

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Monday 9th October, 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,	K. Doyle,
J. Fleming	D. Hynes;	R. Ireton;	W. Kavanagh;
A. Kelly;	G. Lawlor;	L. McDonald;	J. Moore;
BA Murphy,	M. Murphy;	J. Mythen	L. O'Brien;
O. O'Connell;	J. O'Rourke	F. Ó Súilleabháin;	M. Sheehan
F. Staples	J. Sullivan;	D. Wadding;	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;
Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance & ICT;
Mr. P. O'Gorman, SEO, Housing;
Ms. L. Burns, Arts Officer;
Mr. P. Collins, County Secretary

Apologies:

Cllr. P. Kavanagh
Cllr. W. Fitzharris
Cllr. M. Farrell

Votes of Sympathy:

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

- The family of Christina Fitzharris, mother of Cllr. Willie Fitzharris
- The family of Geraldine Creane, mother of Jack Creane, Library Assistant, Wexford Library
- The family of Liam Cosgrave, former Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael. On the proposal of Cllr. K. Codd-Nolan, seconded by Cllr. L. O' Brien, it was agreed to open a Book of Condolence.
- The family of Mick O'Brien, former Fianna Fáil Councillor
- The family of Thomas Whelan Ballycullane
- The family of Mrs. Mary Nolan, Foulksmills

Congratulations/Comhghairdeas:

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

- St. Martin's Camogie Team on winning the County Final
- Wexford County Council Community Groups who had applied for Town and Villages Renewal and the Council Staff who helped with the applications
- The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA), to which the Council is affiliated, who have been nominated for a Nobel Prize for Peace.
- Wexford Tidy Towns on winning a silver medal in the 2017 National Tidy Towns Competition.
- Kevin Doyle former Irish International Soccer Player on his retirement
- The Gardai for the successful Open Day at Gorey Garda Station

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

1.1 Special County Council Meeting – 28th September, 2017.

1.2 County Council Meeting – 11th September, 2017.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. A. Connick, the Council approved the minutes of the meetings as outlined above.

The Cathaoirleach advised that a number of the housing motions on today's agenda would be dealt with at a Special Housing Meeting which will take place on Friday 10th November 2017. This was agreed by the members.

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

2.1 Proposed disposal of property at 4 Lower Church Street, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

At the outset Cllr. J. Mythen disagreed with the motion and asked that the house be retained in Council possession to provide housing for social housing applicants. The Director advised that it would be uneconomic to repair the house and recommended that it be sold. The Council hoped to sell the property for €72,000 and the Director noted that the proceeds of the sale would come back to the Council. The repairs would cost €56,000 and the balance outstanding on the mortgage also has to be paid back. He also advised that the house was not a Local Authority house but was a house bought by a Local Authority loan. The motion was then put to the floor.

On the proposal of Councillor G. Carthy seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy, it was agreed by the majority of those attending to dispose of the property at 4 Lower Church Street, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in accordance with the notices circulated.

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

3.1 LAC1706 – Proposed development of an amenity space over 2.937 hectares consisting of the provision of a multi use games area, senior & junior play zones, outdoor fitness area, open levelled playing area, picnic area, walking tracks and allotments. Provision of a toilet block and a maintenance building will also be included. 85 car parking spaces will also be provided and secure fencing to the perimeter of the site at Clonroche, Enniscorthy.

The Members noted the report of Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive dated 26th September, 2017. On the proposal of Cllr J. Fleming, seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan the Members agreed and approved the proposed development as outlined in the report.

**4. a. Wexford County Council Burial Ground Maintenance and Development Strategy
b. Bye - Laws of Wexford County Council for The Management Of All Open Burial Grounds Within The Jurisdiction Of Wexford County Council:**

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Fleming seconded by Cllr. L. O'Brien and agreed by all, the Council adopted:

(a) the Wexford County Council Burial Ground Maintenance and Development Strategy and

(b) Bye-Laws of Wexford County Council for the Management of All Open Burial Grounds within the Jurisdiction of Wexford County Council

5. River Basin Plan For Ireland (2018 – 2021) - Water Framework Directive Update:

Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services, noted that the Plan has previously been before the Council and has been out for public consultation recently.

Anne Phelan, LAWCO, advised that new regulations with regard to public consultation are now part of the River Basin Plan process. She outlined that a total of 5 public consultation meetings had taken place across County Wexford in the period April to August 2017. She also advised that PPN Representatives had been invited to those meetings and that another meeting will take place in the near future which will allow for further comment from the public.

Brendan Cooney, Senior Executive Scientist advised that the Plan is an ongoing process with the overall objective of providing better water for consumers in County Wexford and throughout the Country.

The update was noted by the Members. Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin raised the issue of the quality of soil in Macamore, north County Wexford and Mr. Cooney advised that the soil is a problem with regard to water quality in that area.

6. Wexford County Council Social Housing Supply Programme 2017-2019 (Progress Report End of Quarter 3 2017):

The Cathaoirleach advised that the report drawn up by the Housing Department is a comprehensive report and deals with much of the information requested by the Members over a number of recent meetings. It is proposed to have a Special Housing Meeting on Friday 10th November 2017 at 3p.m - the meeting will be held "In-Committee" to allow for a frank and open discussion. The Approved Housing Bodies will be invited to the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach advised that if any Member required any further information with regard to housing before this Special Meeting to email the Housing Officer Padraig O'Gorman and he would answer any questions in advance. The report will form the basis of the Special Meeting in addition to a number of motions raised by Members of the Council.

This approach was agreed by the Members.

7. Advancing the Arts 2018 – 2022 Draft Arts Plan - Wexford County Council Arts Office:

Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services, noted that the Members had received a report and presentation. He thanked the Members and the Arts Officer Liz Burns and Mary McAuliffe for putting a comprehensive plan together for County Wexford for the next 5 years with the Artist and the Citizen central to the Plan.

Liz Burns, Arts Officer, then gave a detailed analysis of the contents of the Plan and how the Arts Focus Groups, Municipal Districts and other Arts Group Organisations were involved in the framing of the Plan which also links in with other Plans including the Arts Council and the LCDC Plans. She advised that the Plan itself will be launched in December 2017 and set out the scope and ambition contained in the Plan.

A number of Members made comments on the Plan including the following:

- The huge involvement throughout the County
- The ambitiousness of the Plan
- The accessibility across the County
- The opportunities for the Arts in Co. Wexford arising from Music Generation funding.
- Sense of ownership of the Plan among the artistic community
- Emerging artists
- Lack of financial support from the Council for amateur performers such as Light Opera and Drama Groups

At 3.30 p.m. Cllr. B. A. Murphy left the meeting.

- The active listening to the Community in formulating the Plan
- The mental health benefits of the arts including such areas as music and groups coming together to perform artistic ventures
- The funding for 2018 – Liz Burns advised that the new funding is a niche for small festivals and that there is a need for a policy with regard to festivals. She hoped that an audit of festivals could be carried out in the future.

Finally the Chief Executive complimented Liz Burns, Mary McAuliffe and their team in preparing the Plan and the huge amount of work involved in that. He also advised that the new capital funding proposed in Budget 2018 will be a help towards providing resources towards the arts infrastructure in County Wexford.

He noted that a lot of work in the Arts has been done in the last year since the appointment of the new Arts Officer and he also thanked the Elected Members for their enthusiasm and involvement in the making of the Arts Plan.

The Cathaoirleach echoed the sentiment of the other Members with regards to the ambition and work that had gone into the Plan and the community involvement in making the Plan. He also noted that all of the Arts communities have been part of making the Plan.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Moore seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne the Draft Arts Plan 2018-2022 was adopted by the Council.

8. Bank Overdraft Accommodation 2018:

Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance had circulated a short report with regard to the Council's overdraft requirements for 2018 and advised that approval was being sought for borrowing by way of temporary overdraft accommodation of €13m to 31st December, 2018, the same level of overdraft facility as 2017.

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Donohoe, seconded by Cllr. R. Ireton, the Members approved borrowing by way of temporary overdraft of €13m to 31st December 2018 in accordance with the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001.

9. Public Participation Network Registration:

Annette Dupuy, PPN Support Officer, showed a video to the Members dealing with the role and functions of the PPN. In particular she highlighted that the closing date for registration of organisations with the PPN is 31st October 2017. She asked Members to help to increase the numbers registering and asked that they encourage any groups that they are involved with or knew of to register with the PPN. She also advised that the PPN has a new website.

The Cathaoirleach advised that under Performance Indicators the Council had agreed to try to increase the numbers registered with the PPN in 2017.

10. Report of Corporate Policy Group:

The report of the Corporate Policy Group was proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan seconded by Cllr. K. Codd Nolan and agreed by all.

Cllr. M. Byrne asked that an amendment be made to the London Wexford Association in the previous minutes and this was agreed.

The Cathaoirleach then advised that the Children's Book Festival will be taking place between the 2nd – 31st October and distributed a leaflet setting out the details of the Festival which is supported by Wexford County Council.

11. Chief Executive's Report:

Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, answered a number of queries raised by the Members in the absence of the Chief Executive including the following:

- The Wexford AIRO Report which will analysis the 2016 census data from both a social and economic view point.
- The adequacy of the number of Planning Staff given delays in pre-planning and dealing with compliance letters.
- The Ambassador Programme
- The effect of the statistics in the previous AIRO Report on the distribution of grants
- The marketing of Rosslare Europort
- QPR Training for Members
- Progress on Gorey Town Park
- Taking-In-Charge
- Science Week
- Removal of bins from villages
- Housing units at Whiterock Hill
- Report on Windfarms
- Insurance difficulties in flood plain areas
- Derelict sites
- Tourism Training
- Unfinished Housing Estates
- Cleaning of lane ways
- Town & Village Renewal Schemes
- Junction at Ferrycarrig
- Concerns over disadvantaged areas
- Application to the Healthy Ireland Fund

12. List of Councillors' Conferences and Training:

The List of Councillors' Conferences and Training as submitted to the meeting was noted and agreed by the Members.

13. Minutes of Meetings:

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy and agreed by all the Members present the following minutes were noted and approved.

- 13.1 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting 17.07.17
- 13.2 Gorey Municipal District Meeting 18.07.17
- 13.3 In Committee Gorey Municipal District Meeting 18.07.17
- 13.4 New Ross Municipal District Meeting 12.07.17
- 13.5 Protocol Meeting of Borough District of Wexford 01.09.17

13.6 Borough District of Wexford Meeting 17.07.17

14. Deferred Notices of Motion:

Cllr. D. Wadding:

1. a. "That this Council calls on Government to immediately scrap the failed Rebuilding Ireland programme, to be replaced by rent control, increased rent allowance , a large scale social building project and immediate use of vacant properties as emergency provision.
- b. In acknowledgement of the scale of the crisis, we demand Government calls a National Emergency status with regard to Housing and Homelessness".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. D. Wadding, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes. Following a vote this motion was defeated.

Cllr. D. Hynes:

"This Council supports Social Justice Ireland call on Minister Eoghan Murphy to put plans in place for than 90,000 social homes and apartments needed to be built in the next five years and agrees that current attempts to solve the unprecedented problem and heart breaking problem have failed abysmally in light of recent deaths".

This motion was deferred to the Special Housing Meeting of the Council on 10th November 2017.

Cllr. P. Kavanagh:

"That Wexford County Council implements a plan to deal with the problem of Japanese Knotweed and to educate the public to the dangers of this invasive species".

This motion was deferred to the November Meeting of Wexford County Council.

Cllr. A. Kelly:

"I move that this Council call on the HSE and Minister Simon Harris to extend and adequately staff the existing mental health services at Summerhill Wexford to facilitate 24/7 access to emergency assessment".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Kelly seconded by Cllr. J. Mythen and agreed by all.

Cllr. M. Byrne:

"That Wexford County Council develop a digital strategy that will work toward this County being to the fore in utilising the advantages of technology and this Council leading in terms of the ability of citizens to interact digitally and to use open data. The Council shall also consider the appointment of a digital champion to lead this initiative".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan and agreed by all. Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, advised that he had no objection to a digital strategy for the Council - the Council is keen to promote digital improvements and capitalise on the new technologies. He advised, however, that it will be the first half of 2018

before such a strategy could be presented to the Council given staffing and other constraints.

Cllr. D. Wadding:

“I call on this Council to ban the use of Roundup by Council staff on public land, grass verges etc”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. D. Wadding seconded by Cllr. A. Kelly.

At 5 p.m. Cllr. J. O’Rourke left the meeting.

Following discussion on the motion Cllr. Wadding agreed to withdraw the motion pending the receipt of a report from the Environment Department. The Council is to review the use of Roundup and bring back a report setting out the current use of weed killers and the research is to be done in consultation with the Department of Agriculture. This was agreed by the Members.

Cllr. D. Hynes:

“The recent announcement to take over vacant houses and renovate these is to be welcomed as part of addressing the houses crisis but it can only be done if the finance is made available and the each vacant house in Wexford ear marked by the Council for such renovation is matched by the finance, otherwise it is just more spin”.

This motion was deferred to the Special Housing Meeting of the Council on 10th November 2017.

15. Notices of Motion:

Cllr. L. McDonald:

“In view of the chronic housing situation, Wexford County Council hereby requests the government to depart from their current policy of reviews, reports and summits and to reintroduce a serious policy of building social houses”.

This motion was deferred to the Special Housing Meeting of the Council on 10th November 2017.

Cllr. F. ÓSúilleabháin:

“Wexford County Council calls on the government to immediately implement the Private Members Motion which was unanimously passed in November 2016 regarding rural post offices that will ensure a financially stable Post Office network and the protection of this vital service in our communities”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. F. ÓSúilleabháin seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan and agreed.

Cllr. F. ÓSúilleabháin:

“Wexford County Council sends our solidarity to the parliament and people of Catalonia following their recent referendum”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. F. ÓSúilleabháin seconded by Cllr. D. Wadding.

An amendment by Cllr. K. Doyle seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne was proposed as follows:

“Wexford County Council sends out solidarity to the parliament and people of Catalonia following the action after their recent referendum”. The Council voted in favour of the amendment.

At 5.15 p.m. Cllr. M. Whelan left the meeting.

Cllr. M. Byrne:

“That Wexford County Council opposes any proposals to reduce the number of rural post offices and recognises their importance to rural communities across the county and the country. The Council shall write to An Post and to the Minister for Rural Affairs to express our concerns”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. W. Kavanagh and agreed by all.

16. Sealing of Documents:

On the proposal of Cllr. L. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor the Members noted and approved the sealing of documents as submitted to the meeting.

17. Correspondence and Communications:

The Members noted the following correspondence received:

- Acknowledgement from the office of Mr. Denis Naughten, TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment, regarding new waste management proposals.

18. Any Other Business:

The Cathaoirleach advised that he had received a formal complaint about the use of phones during meetings of the Council. He has advised that the matter will be forwarded to the Protocol Committee for consideration.

Cllr. D. Wadding announced that this would be her last County Council Meeting, that she intended to resign from the County Council on 27th October, 2017. She advised the meeting that she hadn’t come to the decision lightly, but, because of physical and mental health problems caused by stress, particularly in dealing with housing issues, she had decided that it was time for her to stand down. She advised that People Before Profit will be proposing a new Councillor, Tony Walsh.

She thanked the Officials of the County Council and in particular those in the Housing Department for their help during her tenure as a Councillor. She also thanked Cllr. D. Hynes and her colleagues in Sinn Fein for the help that they had given her since her election as a Councillor.

The Cathaoirleach responded by saying that he had great respect for any person who had put themselves before the people for election. He noted that Cllr. Wadding had given 100% effort to represent the people that had elected her and he wished her well in the future.

Cllr. M. Byrne noted Cllr. Wadding's ability to articulate her point of view, but also to listen to other points of view. He complimented her on her energy and honesty and highlighted her passion with regard to Housing and the Arts. He wished her well going into the future.

Cllr. J. Mythen said he was sorry that Cllr. Wadding was leaving – she had a good spirit and served the community well, in particular the oppressed.

Cllr. G Lawlor wished Cllr. Wadding all the best in the future. He highlighted her integrity and her concern for the underdog.

Other members echoed these sentiments.

The Chief Executive wished Cllr. Wadding well on his own behalf and also on behalf of the Council staff. He noted that she followed her own father, the recently-deceased Luke Wadding, in her community service. He also noted that the job of a Councillor is not an easy one, coming face to face with problems of a complex nature every day.

Cllr. Wadding gave a voice to people who don't have a voice and had given huge service to the people of Wexford.

The Cathaoirleach concluded the meeting by saying that Cllr. Wadding's efforts on behalf of the people were held in high regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an la de , 2017.

Cathaoirleach