs



39 events
445 attendees
Highlights:
Exercise and Ageing sessions,
Chair Yoga, Osteoarthritis
education, Breast Cancer
Awareness

 **Age Friendly LIBRARY** 128 events
1,352 attendees

Highlights: Bealtaine Festival, Age Friendly IT sessions, Magic Table workshops

 **Skills For Life** 105 events
976 attendees

Highlights: Smartphone classes, Career guidance sessions, Online safety workshops, Sustainable lifestyles workshops



Local Studies:

- Newly digitised Tholsel Charters & Archives were launched ensuring valuable records are freely accessible, marking a significant step in preserving and sharing our rich county legacy.
- Fadó Fadó Young Researchers Primary School Competition resulted in over 100 diverse, high-quality projects exploring family and local history that are now digitised on the Kilkenny Library Digital Archive through a collaboration with Kilkenny Archaeological Society, and Rothe House Trust and Garden.
- The Virtual Treasury Roadshow visited, showcasing the restored records of the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland, launching a new Irish Manuscripts Commission publication, and featuring presentations on the project's significance for Kilkenny.



Digital

- Our website was upgraded and redesigned offering a cleaner layout, improved navigation, and easier access to library services and digital resources.
- My Open Library launches at Mayfair library, extending access hours to 98 per week.
- Our Makerspaces offering continued to expand to include additional 3D printers and sewing machines, and a suite of laptops and screens for coding and maker events.

Mobile Library Service: We visited over 60 schools, nursing homes, early learning centres and 11 rural community stops each month. This summer, we introduced our first outreach schedule, bringing the service to parks and summer camps. The season culminated in the mobile library's debut at the Iverk Show, where staff welcomed over 300 visitors.



Income

We successfully applied and were awarded €52,075.91 from a range of funding sources including Solas, Kilkenny Carlow ETB, Creative Ireland, LGMA, Commemorative fund, Heritage council, and Calmast.

Awards and Recognitions

- Mayfair Library achieved LEED Gold Certification recognising excellence in sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental responsibility.
- Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government:
 - Shortlisted for Age Friendly award: Information & Activities Programme for Older People
 - Shortlisted for Urban revival award: Mayfair Library and Public Realm
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Workforce & Training

Our staff completed over 750 training sessions, with 135 different courses and workshops including 3D Printing, Ai, media literacy, climate awareness, User Experience, Newspaper Archives and leadership training. Two staff members are currently pursuing professional qualifications in Librarianship. Along with external training, we also engage regularly in internal skill-share events for peer-to-peer learning.

