

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF WEXFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT HELD AT 2.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 20TH JULY, 2020 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL, CARRICKLAWN, WEXFORD.

Presiding: - His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. L. Kelly.

Councillors: - J. Hegarty, G. Lawlor, M. Bell, G. Laffan, D. Hynes,
T. Forde.

In Attendance:-

- Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services.
- Ms. Angela Laffan, District Manager.
- Mr. Sean Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer.
- Ms. Joan Murphy, Staff Officer.
- Mr. Liam Bowe, Executive Planner.
- Ms. Michele Bridges-Carley, Administrative Officer, Housing.
- Mr. Hugh Maguire, Administrative Officer, Environment.

CONGRATULATIONS

Cllr. G. Lawlor congratulated Ms. Joan Murphy, Staff Officer, on the occasion of her upcoming retirement having served over 42 years with Wexford County Council. Members and Officials associated with the good wishes and wished Ms. Murphy well for the future.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th June, 2020 copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed and signed on the proposal of Cllr. J. Hegarty, seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Wexford Borough District held on 29th June, 2019, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed and signed on the proposal of Cllr. D. Hynes seconded by Cllr. M. Bell.

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF LAND AT NEWTOWN ROAD

Mr. T. Larkin presented the attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, in relation to the proposed transfer of a plot of land at Newtown Road, Wexford to Mr. John O'Connor. The disposal, as outlined, was unanimously agreed in principle on the proposal of Cllr. George Lawlor seconded by Cllr. Tom Forde. It was noted that a formal Section 183 Notice will be presented at the September meeting.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR TAKING IN CHARGE- CROSSTOWN MANOR

The attached report, copies of which had previously been circulated, was unanimously adopted on the proposal of Cllr. George Lawlor seconded by Cllr. John Hegarty.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR TAKING IN CHARGE – FORTUNES’S FIELD.

The attached report, copies of which had previously been circulated, was unanimously adopted on the proposal of Cllr. George Lawlor seconded by Cllr. John Hegarty.

FORMATION OF WEXFORD BOROUGH HERITAGE COMMITTEE.

As proposed by Cllr. G. Lawlor at the Ordinary Meeting of Wexford Borough Council on 16th September 2019, and seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly, the formation of Wexford Borough Heritage Committee was discussed and agreed.

Nominations were then invited for membership of the Heritage Committee (Mayor ex-officio plus two members.)

Cllr. Maura Bell was proposed by Cllr. G. Laffan, seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor

Cllr. David Hynes was nominated by Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. J. Hegarty

There being only two councillors nominated, Cllrs. Bell and Cllr. Forde, were then confirmed, in addition to the Mayor ex-officio.

It was further agreed that the following individuals and organisations be invited to join or nominate a representative to the Committee

- Wexford Rotary Club (as caretakers of John Street Graveyard)
- Wexford Lions Club (as caretakers of Selskar Abbey)
- Catherine Mc Loughlin , Stafford McLoughlin Archaeology
- Wexford Historical Society
- Heritage Officer, Wexford County Council (when appointed)

SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT /STREET FURNITURE GRANT SCHEME 2020

In line with 'Reopening Wexford', Ms. Angela Laffan, District Manager, outlined details and criteria for a new Shop Front Improvement / Street Furniture Scheme which is being made available to assist Business Owners / Operators with financial assistance to carry out works which will improve the exterior appearance of their business premises.

The scheme will also provide support to the hospitality sector with a grant towards the cost of equipment in providing additional outdoor seating and accessories in reopening post Covid-19.

Up to 50% of approved costs may be paid to a maximum payment of €500.

Members were advised that a budget of €10,000 is being allocated by the Council's Economic Department to fund the Scheme which is open to non-domestic commercial property located in Wexford Town. In response to Cllr. Lawlor, Ms. Laffan advised that applications from outlying areas such as Castlebridge can be considered subject to available funding.

Members welcomed this new scheme and thanked Ms. Laffan for her detailed presentation.

Questions in relation to the illegal placement of advertising boards and sleeves on bollards outside of premises were addressed by Ms. Laffan and the Director.

REPORTS

HOUSING

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was discussed and noted.

Members raised concern over the standards and poor condition in which some Local Authority houses are being re-let and the lack of opportunity afforded to prospective tenants to view the property prior to accepting the tenancy.

Ms. Michele Bridges-Carley, Administrative Officer, Housing confirmed that she would raise these concerns with the Housing Maintenance Engineer and revert to Members on this matter.

Other queries raised were addressed by Ms. Bridges-Carley.

PLANNING

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was discussed and noted.

Cllr. G. Lawlor referred to the refusal of a planning application for an apartment development at Parnell Street and raised concerns of the impact of any excavations on the adjacent historic 18th century 'Folly Wall' which is not a listed structure but needs to be protected given its historic importance.

Liam Bowe, Executive Planner, confirmed that the application has been resubmitted and suggested Cllr. Lawlor submit photographs of the structure which can be considered as part of the submissions in the planning process.

Members raised concerns in relation to the height of tall trees at the derelict Moongate House, Clonard causing difficulty for neighbours in the area. Mr. S. Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that this is a private matter between the individual property owners.

Cllr. D. Hynes asked that a similar issue at a property on lower St. John's Road be inspected where large overhanging trees are a danger to passing pedestrians. Mr. Bowe advised that this is not a planning matter and suggested that the Area Engineer might inspect.

In response to Cllr. Hynes query regarding the redevelopment of the two derelict houses on Bride Street, Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services, confirmed that the houses are now with the Housing Section and are included under the longer term projects in the housing programme. Demolition and enabling works had been scheduled for Q2, 2020 prior to Covid.

In response to Cllr. J. Hegarty, the Director advised that the review of the County Wexford Development Plan will proceed in 2020 and the Wexford Town Plan will follow towards the end of 2020 or early 2021.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

It being 4.30 p.m., on the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. J. Hegarty, it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders for 30 minutes to allow the remaining business of the agenda to be concluded.

DISTRICT ENGINEERS REPORT

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was presented by Mr. Sean Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer, and noted.

The following matters raised by Members were addressed by Mr. Kavanagh:

- Installation of a new pedestrian crossing at Ferrybank in the vicinity of the Angel Garden
- Need for pedestrian crossing at Loreto School and Min Ryan Park with increased footfall in this area
- The introduction of a one-way traffic system for Fisher's Row
- Consideration of a one way system at St. Aidan's Crescent
- The installation of a bus shelter in Castlebridge
- Street lighting in the village of Castlebridge
- Progress on the installation of the historic water fountain in The Bullring and the installation of water dispensers in Wexford town.
- Wheelchair access at points along King Street
- One way system at The Bullring – Members outlined concerns expressed by a number of businesses in the area who had informed them of a 30% reduction in business following the introduction of the current one-way system and asked that a reversal to a two way system be examined.

The Bullring

With regard to traffic in The Bullring and other areas, Sean Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that the traffic brief will be extended to look at particular areas such as The Bullring/Cornmarket, High Street, School Street, Selskar Street, Monck Street, Charlotte Street, with a view to developing a comprehensive model going forward. He added that the model will include all main arteries into the town in addition to cross routes through the town with the objective of having a comprehensive plan before year end.

In relation to The Bullring, Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services, stated that the old town centre is not car friendly and that choking up the streets with cars is not the solution. He reminded members that they had proposed a trial reversal of the traffic flow pre Covid and are now going back on that proposal by asking for a reintroduction of 2 way traffic.

Following lengthy discussion, to which all members contributed, it was agreed on the recommendation of the Director to postpone any decision on the matter until September at which time the officials can present all the necessary information to enable Members to make an informed decision on the matter.

School Street

Mr. Kavanagh presented a plan and advised Members that the introduction a one-way traffic system in School Street is under consideration in tandem with the planned resurfacing and reconstruction of footpaths under the current year's Roads Programme. Mr. Kavanagh stated that a one way system would greatly increase pedestrian safety and traffic movement particularly at the narrower sections of the street.

Under the plan, traffic would continue to travel from Roches Road through to John Street but traffic in the opposite direction from John Street would be diverted onto Francis Street/Waterloo Road turning right at the Franciscan Friary.

During discussion, Members expressed mixed reaction to the proposal and had reservations on its impact on residents on Francis Street/Waterloo Road and other areas including the impact on traffic accessing the many schools in the area.

Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services suggested that the proposal be included in the overall town traffic model to be carried out in the coming months which can then go out to public consultation. He recommended postponement until September at which time schools will be reopened.

Members unanimously agreed to postpone any decision until the September meeting.

COMMUNITY

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was noted.

Cllr. G. Lawlor asked that a communications board similar to that installed in Min Ryan Park be provided in all public playgrounds throughout County Wexford.

Cllr. Lawlor also asked if a water supply could be provided within the 'Dog Park' at Min Ryan Park.

His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. L. Kelly, recommended that a bench or seat for dog owners also be installed inside the dog area.

ENVIRONMENT

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was presented by Mr. Hugh Maguire, Administrative Officer, Environment, and noted.

Queries raised by Members in relation to difficulties in accessing beaches and car parks and the lack of facilities for camper vans were addressed by Mr. Maguire .

Cllr. T. Forde raised concerns in relation to the spread of knotweed in back gardens within Ashfield Drive. Mr. Maguire advised that the Council do not particularly have a role in private properties but agreed to discuss the issue with the Senior Engineer with a view to promoting public awareness.

Members welcomed the announcement of a further 'Mattress Amnesty' from 21st July to 18th September at Holmestown.

Cllr. G. Lawlor congratulated Gerry Forde, Senior Engineer and the Environment Team on their work during Covid.

LIBRARIES /ARTS / ARCHIVES

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was noted.

FIRE SERVICE

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was noted.

MEMBERS SUPPORT SYSTEM

The attached report, a copy of which had previously been circulated, was noted.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME 2020 – COVID 19 ACCELERATED MEASURE.

Ms. Angela Laffan, District Manager, presented details of the Covid 19 Accelerated Measure under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 and the report of Ms. Liz Hore, SEO, Economic Development outlining details of expressions of interest received from the Wexford District under Round 2.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. J. Hegarty, it was unanimously agreed that the proposal received from Castlebridge Community Co-op would be recommended to the Department of Rural and Community Development for funding of €25,000.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

SIGNED THIS 21st DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2020

MAYOR OF WEXFORD.