

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Monday 8th July 2019 – 2.30 p.m.
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; M. Byrne; J. Codd; K. Codd Nolan;
A. Connick; D. Devereux; A. Donohoe; M. Farrell;
J. Fleming; T. Forde; D. Hynes; W. Kavanagh;
L. Kelly; D. Kenny; G. Laffan; G. Lawlor;
L. McDonald; J. Moore; B.A. Murphy; B. Murphy;
J. O'Rourke; F. O' Súilleabháin; J. Owens;
F. Staples; J. Sullivan; O. Walsh; M. Whelan.

Officials: Messrs: T. Larkin, D/Chief Executive,
E. Hore, J. Carley, E. Taaffe, Directors of Services;
Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance;
Mr. P. O'Gorman, SEO, Housing & Community;
Mr. P. Collins, Meetings Administrator;

Apologies: Councillors G. Carthy; J. Hegarty.
Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach welcomed members of staff who were attending the Council Meeting.

Expressions of Sympathy:

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

- The family of Joey Mullins, Wexford
- The family of Michael Harper, Whiterock View, Wexford
- The family of Tom Furlong, St. Aidan's Villas, Enniscorthy
- The family of Johnny Ryan, Clonmines, Wellingtonbridge
- The family of Sarah Robinson, Gorey
- The family of Ronnie Coughlan, mother of Liz Coughlan, Print Room
- The family of Timothy Burns, father of Liz Burns, Arts Officer
- The family of Jim Ryan, father of Anne Marie Mullally, New Ross MD
- The family of Mark Redmond, former employee
- The family of Vera O'Hara, mother of Anthony O'Hara, Firefighter, Gorey Fire Service
- The family of Breda Barry, mother of Gretta Barry, Local Charges Unit

Vóta Comhghairdeas:

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

- Wexford's Senior and Minor Hurling Teams and Ladies Football Team on winning the Leinster Finals and the best of luck to the U20 Team in the U-20 Hurling Championship Final next week.
- Michelle O'Neill from Enniscorthy who was the Linesperson in the recent Women's World Cup Final – it was agreed to afford her a civic reception
- Congratulations to all of the recent nominees for the AIMS awards including Oyster Lane who won the award for Best Overall Show.
- The St. Joseph's Football team and St. Ibar's Camogie team, both of whom were successful in the recent Féile
- The new RNLI lifeboat which will service the east coast from Clogher Head, Co. Louth.
- The New Ross Pipe Band for their recent success in the European championship.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 County Council Meeting – 13th May, 2019.

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Connick seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald and agreed by all, the Council approved the minutes of the meeting as outlined above.

1.2 Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council – 14th June, 2019.

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

1.3 Special Meeting of Wexford County Council – 14th June, 2019.

On the proposal of Cllr. W. Kavanagh seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and agreed by all, the Council approved the minutes of the meeting as outlined above.

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

2.1 LAC 1905 – The development of a public realm area to include Norman Gardens.

Create formal planting patterns consisting of a variety of hedges, aromatic plants and herbs. A series of faceted gardens from the space between the paths and negotiate the topography. Footpaths and pathways connecting the River Barrow to St. Mary's Church of Ireland. Shared surfaces, to improve pedestrian access and movement.

Public resting Nodes-incorporating seating at The High Hill, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

The Chief Executive's Report had been circulated to the Members previously and Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services, gave a synopsis of the public realm development at the High Hill, New Ross, Co. Wexford. He noted that there were a small number of submissions which had been dealt with in the Chief Executive's Report.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Whelan seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming LAC1905, as presented, was agreed by the Council.

3. Formation of Sub-Committees

The Cathaoirleach proposed that the following sub-committees should be set up and aligned to the appropriate SPC's – this process will take place over the Summer, with nominations to serve on the sub-committees to be decided in the autumn.

- Revitalising Rural Wexford Sub-Committee
- Healthy County Committee
- Rosslare Port Committee

The Cathaoirleach also sought the agreement of the Council that a sub-committee be set up to deal with St. Stephen's Cemetery. On the proposal of Cllr. M. Farrell seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne the Council agreed to set up the four sub-committees as proposed.

4. Nomination to the Future Skills Forum

The Cathaoirleach sought the agreement of the Council to nominate a Member of the Council to the Future Skills Forum and this was agreed by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy. The formal nomination will be made by the Council in the autumn.

5. Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024

The final draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 had been circulated to the Members. In addition, a memo from the Chief Executive was circulated, setting out the background and development of the Programme with a recommendation that the Council adopt same.

Mr. P. O'Gorman, SEO, Housing, highlighted the main points of the Chief Executive's Report and advised that one submission had been received from a traveller group which had been incorporated into the Programme. He also pointed out that the Council had exceeded their targets with regard to Traveller accommodation over the past 5 years.

The Programme proposes that 20 offers of accommodation will be made to Traveller families each year between 2019 and 2024. The majority of traveller families have expressed a preference for local authority housing with only four families looking to be housed in a group scheme.

A number of Members then contributed to a wide ranging discussion covering issues raised by the Programme. Following discussion the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. J. O'Rourke and agreed by all.

6. Housing First Initiative

Mr. P. O’Gorman, SEO, Housing, then presented details of the Housing First Initiative, a copy of which had been circulated to the Members. The Initiative deals with the housing of rough sleepers and will be run by Focus Ireland who won the tender for the project.

Under the Initiative, rough sleepers will be accommodated in the Wexford Town area where a full care package is available to cater for the needs of people who are sleeping rough. The first tenancies will be made in the next few weeks and Wexford County Council will be licencing six properties to accommodate rough sleepers.

Questions raised by Members were answered by the Senior Executive Officer, Housing and the Initiative was then noted and approved by the Council.

7. Local Authority Housing Estate Awards 2019

Copies of the Local Authority Housing Estate Awards Scheme 2019 had been circulated to the Members. It was noted that the closing date for applications is 31st July 2019 and that the Scheme includes each of the 5 Municipal Districts. The Scheme was noted by the Members.

8. Fix date of Special Housing County Council Meeting (proposed 30.09.19)

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Hynes seconded by Cllr. J. Owens it was agreed that a Special Housing County Council Meeting will take place on 30th September 2019 at 2.30 p.m.

The Cathaoirleach then advised that another Special Meeting with regard to Climate Change is scheduled to take place at the end of January 2020 and details will be circulated to Members in due course.

9. Wexford County Council Housing Tenant Handbooks

The two handbooks had been circulated to the Members – Information Handbook for Tenants and Home Maintenance Handbook for tenants. These handbooks have also been circulated to all Local Authority tenants. It was noted that the handbooks had been checked for plain English to ensure that it could be well understood by all reading it.

Members welcomed the new handbooks and sought clarification on a number of points with regard to maintenance. Mr P. O’ Gorman, Senior Executive Officer, Housing, noted the points made by the Members and agreed to take the comments on board for consideration in future versions of the handbooks.

He also reminded Members that the handbooks had already been circulated to the tenants - while it is a good start, the maintenance of Council housing stock and tenant responsibility for home maintenance will be constantly under review. He noted that the Council has 8,500 requests annually for maintenance and operates a priority rating scheme with repairs and maintenance with a high priority given to electrical faults reported.

The Council noted the new handbooks and the remarks of the Housing Officer.

10. Community Based Facilities Grant Scheme

The Scheme, which had been circulated to the Members, was presented by Ms A. O'Neill, Head of Finance and she highlighted the main points of the Scheme. The report set out the background and the need for a Scheme and the various steps taken prior to the production of the final draft of the Scheme.

Queries from a number of Council Members were dealt with by the Head of Finance. She highlighted the need to strike a balance between supporting the good work being done by charities and the need to address the concerns of other ratepayers.

The Community Based Facilities Grant Scheme was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. D. Devereux and agreed by all.

11. Draft SPC Scheme 2019-2024

The County Secretary advised that the Draft SPC Scheme 2019-2024 had been circulated to the Members and will now go for public consultation. He requested that Council Members send in their preference for which SPC they would like to serve on.

It was also noted that Cllr. D. Hynes would now sit on the County Wexford Drugs Task Force and he will replace Cllr. P. Barden on that committee. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. J. Owens and agreed by all.

Cllr. D. Hynes thanked Cllr. P. Barden for his generous gesture to allow him to sit on the County Wexford Drugs Task Force.

12. Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024

The County Secretary advised that the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024 is being prepared at present and that the public consultation phase is now in place. On the proposal of Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. P. Breen it was agreed to go ahead with the public consultation phase.

13. Report of Corporate Policy Group

The report of the Corporate Policy Group held on 1st July 2019 was proposed by Cllr. J. O'Rourke seconded by Cllr. K. Codd Nolan and agreed by all.

14. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive's Report was considered by the Members. The D/Chief Executive and Members of the Management Team responded to Members queries arising from the report including the following:

- Taking in Charge of Estates
- Noise on the Main Street and the need for bye-laws to regulate noise in public areas
- Length of waiting time for pre-planning meetings
- Rates revaluation

- Whether Wexford County Council had made submissions in respect of application for foreshore investigation of sites for wind farms at Bannow Bay
- Bye-laws for drinking in public places
- The need for the carrying out of an audit for the size of ballot boxes required in various polling stations following the difficulties with voting at the Local Elections
- An update on the discussions with regard to the Dun Mhuire Theatre in Wexford
- The resurfacing and drainage of the N11 at Ballinaslaney, Oylegate
- The appointment of a Heritage Officer
- A bus service from Enniscorthy to Waterford
- The rates relief scheme
- Update on Dun Mhuire
- The Head of Finance then advised the Members that the Council had been given permission to go ahead with finalising loan applications received under the Rebuilding Ireland Housing Loans Scheme.

The Council are now in a position to move on with applications on hand which have been processed, but not finalised. The Council will also accept new loan applications. It is expected that the Council will spend approximately €7.5m on these housing loans in 2019

15. List of Councillors' Conferences and Training

- Report of Cllr. W. Fitzharris to New York.

The list of Councillors Conferences and Training was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. P. Breen and agreed by all.

The Members also noted the report of Cllr. W. Fitzharris.

16. Minutes of Meetings:

- 16.1 Borough District of Wexford 15.04.19
- 16.2 Gorey Municipal District 16.04.19
- 16.3 Enniscorthy Municipal District 15.04.19
- 16.4 New Ross Municipal District 10.04.19

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Connick seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor and agreed by all the Minutes outlined above were noted and approved.

17. Sealing of Documents

The Sealing of Documents as submitted to the meeting was noted and approved.

18. Correspondence and Communications

- Wexford PPN Report 08.05.19
- Correspondence from Minister for Health re HSE Recruitment
- Correspondence from Minister of Transport, Tourism & Sport re abuse of disabled parking

- Correspondence from Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People re Mental Health Sub-Committee Report
- Correspondence from Minister for Health re INMO
- Acknowledgement from Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection regarding pensions in relation to CE Supervisors
- Acknowledgement from Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection regarding pensions
- Acknowledgment from Office of Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government regarding transfer of management and completion of water services connections.
- Acknowledgement from Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation re small businesses in the villages of rural Ireland
- Acknowledgement from Minister for Health concerning a second cat lab for Waterford University Hospital.
- Acknowledgement from Minister for Health concerning the Standing 4 Women Campaign
- Correspondence from Minister for Health concerning the new Children's Hospital
- Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation regarding small businesses in the villages of rural Ireland.

The correspondence outlined above was noted.

Cllr. T. Forde advised that he was unhappy with the response from Minister Jim Daly with regard to the mental health sub-committee report which had been furnished to him. It was agreed to circulate a copy of the report to the new Members of the Council for their information.

At this point a number of Council Members left the meeting – Cllr's J. Owens, D. Hynes, J. O'Rourke and F. Staples.

19. Notices of Motion

19.1 Councillor F. Ó Súilleabháin

"That Wexford County Council follows the example of neighbouring Wicklow and declares a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and that we sign up to the Global Mayors Covenant".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. F. Ó' Súilleabháin seconded by Cllr. T. Forde and agreed by all.

19.2 Councillor G. Lawlor

In the context of the declaration of a Climate Emergency and in support for the enhancement of pollinators and biodiversity Wexford Co. Council commits to the following measures throughout Co. Wexford;

(A) The creation of wild flower gardens in and on suitable green areas.

(B) The planting of native heathers, native shrubs and wildflowers on all our roundabouts and verges throughout the County.

(C) Support the creation of allotments in our towns and villages.

(D) The building of 'bug hotels' on many of our public green areas and parks using the skills of the various Men's Sheds in our communities.

(E) The complete adherence to the ban on the cutting of hedgerows during the proscribed nesting season except in the case of proven road safety requirements.

(F) The complete banning of the use of 'Round Up' as a means to control vegetation.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne. Following discussion with regard to a number of the items raised by Cllr. Lawlor it was agreed to refer the motion to the SPC for further consideration and to revert to the full Council in due course.

19.3 Councillor T. Forde

"I call on Wexford County Council to cease its use of and to prohibit the use of round up, glyphosate-based weedkillers and other toxic herbicides in all public places including public footpaths, road verges, play areas, council estates and parkland/amenity areas"

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde – it was agreed to refer this motion to the SPC for further consideration.

19.4 Councillor M. Byrne

That Wexford County Council,

- makes a focused effort between now and year end to tackle derelict buildings in our County and ensures that all necessary powers, including but not exclusively dereliction levies, planning requirements, safety orders, compulsory purchase orders, are employed to address this scourge.

- provides that a detailed report on progress form part of the Chief Executive's Report each month.

- calls on the Minister for Housing and Local Government to increase the dereliction levy to 10% of market value annually and to introduce measures to grant local authorities more powers to tackle dereliction."

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Byrne seconded by Cllr. F. Ó' Súilleabháin and agreed by all.

19.5 Councillor A. Browne

"That Wexford County Council, in keeping with Ireland's ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (U.N.C.R.P.D.), adopts a policy that any new playgrounds or playgrounds undergoing renovation will serve as inclusive playgrounds, meet the principles of universal design and allow children of all abilities to play together through "side by side play".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Browne seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald and agreed by all.

19.6 Councillor D. Hynes

"This Council calls on the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport is Shane Ross, TD. to insure that the necessary legislation is put in place ASAP to properly regulate the Gray Hound industry in light of the revelations that were made known in the recent RTE program. Which highlighted the whole scale culling of unwanted greyhounds (6,000 annually) and the over breeding with no thought given to these animals only the maximum profit of the industry. Also ban the exportation of Irish greyhounds to jurisdictions that do not meet Irish animal welfare standards and make the IGB responsible and accountable for enforcing and policing this ban".

As Cllr. Hynes was no longer in attendance the motion fell.

19.7 Councillor T. Forde

"I call on Wexford County Council recognise the importance of protecting our biodiversity and to create a new Biodiversity Action Plan to update and to entail new initiatives to improve upon the current plan which is dated 2013-2018"

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly and agreed by all.

20. Any Other Business

Cllr. L. Kelly highlighted the case of Amy Richards who, following a general anaesthetic, had to sit her Leaving Cert exam - her only other option was to repeat the exam later in the year. This was as a result of a decision by the Examination Commission.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Kelly seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne it was agreed to send a letter to the Examinations Commissioner and the Department of Education to highlight this case and this was agreed by all.

Cllr. M. Byrne then raised the issue of invitations to the opening of the Enniscorthy By-Pass and asked that the opportunity of the opening should be used to highlight the need to complete the Oylegate to Rosslare motorway route as a matter of urgency.

Cllr. D. Devereux raised an issue with regard to the assembly of a site Anne Street, Wexford. He understood that correspondence had recently been sent to the Chief Executive and he wished to bring this to the attention of the meeting.

Mr. T. Larkin, D/Chief Executive, advised that the Chief Executive's Office had received the correspondence and noted that Wexford County Council had spent a considerable amount of time on this matter previously. He had carried out a thorough investigation into previous correspondence and had answered all of the questions raised by the correspondent at the time.

The D/Chief Executive confirmed that the Chief Executive had met the correspondent recently.

Cllr. Mary Farrell advised that the wording of the document is quite serious and that the recent FOI has thrown up further evidence and she would feel more comfortable if the document submitted was dealt with now.

The Cathaoirleach advised that he would hope that a response could be given to the Council in September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

A number of Councillors then expressed the view that this issue should be put to bed, that it had been dealt with previously by the Council, and that the matter had been examined extensively at the time and the process was now complete.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an 9ú la de Mean Fómhair, 2019.

Cathaoirleach