

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Monday 13th November, 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,
M. Farrell;	W. Fitzharris;	J. Fleming	D. Hynes;
R. Ireton;	P. Kavanagh;	W. Kavanagh;	A. Kelly;
G. Lawlor;	L. McDonald;	J. Moore;	BA Murphy,
M. Murphy;	J. Mythen;	L. O'Brien;	O. O'Connell;
F. Ó Súilleabháin;	M. Roche;	M. Sheehan	J. Sullivan;
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

Apologies:

Cllr. J. O'Rourke
Cllr. F. Staples

At the outset the Cathaoirleach officially welcomed Eddie Taaffe back to Wexford as a Director of Services; this was echoed by all of the other Elected Members.

Votes of Sympathy:

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

- The family of Catherine O'Rourke, former County Librarian
- The family of Artie Gaynor, father of Richie Gaynor, New Ross Roads Area and father in law of Monica Gaynor, Roads Dept
- The family of Tommy Morris, father of Martin Morris, Firefighter
- The family of Mick Howlin, father of Michelle Howlin, Library Service and father-in-law of Barry Kelly, Wexford Borough District
- The family of John Dempsey, Liam Mellow Park, father-in-law, Carolyne Godkin, County Development Officer.
- The family of Margaret Tierney, Hill Street, Wexford.

Congratulations/Comhghairdeas:

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

- Wexford Boxing Club 3 day event at St. Joseph's Boxing Club, Wexford
- Residents Association Day organisers in Wexford County Council
- Bridgetown for winning the best estate award.
- St. Anne's GAA on winning the County Intermediate Hurling Final
- The Cathaoirleach and Padraig O'Gorman, Housing Officer, for explaining the housing policy strategy at last Friday's meeting.
- Fethard Junior Hurling County Team
- St. Martin's on winning the Senior Hurling Title, St. Martin's have won 8 titles in 2017
- Foireann Rugbair na mban Gorey
- Aidan O'Brien on his group one winners in horse racing
- Woodview Drive the overall winners of the Housing Estates
- Joseph O'Brien
- Greg Bolger, Cork City Soccer Team on winning the FAI Cup and league
- The Starlights on winning the County Football Final
- Arthur Minnion on hosting commemoration ceremony in St. Iberius
- Nicola Halford who is hosted the Remembrance Sunday in Enniscorthy
- Adamstown Athletic Club on their recent event
- Killanerin Community Development
- Coolgreany Drama Group

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

1.1 County Council Meeting – 9th October, 2017.

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

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

2.1 Proposed transfer of land at Millbrook, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford to Mr. Brian Walsh, 1 Millbrook, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Councillor G. Carthy seconded by Cllr. J. Moore, it was agreed to transfer the land at Millbrook, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in accordance with the notice circulated.

3. Filling of Casual Vacancy following the resignation of Deirdre Wadding:

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Hynes seconded by Cllr. J. Mythen Tony Walsh was co-opted on to the Council.

Following his election to Wexford County Council the Cathaoirleach welcomed Tony Walsh to the Council Chamber and wished him well in his role as a Councillor.

The newly elected Cllr. Walsh thanked all his supporters and the Cathaoirleach and Member for their welcome. He then set out his background and how he became involved in politics, his work in the prison service and his qualifications in sociology and physiology. He finished up by saying he was in the Council Chamber to serve the most marginalised and disadvantaged people in the County.

Cllr. P. Kavanagh who was absent at the previous meeting wished Deirdre Wadding the best in her retirement and welcomed Tony Walsh to the Chamber on behalf of the Fine Gael party and wished him the very best.

Cllr. Tony Dempsey on behalf of Fianna Fail and Cllr. J. Mythen on behalf of Sinn Fein also welcomed the new Councillor. Cllr. G. Lawlor welcomed the new Councillor on behalf of the Labour Party. Other Members including Cllrs.D. Hynes and A. Kelly also welcomed Cllr. Walsh.

The Chief Executive welcomed Tony Walsh on his own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Wexford County Council and said that Council Staff would be happy to assist Cllr. Walsh in his role as a Councillor.

4. Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 – Proposal to Take in Charge: Loreto School Access Road at Ballynagee:

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. R. Ireton and agreed by all, the Council approved the Taking in Charge of the access road at Ballynagee under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993.

Following the adoption of the Section 11 Cllr. G. Lawlor highlighted the need for safety measures on the new road as it is already a busy road and will become busier with the opening of the new Loreto school.

5. Amendment to Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme (TIPS):

Following discussion about a number of issues, on the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe the Members approved the Amendment to the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme (TIPS) as circulated to the meeting.

6. Annual Service Delivery Plan Q3:

The County Secretary presented the Annual Service Delivery Plan Q3 which had been circulated to the Members prior to the meeting – Members were invited to submit queries about the Annual Service Delivery Plan through the Councillors Query System so that answers could be ready for the meeting.

No queries were received but a number of Members brought up some issues. In particular Cllr. O. O'Connell asked that the descriptions be used rather than percentages in showing the level of completion of tasks.

The County Secretary advised that the Annual Service Delivery Plan is currently under review and it is hoped to have a different type of presentation in 2018. It was further agreed that the Councillors Query System be reviewed with each of the District over the coming months.

7. Report of Corporate Policy Group:

The report of the Corporate Policy Group was proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan seconded by Cllr. L. O'Brien and agreed by all.

8. Chief Executive's Report:

The Chief Executive answered a number of queries raised by Members including the following:

- The challenge and opportunities faced by the Council in dealing with an aging population in County Wexford.
- The adequacy of resources in the Planning Department
- The recent board meeting of the IDA in Wexford and their support for the County Council's property solutions approach to development
- Congratulate Norma Quinsey as the new Marketing Executive of "Visit Wexford"
- Welcome to the Winter Shore Angling Competition in the Gorey Area
- Congratulations to the Council staff involved in Storm Ophelia
- Thanked the Communications Officer David Minogue for his updates to Members during the storm.
- The Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive both thanked the Council Workers for the efforts they made during Storm Ophelia and agreed that the communications to Councillors and to the general public was well handled
- The co-operation with the Gardai, HSE, Civil Defence and other bodies was also acknowledged in so far as dealing with the storm was a combined effort of all the emergency services
- It was also noted that Wexford was one of the most affected areas in the Country
- Tribute was also paid to Irish Water in helping to get water to the public
- The inclusion of the Killag Show in the Council's marketing strategy for tourism
- Planning Enforcement for lower level infringements of the planning code
- The re-opening of roads closed to facilitate the Enniscorthy By Pass
- The issues and problems surrounding secondary school places in Wexford particularly for male students and the need for proper planning and zoning to deal with the demographic changes in Wexford including the allocation of school places. The problem is not just associated with Wexford Town it's a county issue and the situation will get worse in the next 5/6 years.

The Chief Executive advised that he was part of the delegation that met with the Department of Education. The Department say that there are enough school places

in County Wexford and that there is a peak of students working their way through the system

He also advised that WCC is looking for two sites for post primary schools in the county and this issue will not be solved easily and that there was a need to keep meeting with the Department of Education to keep the matter on the agenda

- Boardwalks to the beaches to be constructed in concrete rather than timber
- Car parking

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Donohoe seconded by Cllr. L. O'Brien the Chief Executive's Report was adopted.

9. 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.

10. Minutes of Meetings:

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

10.1 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting 18.09.17

10.2 Gorey Municipal District Meeting 19.09.17

10.3 New Ross Municipal District Meeting 13.09.17

10.4 Borough District of Wexford Meeting 18.09.17

10.5 Housing, Community & Environment SPC 07.06.17

10.6 Housing Community & Environment SPC 22.09.17

11. Deferred Notices of Motion:

11.1 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".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. P. Kavanagh seconded by Cllr. P. Breen. Following discussion to which many of the Members contributed it was agreed to add the purple Himalayan noxious weed to the motion. In addition it was agreed to ask relevant departments to make money available to deal with this problem.

The County Secretary was asked to send the motion to other Councils and to ask the department for a person to give advice to Members on this matter which is a national problem.

12. Notices of Motion:

12.1 Cllr. G. Lawlor:

“In order to expedite the development of a Wexford Campus of Carlow IT, Wexford County Council moves to rezone land at Newtown Road already identified for this project for educational purposes”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. J. Moore and agreed by all.

Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services advised that, subject to any legal issues, he will bring this into effect as soon as possible.

13. Sealing of Documents:

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

14. Correspondence and Communications:

The Members noted the following correspondence received:

- Correspondence from An Post regarding Rural Post Offices
- Correspondence from Denis Naughten, T.D., Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment regarding Local Authority Waste Collection.
- Acknowledgement from Jim Daly, TD, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older, regarding mental health services at Summerhill, Wexford.
- Acknowledgement from the office of Mr. Paschal Donohoe, TD, regarding rural post offices
- Correspondence from Transport Authority Ireland regarding National Road 2018 Current Expenditure Allocations

Discussion took place regarding the correspondence received from the TII notifying the Council of a 15% cut in road grants in County Wexford in 2018. Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services, noted that 15% of the current budget amounts to €60,000 which covers national road maintenance.

Given the high level of maintenance on national roads, the Director advised the reduction will not have a big impact on the national roads in County Wexford. The Director went on to advise that the cut in road maintenance only applied to national roads and does not affect the budget for non-national roads.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister expressing the disappointment of the Council with regards to the cut in its allocation.

15. Any Other Business:

Cllr. R. Ireton notified the Members that he had met recently with Michael Sills, Chairman of London Wexford Association and gave a brief summary of the meeting. He advised that the Fr. Murphy's GAA Club is celebrating 60 years next year and that an event will be held in the Riverside Park Hotel in Enniscorthy at Easter to celebrate this anniversary.

The County Secretary advised the Members that he intends to bring the Draft Polling Scheme to the Council for its December meeting: this deals with the review of polling centers and polling stations in County Wexford and is a statutory function of the Council.

The Draft Polling Scheme has a public consultation element over a 5 week period and it is hoped that it will come back to the Council in February/March 2018 for final approval. The County Secretary intends to send out the Draft Polling Scheme to Members in advance of the December meeting.

The Cathaoirleach advised the Members that there is a signing ceremony event with the UN and the Minister for Environment next week as part of the nZeb Conference.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes the Council then went into committee to discuss matters regarding the Statutory Budget.

The Chief Executive advised that the Statutory Budget meeting will take place in two weeks time and the Draft Budget would be circulated this week. Members are aware that it is proposed to increase the commercial rates by 3% and to harmonise the rates in all of the Districts.

This increase is required to roll out the economic programme which requires funding both to borrow and invest in the community and economy of Wexford. He further advised that there had been no rate increase in Co. Wexford since 2009 and that he will not be looking for any further increase in 2018.

He further advised that, at this time, the Council can borrow money cheaply at 1% rate over a 20 year period; it is unlikely that interest rates will continue at this level going into the future and this option to borrow at low rates will no longer be available to the Council.

The Communications Officer David Minogue has prepared a draft brochure setting out the Council's ambitious economic programme for the County over the next number of years. The document also sets out the challenges facing County Wexford and the opportunities that are available to the County. The document shows the projects proposed for each District and includes a Foreword from the Cathaoirleach and each District Chairman, and the District Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce.

If the 3% rise in the rate is approved the Chief Executive intends to publish and distribute the document to every household in the county in early December 2017. He then updated the Members on a number of projects taking place across the County and their current status.

Given that the Members of the Council are being asked to make difficult decisions regarding increasing the rates, the Chief Executive noted that they deserve acknowledgment for their part in providing funding and borrowing options to the Council. He further intends to publish an update of the document in Spring 2019 prior to the next Local Elections.

The Cathaoirleach noted that the Council needs to communicate better with the public as to the projects being carried out and that this brochure would be a good way to do that.

Cllr. P. Kavanagh welcomed the plan for all our futures and suggested An Post deliver the brochure to each household in County Wexford.

Cllr. K. Doyle also was impressed with the Communications Department and was of the opinion that the Council needs to sell its projects to our own people in County Wexford.

The Chief Executive advised that the Council's Finance Department will be meeting with the four Chambers of Commerce over the next number of weeks and will hold town hall meetings in New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey.

Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services, advised that the Environment Awards are being held on Tuesday 21st November 2017 in the Ferrycarrig Hotel.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an la de , 2017.

Cathaoirleach