

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL****Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2022  
in the Council Chamber at 10am (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach**Councillors:**

<b>BARDEN</b>	PAT	<b>DONOHUE</b>	ANTHONY	<b>MOORE</b>	JIM
<b>BELL</b>	MAURA (Remote)	<b>FARRELL</b>	MARY	<b>MURPHY</b>	BARBARA ANNE
<b>BOLGER</b>	ANDREW (Remote)	<b>FLEMING</b>	JOHN	<b>MURPHY</b>	BRIDIN
<b>BREEN</b>	PIP	<b>FORDE</b>	TOM	<b>O'ROURKE</b>	JOHN
<b>BROWNE</b>	AIDAN	<b>HEGARTY</b>	JOHN (Remote)	<b>Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN</b>	FIONNTÁN
<b>BYRNE</b>	CATHAL	<b>HYNES</b>	DAVID	<b>OWENS</b>	JACKSER
<b>CARTHY</b>	GER	<b>KAVANAGH</b>	WILLIE	<b>SHEEHAN</b>	MICHAEL
<b>CODD</b>	JIM	<b>KELLY</b>	LEONARD (Remote)	<b>SULLIVAN</b>	JOE
<b>CODD-NOLAN</b>	KATHLEEN (Remote)	<b>KENNY</b>	DONAL	<b>WALSH</b>	OLIVER
<b>CONNICK</b>	ANTHONY	<b>LAFFAN</b>	GARRY	<b>WHELAN</b>	MICHAEL
<b>DEVEREUX</b>	DIARMUID	<b>MCDONALD</b>	LISA		

**Officials:**

Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive  
 Mr. Eamonn Hore, Director of Services  
 Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance  
 Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services  
 Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services  
 Mr. Sean Meyler, A/Director of Services  
 Ms. Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services  
 Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary  
 Mr. Diarmuid Houston, Senior Planner  
 Ms. Lynda Lacey, Financial Accountant  
 Mr. Seamus Begley, Management Accountant

**Apologies:**

Cllr. Tom Forde, Cllr. Davy Hynes, Cllr. Garry Laffan & Cllr. Frank Staples,

**1. Opening address – Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive**

Mr. T. Enright advised that the 2023 budget was a particularly challenging budget to draft. Soaring energy costs and rising inflation are just some of the factors to be considered. Mr. T. Enright outlined the ambitious economic and special project programme being delivered. He also highlighted the additional funding the draft budget will provide in the Municipal Districts, in addition to a provision for funding Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann, should Wexford be successful in its bid.

**2. Draft Budget Overview – Presentation**

Ms. A. O’Neill gave a presentation which outlined the following:

- Backdrop to budget 2023.
- Budget gap challenges for 2023.
- Funding position for 2023.
- Budget 2023 income and expenditure summary.
- Expenditure and income movement overview.
- 2023 Budget decisions to be made, including:
  - Local Property Tax (LPT), and local adjustment factor
  - Commercial Rates and ARV for 2023,
  - Introduction of Small Business Support Grant (SBSG)
  - Rates on Vacant Properties

Ms. A. O’Neill responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members in regard to the following:

- Tiered vacancy bands and rates.
- Implications of the 2019 Rates Revaluation Appeals outcome for the Council.
- What do we do with Fleadh funding provision if we are unsuccessful?
- Any requirement on Valuation Tribunal to respond to appeals in a timely manner?
- Potential for receiving rates from solar farms.
- How much from our own resources goes towards pension, pay & FEMPI?
- Confirmation that funding is available for Enniscorthy Town Regeneration Plan.
- Confirmation that if Fleadh bid is successful, Council won’t seek a further rate increase next year.
- Need for rates increase as businesses emerge from Covid.
- Request that additional income for Districts be distributed pro rata based on the number of Councillors in the District.

### 3. Draft Budget 2023

#### ***Consideration of Statutory Budget Tables***

Ms. A. O'Neill then brought the Members through each line of the Budget Tables and together with her colleagues from the Management Team responded to queries from the Members on a number of elements of the Draft Budget, as follows:

#### Division A

- Have housing grants been amalgamated into one line?
- What does management and maintenance of traveller accommodation cover and how many staff are charged under this heading?
- Breakdown of technical and administrative support.
- Breakdown of payment and availability expenditure.

#### Division B

- Reason for large increase in local road general improvement works.
- % of public lighting costs funded by the Council.
- Reason for decrease in school warden expenditure.
- Impact of cost increases on tertiary roads.
- What does the €80k public lighting improvement cover?
- Explanation for increase in service support costs in Division B.

#### Division C

- Possibility of public convenience in Ballymoney being operational full time in 2023.
- Position in relation to Irish Water staffing for 2023.

#### Division D

- Does D901 – D999 cover all our contributions to match funding projects.
- Will we be funded for Ukrainian staffing costs?

#### Division E

- Where are costs for fly tipping charged and how much do we recoup?
- Is E0601 (operation of street cleaning service) for cleaning of streets and is it split evenly across all towns?
- What is E0901 (maintenance of burial grounds) for?
- What does E1501 (Climate change and flooding) cover?
- Are we making a provision in budget for mobile recording devices due to Circular Economy legislation?

#### Division F

- Is Heritage Officer position funded?
- Does F0401 (community grants) include Amenity Grants?
- Breakdown of F0501 (administration of the arts programme).
- Is there a provision for maintenance of walking trails and sports facilities?

Cllr. Michael Sheehan proposed that Amenity Grants be increased from €6,000 per Member to €7,000. Cllr. Ger Carthy proposed that the shortfall be funded from F0501

(administration of the arts programme). There was a lengthy discussion, and it was agreed to come back to the issue when the vote was being taken on the draft budget.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at this point.

Division G

- Proposal to abolish charge for slipways.
- Possibility of increasing income from dog licences considering the cost of the dog warden service.

Division H

- Clarification what H303 (refunds and irrecoverable rates) relates to.
- Considering climate change, should we reconsider foreign travel expenditure?

**Decision on Rates to be applied to Vacant Premises**

Recommendation for Change from 2023

- Retain 90% relief for all properties with annual rates to €2,000
- Apply 80% relief for properties with annual rates over €2,000 and less than €10,000
- Apply 60% relief for properties with annual rates over €10,000

On the proposal of Cllr. Diarmuid Devereux, seconded by Cllr. Willie Kavanagh, the Council resolved to adopt the recommendation for change to rates to be applied to vacant properties.

**Adoption of Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV)**

Recommendation – Adopt €0.253 an increase of 3% in the ARV over 2022 level

Cllr. Michael Sheehan proposed to increase the Amenity Grants from €6,000 per Member to €7,000 per Member with the consequent reduction being met from the Community budget, this was seconded by Cllr. Cathal Byrne and agreed by all.

Cllr. Cathal Byrne proposed the abolition of slipway charges, this was seconded by Cllr. Pat Barden. There was a lengthy discussion during which Cllr.'s D. Devereux, J. Moore and P. Breen spoke against the abolition of slipway charges. In addition to the proposers, Cllr.'s J. Owens and M. Whelan spoke in favour of the abolition of slipway charges.

The Cathaoirleach advised that there would be a roll call vote to establish if slipway charges would be abolished. The outcome was that the proposal to abolish slipway charges was defeated with 6 in favour and 22 against. The voting was as follows:

<b>BARDEN PAT</b>	F	<b>DONOHOE ANTHONY</b>	A	<b>O’ROURKE JOHN</b>	A
<b>BELL MAURA</b>	A	<b>FARRELL MARY</b>	A	<b>Ó’SÚILLEABHÁIN FIONNTÁN</b>	A
<b>BOLGER ANDREW</b>	A	<b>FLEMING JOHN</b>	A	<b>OWENS JACKSER</b>	F
<b>BREEN PIP</b>	A	<b>KAVANAGH WILLIE</b>	A	<b>SHEEHAN MICHAEL</b>	A

<b>BROWNE AIDAN</b>	A	<b>KELLY LEONARD</b>	A	<b>SULLIVAN JOE</b>	A
<b>BYRNE CATHAL</b>	F	<b>KENNY DONAL</b>	A	<b>WALSH OLIVER</b>	A
<b>CARTHY GER</b>	A	<b>LAWLOR GEORGE</b>	A	<b>WHELAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>CODD JIM</b>	F	<b>MCDONALD LISA</b>	A		
<b>CODD-NOLAN KATHLEEN</b>	A	<b>MOORE JIM</b>	A		
<b>CONNICK ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BARBARA ANNE</b>	A		
<b>DEVEREUX DIARMUID</b>	A	<b>MURPHY BRIDIN</b>	A		

Cllr. John Fleming proposed the removal of charges for non-piloted vessels, this was seconded by Cllr. Michael Whelan.

The Cathaoirleach advised that there would be a roll call vote to establish if charges for non-piloted vessels would be abolished. The outcome was that the proposal to abolish charges for non-piloted vessels was carried with 17 in favour and 10 against. The voting was as follows:

<b>BARDEN PAT</b>	F	<b>FARRELL MARY</b>	A	<b>OWENS JACKSER</b>	F
<b>BELL MAURA</b>	A	<b>FLEMING JOHN</b>	F	<b>SHEEHAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>BOLGER ANDREW</b>	F	<b>KAVANAGH WILLIE</b>	F	<b>SULLIVAN JOE</b>	F
<b>BREEN PIP</b>	F	<b>KENNY DONAL</b>	F	<b>WALSH OLIVER</b>	A
<b>BROWNE AIDAN</b>	F	<b>LAWLOR GEORGE</b>	A	<b>WHELAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>BYRNE CATHAL</b>	F	<b>MCDONALD LISA</b>	A		
<b>CARTHY GER</b>	A	<b>MOORE JIM</b>	A		
<b>CODD JIM</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BARBARA ANNE</b>	F		
<b>CODD-NOLAN KATHLEEN</b>	A	<b>MURPHY BRIDIN</b>	F		
<b>CONNICK ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>O'ROURKE JOHN</b>	A		
<b>DEVEREUX DIARMUID</b>	A	<b>Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN FIONNTÁN</b>	F		

Ms. A. O'Neill acknowledged the amendment to the draft budget and advised that it wasn't a change that would materially impact the overall budget.

Cllr. Pip Breen proposed the adoption of the ARV of €0.253 (an increase of 3% in the ARV over 2022 level), this was seconded by Cllr. Willie Kavanagh.

Cllr. J. Owens sought a roll call vote on the adoption of the ARV. The outcome was that the proposal to adopt the ARV of €0.253 was carried with 23 in favour and 5 against. The voting was as follows:

<b>BARDEN PAT</b>	A	<b>DONOHUE ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN FIONNTÁN</b>	A
<b>BELL MAURA</b>	F	<b>FARRELL MARY</b>	F	<b>OWENS JACKSER</b>	A
<b>BOLGER ANDREW</b>	F	<b>FLEMING JOHN</b>	F	<b>SHEEHAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>BREEN PIP</b>	F	<b>KAVANAGH WILLIE</b>	F	<b>SULLIVAN JOE</b>	F
<b>BROWNE AIDAN</b>	F	<b>KENNY DONAL</b>	F	<b>WALSH OLIVER</b>	F
<b>BYRNE CATHAL</b>	F *	<b>LAWLOR GEORGE</b>	F	<b>WHELAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>CARTHY GER</b>	F	<b>MCDONALD LISA</b>	F		
<b>CODD JIM</b>	A	<b>MOORE JIM</b>	F		
<b>CODD-NOLAN KATHLEEN</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BARBARA ANNE</b>	F		
<b>CONNICK ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BRIDIN</b>	F		
<b>DEVEREUX DIARMUID</b>	A	<b>O'ROURKE JOHN</b>	F		

\*Cllr. C. Byrne noted his interest as a rate payer.

#### ***Agree to replace RIS & SRIS with New SBSG Scheme***

- To provide Small Business Support Grant up to a max of €800
- To be applied at 10% of Annual Rates to a max of €800
- To be applied to all with annual rates up to €30,000 meeting T & Cs

Cllr. Michael Sheehan proposed to replace the RIS & SRIS with the New SBSG Scheme, this was seconded by Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy and agreed by all.

#### ***Adopt 2023 Budget with or without amendment***

Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy proposed the adoption of the 2023 Budget with an amendment to increase the Amenity Grants by €1,000 per Member (€6,000 to €7,000), this was seconded by Cllr. Oliver Walsh.

The Cathaoirleach advised that there would be a roll call vote on the proposal to adopt the 2023 Budget with an amendment to increase the Amenity Grants by €1,000 per Member. The outcome was that the proposal to adopt the 2023 Budget with an amendment to increase the Amenity Grants by €1,000 per Member was carried with 24 in favour and 4 against. The voting was as follows:

<b>BARDEN PAT</b>	A	<b>DONOHUE ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN FIONNTÁN</b>	A
<b>BELL MAURA</b>	F	<b>FARRELL MARY</b>	F	<b>OWENS JACKSER</b>	A
<b>BOLGER ANDREW</b>	F	<b>FLEMING JOHN</b>	F	<b>SHEEHAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>BREEN PIP</b>	F	<b>KAVANAGH WILLIE</b>	F	<b>SULLIVAN JOE</b>	F
<b>BROWNE AIDAN</b>	F	<b>KENNY DONAL</b>	F	<b>WALSH OLIVER</b>	F
<b>BYRNE CATHAL</b>	F	<b>LAWLOR GEORGE</b>	F	<b>WHELAN MICHAEL</b>	F
<b>CARTHY GER</b>	F	<b>MCDONALD LISA</b>	F		
<b>CODD JIM</b>	A	<b>MOORE JIM</b>	F		
<b>CODD-NOLAN KATHLEEN</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BARBARA ANNE</b>	F		
<b>CONNICK ANTHONY</b>	F	<b>MURPHY BRIDIN</b>	F		
<b>DEVEREUX DIARMUID</b>	F	<b>O'ROURKE JOHN</b>	F		

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. A O'Neill, Ms. L. Lacey, Mr. S. Begley and the team for their work in compiling the draft budget and explaining it with such clarity. He acknowledged that the Budget Meeting was an excellent demonstration of the democratic process. Cllr.'s M. Sheehan, J. Moore, F. Ó Súilleabháin, J. Fleming and J. Owens all echoed the sentiments of the Cathaoirleach.

Mr. T. Enright thanked Ms. A. O'Neill, her team and the Directors of Service for their efforts in drafting the budget.

#### **THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING**

**Daingithe ar an**

**lá de Nollaig, 2022.**

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***Cllr. George Lawlor***  
***Cathaoirleach***

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***Michael Drea,***  
***County Secretary***