

Project Infant

Established 2022

Project Infant Findings Report

Kilrush Nursery, County Clare

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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History of the Home

What was known as the Kilrush Union Workhouse had now become the Kilrush Nursery. The building was finished in 1840/1841 and until 1921, was the primary outlet for relief in the area. When the Anglo-Irish Treaty had been signed in December 1921, the Infirmary and Fever Hospital became the Kilrush District Hospital and part of the main building of the Workhouse had become the Kilrush Nursery.

Though not the home with the shortest operation time, this home had operated for ten years. It opened in early 1922 and closed in mid/late 1932. However judging by the below quote it was potentially closed in September or October 1932:

“A gratuity of £66 13s 6d has been sanctioned for Miss Alice O’Donnell who lost her employment as matron of the Kilrush Nursery when the institution was recently abolished.”

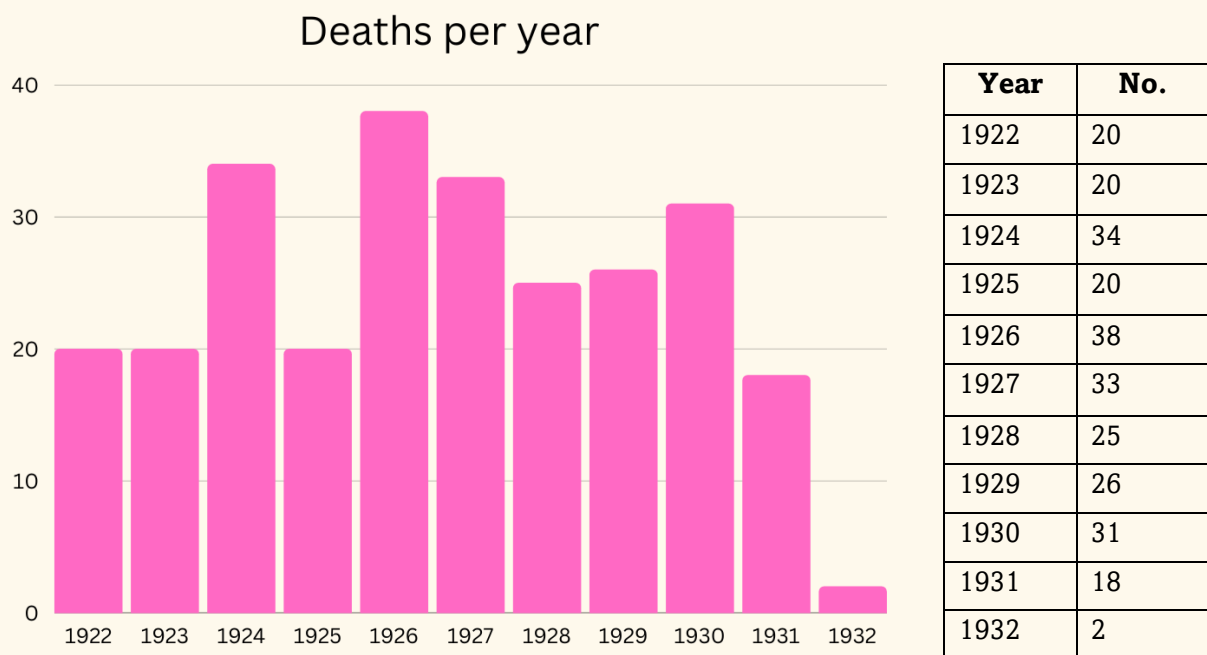
- Connacht Tribune, October 8th, 1932

Victims

Info

Through its research, Project Infant has discovered the names of 267 infants that died in the Kilrush home. 3 mothers have been found in this home. They were aged 19, 22 and 28. The full list of names can be found [here](#).

The number of deaths through the years can be seen below.

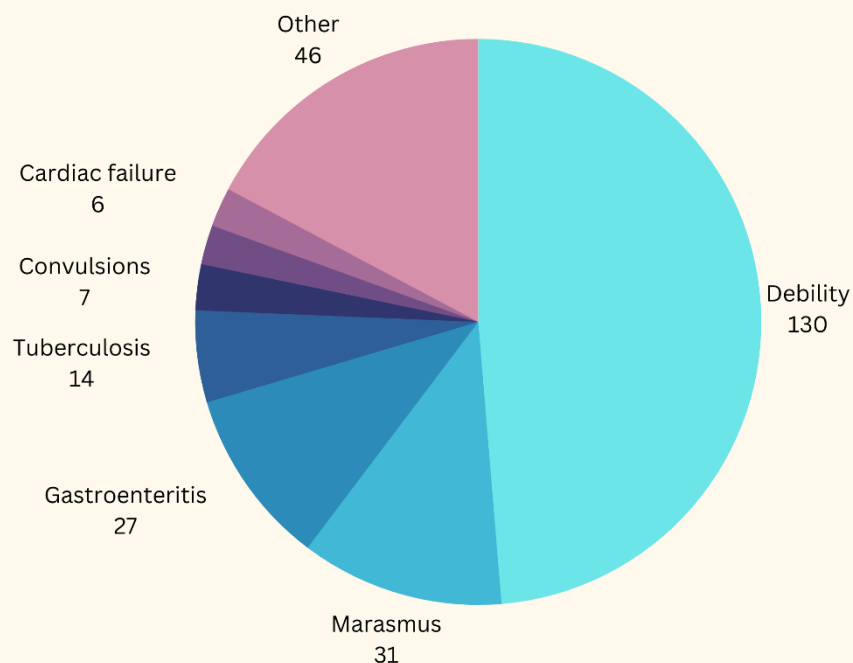


The causes of death can be seen below.

Causes of Deaths

Primary Cause of Death

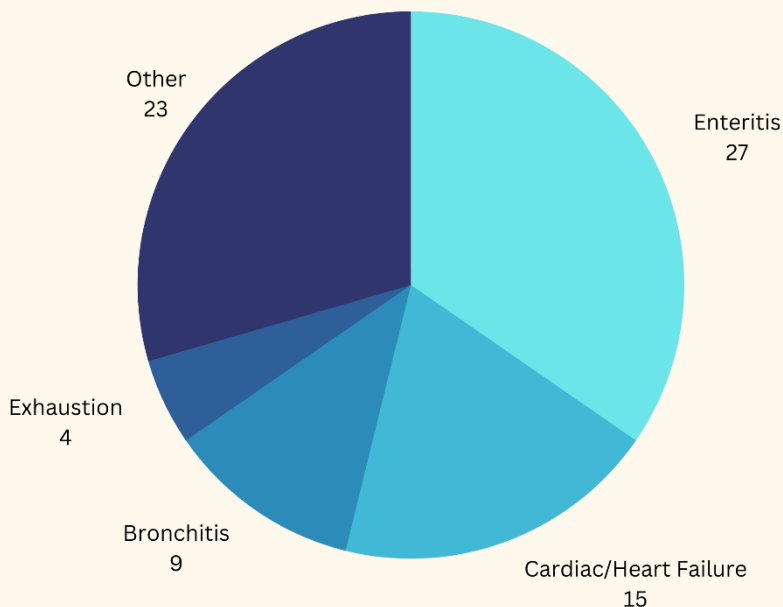
Primary Cause of Death



Above is a pie chart with the primary cause of deaths in Kilrush. The following causes of deaths are under 'other'. Pertussis – 5. Influenza, premature and whooping cough – 4. Pneumonia – 3. Bronchitis, Burns, Measles, Septicaemia, Toxaemia of Pregnancy and Underdevelopment – 2. Anaemia, Asphyxia, Croup, Delayed labour, Imbecile Wasting, Imperfective Anus, Injury at Birth, Multiple Abscesses, Natural causes, Paralysis of birth, Placenta Praevis, Puerperal sepsis, pustular skin disease and rickets – 1.

Leading cause of death is some form of debility contributing to 130 deaths.

Secondary Cause of Death



Above is a pie chart on the secondary causes of deaths in Kilrush. 189 of these did not have a secondary cause listed.

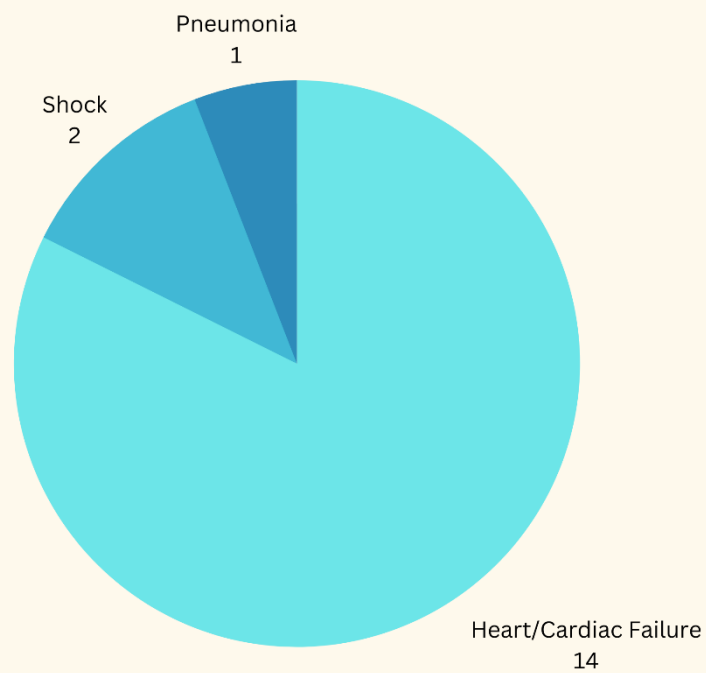
In the 'other' category, the following causes of deaths are contained. Shock – 2.

A.O.H., Accidental Haemorrhage, Artificial Feeding, Bone Disease, Congestion lungs, Convulsions, Intestinal Obstruction, Post-Partum Shock, Premature, Secondary Pulmonary Embolism, Septic Face and Skin, Septicaemia and whooping cough – 1.

Enteritis was the leading cause.

Tertiary Cause

Tertiary Cause of Death

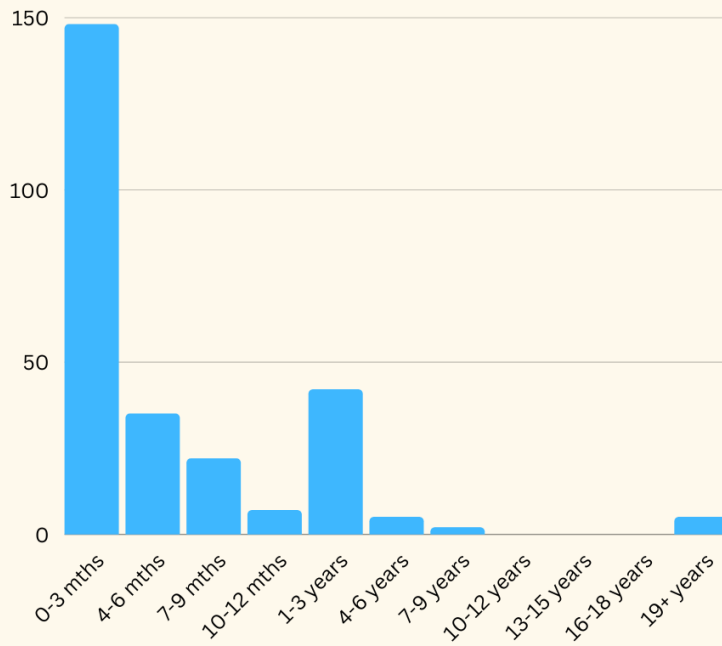


Only 17 deaths in Kilrush had a third cause listed.

Heart/Cardiac Failure was the leading cause.

Ages

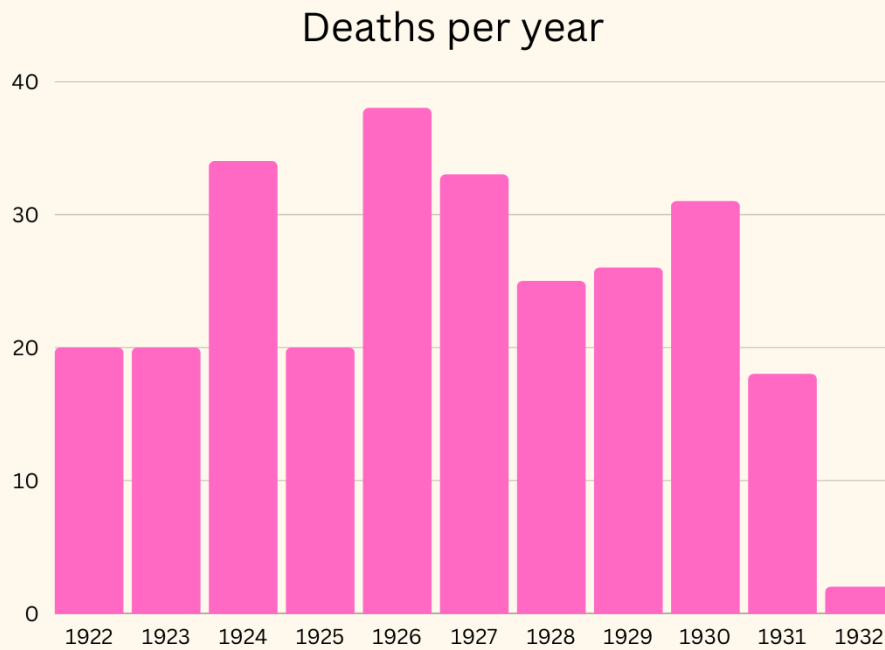
Distribution



This bar chart shows the age distribution of the infants who died in the Kilrush home. 55.4% of the deaths occurred when the infants were between 0-3 months old.

Ages	Number
0-3 mths	148
4-6 mths	35
7-9 mths	22
10-12 mths	7
1-3 yrs	42
4-6 yrs	5
7-9 yrs	2
10-12 years	0
13-15 years	0
16-18 years	0
19+ years	5

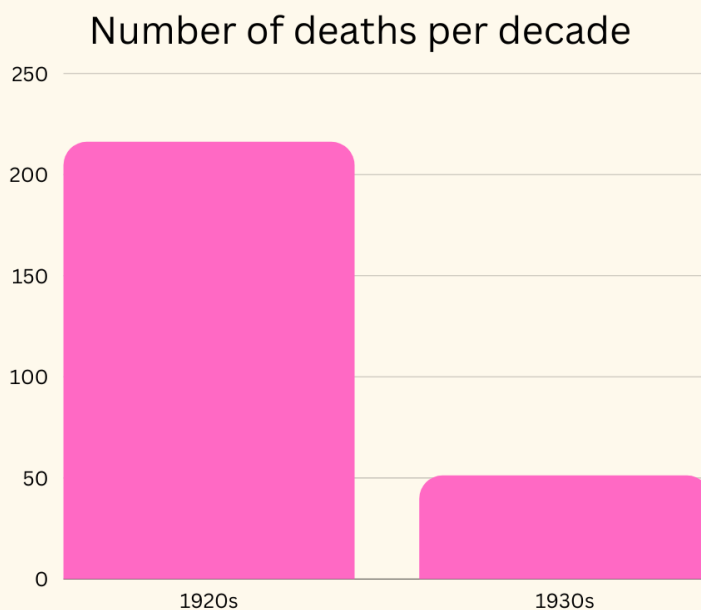
Deaths per year



Year	Number
1922	20
1923	20
1924	34
1925	20
1926	38
1927	33
1928	25
1929	26
1930	31
1931	18
1932	2

The most deaths occurred in 1926 with a total of 38.

Deaths per decade



Decade	Number
1920s	216
1930s	51

The most deaths happened in the 1920s.

The Home in the Newspapers

Article 1:

Nenagh Guardian – March 5th, 1932

CLARE BOARD OF HEALTH

TO SEND CHILDREN TO SEAN ROSS ABBEY

At a meeting of the Clare Co. Board of Health, held at Ennis, Mr. John Fahey presiding. A letter was read from Sister da Sales, Superintendent of Sean Ross Abbey, Roscrea, stating she was prepared to receive into the institution 25 children at 10s. per head per week. Sister M. Gleeson, Sacred Heart Home, "Bessboro," Co. Cork wrote stating that they had a Maternity Hospital for the first offenders only, and were not allowed to admit mothers without children.

The secretary said that there were 10 or 12 second offenders in Kilrush Nursery and it would be well for the Board to approve of discharging the mothers and boarding out the children at Roscrea. The chairman said it seemed as if it was the only thing that the Board could do.

Mr. O'Grady – Could we not get any institution for the mothers?

Secretary – No, but in some of the cases their people are taking them.

Mr. O'Grady – Their people had had them before, and yet they came back to the institution as second offenders. Could we not get them an institution some place?

Secretary – I have interviewed all the inmates and they will go anywhere rather than an institution.

Mr. O'Loughlin – It looks like a case of releasing the prisoners so.

Mr. O'Grady – And we shall have them back again in 12 months. It is all very fine to talk about letting these inmates go, but they are a dangerous type to have roaming through the country.

Secretary – But there is no legal power in the Board to detain any inmate for even an hour if she wishes to take her discharge. The only obligation on the inmate is that she must take her child with her and that prevents an number of them from going out. That is why I suggested sending the children to the Roscrea institution and letting the mothers off. Every one of these children born in the county costs the rate-payers about £300 each until they reach 15 years of age. The secretary's suggestion was adopted.

Article 2:

Limerick Leader – November 1st, 1926

MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN

Clare County Board of Health has instructed its solicitor to take the necessary steps to make the putative fathers of children born in the County Nursery at Kilrush responsible for their maintenance. In a few cases, it is stated, the mere threat has already proved effective. When it is taken into account that about 90 such children have become chargeable to the rates each year, the importance of strict legal action will be recognised.