

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Monday 11th December, 2017 – 2.30 p.m.
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford.**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. J. Hegarty, Cathaoirleach.

Councillors:

P. Breen;	M. Byrne;	G. Carthy;	K. Codd Nolan
A. Connick;	T. Dempsey;	A. Donohoe,	M. Farrell;
W. Fitzharris;	J. Fleming	T. Forde;	P. Kavanagh;
W. Kavanagh;	G. Lawlor;	L. McDonald;	J. Moore;
BA Murphy,	M. Murphy;	J. Mythen;	L. O'Brien;
O. O'Connell;	J. O'Rourke;	M. Roche;	M. Sheehan;
J. Sullivan;	T. Walsh;	O. Walsh;	M. Whelan.

Officials:

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive;
Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services;
Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services
Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services;
Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services;
Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance & ICT;
Mr. P. Collins, County Secretary;
Mr. G. Forde, Senior Engineer;
Ms. F. O'Loughlin, Carlow/Kilkenny Energy Agency

Apologies:

Cllr. F. Staples
Cllr. D. Hynes
Cllr. R. Ireton
Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin
Cllr. K. Doyle

At the outset the Cathaoirleach welcomed the students and teachers from the Enniscorthy Vocational College to the meeting. It was noted that each of the three students present had achieved an A standard in their recent CSPE exams.

2. Filling of Casual Vacancy following the resignation of Cllr. Anthony Kelly

The Cathaoirleach then welcomed Tom Forde to the Council Chamber. On the proposal of Cllr. J. Mythen, seconded by Cllr. T. Walsh, Tom Forde was co-opted to the Council.

Tom Forde then addressed the Council. He thanked the Members for their warm welcome and advised them that he was a strong socialist and republican. He also noted that it was a huge honour to serve the people of Wexford as a Member of Wexford County Council.

He had been a spectator to many events over the years as a Member of Sinn Fein and had been hugely influenced by Anthony Kelly as a Councillor. He had been educated in the CBS in Wexford and was an electrician for 6 years. He is now a primary school teacher.

He has followed politics for many years and grew up in a single parent home. He joined Sinn Fein 12 years ago, citing his motivation as the thousands of children who are homeless in Ireland and the number of people on HSE waiting lists and also the need to provide services for disadvantaged people. He looked forward to working with all the other Members and had already noted that the Members had great pride in our county.

Cllr. J. Mythen welcomed Tom Forde and noted that he would be the youngest Councillor and looked forward to working with him in the future.

Cllr. G. Carthy wished the new Councillor well in his work as a Councillor.

Cllr. T. Dempsey on behalf of Fianna Fail issued a Failte to the new Councillor and noted that he was a young man and was welcome to the democratic process.

Cllr. G. Lawlor on behalf of the Labour Party welcomed a young person , who is an active member of Marine Watch and looked forward to lively discussions in the future.

Cllr. M. Farrell also welcomed the new Councillor and looked forward to working with him.

Cllr. T. Walsh, PBP, added to the welcome and looked forward to working with Tom Forde.

Cllr. P. Kavanagh on behalf of Fine Gael welcomed Tom Forde and noted the difference of politic views held by his own party and Sinn Fein but noted that the diversification of views is what makes democracy work.

The Chief Executive welcomed Tom Forde on behalf of the Executive Team of Wexford County Council. He pledged his support from the staff of Wexford County Council and offered all help and advice to the new Councillor. He also took the opportunity to wish Anthony Kelly well in his retirement and noted the great work he had done as a Councillor for over 18 years.

The Cathaoirleach finally noted that the new Councillor had big shoes to fill in taking Cllr. Anthony Kelly's place but he welcomed him and congratulated him on his achievement.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

- 1.1 County Council Meeting – 13th November, 2017.
- 1.2 Special County Council Meeting – 10th November, 2017.
- 1.3 Statutory Budget Meeting – 27th November, 2017.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Carthy seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne and agreed by all the Council approved the minutes of the meeting as outlined above.

Votes of Sympathy:

The Members expressed their sympathy to the families of the following recently deceased:

- The Alexander and Keevey families, Cushenstown
- The family of Lucy Wall, previous employee in the Library Services in Bunclody
- The O' Kennedy Family, New Ross

- The family of Yvonne Maguire, Coolcotts, Wexford
- The family of Ger Morrissey, Enniscorthy
- The family of Christopher Butler, Enniscorthy
- The Gardai and WCC were praised in their handling of the recent road accident at Cushenstown and all Members expressed their congratulations to the emergency services in dealing with a very difficult situation.
- The family of Ann Ennis, mother of Jimmy Hillis, Roads Foreman and mother-in-law of Miriam Hillis, Housing Dept
- The family of Muiris O’Laighin, father of Dearbhla Ní Laighin, Executive Librarian, Wexford Library and father-in-law of Vincent Murphy, Housing Dept
- The family of Michael Howlin, father of Michelle Howlin, Library Service and father-in-law of Barry Kelly, Borough District of Wexford.

Congratulations/Comhghairdeas:

Déan na Comhairleoirí comhghairdeas ar na ghrúpaí/dhaoine liostaithe thíos:

- Muintir Lady’s Island for winning the national Pride of Place Coastal Communities award
- The Coolgreany Drama Group who won the All Ireland One Act Drama
- John Whelan who won the World Ploughing Championship
- Eamonn Treacy who had won a silver medal at the Ploughing championships
- Cumas New Ross who were prizewinners in the national Pride of Place Community Reaching Out Initiative
- Enniscorthy Vocational College
- The Women’s Refuge on the launch of their new book “Surviving the Darkness”
- Killanerin on winning their first Leinster Final
- Fethard who won an All Ireland final recently

The Chief Executive advised that the Council had offered a site to the Women’s Refuge recently to help them to build a larger premises.

3. Proposed disposal of land under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001:

3.1 Proposed transfer of plot of land at Clonard Wexford to the High Meadows Community Hub CLG, 78 Cromwellsfort Drive, Mulgannon, Wexford, for the purpose of constructing a building for Community and Scouting activities.

On the proposal of Councillor G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. T. Dempsey, it was agreed to transfer the land at Clonard in accordance with the notice circulated.

3.2 Proposed transfer of approximately 0.21hectares of land to the Parish of Rathnure/Tempeludigan for the purposes of car parking facilities for the school and parish at Rathnure, Wexford.

This proposed Section 183 was withdrawn.

4. Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8, of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended):

4.1 LAC1707 – Proposed development of 18 no. housing units with associated site works at Taghmon, Co. Wexford.

The Members noted the report of Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive dated 24th November, 2017. On the proposal of Cllr M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. T. Walsh the Members agreed and approved the proposed development as outlined in the report.

4.2 LAC1708 – Proposed erection of a single storey detached special needs dwelling house with associated site works and connection into existing services at Castlemoyle, Healysland, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

The Members noted the report of Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive dated 29th November, 2017. On the proposal of Cllr M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. T. Walsh the Members agreed and approved the proposed development as outlined in the report.

5. Draft Polling Scheme 2017:

The County Secretary presented the Draft Polling Scheme 2017 and sought the approval of the Council to go to the public consultation phase of the Polling Scheme. A number of Councillors raised issues in particular with regard to the previous Polling Station at Clohamon. The County Secretary advised that if a new venue could be found at Clohamon this would be considered. This should be notified formally to the Council and be considered before the Polling Scheme process is completed.

The proposal to go out to public consultation was then proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell and agreed.

6. Increased Borrowing Requirement for Publicly Funded Housing Mortgages:

Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance, presented a report to the Members outlining proposals for additional borrowing of €1.2m for the purposes of funding the 2017 Capital Allocation for Publicly Funded Housing Loans.

In accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, and on the proposal of Councillor M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen, the Members approved the borrowing proposal as outlined in the report.

The Chief Executive then updated the Members on his proposal to the DOE for a programme to offer affordable mortgages to middle income families on a pilot basis. He has submitted this proposal to the Department and is expecting a reply early next year.

A number of Members asked that an overview of the lands in Wexford County Council's ownership which are currently unused should be submitted to the Members. This was agreed by Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services.

7. Data Protection re Housing List:

The County Secretary circulated a document from the Data Protection Commissioner entitled "Guidance Note for Data Controllers and the Release of Personal Data to Public Representatives".

A wide ranging discussion then took place among the Members with many of them opposing the restrictions placed on releasing the names of persons being housed by the Council to Elected Members. Members were of the opinion that their input and local knowledge helped with good estate management and many felt that the role of the Councillor was being diminished.

Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services, noted that the new act will apply to all public representatives in all counties. He advised that the Council is currently reviewing all of the information it receives and will need to improve the way the Council holds information and data and how we use it.

If the Council was found to have let information into the public arena without the consent of the person involved, they could be subject to fines and claims for compensation. The cost of defending such actions would be high.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy the following motion was then adopted by the Council:

"That this Council resolves that the guidance issued by the Data Protection Commissioners should not supercede the public interest role of Councillors both to oversee the allocation of houses and to provide input based on local knowledge to assist in the allocation of housing and that a draft protocol to balance these competing interests be brought forward."

It was further agreed to send the motion to every County Council in Ireland plus the T.D.'s, MEP's and the CCMA.

8. Energy Policy Wexford County Council:

Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services, advised that a cross functional team had prepared an Energy Policy for Wexford County Council. He asked the Members to commit to the plan and the actions contained in it and that the plan would be reviewed at a later stage.

Issues dealt with in the plan include public lighting, pv panels and retro fitting Council housing. Cllr. O. Walsh and J. Carley, Director of Service, are on the board of the Carlow/Kilkenny Energy Agency representing Wexford County Council.

The Council will review the policy annually and reduce energy output. A new plan will be brought to the Strategic Policy Committee in the New Year.

A number of issues raised by Members were answered by Council Officials in attendance.

The plan was then proposed by Cllr. O. Walsh seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming and agreed by all. Cllr. Walsh complimented John Carley and Gerry Forde on bringing forward the policy and noted that it will pay large dividends both in terms of finance and energy use in the

future. Fiona O'Loughlin from the Energy Agency also attended the meeting and the Director noted that the IFA will be included in the next phase of the programme.

9. Dates of January Meeting of CPG and County Council Meeting (08.01.18 and 15.01.18):

On the proposal of Cllr. L. O'Brien it was agreed that the County Council Meeting will be held on 8th January, 2018 and that there will be no CPG Meeting in January.

10. Report of Corporate Policy Group:

The report of the Corporate Policy Group was proposed by Cllr. L. O'Brien seconded by Cllr. T. Dempsey and agreed by all.

11. Chief Executive's Report:

The Chief Executive's Report was proposed by Cllr. M. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell.

The Chief Executive and other Council Officials in attendance answered a number of queries raised by Members including the following:

- Outreach by the Housing Department to homeless people in the Bunclody area.
- Need for salt and grit on the busy roads in the event of snow in the Bunclody area over the winter period.
- Director of Service John Carley advised that the Housing Department had put out a number of notices to homeless people and they were trying to help any people who were homeless. He advised that there are difficulties in dealing with homeless people with regard to where they can be placed and whether or not they wish to be accommodated. The Chief Executive clarified that the Council had contacted other agencies and voluntary bodies in regard to homelessness.
- E. Hore, Director of Services, advised that the Council will work through the plan for winter maintenance which has been well thought out with work on primary, secondary and tertiary roads as first priority and then local roads. There will be 350km of roads gritted and he complimented the Council staff for the work they had done to date.
- The recent tragic road accident at Cushenstown
- The Best Young Entrepreneurs.
- 1916 Medals for Members of the Fire Service.
- Targeting the high levels of deprivation in certain areas of the County.
- The return of the RAPID Programme.

12. List of Councillors' Conferences and Training:

The List of Councillors' Conferences and Training as submitted to the meeting was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe and agreed by the Members.

13. Minutes of Meetings:

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. P. Kavanagh, and agreed by all the Members present the following minutes were noted and approved.

- 13.1 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting 23.10.17
- 13.2 Gorey Municipal District Meeting 17.10.17
- 13.3 New Ross Municipal District Meeting 19.10.17
- 13.4 Borough District of Wexford Meeting 23.10.17
- 13.5 Special Economic Development and Enterprise Meeting 13.07.17
- 13.6 Economic Development and Enterprise Meeting 28.03.17
- 13.7 Economic Development and Enterprise Meeting 19.09.17
- 13.8 Planning & Building Control SPC 14.06.17

14. Sealing of Documents:

The sealing of documents as submitted to the meeting was noted.

15. Correspondence and Communications:

The Members noted the following correspondence received:

- Correspondence from Minister Denis Naughten, regarding the PSO Levy.
- Correspondence from Minister Denis Naughten, regarding the Post Office Network.
- Correspondence from Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure & Reform regarding the Post Office Network.
- Acknowledgement from Private Secretary to Minister Ross regarding road grants for County Wexford.

16. Any Other Business:

Cllr. G. Carthy congratulated the Executive and in particular J. Carley in the preparation of the Bid Document for Fleadh Ceol na hEireann 2019. Other Members supported the Bid pointing out the huge revenue potential for the County if Wexford were successful in their bid to hold the Fleadh Ceol.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to John Carley and Cllr. G. Carthy and noted the Members in their Budget for 2018 had allocated €50,000 towards the costs of running the Fleadh. He also agreed that there would be a huge economic benefit to County Wexford if the bid was successful as well as a huge cultural impact on the County. He further highlighted that accessibility to County Wexford will be improve when the two new major roads are completed and these should be done in time for the Fleadh.

J. Carley thanked the Members for their kind remarks and circulated a copy of the Bid document to the Members for their information.

The Cathaoirleach then concluded the meeting and thanked all of the Members for the work they had done during the year and wished them all and Peaceful and Happy Christmas.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an la de Eanair, 2018.

Cathaoirleach