

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 8th May, 2023
in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach**Councillors:**

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

Officials:

Mr. Eamonn Hore, Deputy Chief Executive
 Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance
 Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services
 Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services
 Ms. Sinead Casey, A/Director of Services
 Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary

Apologies:

Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive
 Ms. Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services

Votes of Sympathy:

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to:

- The family of Peter 'Pax' Shortall, father of Paula Shortall, Housing Section and Joseph Shortall, former employee
- The family of Mary Delaney, wife of Larry Delaney, former employee and mother of Larry Delaney, Water Services
- The family of Yvonne Warham, sister of Esther Lanney, Customer Service Unit and Catherine White, Environment Section
- The family of Fintan Cleary, brother of Sean Cleary, Water Services Inspector, Water Services

Votes of Congratulations:

Cllr. B.A. Murphy congratulated Andy Doyle on winning the Best Actor award at the RTE All-Ireland Drama Festival in Athlone.

Cllr. M. Sheehan congratulated Nicole Kinsella, Paddy Kane, Nicholas O'Rourke and Jamie O'Rourke from St. Mary's Boxing Club on winning All Ireland medals.

Cllr. Jim Codd congratulated the Sinnott family of Bannow, Paul Hillis of Bannow, John Walsh of Knocktown and other connections in the Bannow, Rathangan, Foulksmills, areas for their involvement in the success of Corach Rambler, Grand National winner.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

1.1 County Council Meeting 11th April, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. D. Kenny, the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the County Council Meeting on 11th April, 2023.

1.1.1 Matters Arising

Cllr. B.A. Murphy advised that she left the April meeting at 5.30pm.

1.2 Special Meeting of Wexford County Council (Climate Change, Coastal Erosion, Coastal Flooding & Rising Sea Levels) 11th April, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Hynes, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy, the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Wexford County Council (Climate Change, Coastal Erosion, Coastal Flooding & Rising Sea Levels) on 11th April, 2023.

2. 3 Year Capital Programme 2023 – 2025

Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance presented the proposed 3-year Capital Programme for the Council's consideration. The Programme outlined 199 capital projects at various stages together with estimated costs and proposed sources of funding.

The Programme was prepared on the basis of a realistic and prudent assessment of the position regarding each project and on the basis of the information available at the time and having regard to the measures proposed to fund the Programme.

The Members considered the Programme and raised a number of points for clarification which were responded to by Ms. A. O'Neill and the Management Team, including the following:

- Spend to date on programme.
- Should High Hill continue to be included?
- No provision for Duncannon improvement works.
- Some proposed wastewater treatment plants not included.
- Larkin's cross roundabout works not included.
- Expenditure on Min Ryan Park.
- Is land cost included in the funding of playground at Templeshannon?
- Spend of c€220m on housing welcomed.
- Concern over cost of 3 housing units at the Bullawn, New Ross.
- Query in relation to cost of Carrigfoyle & Curracloe activity centres.
- Request for breakdown of cost for Gorey town park.
- Villages in New Ross prioritised for improved wastewater facilities?
- Investment in Kilmore Quay business hub welcomed.
- Concern over cost of feasibility study for New Ross port.
- Is New Ross library being extended?
- Request to explore greenway to White Mountain rather than St. Mullins.
- Update on progress of lighting at Min Ryan skate park.
- Request for increased spending on housing land.
- Plan for Mechanics Institute and Ballast Office.
- Possibility of fast tracking N11/N25 works.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. P. Barden and agreed by all, the Council resolved to adopt the 3 Year Capital Programme 2023 – 2025.

3. Wexford County Council Arts Plan 2023 - 2027

Ms. C. Godkin outlined the legislative basis for adopting an Arts Plan and the steps taken in the process of formulating the current draft plan.

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes, the Council resolved to adopt the Wexford County Council Arts Plan 2023 - 2027.

4. Approval for delegation to travel to St. Davids, Pembrokeshire for Ancient Connections Civic Visit 28th May, 2023 – 30th May, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan, the Council resolved to approve a delegation to travel to St. Davids, Pembrokeshire for Ancient Connections Civic Visit 28th May, 2023 – 30th May, 2023.

5. Approval for delegation from Rosslare MD to accept invitation to visit Dunkirk from 31st May to 4th June 2023 to further develop the twinning relationship, following on from the success of the pilot school exchange programme.

On the proposal of Cllr. F. Staples, seconded by Cllr. J. Moore, the Council resolved to approve a delegation from Rosslare MD to accept an invitation to visit Dunkirk from 31st May to 4th June 2023.

6. Proposed Date of Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council - 26th June, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Carthy, seconded by Cllr. A. Bolger, the Council resolved to fix the date of the Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council for 26th June, 2023.

7. Chief Executive's Report

The Deputy Chief Executive and members of the Management Team responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- Ongoing odour issue at Ballyminaun.
- Latest on property in north Wexford affected by defective block issue.
- Current position in relation to Tobar Mhuire housing units in Gorey.
- Status of proposed Wexford St. housing development in Gorey.
- Discussion on keeping Members up to date in relation to housing applicants they have made reps on behalf of.
- Criteria for Town & Village renewal scheme.
- Is Wexford County Council providing additional funding for 225th anniversary of 1798 rebellion?
- Need for Members to be kept in the loop in relation to the work of town teams in New Ross and Enniscorthy.
- Timeframe for works for Bunclody water treatment plant.
- Need for traffic management plan for Tincurry works.
- Date for start of safe route to school programme for St. Aidans.
- When will list of schemes approved for funding under the Community Recognition Fund be available?
- Request to clarify the Housing report which is confusing.
- The number of vacancies in the Fire Service and the number of staff who have left after serving less than 5 years.
- Request that water softeners be provided in social houses affected by hard water supplies, such as Fardytown W.S.
- Timeframe for Choice Based Letting to be implemented.
- Request for list of social houses being retrofitted with windows and doors.
- The need for additional emergency accommodation.
- Request that landlords aren't given unreasonable extension of time to carry out works identified after private rented inspection.
- Request to invite IDA in to discuss why we are only getting 1.2% of the IDA jobs, when we have 3.2% of the population. It was agreed by all Members that the IDA should be invited to a meeting.

- Timeframe for assessment of expressions of interest for Gorey Market House.
- Timeframe for works on Wilton bridge.
- Request for action to be taken to reduce the length of time to get a pre-planning meeting.
- Request to clean up the Murphy Flood's site.
- Update on discussions with the Department in relation to affordable housing.
- Query in relation to housing delivery in Enniscorthy.
- Query in relation to the length of time social houses are left vacant before re-letting.
- Timeframe for delivery of Ross Road Astro turf pitch.
- Serious issue with dog fouling needs to be highlighted.
- Monument on Vinegar Hill needs to be cleaned.
- Request for a solution from TII in relation to speeding highlighted in Tagoat village traffic study.
- Timeline for filling Rosslare MD Housing Officer post.
- On the proposal of Cllr. G. Carthy, seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald and approved by all, the Members of Wexford County Council resolved to invoke their reserve function under section 131 A(1)(b) calling on the Chief Executive to prepare and submit plans, specifications, and an estimate of cost on a suitable site to house a local affordable housing scheme to include social and any other housing options if necessary for the Kilrane/Rosslare Harbour area.
- Request that Wexford County Council raise concerns with Minister Martin in relation to the very restrictive conditions attached to 1798 funding stream.
- How does Wexford County Council recruit Healthy Age Friendly Officers?
- Request for Countywide shop front scheme to be considered.
- Query if a response has been received from the Minister in relation to funding for roads in New Ross town.
- Frustration expressed that constraints on Community Facility Scheme are far too stringent.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at this point.

Cllr.'s J. Owens, J. Hegarty, A. Connick and A. Donohoe left the meeting at this point.

- Enquiry as to how many affected by the eviction ban lifting attended the meeting with Housing staff.
- Timeline for works on Bride St.
- Request for plan for bridge over the Ounavarra river so footpath from Gorey to Courtown can be completed.
- Signage needed in Rosslare Harbour waiting area promoting Wexford. Also, enquiry if tourism leaflets can be placed on ferries.
- Request for New Ross to be considered as a location for a motor home park.
- Request that consideration be given to one staff member being responsible for securing planning permission on social housing sites across the County.
- Enquiry if Council is confident of getting funding to connect Beechview and Farrin Carraig estates in Duncannon to wastewater treatment plant.
- Request for statistics on number of local authority house chimney fires.

Cllr. L. Kelly left the meeting at this point.

- Request for Executive to seek increased train frequency between Dublin and Gorey.
- Query if the Council has a suitable site the Coastguard could use in Courtown.
- Has the Council received a response from the Department in relation to the KPMG report on affordable housing.
- Update in relation to 15 units in Grantstown.
- Department approval for 18 units in Tagoat welcomed.
- Date for opening of housing units in Tagoat.
- Request for external access to Arts centre to be examined to ensure it is accessible for all.
- Query if anything can be done through planning to restrict the number of vape shops on the Main St.

Cllr. A. Browne left the meeting at this point.

- Request that road markings at Cullen's Cross be redone after resurfacing.
- Concerns raised over condition of Busherstown Road.
- Request for solar bins like those in Bunclody for the Rosslare MD.
- Request that two roads at Cloonerane, Taghmon and Gurtins, Cleariestown be considered for improvement works. It needs to be clarified if they are roads or private lanes.

Cllr. L. McDonald left the meeting at this point.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Whelan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and agreed by all, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 5.30pm.

8. Minutes of CPG Meeting 2nd May, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Breen, seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the CPG of 2nd May, 2023.

9. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting):

- 9.1** New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 8th March, 2023
- 9.2** Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 15th March, 2023
- 9.3** Borough District of Wexford Meeting– 27th March, 2023
- 9.4** Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 27th March, 2023
- 9.5** Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 21st March, 2023
- 9.6** Protocol Committee Meeting -12th December, 2022
- 9.7** Planning & Building Control SPC Meeting – 19th January, 2023
- 9.8** Climate Change, Biodiversity & Environment SPC - 23rd February, 2023

The minutes of the above meetings were noted.

10. Correspondence and Communications

- 10.1** Letter from Westmeath County Council re: motion of 25th April, 2023
- 10.2** Correspondence from Senator Malcolm Byrne regarding motion of 28th April, 2023

The Members noted the above correspondence.

11. Councillor's Conferences and Training

11.1 List of Conferences/Training – List Attached

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell, the Council approved attendance for the following conference:

Conference:

26th May, 2023 “Count Her In National Conference” – Equality for Women for Election in 2024. Cork City Concert Hall.

11.2 Councillor's Conference Reports:

Conference Report Cllr. J. Fleming - The Suck Valley Way, 5/6 April, 2023
Conference Report Cllr. J. Sullivan - The Suck Valley Way, 5/6 April, 2023
Conference Report Cllr. G. Laffan - The Suck Valley Way, 5/6 April, 2023
Conference Report Cllr. D. Kenny - The Suck Valley Way, 5/6 April, 2023
Wexford London Association Delegation Report - April, 2023
Fleurus Delegation Report April, 2023 - Mayor M. Bell, Cllr. G. Laffan, Cllr. G. Lawlor

The Members noted the reports above, as circulated.

12. Notices of Motion

12.1 Cllr. Michael Whelan

“I move as the LAMA Representative on this Council that Minister Simon Harris would immediately revisit the Higher Education Bill of 2022 to include the automatic inclusion of Local Authority Elected Members on the Higher Education Boards.”

Executive Response:

If passed, this Motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Whelan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and carried.

Cllr.'s F. Staples, J. Moore and C. Byrne left the meeting at this point.

12.2 Cllr. Tom Forde, Cllr. Hynes and Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin

"We call on Minister Darragh O'Brien to reverse his decision to end the no fault eviction ban and to keep it in place until government have significant and impactful emergency measures, supports and resources in place for tenants and local authorities that will allow them to address this emergency situation."

Executive Response:

If passed, this Motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing, for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde and seconded by Cllr. F. Ó'Súilleabháin. After a lengthy discussion with contributions from Cllr.'s T. Forde, F. Ó'Súilleabháin, D. Hynes, J. Codd, G. Lawlor (spoke in favour), M. Sheehan and B. Murphy (spoke against), a roll call vote was requested.

The outcome was the motion was defeated with 9 in favour and 14 against. The voting was as follows:

BELL, MAURA	F	KAVANAGH, WILLIE	A	WHELAN, MICHAEL	A
BOLGER, ANDREW	A	KENNY, DONAL	A		
BREEN, PIP	A	LAFFAN, GARRY	A		
CARTHY, GER	F	LAWLOR, GEORGE	F		
CODD, JIM	F	MURPHY, BARBARA ANNE	A		
CODD-NOLAN, KATHLEEN	A	MURPHY, BRIDÍN	A		
DEVEREUX, DIARMUID	A	O'ROURKE, JOHN	F		
FARRELL, MARY	F	Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN, FIONNTÁN	F		
FLEMING, JOHN	A	SHEEHAN, MICHAEL	A		
FORDE, TOM	F	SULLIVAN, JOE	A		
HYNES, DAVID	F	WALSH, OLIVER	A		

12.3 Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy

“That Wexford County Council use ‘The Street’ in Co. Hall to facilitate Pre Planning Clinics for people hoping to apply for planning permission for one off houses on a quarterly basis. This measure would help to alleviate the pressure on pre planning and allow people to move on with their lives.”

Executive Response:

The use of an open clinic was considered at a recent SPC which discussed the problems relating to delays in the preplanning system. It was agreed that such a proposal would have limited benefit as only the basic generic advice could be given (this information is available from the County Development Plan and could be provided by the applicants’ architect or planning agent).

The Planning Department had previously held information events but those attending wanted advice on their projects and had to be processed for individual meetings. At present the preplanning requests are reviewed by the planner and, in many cases, site visits are carried out to advise on the setting and design of developments. Each preplanning request is also validated to comply with Section 247 of the Planning and

Development Act 2000 (as amended), mapped and recorded on the Planning APAS system. This would be incredibly difficult in an open meeting.

The Planning Section will continue to assist the planning agents in advising their clients and work has been carried out on this through the agent advice days and email updates. General advice can also be given by calling the Planning Department Customer Unit (053 9196101) and the Planner on Call will seek to provide assistance.

To the end of last month (28-4-23) the Planning Staff have completed 136 preplanning meetings and are continuing to clear the back log despite increasing workloads and additional duties.

Ms. L. Hore corrected the record and advised that the SPC hasn't discussed open pre-planning meetings, as incorrectly outlined in the Executive response to the motion.

After some discussion on the motion, Ms. L. Hore agreed to implement the proposal as outlined on a trial basis.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. A. Bolger and carried.

12.4 Cllr. Tom Forde

"We request that Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien allow local authorities to work with landlords to lease suitable properties on a long term basis. Under the Housing for All strategy that was announced by the Government at the end of 2021, the Leasing Scheme has ceased and WCC can no longer accept new proposals for this scheme. We ask that this scheme be reinstated to support a housing solution for many that are in need and to avoid some of these properties becoming or staying vacant."

Executive Response:

If passed, this Motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing, for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. F. Ó'Súilleabháin and carried.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an

lá de Meitheamh, 2023.

Cllr. George Lawlor
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary