



KILKENNY RECREATION
& SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

—— SPORT IRELAND ——

Annual Report 2024



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

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1. ABOUT KRSP



ANNUAL REPORT

01 January 2024 to
31 December 2024

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2. KRSP'S STORY

OUR VISION

Getting Kilkenny Active

MISSION

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP) will work collaboratively to empower people and communities to participate in lifelong active recreation, sport, and physical activity.

OUR VALUES

Empowering

We will work to unlock potential by motivating, inspiring and building skills and confidence in communities, clubs, organisations and volunteers.

Integrity and Accountability

We will be professional, open, honest, and transparent in how we operate. We will do the right things in the right ways to Get Kilkenny Active.

Enjoyment

Sport and physical activity should be fun. Enjoyment, enthusiasm, optimism and positivity will be at the heart of our approach.

Evidence Informed

We will use evidence-informed programmes to improve the lives of those we work with in order to achieve most impact in the community.

Diversity and Inclusion

We will embed a culture of diversity and inclusion across the organisation by proactively targeting those most excluded and those who face the most barriers to participation.

Together

We will collaborate internally and externally to optimise the quality of our work and help people in Kilkenny become active and stay active.

OUR KRSP PILLARS

Our work over the period 2024-2025 is structured under six pillars. Each pillar is supported by an overall Strategic Goal and a series of objectives, action areas, and key performance indicators.



**Active
Empowerment**



**Active
Promotion**



**Active
People**



**Active
Partnerships**



**Active
Places**



**Active
Governance**



Report and Commentary for 2024



We are pleased to present the Annual Report for 2024. This year has been marked by significant growth in programmes and participation, ongoing commitment to inclusion, and the strengthening of governance and organisational practice.

In 2024, KRSP continued to grow programme delivery and participation, even without an increase in staffing levels. This progress reflects the outstanding commitment of our staff team, tutors, volunteers and partner organisations. As work on the staffing structure review moved forward, the thoughtful and effective use of existing resources supported the ongoing development and expansion of many valued initiatives.

KRSP supported over 2,247 primary school children through a range of inclusive, school-based physical activity programmes. Initiatives such as the re-introduced Sportshall Athletics programme, balance bike training, playground markings, and bike awareness sessions helped children develop movement skills, build confidence, and enjoy being active throughout the school day. Beyond the classroom, we were proud to support the launch of Kilkenny's first Junior Parkrun. Since April, 621 children have taken part, completing nearly 3,000 runs, highlighting strong local engagement and the value of community-led activity for young people.

Our work in disability and inclusion continued in 2024, with KRSP deepening its focus on inclusive programme delivery and strengthened partnerships with community groups and services supporting people with disabilities. This reflects our long-standing priority of making sport and physical activity accessible for everyone in the Kilkenny community.

We have continued the development of the Community Sports Hub (CSH) and Urban Outdoor Adventure (UOA) initiatives, expanding both reach and impact. These programmes are helping to embed sport in the heart of communities and encourage outdoor activity in both rural and urban settings.

KRSP has also placed a greater emphasis on communications in 2024 following the guidance of the LSP network communications project and our Regional Communications Officer. This led to improved messaging, more consistent branding, and increased visibility across digital platforms. Staff have undertaken additional training in communications, further enhancing our ability to engage with our communities and stakeholders.

“Looking ahead, KRSP remains committed to its vision of creating a more active and inclusive Kilkenny. “



In December 2024, KRSP reinstated the Governance Code for Sport, reflecting our continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and strong governance. This has involved a comprehensive review of our policies, procedures, and practices to align with the standards set out in the Code. The process reaffirmed our governance structures and further embedded best practice across all levels of the organisation.

KRSP also successfully completed an external audit carried out by KOSI on behalf of Sport Ireland. The audit affirmed the integrity of our systems and provided valuable guidance for continuous improvement.

Looking ahead, KRSP remains committed to its vision of creating a more active and inclusive Kilkenny. The Board and staff will continue to work collaboratively to deliver meaningful opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for all.

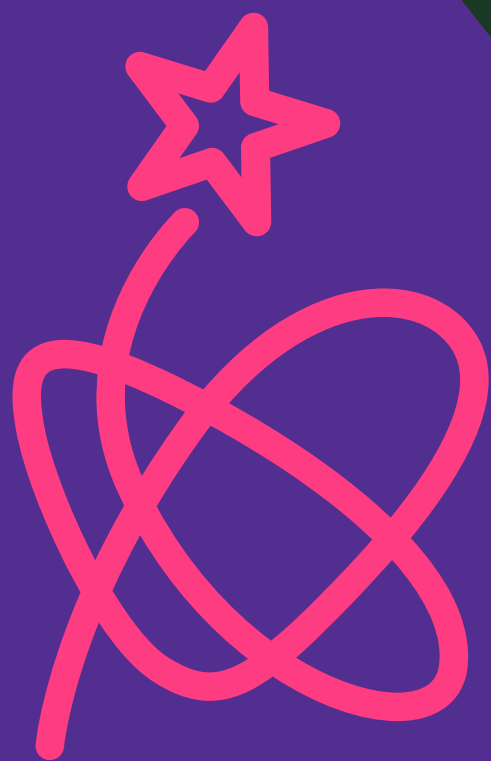


David Denieffe
Chairperson



Nicola Keeshan
CEO





3. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Trustees, Board Directors/ Committee Members



Role of the Board

The Board plays a crucial role in providing strategic direction, oversight, and governance to ensure the organisation delivers on its strategy and operates to the highest standards of accountability.

Under the KRSP Board Terms of Reference, the Board's key responsibilities include:

- **Strategic Leadership and Oversight:** Setting the strategic direction, monitoring progress, staying informed on key issues, and overseeing organisational performance.
- **Governance and Compliance:** Ensuring adherence to legal, regulatory, and governance obligations, upholding ethics, corporate governance standards, and fiduciary duties.
- **Staff and Organisational Support:** Overseeing staff, providing leadership, and ensuring alignment with operational priorities and organisational objectives.



The Board also oversees financial governance and internal controls, making key decisions on financial matters. These include:

- **Financial Oversight:** Approving annual plans, budgets, financial statements, and managing financial governance, including audit, risk, and procurement processes.
- **Board Effectiveness:** Monitoring and evaluating Board and committee performance, ensuring effective induction, and supporting active participation through streamlined meetings.

Through these responsibilities, the Board ensures KRSP operates effectively, transparently, and in alignment with its strategic objectives and stakeholder expectations.

The KRSP Board's Schedule of Matters outlines key functions reserved for the Board to ensure good governance and compliance. These include entering into and reviewing partnerships, overseeing financial and asset management, appointing and appraising staff, approving strategic plans and governance policies, monitoring performance and risk management, and ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and fiduciary obligations while maintaining transparency and accountability. The CEO reports directly to the Board, ensuring the implementation of strategic objectives and operational priorities aligns with the organisation's goals.

The Board of KRSP has reduced the number of annual meetings from six to four, aiming to improve attendance, encourage more effective participation and to enable and support the work of the Board Committees. This change is designed to streamline decision-making while maintaining high standards of oversight and governance.



Board of Directors

KRSP Directors are nominated in accordance with the KRSP constitution, chosen for their ability to maximise key relationships and influence within Kilkenny, particularly in areas critical to our objectives.

The following table shows the directors that served during the financial year, except where otherwise indicated:

	Position	Representative	Tenure
David Denieffe	Chair	South East Technological University (SETU)	
Mary Cowman	Secretary	Co-option	
Catherine Byrne Murphy		Kilkenny County Council Chief Executive	
Ann Bates		HSE	
Declan Rice		County Kilkenny Leader Partnership	
Anthony Reynolds		National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals	
Rita Comerford		Kilkenny City & County Youth Organisation	
Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick		Representative: County Kilkenny Leader Partnership Board Nominee	Elected 28-Feb
Cllr Jenny Catt Slattery		Kilkenny County Council Elected Representative	Elected 07-Oct
Cllr Joseph Lyons		Co-option	Elected 07-Oct
Siobhan O'Brien		Carlow Kilkenny Education Training Board - Chief Executive Nominee	Elected 07-Oct
Saoirse Prendergast	Vice-Chair	Carlow Kilkenny Education Training Board - Chief Executive Nominee	Resigned 28-Feb
Pat McAuley		Representative: County Kilkenny Leader Partnership Board Nominee	Resigned 28-Feb
Cllr Pat O'Neill		Co-option	Resigned 07-Oct
Marypaula Kelly		Co-option	Resigned 07-Oct
Cllr Eamon Aylward		Kilkenny County Council Elected Representative	Resigned 07-Oct

KRSP Board Meetings

In 2024, KRSP held four Board meetings. Among these, one meeting on 16th December took place online through MS Teams. The KRSP AGM was held on 8th May 2024 and was held in person.

Member Attendance at Board Meetings 2024

	28 Feb	08 May (incl. AGM)	02-Sep	07-Oct	*16 Dec	*11-Jan (2025)	Total
David Denieffe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Mary Cowman	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	4
Catherine Byrne Murphy	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	4
Ann Bates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	5
Declan Rice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Anthony Reynolds	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	4
Rita Comerford	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	3
Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick	Elected 28-Feb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Cllr Jenny Catt Slattery				Elected 07-Oct	X	X	0
Cllr Joseph Lyons				Elected 07-Oct	X	X	0
Siobhan O'Brien				Elected 07-Oct	✓	X	1
Saoirse Prendergast	✓	Resigned 28-Feb					1
Pat McAuley	✓	Resigned 28-Feb					1
Cllr Pat O'Neill	X	X	X	Resigned 07-Oct			0
Marypaula Kelly	✓	X	X	Resigned 07-Oct			1
Cllr Eamon Aylward	X	X	X	Resigned 07-Oct			0

**The meeting organised for 11th December 2024 did not go ahead as it was not quorate. A meeting was called on 16th December 2024 to discuss items requiring approvals to support compliance with the Sport Ireland Governance Code for Sport. A further meeting on 11th January 2025 was held to cover the remaining agenda items from 11th December.*

KRSP Sub Committee Meetings

KRSP has the following sub committees:

Finance Audit and Risk Committee:

In November 2021, the Board established the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee (FARC) as a Committee of the Board. This committee aims to aid the Board in meeting its responsibilities regarding sound financial governance, financial reporting, and the management of risks and control systems. This includes assessing and evaluating the comprehensiveness of assurances presented to the Board and ensuring that these assurance requirements are fulfilled.

However, ultimate responsibility for all of these areas rests with the Board, who must fully consider the advice and approve or amend the recommendations from the Committee.

FARC Programme of Work 2024

Policies Reviewed for Board Approval

- Volunteer Policy V1
- Financial Control Policy V3
- Cookie Policy V2
- Privacy Policy V2
- Clean Desk Policy V2 161224

Reports Reviewed for Board Approval:

- Finance Report
- Risk Register
- Audited Accounts Y/E 31-Dec-23
- Annual Report 2023



FARC Meeting Dates 2024

	30-Apr	09-Sep	Total
David Denieffe	✓	✓	2
Mary Cowman	✓	✓	2
Catherine Byrne Murphy (Chair)	✓	✓	2

**Saoirse Prendergast was a member of the FARC in early 2024 but did not attend any meetings prior to her resignation in February 2024.*

Governance Committee:

In February 2021, the Board established a Governance Committee as one of its official committees. The primary purpose of this committee is to assist the Board in meeting its responsibilities related to upholding good governance practices. The committee focuses on ensuring the efficient and effective conduct of Board and committee meetings, providing support for induction and ongoing professional development programmes, and overseeing compliance with ethical and conduct obligations for both Board and committee members.

However, ultimate responsibility for all of these areas rests with the Board, who must fully consider the advice and approve or amend the recommendations from the Committee.

Governance Committee Programme of Work 2024

- Progress on key governance priorities
- Progress on executive priorities and deliverables
- Implementation of the corporate/governance risk register
- Reinstating the Sport Ireland Governance Code for Sport
 - Public Statement of Compliance
 - Comply or Explain Form
 - Compliance Record Form
- Preliminary work was done on updating the KRSP Constitution. KRSP is awaiting the Sport Ireland Heads of Agreement to finalise.

Governance Committee Meeting Dates 2024

	07-Jul	18-Nov	Total
David Denieffe	√	X	1
Anthony Reynolds	√	√	2
Ann Bates (Chair)	√	√	2

Strategy Committee:

The Board has established a Strategy Committee as a Committee of the Board to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to the development, implementation, and monitoring of the strategic plan and annual business plans, the monitoring and oversight of key performance indicators and measures.

However, ultimate responsibility for all of these areas rests with the Board, who must fully consider the advice and approve or amend the recommendations from the Committee.

Strategy Committee Programme of Work 2024

- Performance Management System for Strategy Review
- Risk Register
- AOP 2024

Strategy Committee Meeting Dates 2024

The Strategy Committee meeting scheduled for March was not quorate and was therefore rescheduled to April. However, no formal meeting took place in April, with communications conducted via email instead.

	15-Nov	06-Dec	Total
Declan Rice (Chair)	√	√	2
Mary Cowman	√	√	2
Ann Bates	√	√	2

* Pat McAuley was a member and Chair of the Strategy Committee in early 2024 but did not attend any meetings prior to his resignation in February 2024.

* Marypaula Kelly was a member of the Strategy Committee in 2024 but did not attend any meetings prior to her resignation in October 2024.

Safeguarding Committee:

The Board established a Safeguarding Committee in April 2024 as a Committee of the Board to regularly review relevant policies and procedures, consider and make decisions with respect to child and vulnerable persons safeguarding concerns, consider allegations of a general nature in regard to children and vulnerable persons, and to consider vetting, disclosures and/or returns referred to the KRSP contact person by Sport Ireland.

However, ultimate responsibility for all of these areas rests with the Board, who must fully consider the advice and approve or amend the recommendations from the Committee.

Safeguarding Committee Programme of Work 2024

- Developed template for Safeguarding Committee reports to the Board
- Safeguarding Risk Register
- Address vetting concerns



Safeguarding Committee Meeting Dates 2024

	17-Jul	15-Nov	Total
David Denieffe	√	√	2
Anthony Reynolds	√	√	2
Rita Comerford	√	√	2
Nicola Keeshan (DLP)	√	√	2

KRSP Board Induction and Training

KRSP Board signed off a new Board Induction pack and process in July 2022. A supporting policy document on KRSP Board Induction was approved by the Board in December 2024. There were three new Board Members who were onboarded in 2024 and positive feedback was received from them on the process.

During 2024, Sport Ireland and Charity Board training offerings were circulated to the KRSP Board. The following Board members attended training:

- Rita Comerford attended the Sport Ireland run Board Member Roles & Responsibilities in March.
- David Denieffe completed Sport Ireland Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Anti-Racism training in June
- Mary Cowman attended the Strategy and Performance Masterclass and Building a Healthy Risk Culture which were run online by the IPA Governance Forum in September and November respectively.
- Siobhan O'Brien attended the Sport Ireland, Sport Bodies – Board Member Roles & Responsibilities in October.

Risk and Conflict of Interest Management

Risk

In alignment with the Governance Code for Sport, KRSP developed a risk appetite, risk policy, and risk register in 2021. A comprehensive review of these documents was completed in 2023. It was agreed in 2024 that KRSP would transition from using a 3x3 risk matrix to a more detailed 5x5 matrix to better assess the likelihood and impact of risks across the organisation. While this update has not yet been implemented, it is scheduled for early 2025.

Throughout 2024, KRSP maintained its commitment to effective risk management. All committees continued to monitor and address risks at each committee meeting, with a final sign-off on updates taking place at the last KRSP Board meeting of the year. This ongoing engagement ensures a proactive approach to managing risk at all levels of the organisation.

Risk management at KRSP is a continuous and integrated process involving the Board, CEO, and staff. Its purpose is to identify, assess, manage, and control potential events or situations that could impact the achievement of objectives, while also supporting organisational value and sustainability.

KRSP remains committed to embedding risk management into its organisational culture, ensuring it is not viewed as a standalone task but as a fundamental part of planning, decision-making, and day-to-day operations.

The top risks identified by KRSP are:

Risk Appetite	Risk Area
Compliance	Low
Collaboration	High
Financial	Low
Staff	Medium
Participation, Growth & Innovation	Low
Communications/Information Technology	Medium
Reputation & Image	Low

Conflict of Interest

In 2024, KRSP issued Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest forms to all Board members. By year-end, all Board members had submitted their completed forms, with declarations of interest now being systematically logged to strengthen governance and transparency practices – this log is a measure implemented as an outcome of the KOSI audit. Conflict of Interest is a standing item on all KRSP Board and Committee meetings.

Governance Standards

KRSP follows the Sport Ireland Governance Code for Sport. This is a voluntary code of practice for good governance of sport organisations in Ireland, operating on a ‘Comply or Explain’ basis. The Code has been developed for and by the Community, Voluntary and Charitable (CVC) sector, and it offers KRSP room to decide how it should act while following the principles of good governance.

The initial declaration of compliance as a Type C Organisation was made in December 2021 and the journey has continued since, with the Board working effectively to restate compliance in December 2024. Throughout 2024, the KRSP Board and staff continued to dedicate efforts to embed the policies and procedures developed during the Governance Code for Sport journey into daily business operations. This work aimed to ensure that the principles and guidelines outlined in the governance journey became integral components of the organisation's day-to-day functioning.

A sample of Governance Policies and Procedures developed, reviewed and signed off by the KRSP Board during 2024 is:

- KRSP Communications Policy V2
- KRSP Board Induction Policy V1
- KRSP Volunteer Policy V1
- KRSP Financial Statements for year ending 31st December 2023
- KRSP Annual Report 2023



2024 Staffing

Position	Name
CEO	Nicola Keeshan
Administrator Administrator Cover	Mairead Maher Michael O'Dea (29 Jul to 16 Oct)
Governance & Finance Officer	Aisling Cullen
Sports Inclusion Development Officer	Seamus Nugent
Community Sports Development Officer	Ciara Kelly
Regional LSP Communications Officer - Leinster & Ulster	Rose Bergin

MEET OUR TEAM



Nicola Keeshan



Seamus Nugent



Rose Bergin



Ciara Kelly



Aisling Cullen



Mairead Maher

Organisational Restructuring

In 2024, KRSP continued its work on organisational restructuring to align with the minimum recommended structure for Sport Ireland funded positions. As part of this process, the role of Sports Co-ordinator was reviewed to reflect the evolving scope and responsibilities of the position. Following this review, the role was regraded to Chief Executive Officer. In addition, funding proposals for a Programme Manager and an ESF Social Innovation for Sport Officer were included in our 2025 Sport Ireland Core Grant application.

Staff Training and Support

KRSP staff avail of training through Sport Ireland Organisation Capacity Building Offering. In addition, KRSP organised training for staff, tutors and volunteers. Below is a sample of conferences and courses attended by different staff members:

Conferences

- Sport Ireland Annual Governance Conference
- Federation of Irish Sport Annual Leaders Forum
- Sport Innovation and Technology Summit 2024
- Sport Ireland National Conference for Development Officers

Courses/Webinars

- Sport Ireland Get Ireland Active Training
- ENGAGE - Connecting with Men
- Coaching Teenage Girls in Sport
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Anti-Racism Training
- Better Board Recruitment - Succession Planning, Finding Volunteer Board Members
- Enhanced Reporting Requirements
- Smartphone Video Training/Editing
- ChatGPT/AI for Marketing
- Equine Centred Team Leadership Development



Kilkenny Business Awards 2024

KRSP attended the Kilkenny Chamber Business Awards 2024, held in the Lyrath Estate Hotel. The event was a celebration of local enterprise, innovation, and community contribution.

Seamus Nugent, was shortlisted for the 'Employee of the Year' award. While the award ultimately went elsewhere, Seamus's nomination is an honour and a testament to his dedication and impact within KRSP.



Collaboration

Collaboration is a central component of KRSP's work. Our objectives could not be met without the ongoing support, expertise, and commitment of our partners. From programme delivery to the creation of inclusive environments and the facilitation of community engagement, the relationships we have developed continue to play an important role. Feedback from participants regularly highlights the value they place on the individuals who support and deliver our programmes.

Partner Agencies

Our partner agencies provide vital expertise, resources, and networks that enhance our reach and impact. Their continued collaboration ensures our initiatives are aligned with local needs and national priorities.

Tutors

Our tutors are the face of many of our programmes, delivering sessions with professionalism and care. We follow a rigorous recruitment process to ensure high-quality delivery, and participant feedback consistently reflects their enthusiasm and skill.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of community sport and recreation. Through a supportive recruitment and onboarding process, we ensure they are equipped and encouraged to contribute meaningfully. Their dedication makes a lasting impression on participants and communities alike.

Clubs

Local clubs are essential partners in community level engagement. Their local knowledge and commitment to inclusion help us connect with diverse groups and generate a sense of belonging through sport and physical activity.



4. OBJECTIVES, ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE



Objectives for the Year

Snapshot of Our Work During 2024

5,378



people participated in 57 locally delivered participation initiatives, both online and in person.

296



people with a disability engaged in a variety of online and in-person LSP initiatives including multi-sport, swimming, walking, and cycling programmes. This included 164 males and 132 females.

217



Continued focus on female participation yielded a total of

participants, from specific programmes such as HEROutdoors.

74



Secondary school aged youth (29 male, 45 female) participated in Multi-sports activities.

68



older adults engaged, including participation through age-friendly initiatives and disability-inclusive programming. This number consists of 50 women and 13 men, and 5 participants with a disability (4 male, 1 female).

2,247



children engaged in the Primary School Programme - a cornerstone of KRSP's youth programming. Pre-School Programmes engaged 235 participants.



426

participants were engaged in sports-based social opportunity programmes, including sports such as hockey, swimming, cycling and golf.



193

volunteers were trained - including 179 for SG1 (11 u18), 8 for SG2 and 6 for SG3.



290

social media posts on Facebook reaching 6,900 followers and 238 posts on Instagram reaching 1,558 followers and 41,500 website impressions.



8

radio interviews and 1 TV appearance.



KRSP staff represented on **11** local and **5** national networks and committees, with **17** further partner and stakeholder engagements.

Case Studies

Primary Schools Opportunities

In 2024, KRSP continued to work closely with primary schools across the county to create meaningful opportunities for children to stay active, develop fundamental movement skills, and build confidence through a range of inclusive, school-based physical activity initiatives. These programmes not only promote physical development but also support long-term healthy habits through active play and participation.

To support younger children in developing coordination and balance, balance bikes were introduced in five schools, while playground markings were painted in four schools to encourage movement and imaginative play during break times. In total, these initiatives engaged 984 students, many of whom were active during unstructured times such as lunch or after-school, highlighting the importance of designing environments that promote physical activity throughout the school day.



KRSP introduced a redeveloped Sportshall Athletics programme to nine schools, directly engaging 1,015 pupils. This six-week, in-school initiative focuses on developing fundamental movement skills – agility, balance, and coordination – while supporting the re-establishment of key movement patterns that may have been affected by the pandemic. The programme adopts a sustainable delivery model: KRSP tutors work alongside teachers in the initial session, providing hands-on guidance and upskilling them to lead the remaining weeks. By leaving equipment in schools for the full duration, teachers can continue to integrate the activities into their PE lessons and for extra activity opportunities, promoting ongoing engagement and physical literacy beyond the formal programme.

In addition, KRSP promoted cycling by delivering bike awareness classes in five schools. These sessions gave children essential skills for safe cycling and encouraged them to view cycling as a fun activity. To further expand access to diverse sports, KRSP partnered with Badminton Ireland to deliver a County Qualifier event and worked with Southeast Viking Orienteers to host a schools orienteering event. Combined, these initiatives introduced 770 students to new, non-mainstream sports, promoting greater participation and helping children discover new interests.

Across all these programmes, over 2,800 primary school children participated in 2024. This reflects the importance and effectiveness of school-based supports in ensuring that children have consistent access to a wide variety of physical activities.

Looking ahead, KRSP plans to expand the reach of the Sportshall Athletics programme to 16 schools in 2025 and will continue to collaborate with National Governing Bodies to provide even more opportunities for children to experience and enjoy non-mainstream sports.

Junior Parkrun at Dunmore Countryside Park

The Junior Parkrun is part of a growing global movement that encourages children to enjoy running in a relaxed, supportive, and non-competitive environment.

In April 2024, KRSP proudly supported the launch of the Junior Parkrun — a free, weekly, timed 2 kilometre event designed for children aged 4 to 14. The event, made possible through collaboration and joint funding from KRSP, Kilkenny County Council, and Healthy Kilkenny, takes place every Sunday morning at 9:30am in the newly opened Dunmore Countryside Park, just 5km outside Kilkenny City. This welcoming initiative has been underpinned by the enthusiasm of a dedicated team of local volunteers, who ensure the event runs smoothly each week.

Since its launch, the Junior Parkrun has seen impressive levels of participation and community support. Between April and December 2024, the event welcomed 621 participants, who collectively completed 2,993 runs — an average of nearly five runs per child. This consistent engagement reflects not only the enthusiasm of the children, but also the commitment of families and volunteers alike.

As momentum continues to build, we look forward to growing the programme further in 2025 and enhancing opportunities for children to enjoy active, social, and healthy lifestyles.



What KRSP planned but didn't achieve, and why.

In 2024, while KRSP made strong progress across many strategic objectives, there were a number of planned actions that could not be delivered as intended. A key challenge was limited staff capacity, particularly with the Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO) covering programme areas such as Urban Outdoor Adventure (UOA) and the Community Sports Hub (CSH). This impacted KRSP's ability to initiate collaborations with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and to advocate for broader quality assurance frameworks at club level. Additionally, the administrative burden of implementing new systems, particularly around monitoring and evaluation, placed further pressure on existing resources. Some strategic actions that required significant stakeholder or national-level direction, such as the promotion of school facility use or developing brand association with partners, also remained on hold.

KRSP continues to review and adapt its internal processes and resource allocation to address these limitations moving into 2025.

Some examples of the actions not delivered are outlined below:

Programme	Reason
Swim for a Mile	Limited tutor availability impacted the delivery of Swim for a Mile. We value our relationship with Swim Ireland and look forward to exploring other opportunities that align with KRSP strategy in the future.
Yoga and Dip	No Tutor
Community based programmes targeting women and girls	Lack of tutors in communities outside of the city
Playground Markings	Poor weather conditions
Adults Learn to Cycle	As many services had pre-scheduled activities and the return time was late in the day, most disability services opted to use KRSP's year-round adapted cycling/learn to cycle programme instead.

Key Achievements and Performances for the Year

This report sets out the achievements and outputs of Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership in 2024 from the information collated and submitted as part of the national report on the Local Sports Partnership network.

Pillar 1:



Active Empowerment

Strategic Goal: *To support clubs and organisations to develop and deliver more opportunities for people to participate in lifelong active recreation, sport and physical activity for all.*



Participation

KRSP Club Supports

In 2024 KRSP had two different programmes of support for clubs available:

2024 COVID-19 Small Grant Scheme

The aim of the scheme was to support Sports Clubs, Community Groups & Organisations to re-start sports and physical activities, re-engage and recruit new members / participants. These grants would cover costs associated with restarting and rebuild following COVID 19.

In 2024, many clubs and community groups continued efforts to re-engage former members and individuals who had previously participated in physical activity. To support these efforts, KRSP allocated €9,244 in funding to assist in increasing participation across clubs and communities. Notable examples include Graiguenamanagh Canoe Club, which received funding to purchase a larger, more accessible canoe; SOS Kilkenny, which was supported in acquiring inclusive equipment suitable for all abilities; and Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA Club, which successfully delivered family-friendly introductory sessions in tennis and rounders on their own club grounds.

2024 KRSP Club Development Scheme

This fund aims to encourage the set-up of new clubs and assist existing clubs in their development to increase participation in their sport. Priority is be given to minority sports and low participation groups/target groups identified by KRSP.

In 2024, KRSP provided funding of €6,350 to support clubs in building capacity and attracting new members. Kilkenny Judo Club developed promotional videos to raise awareness and encourage participation. Marble City Boxing Club received funding to deliver training courses aimed at enhancing the skills of their volunteer coaches. St. Joseph's Athletic Club used their funding to produce informational leaflets to strengthen connections within their local community. These initiatives reflect KRSP's ongoing commitment to supporting club development and increasing opportunities for wider community participation in sport.

KRSP COVID-19 Small Grant Scheme 2024	
Name of Club / Organisation	Funding Awarded
Ballyhale Shamrocks Healthy Club	€280
Deerview Centre	€700
Stoneyford Development Association	€700
Rotheil Handball Club	€800
St. Lachtains GAA Club	€1,000
Glessan Community Leisure	€1,290
SOS Kilkenny	€1,474
Graiguenamanagh Canoe Club	€1,300
Thomastown Athletic Club	€1,500
Total amount Awarded: €9,244	

KRSP Club Development 2024	
Name of Club / Organisation	Funding Awarded
Kilkenny Judo	€400
St. Josephs AC	€500
Kilkenny City Squash Club	€700
Marble City Boxing Club	€750
Thomastown United AFC	€1,000
Kilkenny Aquas Canoe Club	€1,500
Kilkenny City Badminton Club	€1,500
Total amount Awarded: €6,350	

Catering for Diverse Groups

Kilkenny County Council and Ukrainian Community Forum

In 2024, with the rollout of the new expanded integration remit in the local authorities, the role of the Community Response fora was extended to include International Protection, those with Status, Ukraine Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTPs) and where applicable, the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). KRSP is a member of the Community Integration Forum, attends meetings, links with other forum members, signposts activities and contributes where possible to this group.

Sport Ireland Research: Equality in the Field

KRSP's 'Equality in the Field' study examined LGBTQ+ youth experiences in sports in Kilkenny and Carlow. Findings identified infrastructure barriers and the need for inclusive policies, language, and training. KRSP is now assessing LGBTQ+ awareness and readiness to participate in training in local sports clubs with plans to distribute a toolkit promoting inclusivity and acceptance.

One of the recommendations from our report Equality In The Field was the provision of training for sports clubs and facilities. Staff and volunteers who are trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and are responsive to the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals, including having the skills to intervene and support. This was distilled into two parts:

1. An improved understanding and awareness of the theory & the terminology associated with the LGBTQ+ population within sports clubs and sporting facilities in the study area (Kilkenny and Carlow).
2. To equip sports club and facilities with a training toolkit to support them in inclusion of members of the LGBTQ+ population in their club or facility.

KRSP engaged the services of a consultant to conduct this work on our behalf. A qualitative survey was issued to clubs and sporting facilities in Kilkenny and Carlow to ascertain what type of training they would prefer. Following the collation of data from this, it emerged that online training which could be accessed in participants own time was the most preferred.

A review of training providers was undertaken, and a 2-module training programme was developed for an Irish context by Accelerate Sport UK. Following this, 100 licences were purchased and distributed the club coaches who expressed an interest in receiving training. A report was written documenting this process. A training toolkit document was written to supplement the online training modules.

However, despite a high level of interest in undertaking training, response to the training offering was low. KRSP will address this in 2025.

Inclusive Sections in Sports Clubs

Supported by KRSP Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO), Kilkenny Hockey Club, Kilkenny Rugby Club, Danesfort GAA & Camogie Club and Gowran Park Golf Club established new or strengthened inclusive sections for children with additional needs.

Following a Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness presentation to club coaches in Young Irelands GAA (Gowran) an inclusive club was established there. It launched in March and ran through until September and was hailed as a great success by the club and especially by parents of children from the area. The young participants also played a small game at half time in the Kilkenny v Wexford Allianz National Hurling League game in UPMC Nowlan Park.

KRSP have worked closely with the Kilkenny GAA Games Promotion Officer, and this resulted in an Easter GAA Camp in Dunmore GAA Centre for children with additional needs. The camp was supported by KRSP Transition Year volunteers, KRSP staff and coaches from Kilkenny GAA.

The KRSP SIDO also delivered a Sport Inclusion and Disability Awareness talk to several GAA clubs who have expressed an interest in establishing inclusive groups within their clubs. This took place in O'Loughlin Gaels GAA headquarters in November and was well attended. A presentation was also given on the night by Young Irelands (Gowran) GAA club on their journey in establishing an inclusive section. It is hoped to establish some more inclusive club sections in GAA clubs in Kilkenny in 2025.



Kilkenny Hockey Club

In September 2024, Kilkenny Hockey Club, in collaboration with KRSP's SIDO, restarted its inclusive section in-line with the hockey season. Through a successful application to the KRSP Club Development Grant, the club secured funding to invest in new equipment tailored for inclusive participation.

Now operating independently, the inclusive section continues to maintain close contact with KRSP for ongoing support and participant referral. The programme takes place every Sunday morning throughout the hockey season (September to March), with a strong foundation of volunteer involvement. Inclusive training is fully integrated, taking place alongside the club's youth sessions and on the same pitch. Weekly participation ranges from 8 to 12 players.

Kilkenny Rugby Club

The inclusive rugby group recommenced in October 2024, with 15 players registered to take part in weekly sessions held on Monday evenings. The programme continues to run in line with the rugby season calendar.

During the summer, KRSP was sincerely grateful to Kilkenny Rugby Club for generously providing access to their facilities for our inclusive summer camp. The venue proved to be well-suited to the programme's needs, and it also served as the location for a dedicated training day for Summer Camp volunteers. This support reflects our shared commitment with that of Kilkenny Rugby Club to creating welcoming opportunities for young people with additional needs.



Danesfort GAA & Camogie Club

In 2024, Danesfort GAA & Camogie Club hosted a six-week inclusive programme at their club grounds in Danesfort. The initiative welcomed 10 young participants and was strongly supported by club mentors, who played a key role in creating a welcoming and encouraging environment. The sessions focused on fun, movement, and social interaction, ensuring that each participant could engage at their own pace. This programme highlights the club's commitment to promoting inclusivity and community involvement through sport.

Gowran Park Golf Club

The inclusive section at Gowran Park Golf Club continues to progress well, with eight young players now registered. The group benefits from the guidance of an enthusiastic coach and mentors, whose support has contributed significantly to the development of participants' skills. Notably, one player has advanced to the club's Junior Section, while a new participant has since joined the inclusive group to take his place.

Ongoing support from within the club remains strong, and KRSP's SIDO maintains regular contact with coaches and mentors to offer continued guidance. The SIDO was also delighted to attend a recent certificate and medal presentation event hosted by the club, celebrating the achievements of the young golfers.

Autism in Sport Training and Disability Inclusion Training

These workshops were delivered to coaches from Young Irelands GAA Club (Gowran) and Gowran Park Golf Club following commitment to establish an inclusive section within their club. Both courses were fully attended by club coaches.



Volunteers

Supported Swim Programme for Children with Additional Needs

Volunteers play a central role in KRSP's work, with the Supported Swim Programme offering a strong example of meaningful engagement. Taking place over 26 weeks during the school year, the programme supports children with additional needs in partnership with local schools. Volunteers – primarily Transition Year students – are recruited through schools and online platforms, including social media. A reference check forms part of the selection process to help ensure a good fit for this supportive role.

Before starting, all volunteers complete a Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness session. KRSP staff provide ongoing guidance and support throughout the programme, helping to build confidence and competence. Two groups of volunteers support the programme as Swim Buddies, offering one-to-one assistance to children over 26 weeks (12 weeks with one group and 14 with the other). Their support helps children build confidence and progress at their own pace, while reinforcing instruction from the swim teachers. With nearly 800 volunteer hours contributed, this programme offers volunteers a rewarding experience that supports personal development, contributes towards their Gaisce Award, and enhances early CVs – while making a real difference in the lives of others.

Inclusive Summer Programme for Children with Additional Needs

Our volunteers continue to be the driving force behind KRSP's inclusive summer initiatives, contributing over 1,900 hours. This year alone, 34 youth and 6 adult volunteers generously gave their time and energy to support children with additional needs, creating a welcoming and enjoyable environment for all participants.

Regardless of their sporting experience, volunteers step forward with enthusiasm and compassion, playing a crucial role in ensuring children feel included and valued. From assisting with games and activities to offering one-to-one encouragement, their presence is vital to the success of our summer programmes.

All volunteers receive Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness training and practical leadership training, helping them to develop the skills and confidence needed to support participants effectively in a range of activities. A Safeguarding 1 course is delivered by a KRSP tutor to volunteers aged 16 years (with parental consent) and older. For many of our younger volunteers, this experience represents a meaningful milestone – their first time working with children with additional needs, and often their first 'summer work' experience.

Over the years, KRSP has built a strong and supportive volunteer programme that extends beyond the camps themselves. From initial recruitment through to programme completion, our team provides structured guidance and mentorship. We are committed to ensuring volunteers feel valued, confident, and part of something impactful.

As our inclusive programmes grow, we have come to recognise that the recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteers is not just a support function – it is a cornerstone of our success.

DAF (Dormant Account Funding) Volunteer Support Programme

KRSP supports local clubs and organisations to train and upskill their volunteers by means of providing funds for coaches, leaders and committee members to attend training and education courses that will benefit the club to increase participation.

The volunteer supports initiative provides funding for individuals volunteering in disadvantaged communities or with people with disabilities to gain leadership skills in community sports and physical activities. The funding aims to boost confidence among participants and contribute to community development through their subsequent volunteer work in sports.



DAF Innovation for Sport Inclusion - Bainisteoir Beag

We are continuing to work on the development of the Bainisteoir Beag interactive application to support the development of a youth leadership programme for primary schools.

Following a tender process for the delivery of a proof of concept for the Bainisteoir Beag programme, Animated Technologies was engaged and work commenced on the creation of engaging animations and immersive interactive applications. One activity was chosen to develop as a proof of concept.

Initially 10 schools in Kilkenny expressed an interest in testing the activity. Eventually, 4 schools completed the pilot - 4 teachers and 26 pupils completed the feedback forms. The feedback data was collated and is extremely positive and definitely gives KRSP a mandate to push for development of further activities in line with the plans for the programme.

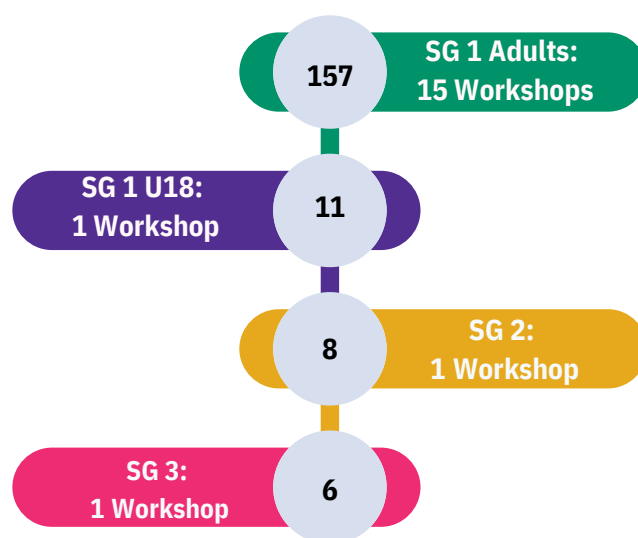
Because of the amount involved to conduct the development of activities, the tender process must now go through the eTender process and KRSP will commence this in early 2025.

Safeguarding

KRSP facilitates Sport Ireland safeguarding training courses for people who are involved in the organisation of sport for children and young people throughout Kilkenny. All courses are 3 hours in duration and are available in both an online and classroom environment.

- Safeguarding 1 - Basic Awareness (all coaches)
- Safeguarding 2 – Club Children’s Officer (role specific)
- Safeguarding 3 – Designated Liaison Person (role specific)

Safeguarding Participants



DAF Urban Outdoor Adventure Programme - REC 3 training

In remote or off-track locations, emergency response times can range from 4 to 6 hours, meaning that even minor medical incidents can quickly escalate into life-threatening situations. The Rescue Emergency Care (REC) Level 3 course is designed to equip participants with the skills and confidence needed to stabilise such situations until professional help arrives.

This course meets the standards set by major sporting governing bodies, including Mountaineering Ireland and Canoe Ireland, and is delivered by experienced outdoor medical professionals with backgrounds in both healthcare and adventure sports.

In November, KRSP facilitated a REC 3 course for Urban Outdoor Adventure (UOA) canoe clubs in Kilkenny. Ten participants from three clubs successfully completed the training and received REC 3 certification.

First Aid Courses

In June 2024, KRSP delivered two, one-day First Aid training courses, specifically tailored for volunteers from sports clubs across Kilkenny. Both sessions were fully booked, with a total of 24 participants taking part. The training equipped attendees with essential skills, including CPR, the use of an AED, and the management of minor sports-related injuries. These newly acquired skills will now be of direct benefit to local clubs, enhancing safety and preparedness across the county’s sporting community.

Pillar 2:



Active People

Strategic Goal: *To increase opportunities for people to get sustainably active, particularly those who face additional barriers.*

Delivery of Programmes and Initiatives

DAF - Urban Outdoor Adventure/Initiative (UOA)

KRSP successfully secured funding through the Urban Outdoor Adventure Initiative, supported by Dormant Accounts. This funding has enabled the development of inclusive and engaging outdoor programmes throughout Kilkenny. The initial stream of funding focused on school-based participation, but further streams were secured to include people with disabilities, as well as women and girls, with a particular emphasis on water-based activities.

Each stream of funding is structured around three core elements:

- a capital component to support the purchase of equipment for clubs and providers,
- a capacity-building element that facilitates training and education for coaches, leaders and volunteers and
- a programme activation element to increase participation in outdoor adventure sports.

With a strong focus on engaging individuals from disadvantaged areas, KRSP delivers these programmes in Kilkenny City, Castlecomer, Graigueenamanagh, and Thomastown, helping to bring outdoor adventure opportunities to local communities.

UOA - Orienteering

KRSP was pleased to offer volunteer support for a Southeast Secondary and Primary School orienteering event, held at the picturesque Kilkenny Castle Grounds in Kilkenny City. The event saw participation from two secondary schools and eight primary schools, with over 550 students taking part. Focused on developing navigation skills, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, the orienteering meet not only encouraged physical activity but also helped students build important life skills. This initiative had a positive impact on the students' personal development, and KRSP remains committed to supporting similar events that contribute to the overall growth of young individuals in the community.

UOA - Get Going Get Rowing

Get Going Get Rowing commenced with Duiske College in January in conjunction with Rowing Ireland and Graigueenamanagh Rowing club. 15 participants took part in the programme. Get Going Get Rowing is aimed at TY students, who are trained to coach indoor rowing on ergometer machines kept at their school. Then they, in turn, coached first-year students over six weeks during their P.E. classes to earn a TrY Coaching Certificate.

UOA - HEROutdoors

Throughout HEROutdoors Week 2024, women and girls developed confidence in their capacity to participate in outdoor activities by participating in new activities and developing skills and knowledge of these activities. These programmes aim to show women and girls the potential to be more active in the outdoors in Kilkenny even if they are not “sporty”.

Teenage Girls Get Her Kayaking – Kilkenny City

This programme was run with the help of Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club targeting teenage girls. They ran 4 sessions from Tuesday 30th July until 27th of August (excluding the 20th of August) for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The girls were provided with boats, lifejackets and other safety gear. There were options to try Stand Up Paddle boarding, Kayaking and Canoeing. The girls were then given a pathway for to join the club if they enjoyed the programme and sport. The programme was full with 6 teenage girls on the programme.



Reaching New Heights – Hill Walking Programme

Reaching New Heights is a hillwalking course that KRSP delivered in partnership with Mountaineering Ireland. 10 Women from around Kilkenny participated on this programme, with one session per week for 3 weeks. Locations included a low walk on the 8th of August, Brandon Hill on the 15th and finally Mount Leinster on the 22nd. With poor weather on the 22nd the last session was rescheduled for a walk around Inistioge.

Unfortunately, there was poor attendance throughout the sessions. Participants felt that it was too fast of a jump for a beginner walker to tackle the higher hills. This will be considered when planning for HEROutdoors 2025.



Rock Up and Climb

Rock Up and Climb is a rock-climbing programme that was again held in partnership with Mountaineering Ireland. This programme was suitable for beginners and was a 2.5 hour introductory to rock climbing in Ballykeeffe Quarry. The course was delivered by a qualified leader through Mountaineering Ireland. The leader guided participants through the techniques and the use of ropes throughout the session.

All participants abseiled and completed two trails of rock climbing. This was held over 2 days on Wednesday 14th & Thursday 15th August. A total of 12 teenage girls and 12 women participated in the sessions over the 2 days.



HEROutdoors - Castlecomer Discovery Park

The next programme was a 4-week outdoor adventure programme for teenage girls in Castlecomer Discovery Park. Two groups were organised - one starting on Wednesday 7th and a second starting on Thursday 8th of August. This was KRSP's fourth year running the programme in conjunction with Castlecomer Discovery Park. The teenage girls were introduced to archery, axe throwing, raft building, zip-lining, team building activities, to name a few.

18 participants completed the four-week programme. KRSP worked with local agencies such as Foroige to specifically target girls from the area onto the programme before expanding it out. A change in day from the previous year may also have impacted the take up of the Thursday programme. These learnings will be considered when planning for 2025. For those that did attend they had great fun with new friends being made.

Adult Mountain Biking

KRSP ran a beginners 4-week introduction in Mountain Biking in Castlecomer Discovery Park. This was led by a female tutor who gave confidence, skills and tricks to the women over the 4 Saturdays.

At the end of the programme many were interested in buying bikes and looking to join a local group. They used trails in the park to practice and brave the rough grounds. All 8 spaces were booked up quickly.



Adult Get Her Kayaking - Graiguenamanagh

Our final HEROutdoors programme was for adult ladies looking to get involved in kayaking in Graiguenamanagh. This programme had huge interest with a long waiting list. The programme ran over two weeks, with four two-hour sessions held on 21st, 22nd, 26th, and 27th August. A female instructor from Graiguenamanagh Canoe Club led the sessions.

All participants received their Level 1 kayaking qualification and were given a pathway to join the club. 8 ladies took part in this programme and the feedback was brilliant.

Men on the Move

Men on the Move provides men with the opportunity to begin their journey towards re-engagement in sports and physical activity within a supportive and non-judgemental environment. The programme is offered three times annually, in January, April, and September.

Held at the running track in the Watershed, Kilkenny City, participants are guided through the programme, enhancing their fitness levels while integrating strength and conditioning exercises.

Participation numbers fluctuate throughout the year, with an average of 35 men registered for each programme.



DAF Community Sports Hub – Urlingford and Johnstown

The CSH initiative was established to promote and encourage sports and physical activity in the Urlingford/Johnstown area by supporting and assisting local clubs and organisations. After conducting a needs analysis, KRSP collaborated with each community club and organisation to address their specific challenges and support them in offering high-quality sports and physical activity opportunities within the community.

Secondary School Weightlifting Programme

KRSP initiated a new partnership with Weightlifting Ireland to deliver an Introduction to Weightlifting programme through secondary school settings.

Under our Community Sports Hub programme, this programme was delivered in Colaiste Mhuire, Johnstown for transition year students within a mixed class setting. 25 young people completed the programme and became members of Weightlifting Ireland.

Following the success of these programmes, KRSP intends to expand this programme to other secondary schools in County Kilkenny in 2025.

Boxercise

An all-female Boxercise programme, targeting women who were back to fitness/ beginner level, was held in November in Johnstown. The programme aimed to enhance participants' motor skills, reaction times, agility, hand-eye coordination, and overall fitness and health. Over the course of 8 weeks, 27 women took part in the programme.



Couch to 5/10K

In February, KRSP delivered a 6-week Couch to 5/10km programme in Urlingford. Building on previous Couch to 3/5k programmes, this initiative supported participants in gradually increasing their running distances at their own pace, while also welcoming newcomers. A total of 31 participants took part, with 29 of them being women.

Men on the Move

KRSP ran two Men on the Move programmes for men within the Community Sports Hub. In November, it was offered as a taster programme to try and encourage beginner and low activity men into the programme. This was the first time a “men only” programme has been offered in the CSH. It ran for four weeks from 6th November, with sessions starting at 8pm. 14 men signed up and attended the programme. Since this interest we have run further programmes to help this target group.

Community Programmes

Monday Night Walks

The Monday Night Walks series is a walk and talk programme for adults in Kilkenny. Starting from the Canal Square, Kilkenny, participants are guided on different routes throughout the city building up distance over the course of the programme. The programme is offered three times during the year in January, April and September. Numbers vary throughout the year with approximately 31 participants on average registering for each programme.



Activator Poles in Libraries

KRSP is pleased to continue working with Kilkenny County Council to provide activator poles available to borrow from four Kilkenny County Library branches: Castlecomer, Loughboy, Graiguenamanagh, and Ferrybank.

This partnership with Kilkenny County Libraries continues to provide accessible physical activity opportunities to the public through the library network. The poles are available for loan with a library card, supporting community members to stay active in their own time and at their own pace.

Junior Parkrun (refer to Case Study for details)

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership was delighted to help with the startup costs and support to establish a Junior Parkrun in Kilkenny. This parkrun, which takes place in Dunmore Countryside Park is a 2km event for children ages 4-14 years old. It is run every Sunday from 9:30am, supported by a group of volunteers.

This is a free inclusive event and is open and accessible to children from all backgrounds. In 2024 The Junior Parkrun saw 621 children take part in at least one run.

Bike Week 2024

Bike Week is pivotal for cycling enthusiasts nationwide, coordinating initiatives and promotions across different national and local media platforms. This boosts the visibility of Bike Week stories, promoting cycling locally and expanding campaign reach.

It also encourages networking among local groups and organisations, allowing for relationships to be built. In Kilkenny, events aim to increase participation, access to education and to promote cycling. This ultimately builds cyclist confidence, changes social norms, and develops a cycling culture. Bikeweek programmes are delivered through funding support by Kilkenny County Council.

KRSP Bike Week 2024 – Summary

Activity/ Programme	Participants
Children's Learn to Cycle	14
Adult's Learn to Cycle	0
Basic Bike Maintenance Workshop	24
School Bike Classes	197

Children's Learn to Cycle

In the lead up to Bike Week 2024, KRSP planned two Learn To Cycle programmes. Experience delivering learn to cycle programmes has shown us that having the programme on three successive days brings the most success for young learners.

The programmes took place from 1st to 3rd May, with two mixed ability classes each day: 4–5pm for ages 5–7, and 5–6pm for ages 8 and up. The children's classes were well supported, and 14 children signed up. Numbers were not as high as the classes we delivered at Halloween midterm break last year. Again, children may have had other activities scheduled as part of the normal school / sports year. In future we would prefer to run learn to cycle programmes at school breaks as parents are more inclined to bring their children to an activity during these breaks.

Great fun was had, and all the children successfully learned to cycle. Having two tutors on the programme means that all children get lots of individual support during the lessons. In addition to this, having a really safe, secure venue is important as children can really express their newly learned skills on day 3!

Adults Learn to Cycle

In the lead up to Bike Week 2024, KRSP planned an adult Learn To Cycle programme. The programme was scheduled for May 1st to 3rd with classes for adults (mixed ability) from 3pm to 4pm.

No adults registered for the first class. This is probably due to the services having already scheduled activities on the days and the time being late in the afternoon for returning to base. KRSP delivers an adapted cycling / learn to cycle programme throughout the year and most of the local disability services use this programme for cycling.



Bike Maintenance Classes

KRSP hosted two, one-hour bike maintenance workshops during Bike Week, catering to both new and experienced cyclists. Led by the proprietors of the Kilkenny Cycle Clinic, the sessions equipped participants with the skills to identify and repair punctures, perform basic 'M-checks,' and ask questions directly of seasoned mechanics.

Open to a diverse range of ages and genders, the workshops welcomed participants from 17 to 68 years old. With 24 attendees across the two sessions, a significant portion were beginner cyclists who actively engaged by asking numerous questions. This engagement contributed to a valuable learning environment where participants gained practical knowledge and confidence in bike maintenance. All participants received their own bike maintenance kit to take home with them.

Bikefest

KRSP CSDO supported Kilkenny County Council for their Kilkenny 2024 BikeFest event. This event has fun cycle events and opportunities for families in Kilkenny. The CSDO supported set up and managed the information stand throughout the day in addition to running the power challenge which attracted huge interest. This proved to be an engaging way to interact with those attending about cycling and physical activity.



School Bike Classes

KRSP expanded its outreach to primary schools by delivering six, 45-minute bike safety workshops across five locations in Kilkenny County. Targeting 3rd and 4th class, these interactive sessions showed students how to do the M-check, foster safe cycling habits and highlights Bike Week.

Led by the Kilkenny Cycle Clinic, the workshops used engaging and fun methods to keep students engaged. To incentivise participation, students were offered a night off homework, along with a water bottle and sweets for those who aced the five-question quiz administered at the end. This combination proved to be a highly effective and enjoyable strategy for engaging the young participants. Over the course of the six workshops, KRSP reached a total of 197 students, receiving positive feedback from teachers.



Primary School Support Programme

Balance Bike Programme

KRSP provides a balance bike loan scheme suited to pre-school and primary pupils up to first class. Settings are provided with 6-7 balance bike and helmets for a period of six weeks. In 2024, the following settings availed of the programme:

Date	School
January	Croia Play School Churchill NS
February	First Steps Montessori
March	St. Beacon NS
April	Moneenroe NS
May	Danesfort Childcare
July	Thomastown Summer Camps Talbots Gate Childcare Step by Step Creche
September	Early Days Montessori Urlingford NS

KRSP serviced the balance bikes in November to prepare for 2025.

Badminton Programme

KRSP hosted a Badminton County Qualifier event, open to all primary schools across County Kilkenny. A total of eight schools took part, including Scoil Mhuire Mooncoin, Scoil Bhríde Paulstown, Scoil Pádraig Ballyhale, St. Patrick's De La Salle, St. John's Senior School, and Windgap NS. The event provided a fun and inclusive opportunity for both boys and girls to play and experience badminton in a competitive but supportive environment. We were especially proud to see three of the participating schools go on to represent Kilkenny at Leinster level.

Sportshall Athletics Programme

Sportshall Athletics is a school-based programme designed to develop children's running, jumping, and throwing skills, with a focus on fundamental movement and multi-skill development through fun, inclusive Track & Field-style activities.

The traditional training day has been replaced with on-site training, where KRSP tutors work directly with school staff for one day at the start of the programme, demonstrating activities and supporting teachers as they gain confidence to lead the programme themselves. This approach promotes sustainable delivery and long-term impact within the school setting.

KRSP purchased five sets of Sportshall Athletics equipment through Sport Capital funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport (now the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport) received in 2018. This equipment remains in schools for the duration of the programme, allowing teachers to integrate it into their own PE lessons and extend pupil engagement beyond the structured sessions.

In 2024, eight schools across the county participated in the Sportshall Athletics programme, with 1,015 students taking part throughout the year.

Playground Markings

Playground markings add a fun and vibrant element to school playgrounds, encouraging children to be active, play, and socialise with their peers.

Due to adverse weather conditions throughout the year, playground markings were only completed at four schools in Kilkenny. These schools were Templorum, Churchill, St. Patrick's, and Newmarket.

KRSP sought expressions of interest for Primary Schools in Kilkenny interested in availing of Playground markings scheme with a schedule of schools ready for implementation of the programme in 2025.



Women in Sport Initiatives

In 2024, KRSP supported the following club and community groups in providing additional sports and physical opportunities for girls and women through its Women in Sport Support Programme.

Buggy Buddies Programme

In October, KRSP facilitated a 6-week Buggy Buddies programme in Kilkenny City, designed specifically for mothers with babies, six months post-partum. Five women took part, engaging in gentle physical activity in a supportive environment. The programme offers postpartum mums an accessible way to return to exercise while including their babies, removing the barrier of childcare.



Name of Club / Organisation	Funding Awarded
Kilkenny City Squash Club	€50
Kilfane Handball Club	€400
Motheel Handball Club	€400
SDS Kilkenny	€833
Freebooters AFC	€700
Graiguenamanagh Canoe Club	€750
Grennan Community Leisure	€750
Thomastown Athletic Club	€750
Stoneyford Development Association	€750

Total amount Awarded: €5,233

Menopause Moves

In 2024, KRSP delivered two Menopause Moves programmes on Monday and Tuesday evenings throughout September. These programmes were specifically designed to support women who were either entering or experiencing menopause, with a focus on those new to exercise or returning after a break.

Over the course of the two sessions, a total of 21 women took part. The 6-week programme introduced participants to weighted exercises—an essential component for supporting bone health and overall wellbeing during this stage of life.

TY Badminton Programme

KRSP was delighted to partner with Badminton Ireland for a special two-day event during Women in Sport Week. The event provided 30 female students with the opportunity to complete the Foundation Level 1 coaching course, earning official accreditation.

As part of the initiative, the school also received badminton equipment to help encourage increased participation among younger students, supporting the growth of the sport within the school community.



Older Adult Programmes

Older Adults Boccia and Bowling

This programme ran for 3 blocks (10 weeks from January to Easter, 7 weeks from Easter to June and 10 weeks from September to December). Numbers are between 10 and 12 participants weekly playing Boccia, matt bowling, cornhole and skittles.





Stretch & Move

The programme ran in three blocks: 10 weeks from January to Easter, 7 weeks from Easter to June, and 10 weeks from September to December. It is held in Kilkenny Castle Park each week (with kind permission of the OPW) and has 12-15 participants registered. The programme consists of gentle warm-up movement, a walk and some stretches and bodyweight exercises to cool down.

Callan Community Chair Based Pilates

Callan Community Chair Based Pilates

The programme ran in three blocks: 10 weeks from January to Easter, 7 weeks from Easter to June, and 10 weeks from September to December. Numbers are set at 20 participants due to room size. Participants are a combination of older adults and some people with a disability from local services. The programme is supported by Droichead Family Resource Centre who provide their premises free of charge.

Programmes for People with a Disability

A number of disability programmes were run during 2024. These programmes aimed to address the specific challenges faced by those with a disability. Through these programmes, significant strides were made towards creating a more inclusive society.

Adult Summer Programme - Give it a Try Week

Six taster sessions were delivered over five days during the Give It A Try week. Aimed at adults with a disability, participants are recruited through the disability services that KRSP works with. Activities included Adapted Cycling (on KRSP bikes in the Watershed Track); Football For All, Community Nature Walk, a Multi-Sport Try Out session, aqua aerobics, and a spinning class.

The activities took place from Monday June 17th to Friday June 21st with 40 adults with a disability registered for the programme from numerous services across Kilkenny city and county. This programme was supported through Healthy Ireland (Kilkenny) funding.

Supported Swimming Lessons – Children

Supported swimming lessons were delivered to between 28 and 35 children with additional needs throughout 2024. The lessons ran in three blocks: 10 weeks from January to Easter, 6 weeks from Easter to the end of May, and 10 weeks from October to December. Each September, KRSP recruits Transition Year Swim Buddy volunteers to support the programme across the year with 34 recruited in 2024.

While 28 children can attend the programme, there are limitations and supply of spaces exceeds demand. KRSP are fortunate to have two very experienced swimming teachers and the support of excellent volunteers which KRSP mentor and support. This programme is currently led by KRSP, as no other organisations or facilities have offered similar disability swimming lessons for children with additional needs, largely due to financial viability. Funding support from Healthy Ireland (Kilkenny) plays a key role in enabling KRSP to deliver this valuable initiative.

Adapted Cycling Programme

Healthy Ireland (Kilkenny) funding, along with access to KRSP's range of adapted bikes, helps make this programme possible. Led by a KRSP tutor, it takes place every Monday morning on the Watershed athletics track. Participants, who attend with care staff, pay a reduced rate directly to the Watershed. The programme supports 10–15 participants each week. KRSP is exploring the purchase of additional trikes to make the programme even more accessible. The combination of an experienced tutor and continued funding ensures its steady delivery.

National Learning Network (NLN)

This in person programme, supported by Healthy Ireland funding, is delivered on Mondays to students attending National Learning Network (NLN) in three blocks - January to Easter (10 weeks), Easter to May (6 weeks) and September to December (10 weeks).

NLN provides a range of flexible training courses for people who have experienced a setback, have had an accident, a mental health issue, an illness, injury or have a disability and need extra support. As part of their personal learning plans, the students are taught how to be independently physically active throughout life. This is done by having physical activity as part of their weekly programme and the KRSP programme is an essential part of this to support NLN. The programme is a good partnership with NLN providing the venue and KRSP through Healthy Ireland (Kilkenny) funding providing the tutor.

Summer Swim Camps

A week-long swim camp for children with a disability took place from 22nd to 26th July, with three sessions held each day and attended by 24 children. The programme was delivered in the Watershed swimming pool with support from 10 KRSP volunteers, swim teachers, and staff.

The programme helps bridge the gap between the two supported swimming lessons that KRSP provide (Spring and Autumn/Winter). KRSP try to make this programme affordable for parents of children with additional needs made possible by KRSP trained volunteers and through support funding from the HSE.

The Community Walk

Supported through HSE funding, the Community Walk is a tutor led programme for people who want to start slowly and gradually build fitness specifically for people with a disability.

KRSP delivered three programmes – January to Easter, Easter to May and September to December. Participants are recruited through disability support services in Kilkenny. All participants and their care staff reported that they enjoy the programme which takes place in nature walks around the Linear Park, Canal Walk, St. John's Quay and Castle Park in Kilkenny City.

Approximately 10-30 participants attend each week and the programme offers a valuable social opportunity for people from various services and their carers to mix during the walk.



Easter GAA Camp

In 2024, KRSP collaborated with Kilkenny GAA County Board to provide a 3-day Easter GAA Camp for children with additional needs. The camp was held in the Kilkenny GAA Training Centre in Dunmore and 10 children attended supported by KRSP staff, volunteers and Kilkenny GAA Coaches.

TASK Group

Building on the success of our previous programme with TASK groups, we're now engaging with a new group from TASK. Each week, 10–15 participants take part in a range of sports in a relaxed, non-competitive setting, with the focus on fun, participation, and going at their own pace. The programme benefits from the guidance of one of KRSP's most experienced tutors, and feedback has been very positive. It is supported by HSE funding.

Multi-Sport Activities

KRSP provided multi-sports activities for adults with a disability in the Watershed in Kilkenny. These activities are provided throughout the year in three blocks - 9 weeks from January to Easter, 7 weeks from Easter to Summer programme; and 10 weeks from September to December.

Numbers have grown in the past two years from 10-12 each Friday, to now over thirty adults plus 8-10 care staff attending each week. The programme is being delivered by a KRSP staff member due to lack of tutor availability mid-year. Because of the large numbers, KRSP have had to extend to two sections of the Sportshall and also appeal to some of the local NGBs to support the programme. Leinster Rugby and FAI Kilkenny Development Officer have kindly helped out. This programme is delivery through funding support from the HSE.



Inclusive Summer Programme

KRSP's comprehensive Inclusive Summer Programme ran for the full month of July in 2024 supported through funding from the HSE.

- **Youth Volunteers:** Through KRSP safe recruitment process, 35 young volunteers and 6 adults volunteers, were recruited to support participants on our summer programme (see Active Empowerment section for details on this volunteer support programme).
- **Inclusive Sports Camps:** In summer 2024, KRSP delivered an extensive and diverse four-week programme of inclusive sports camps, made possible through funding support from the HSE. KRSP engaged with Development Officers from National Governing Bodies to support the programme - the Kilkenny based FAI Development Officer and Leinster Rugby Club Community Rugby Officer. Kilkenny Tennis Club and Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club each supported the programme with dedicated activity days. The programme was delivered by KRSP staff, KRSP tutors, local NGB Development Officers and KRSP volunteers.



Kilkenny Rugby Club generously provided their facilities which proved ideal for the camps. KRSP also held a training day for the Summer Camp volunteers at the location.

Camps ran daily from 10am to 12.30pm, with indoor facilities ensuring that no activities were cancelled despite occasional poor weather.

A great time was had by all the children. 48 children took part in the camps, which provided an opportunity for physical activity not otherwise available by mainstream camps in the area. Through the camps, KRSP aimed to support parents and guardians of children with additional needs by providing an active summer programme and by introducing them to pathways for clubs and activities in Kilkenny.

Camp activities included tennis, rugby, soccer, cycling, arts & crafts, badminton, basketball and athletics. A popular activity every year in the programme is kayaking and canoeing and this was a big hit with the children and the volunteers. To thank our volunteers, KRSP provided an appreciation day for volunteers with kayaking on the River Nore, followed by pizza.

Promotion for all programmes was done through our work with the various disability agencies in Kilkenny, through the KRSP database of contacts and through our social media channels.

Learn to Cycle

During the Halloween school break, KRSP delivered a three-day Learn to Cycle programme for 24 children of mixed abilities. The children were split into two groups of 12, based on age (under 8s and over 8s), and each group took part in a one-hour cycling lesson each day at St. John's Senior School. The sessions were led by a Cycling Ireland tutor, a local cycling tutor, and a KRSP staff member. The majority of participants learned to cycle over the three days.

Evergreen FC Football For All - Children

Football for all for children is a programme that runs each Saturday throughout the football calendar year. The programme was established as a partnership between Evergreen Football Club and KRSP as part of the FAI Football For All programme. The programme is run by Evergreen Football Club with minimum support from KRSP. The group has between 30 and 40 children who might not ordinarily get an opportunity to play football attending each week.

Numbers have fallen in the youth section of this programme. KRSP were approached to help with recruitment of new participants. The SIDO worked with club officials and conducted a recruitment campaign through schools in Kilkenny. The programme was also advertised on social media and some new members were recruited as a result. The programme is also recommended to parents who contact KRSP in search of activities for their children.

KRSP Football For All - Adults

Football for all is a programme for adults with additional needs who do not usually get to play football. KRSP previously delivered this in partnership with Freebooters AFC. Due to lack of tutor availability, the day and venue of the programme had to change. This impacted numbers attending which can vary between 5 and 10 participants – which is low for a game of football.

This programme creates opportunities for participants who might not usually be active to get moving in a way they enjoy – by playing football. The programme runs on Mondays in three blocks; January to Easter for 9 weeks; Easter to Summer for 7 weeks and September to December for 10 weeks. This programme is delivery through funding support from the HSE.



Pillar 3:



Active Places

Strategic Goal: *To maximise the use of existing facilities and support the development of accessible, welcoming sport and physical activity environments*

Future Facilities

Dormant Accounts Funding - Community Sports Hubs - Watersports Home

Kilkenny County Council is continuing work on the design and development of a proposed water sports facility at County Hall. As part of this process, KRSP was invited to support engagement with disability services and users to review the plans from an accessibility perspective. A consultation meeting is scheduled for early 2025 to help ensure the facility meets the needs of all potential users.

St. Canice's Masterplan

Kilkenny County Council, in partnership with the Health Service Executive (HSE), has commenced development of a Framework Plan for the HSE-owned lands surrounding St. Canice's Hospital in Lacken. KRSP remains ready to contribute to the planning process when invited and looks forward to supporting future stages as the project progresses.

Participation Nation

KRSP, on behalf of the Kilkenny County Council, successfully applied for funding under the Participation Nation Funding Scheme 2024 for two key projects. The first, Kilkenny Countryside Park, will see the installation of four Outdoor Exercise Zones along the park trails. The second, Slieverue Linear Park, will feature a boules court and a set of boules. KRSP was awarded €45,000 in funding from Sport Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport, Media, and Gaeltacht (DTACSMG), which will support the purchase and installation of permanent sport equipment.

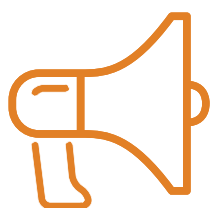
Amuigh Faoin Spéir

KRSP, on behalf of the Kilkenny County Council, also secured €15,000 funding for biodiversity enhancements as part of the Participation Nation Funding Scheme 2024. At Kilkenny Countryside Park, the funding will support the installation of a bat house. Slieverue Linear Park received funding for planting initiatives to enhance the local ecosystem. These biodiversity projects complement the participatory sports initiatives at both parks, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally enriched community space.

Outdoor Swimming Infrastructure Funding 2024

Local groups reached out to KRSP in relation to the Outdoor Swimming Infrastructure Funding 2024, expressing interest in enhancing Kilkenny County Council's swimming spots. While we were eager to support these initiatives, the timing of the application process and changeover in staffing in the Council meant that we were unable to submit an application this year. We remain committed to revisiting these discussions and exploring future opportunities for collaboration.

Pillar 4:



Active Promotion

Strategic Goal: *To create an increased awareness of KRSP and its mission to promote lifelong active recreation, sport and physical activity for all.*

Following the guidance of the LSP network communications project and our Regional Communications Officer, KRSP has taken big steps in 2024 to create and increase awareness of our mission to promote lifelong activity by Getting Kilkenny Active.

Promotion and Awareness

In 2024, we reviewed and strengthened our communications policy to place a clearer focus on growing engagement with our participants and stakeholders across the county. Our aim is to ensure that more people understand the role of KRSP and the positive impact of an LSP within their community. We have taken active steps to showcase the great work we do and to tell the story of our programmes through the voices of those who benefit most—our participants.

National LSP Communications Project

The LSP Communications Project was established to strengthen the communications capabilities of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network, helping each LSP deliver more consistent, strategic, and locally relevant communications aligned with Sport Ireland's national objectives. The project is structured around four core pillars: Collaboration, Capacity Building, Resource Development, and Governance & Oversight.

2024 focused on laying solid foundations, despite being delivered by a single project officer for most of the year. A key achievement was the successful delivery of the LSP Local Logo Toolkit Project, with 25 LSPs participating to improve branding consistency, quality, and accessibility across the network.

Other highlights included the development of a central SharePoint resource hub, the rollout of monthly online meetups, and targeted training in design, video, and tools such as Canva and Mailchimp. Network engagement was strong, with 100% of LSPs participating and high uptake of shared templates, campaign support, and micro-learning opportunities.

The groundwork also began for EAA (European Accessibility Act) compliance, with one-to-one web reviews and increased awareness of accessibility needs across LSPs. A phased, localised approach ensured individualised support for website development and email setup.

With two additional Communications Officers joining the team in 2025, we're excited to scale impact and increase the reach of the project.

The expanded team will drive forward key priorities including full EAA compliance by June 2025, GDPR-aligned email list development, and piloting a SharePoint-based Learning Management System (LMS) to support onboarding and comms training.

Looking ahead, the project will continue to focus on aligning national and local messaging, amplifying local storytelling, and embedding best practices that support participation, visibility, and inclusivity across the country – ultimately demonstrating the long-term value of investing in communications within the LSP network.

Website

Following a full review of our website, we made a number of improvements to enhance the user experience and better support our programme delivery. A key development was enabling direct bookings through the website, removing friction for users and giving them a seamless way to engage with our services.

In 2024, we also shifted the focus of all social posts and communications to drive traffic back to our website. This approach supports a wider goal of helping visitors learn more about KRSP as an organisation, not just individual programmes.

Key Website Stats 2024:

- Unique Visitors: 7,300
- Average Time on Site: 2 minutes 32 seconds
- Average Pages per Visit: 5
- Top 5 Visited Pages:
 1. Home
 2. Events
 3. Older Adults
 4. Women & Girls
 5. Active Kilkenny

The improved structure and usability have helped us build a more engaging platform that is supporting both programme registrations and overall awareness of our work.

Social Media

In 2024, we placed a strong focus on showcasing our programmes in action – highlighting not only what is delivered but the real-life impact on participants. This shift has resonated with our audience, reflected in stronger engagement and steady growth across platforms.

Facebook

Posts: 290

Followers: 6,900 (↑ 8%)

Instagram

Posts: 238

Followers: 1,558 (↑ 23%)

X (Twitter)

Posts: 13

Followers: 465 (no change)

We continue to prioritise Facebook and Instagram, while X remains a lower priority channel for us.

Canva and Branding

We continued to use Canva Pro as a key design tool throughout 2024, helping us streamline the production of branded, accessible, and consistent communications.

This year, we further developed our brand style and tone of voice, ensuring our materials resonate with our key audiences. Canva also enables quick adaptation for social platforms, which has helped drive up engagement and maintain consistency across all channels.



Database and E-mail Communications

We now have 2,335 active, opted-in contacts on our database — an increase driven by the inclusion of a marketing opt-in on all programme sign-ups and the addition of a newsletter sign-up in our website's main navigation.

In 2024, we sent 9 newsletters — roughly one every 1–2 months. This strikes a balance between keeping our audience informed and avoiding over-sending. Feedback has been positive, and open and click-through rates remain healthy, indicating we are sharing relevant and welcome content.

Text Messaging

We continue to use text messaging exclusively for programme-related communications, such as schedule reminders or updates. This approach respects participants' preferences by avoiding promotional messages and maintaining a focus on useful, programme-specific updates.

Advertising

KRSP continues to utilise its local means of communication with 2 articles and 1 press release were submitted to the local papers. 4 radio interviews were given throughout the year to KCLR and Kilkenny Community Radio.

Media Engagement

This year, we made a conscious effort to engage more consistently with local media, recognising its value in reaching our community and telling our story.

Press Releases Issued: 6
Articles in Local Press: 3
Local Radio Interviews: 8
Television Appearances: 1



We are very grateful to KCLR, Kilkenny Community Radio, and the Kilkenny People for their ongoing support. With limited budget for paid advertising, this kind of local media engagement is invaluable. A particular highlight this year was our feature on Ireland AM, which showcased our HEROutdoors programme at Castlecomer Discovery Park.



Pillar 5:



Active Partnerships

Strategic Goal: To work collaboratively to maximise resources and increase opportunities for people to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity.

Effective and Purposeful Partnerships

KRSP continued to strengthen the relationships with local agencies and Fora to ensure physical activity remains an important element of their work.

Participation on committees is carefully considered in terms of time, capacity, relevance and potential. KRSP is represented on the following committees requiring attendance at meetings, reports, updates and collaborative work on joint initiatives:

Local networks or committees on which the LSP is represented:

- Community Integration Forum (formerly Kilkenny Community Resilience Forum)
- Cycle Kilkenny
- CYPSC- Health & Active Sub Group
- Healthy Ireland Kilkenny Committee
- Kilkenny Access Group
- Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance
- Kilkenny Leader Partnership Evaluation Committee
- Kilkenny Watersports Hub Stakeholder Group
- St. Canice Masterplan Steering Committee (no meeting held in 2024)
- Trail Kilkenny

National networks or committees on which the LSP is represented:

- LSP Communications Steering Group
- LSP/GAA Cul Camps Working Group
- LSP research & Evaluation Sub-Committee
- Women in Sport Stakeholder Group



Sport Ireland, LSP Network, NGBs and other Sport Sector Organisations

KRSP is committed to promoting inclusive participation and meaningful engagement across all sectors of the community. We collaborate with a wide range of organisations and partners to ensure that our programmes are accessible, impactful, and aligned with local needs.

- We work with disability organisations to ensure people of all abilities have opportunities to be active in a supportive environment.
- National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are vital in providing sport-specific expertise and structures to help deliver high-quality physical activity opportunities.
- We also partner with external agencies, schools, community groups, and local services to promote active lifestyles, create welcoming environments, and support long-term health and wellbeing for all.

Sport Ireland coordinates and administers several valuable networking groups and events, including the Sport Ireland Leadership Network. Specific networking and training opportunities are organised for LSP staff including CEOs/Co-ordinators, CSDOs, SDOs, Programme Managers, Administrators and Communications contacts. These networking opportunities allow knowledge sharing, expertise exchange, and collaboration among LSPs.

Sport Ireland also engages with a variety of key organisations at training and networking events, such as Active Disability Ireland, NGBs, the Federation of Irish Sport, and others. These collaborations are instrumental in strengthening the collective efforts to improve sports participation and accessibility across the country.

KRSP Partner Engagement Overview 2024

Group	Partners	Purpose
Disability	IWA Sport, Vision Sports, Active Disability Ireland	To provide inclusive opportunities that support people of all abilities to take part in physical activity.
NGBs	Athletics Ireland, Badminton Ireland, Cricket Ireland, Cycling Ireland, Football Association of Ireland, Golf Ireland, Hockey Ireland, Irish Rugby Football Union, Mountaineering Ireland, Orienteering Ireland, Rowing Ireland, Swim Ireland, Table Tennis Ireland, Tennis Ireland, Weightlifting Ireland	To deliver sport-specific programmes and utilise national expertise in supporting participation at all levels.
Other Partners	An Garda Síochána, Community Centres & Clubs, Children and Young People Services Committee, Gyms, Health Service Executive, Local Community Development Committee, Leisure Centres, Local Authority, Men's Sheds, Parkrun, Public Participation Network, Primary & Secondary Schools, Sports Clubs, Third Level Institutions, Youth Services, Age & Opportunity, Active School Flag	To create strong local connections encourage cross-sector collaboration, and support community health and engagement.

Pillar 6:



Active Governance

Strategic Goal: KRSP will operate to the highest standards of professionalism, accountability and integrity.

Governance and Finance

Funding Streams

In 2024, KRSP continued to access funding through successful grant applications to a range of organisations. Sport Ireland remained the primary funder, supporting KRSP through the LSP Core Grant, Dormant Accounts initiatives, and various targeted funding streams.

Additional financial support was provided by Kilkenny County Council, the HSE, and Age & Opportunity, enabling the delivery of national campaigns and initiatives such as Healthy Ireland and Bike Week.

As part of our commitment to strong financial governance, KRSP maintains rolling three-year financial forecasts. This proactive approach supports effective resource planning, identifies potential risks, and underpins the successful delivery of projects and programmes.

Board

The KRSP Board plays a key role in guiding the strategic direction, funding and governance of the organisation. In 2024, the Board focused on reinstating the Governance Code for Sport (GCS) to ensure that the organisation's practices align with best governance standards. However, the external audit conducted by KOSI highlighted some areas for improvement. In response, the Board is committed to addressing these issues and will prioritise strengthening its engagement moving forward to ensure continued alignment with KRSP's strategic objectives and governance best practices.

KOSI Audit

As part of Sport Ireland's ongoing oversight, KRSP underwent an external audit conducted remotely by KOSI in 2024. The audit assessed governance arrangements and financial control frameworks in line with the GCS.

The findings highlighted that KRSP have a number of areas of good practice including the quality of reporting to the Board and sub-committees, related minutes and detailed Compliance Record Form. However, the audit also identified areas for improvement which will be a focus for further development. Overall, it provided a positive reflection of KRSP's governance culture, with an adequate level of assurance regarding internal controls.

Board Effectiveness Review & Skills Audits

In 2024, KRSP engaged Boardmatch to carry out an independent external Board Effectiveness Review and Board member skills audit to support good governance and continuous improvement. A detailed questionnaire, including a Skills Audit, was circulated to all Board members in October, with flexibility provided for newer members.

Responses were collated and analysed by Boardmatch, who delivered a comprehensive report and presentation to the Board in December. Following this, a dedicated KRSP committee was established to review the findings and oversee the implementation of any recommended actions arising from the review.

Governance Code for Sport - Compliance

In 2024, KRSP continued to progress on its Governance Code for Sport (GCS) journey and formally reinstated compliance with the Code in December 2024. KRSP had previously submitted its public statement of compliance as a Type C organisation to Sport Ireland in December 2021, with documentation made publicly available on the KRSP website.

Throughout 2024, the Board and staff remained committed to embedding the Governance Code into the organisation's practices. This included integrating approved policies and procedures into daily operations and ensuring that governance standards were consistently upheld. The reinstatement of the Code marks a reaffirmation of KRSP's dedication to transparency, accountability, and best practice in governance.

Systems and Policies

KRSP contracted or retained access to the following supports for engagement on an as-needed basis in 2024:

- Auditing of Accounts & Company Secretariat Services – O' Neill Foley Accountants
- Information Technology Support – AtoZ Computers
- Human Resources Support - Peninsula Business Services
- Database Development and Support – Mindaclient
- CLG LSP HR Consultation on shared work – Voltedge
- Health & Safety Support - Peninsula Business Services
- Pension Management and Advice and Master Trust Services – WillisTowerWatson
- Poe Kiely Hogan Lanigan – Legal services
- Bluescope – Website support



Comply with CRO and Funder Requirements

All required documents were submitted to O' Neill Foley for filing with the CRO.

Funding requirements were adhered to, and all reports submitted by due dates. KRSP worked with the individual funders regarding the extension of delivery dates, drawdowns and returns etc.

Impact and Evaluation

KRSP Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Interim Review

The KRSP draft interim strategy report was prepared by the Strategy Committee and staff as a progress review of the KRSP Strategy 2022–2025. It outlined achievements and challenges across each strategic pillar, with updates provided on strategic goals, objectives, and actions. Areas not yet completed were noted, with context provided.

The report also included a summary of recommendations for the KRSP Board to consider in relation to future strategic direction, resourcing, communications, inclusion, sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation. This will be presented to the KRSP Board in 2025.

Sport Ireland: M1 Reporting

The Sport Ireland (SI) M1 Measure is a standardised evaluation tool developed by SI to assess the impact of participation in sport and physical activity programmes. It is primarily used by LSPs, NGBs, and other funded organisations to demonstrate outcomes and support evidence-based planning and reporting.

The M1 Measure focuses on changes in participants' attitudes and behaviours relating to physical activity. The measure is administered both pre- and post-programme, to assess the sustainability of any behavioural changes.

The consistent use of M1 allows Sport Ireland and its partners to compare results across different initiatives and regions, ensuring accountability and informing continuous improvement.

KRSP Programme Feedback

In addition to formal evaluation tools, KRSP's SDOs regularly gather valuable programme feedback through direct engagement with participants, carers, and tutors during and after sessions.

They also consult with parents and school staff, particularly in youth and schools-based programmes.

Where appropriate, focus group discussions are held to explore participant experiences in more depth and to inform programme development.

This informal feedback complements structured data collection and provides a more holistic view of programme impact.

Programme Planning

Throughout 2024, the Annual Operation Plan (AOP) remained our primary document for work and programme planning. Considerable effort is invested at the beginning of the year to ensure sufficient budget and staff time allocation for each task.

Regular updates were made to reflect progress at each Board meeting and to align with Sport Ireland's reporting requirements. Progress on KRSP structure staffing challenges was made in 2024 with increase of staffing planned for 2025.



Beneficiaries & Stakeholder Engagement

KRSP puts a strong focus on listening to and engaging with the people, groups, and organisations we work with. We shape our work based on ongoing needs, direct feedback, and regular conversations with participants and partners.

Everyday contact, through calls, emails, visits and events gives us useful insights that help us respond quickly and effectively. We also carry out regular evaluations and gather feedback to check how well our programmes are working. This helps us stay focused on the needs of our communities, build strong partnerships, and deliver inclusive, high-quality services across Kilkenny.



Sport Ireland Research Grant

KRSP remains committed to promoting inclusion in sport by working closely with clubs in the community. Following the Equality in the Field study, which highlighted the need for more inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth in Kilkenny and Carlow, KRSP engaged with local clubs to better understand their training preferences and awareness levels.

Through surveys and consultation, we identified a demand for flexible, accessible training, which led to the development of an online, Irish-context-specific training programme, delivered in partnership with Accelerate Sport UK. A training toolkit was also created to support clubs in making their environments more welcoming and inclusive. While initial interest from clubs was high, uptake of the training has been limited. KRSP will build on this engagement and explore new strategies to increase participation in 2025.

Bainisteoir Beag – Prototype in Schools

KRSP worked with schools in Kilkenny to pilot a proof of concept for the Bainisteoir Beag programme, designed to create engaging, interactive learning experiences for children.

Following initial interest from ten schools, four schools took part in the pilot phase, with feedback gathered from teachers and pupils. The response was overwhelmingly positive, providing a strong mandate to progress the development of further activities.

KRSP plans to build on this successful engagement with schools and will initiate a formal eTender process in early 2025 to support the next phase of programme development.



Mary Immaculate College - HEROutdoors Programme

Mary Immaculate College, a university-level institution specialising in Education and the Liberal Arts, undertook a study to explore the factors influencing teenage girls' participation in KRSP's HEROutdoors adventure programme at Castlecomer Discovery Park. The programme featured a range of outdoor activities including ziplining, axe throwing, and kayaking.

While external research funding was not secured on this occasion, the College identified internal supports to advance the study. The research was designed to include surveys and interviews, with appropriate parental or guardian consent obtained for all participating girls. Preliminary observations from the 2024 programme revealed that most participants were new to HEROutdoors, with ziplining emerging as the most eagerly anticipated activity. Key motivators for participation included the influence of friends and family, as well as the desire for social interaction and shared experiences.

Findings from the study have provided valuable insights for future programme planning. Participants expressed a clear preference for opportunities that allow them to have fun, try something new, engage socially, be challenged, and take part in activities not commonly available to them. These factors were identified as strong drivers of engagement for teenage girls in outdoor adventure settings.

Challenges

2024 was a year of strong delivery and meaningful progress for KRSP. Our programmes and courses remained our core focus, and we are proud of what we achieved. However, like many small organisations, we faced a number of challenges — particularly in areas of administration and governance due to operational capacity. We addressed and are continuing to address these challenges into 2025.

Staffing

While we successfully recruited an administrator cover role, unforeseen circumstances led to the individual leaving after ten weeks. This created a gap in administrative support during a particularly busy time. In response, our GFO took on additional responsibilities in finance and payroll, while the wider team stepped in to manage other key administrative tasks. This collective effort ensured that operations continued smoothly, although it did place extra pressure on individual workloads—particularly in governance-related areas.

We are incredibly grateful to the staff for their flexibility, teamwork, and commitment throughout this period.

Governance

Throughout 2024, we continued to embed the principles of the Governance Code for Sport, recognising the important role strong governance plays in how we operate. For smaller organisations like KRSP, however, the level of governance-related requirements can be particularly demanding. These pressures are felt in both board capacity and engagement, as well as in the day-to-day running of the organisation. Our four sub-committees provide

valuable oversight and direction, and we are working steadily towards full implementation of their terms of reference. This, however, adds a significant administrative load for our small team.

While we fully support the principles of good governance, there is a need to consider how requirements can be applied in a proportionate way—ensuring robust oversight and accountability without placing undue strain on limited resources.

Board engagement was also identified as an area for development in Sport Ireland’s external Pulse audit. In practice, limited engagement can increase the administrative burden on the CEO and the KRSP team — requiring repeated follow-ups for input, re-scheduling meetings due to lack of quorum, and delays in progressing decisions. Additionally, there is an impact on those on the Board who are engaged. The Board and CEO are committed to working together to improve this area, and actions are underway to strengthen overall board involvement and efficiency.



Operations

A continuing challenge is both the recruitment and retention of self-employed physical activity tutors and the availability of existing tutors. This is particularly difficult in rural areas, where lack of a tutor in the area and travel time can make programme delivery unviable.



5. Finances - Income & Expenditure

Funding & Support

In 2024, KRSP secured funding from Sport Ireland to support the ongoing operations of the Partnership, with additional financial contributions from partner agencies, grants, and income generated through course fees and interest on deposits. Kilkenny County Council also continued to provide office space, utilities, and storage for KRSP at a reduced cost as a benefit-in-kind contribution.

KRSP's financial accounts are audited annually, with the audited accounts reviewed and approved by the Board during its AGM. O'Neill Foley Accountants carried out the audit for the 2024 accounts.

The full KRSP Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 is available on the KRSP website.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Income	6	561,214	487,004
Expenditure		(599,922)	(472,240)
Surplus before Interest		1,292	14,764
Interest Receivable and Similar Income		291	15
Surplus before Tax		1,583	14,779
Tax on Surplus		-	-
Surplus for the Financial Year		1,583	14,779
Total Comprehensive Income		1,583	14,779
Retained Surplus Brought Forward		114,035	99,256
Retained Surplus Carried Forward		115,618	114,035

TRADING STATEMENT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

	Schedule	2024 €	2023 €
Income			
Sport Ireland - Core Funding		433,116	355,319
Sport Ireland - Women in Sport		6,257	5,741
Kilkenny Local Authorities		28,828	26,477
Health Service Executive (HSE)		9,801	9,247
Course Programme Fees		26,808	18,629
Other Funders		5,818	4,825
Sport Ireland - Dormant Account Programmes		30,379	44,936
Pobal - Healthy Ireland		4,475	6,098
		545,482	471,272
Gross Surplus Percentage		100%	100%
Overhead Expenses	1	(559,922)	(472,240)
		(14,440)	(968)
Miscellaneous Income	2	16,023	15,747
Net Surplus		1,583	14,779

SCHEDULE 1 : OVERHEAD EXPENSES

for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Administration Expenses			
Wages and Salaries		326,892	248,816
Social Welfare Costs		35,663	27,369
Sport Ireland Programme Costs		47,097	50,540
Women in Sport Programme Costs		6,258	5,740
HSE Programme Costs		9,510	8,892
KRSP Programme Costs		4,539	5,930
Kilkenny CoCo Programme Costs		3,828	1,478
Other Funders Programme Costs		887	4,825

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Sport Ireland Dormant Account Programme Costs		30,067	32,409
Pobal - Healthy Ireland		9,928	5,808
Staff Defined Pension Contribution Costs		23,514	16,513
Staff Training		1,177	890
Rent Payable		10,270	7,453
Insurance		5,231	5,877
Repairs and Maintenance		745	1,396
Database		443	443
Printing, Postage and Stationery		1,135	1,728
PR & Branding Costs		2,854	2,105
HR Support		3,698	1,698
Telephone		1,539	1,783
Website		1,291	921
IT Support and Software		6,614	5,085
Travel and Subsistence		8,416	7,828
Legal and Professional		6,781	2,663
Bank Charges		317	218
General Expenses		(9,081)	-
Subscriptions		350	350
Auditor's Remuneration		6,089	5,116
Depreciation of Tangible Assets		13,071	17,567
Amortisation of Tangible Assets		799	799
		559,922	472,240

SCHEDULE 2 : MISCELLANEOUS INCOME

for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Miscellaneous Income			
Amortisation of Government Grants		15,732	15,732
Bank Interest		291	15
		16,023	15,747



6. FUTURE PLANS

Future Plans

Looking ahead to 2025, KRSP is preparing for another ambitious and progressive year, focused on continued growth, inclusive practice, and strategic planning.

A key priority will be the commencement of our next strategic planning cycle, with development of the KRSP Strategy 2026–2030 set to begin. This will involve broad consultation and reflection, ensuring the new strategy is responsive to emerging needs while building on the progress of recent years.

In addition, KRSP will be actively contributing and supporting two strategic planning processes in the County, the Kilkenny Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the Kilkenny Local Sports Plan.

We also plan to expand our team with new roles including a Programme Manager and an ESF Social Innovation for Sports Officer. These positions will strengthen KRSP’s capacity to deliver high-quality programmes and support the increase in sports participation across Kilkenny.

In 2025, KRSP aims to complete and roll out two important resources: the Bainisteoir Beag app for young leaders in schools, and an LGBTQ+ in Sport awareness training programme. These initiatives reflect our sustained commitment to inclusion, youth empowerment, and creating welcoming environments for all.

Alongside these new developments, KRSP will continue to support our target groups including people from disadvantaged areas, people with disabilities, women and girls, older adults, ethnic minority communities, and people seeking international protection.

Through a combination of innovative programming and strong community partnerships, we remain focused on ‘Getting Kilkenny Active’ in 2025 and beyond.



