

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Special Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Friday 14th June 2019 – 12 noon
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford.**

Attendance:

In The Chair: Councillor M. Sheehan

Councillors: P. Barden; M. Bell; P. Breen; A. Browne;
C. Byrne; G. Carthy; J. Codd; K. Codd Nolan;
A. Connick; D. Devereux; A. Donohoe; M. Farrell;
J. Fleming; T. Forde; J. Hegarty; D. Hynes;
W. Kavanagh; L. Kelly; D. Kenny; G. Laffan;
G. Lawlor; L. McDonald; B.A. Murphy; B. Murphy;
F. O' Súilleabháin; J. Owens; F. Staples; J. Sullivan;
O. Walsh; M. Whelan.

Officials: Messrs: T. Enright, Chief Executive,
T. Larkin, E. Hore, E. Taaffe, Directors of Services;
Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance;
Mr. P. O'Gorman, A/Director of Service;
Mr. P. Collins, Meetings Administrator;
Mr. David Minogue, Communications Officer.

Apologies: Councillors J. Moore; M. Byrne; J. O'Rourke

Expressions of Sympathy:

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

- The family of Pat Walsh, father of Dan Walsh, reporter, Enniscorthy
- The Byrne family, Bunclody on the death of their father, Sean
- The Kennedy family on the death of Simon Kennedy, Duncannon
- The Mythen family of Blackwater father of Mary Prendergast and Katherine Mythen
- The family of Ned Wheeler, Wexford Town
- The family of Maurice Connolly, New Ross.
- The family of Jimmy Henneberry, New Ross.

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

1.1 LAC1903

Wexford County Council is proposing to develop a Rape Crisis Centre on a site situated at Maudlintown, Wexford. The development will consist of a 2 storey building, approximately 206m² and will be located along the entrance to the Rocks, Maudlintown, Wexford. Accommodation will comprise of counselling rooms with administration and ancillary spaces, with two walled exterior spaces and car parking spaces @ The Rocks. Maudlintown, Wexford

Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, outlined the background to the development at Maudlintown, Wexford which was supported by a number of Members from the Wexford District present at the meeting. The Chief Executive thanked the Members for their support and advised that the current Rape Crisis Centre premises at Clifford Street are not suitable for their needs. He also advised that a suitable philanthropic person will greatly assist with the funding of the project.

A Section 183 Notice will come before the Council in the future to formally transfer the land to the Rape Crisis Centre. The Chief Executive advised that funding of €2m. has been received for extra housing units for the Women's Refuge which will be built on the site adjacent to the Rape Crisis Centre. It is hoped that the Rape Crisis Centre project will be completed by the end of this year, with the Women's Refuge development scheduled for completion by the end of 2020.

LAC1903 was proposed by Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. G. Laffan and agreed by all.

1.2 LAC1904

Refurbishment of Gate Lodge (former Wexford County Council Offices) for use as residential accommodation. This is a Protected Structure (WBC0035) @ Gate Lodge, Spawell Road, Wexford.

Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, outlined the background to the refurbishment of the Gate Lodge at the former County Council Offices at Spawell Road, Wexford. These offices will be refurbished to make student accommodation for use by students who will be taking their places in the Georgia Southern University in Ireland in September 2019. He advised that is a very good use of a heritage building.

Mr T. Enright, Chief Executive, added that he is excited about the opportunity presented by this development and he hopes that it will grow and expand over the years. He also reiterated that the student accommodation will provide affordable accommodation for students and will bring this old building back to life.

He added that there are other much larger projects in town where it is hoped that, with the assistance of partners, older buildings can be brought back into use and he will come back to the Members with further details as the projects progress

Members present welcomed the project and queries were raised with regards to the cost of the work and who would be paying for the works. Mr. T. Larkin advised that Wexford County Council would be doing the initial work but will be leasing the premises to the college and that over a period of time the lease will cover the cost. Similarly the college will pay for accommodation over time and the costs that Wexford County Council will incur will be recouped over time.

Wexford County Council will be paying the upfront costs and the Chief Executive advised that the cost to Wexford County Council is modest, there will be a 10 year lease and will lead to increased student activity in Wexford. It will also help to provide business opportunities whereby companies from Wexford will link with companies in

Savannah, a process that is happening already and that the education and business opportunities will bring huge benefits over time.

Cllr. L. Kelly asked who will manage the development and asked that an audit be carried out of any other historical buildings in town which could be used for similar purpose. The Director advised that the property department of the Council will manage the property. The buildings which the Council are currently engaged in talks with the owners are all privately owned. The Director stated that he could not give out that information at the present time as he is in discussion with these parties, but will be back to the Council if proceeding with any of the projects.

LAC1904 was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes and agreed by all.

2. Approval of Community CCTV Schemes

Approval of Community CCTV Schemes in Courtown/Riverchapel, New Ross, Enniscorthy and Bunclody, as per the report circulated by the County Secretary and which had been approved by the Joint Policing Committee was then proposed by Cllr. A. Donohoe seconded by Cllr. K. Codd Nolan and agreed by all.

3. Any Other Business

Mr. P. O’Gorman, A/Director of Services, circulated an invitation to members for the official opening of a number of housing schemes in Co. Wexford as follows:

- Baile Eoghain, Gorey
- Willow View, Castlebridge
- Rath an Dúin, Castlebridge
- Rosetown, Rosslare
- Ard Uisce, Whiterock Hill, Wexford

Eoghan Murphy T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government will perform the official openings of these housing projects on Friday 21st June 2019.

Discussion regarding the housing situation in Wexford then took place with many members congratulating the Housing Department for exceeding their housing targets.

Responding to criticism of the number of houses built by Wexford County Council, the Chief Executive pointed out that the renting of houses owned by housing bodies and turnkey purchases by the Council had contributed significantly to the reduction of numbers on the Housing List. He also pointed out that funding has not been an issue.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. McDonald seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor it was agreed that a Special Meeting of Housing will take place, the date for such a meeting will be set at the July 2019 meeting of the Council.

New Ross Port – Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, then updated the Members on the current position regarding the transfer of New Ross Port to Wexford County Council. He advised that it is a state owned port which is operated independently. A number of Ministers are currently signing documents with regard to the transfer and the Director

advised that the transfer may well happen before the July 2019 Meeting of the Council. The transfer will involve the transfer of assets and liabilities, staff etc. to Wexford County Council and the Port in New Ross will carry on as normal over the summer while arrangements are put in place with regard to the long term operating of the Port.

The Director advised that negotiations had gone well with Waterford Port and that Wexford County Council will have responsibility for the land assets including the oil tanks on the entrance to New Ross. It is likely that the Council will bring in bye-laws to cover the harbour. It is also likely that the Council will enter into a management agreement with the Port of Waterford to run the day to day operations of the Port. An ongoing financial plan will be put in place. A number of Members expressed their views on this issue welcoming the news and looking forward to the oil tanks being removed. They stressed the importance of a commercial plan and the Cathaoirleach asked that a report be brought to the Municipal District if the transfer occurs before the July 2019 Meeting.

Cllr. M. Whelan asked a number of questions with regard to staffing and contractors currently employed by the New Ross Port. The Chief Executive advised that all these matters are now under review but would not be concluded until such time as the transfer takes place and he advised that there may be changes in the future.

Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, advised that shipping will continue in New Ross Harbour for vessels carrying less than 4.5 tonnes and all of the shipping contractors in New Ross expect that there will be modest increases in business in the future. The Director also advised that a business plan is being developed and that the Chief Executive of the Port will come to a meeting of the Council later in the year to update the Members on the shipping operations in the harbour.

Cllr. G. Carthy raised a number of issues with regard to the responsibility for driving business in New Ross and he noted that he would be against the transfer of the site after the summer to Waterford Port and would only be inclined to sign a contract for the operations for a period of 12 months.

Mr T. Larkin, Director of Service, clarified that the status quo would remain in place and that it would be business as usual on the transfer day. He agreed to report back to the Council in July 2019 with regard to discussions taking place with regard to the future management and operation of the port.

The Chief Executive advised that the Council is complying with government policy set out in the National Port Study to transfer Tier 3 Ports back to Local Authorities. The Council will not be handing over the running of the port to Waterford; instead, it will use Waterford's piloting skills and experience to operate in New Ross Port. The future development of the Port will be a matter for Wexford County Council. The Chief Executive also advised that the Council is looking at a proposal of having one Port Authority for the South East.

The Chief Executive also noted that Kilmore Quay needs major investment as a harbour, but not as a Port. Following a question from Cllr. A. Donohoe regarding the costs and liabilities of the Port, Director T. Larkin advised that the costs at this point were unknown but that he was of the opinion that the operation of the Port would be more or less self-funding and that the cost of removing the tanks were unknown at this point.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an 8ú la de Iúil, 2019.

Cathaoirleach