

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
Held via MS TEAMS Monday 10th January, 2022 at 2.30pm**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. B. A. Murphy Cathaoirleach.

Councillors:

BARDEN	PAT	DONOHUE	ANTHONY	MCDONALD	LISA
BELL	MAURA	FARRELL	MARY	MOORE	JIM
BOLGER	ANDREW	FLEMING	JOHN	MURPHY	BRIDIN
BREEN	PIP	FORDE	TOM	O'ROURKE	JOHN
BROWNE	AIDAN	HEGARTY	JOHN	O'SUILLEABHAIN	FIONNTAIN
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	LAWLOR	GEORGE	WHELAN	MICHAEL

Officials:

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive
 Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services
 Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services
 Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance
 Ms. C. Godkin, Director of Services
 Ms. Liz Hore, Director of Services
 Mr. D. Minogue, County Secretary

The Cathaoirleach asked for the cooperation of the members in taking Item 4 as the first item for consideration. This was agreed.

4. Section 24 of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 as amended by the Standards in Public Office Act 2001 and as applied by the Local Government Act 2001.

Consideration of the Report of the Investigation by the Standards in Public Office Commission of Alleged Contraventions of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and 2001 and Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 - Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive, Wexford County Council

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. M. Bell, it was agreed unanimously to defer consideration of Item 4 to a Special Meeting of Wexford County Council, to be held on Friday 14 January 2022 at 2.30pm.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Whelan, seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy, it was further agreed unanimously to hold that Special Meeting in person in the Street, County Hall Wexford.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Council Meeting 13.12.2021 – 2.30pm

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Laffan, seconded by Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan, the Minutes of the Meeting of Wexford County Council of 13th December 2021 were adopted by the Council.

2. Proposed disposal of property under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001

2.1 Disposal of property at Main Street, Coolgreany, Gorey, Co. Wexford

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe, the Council resolved to dispose of the above property in accordance with the terms of the Notice as circulated.

3. Finance Matters

3.1 Increased Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Borrowing Requirement

The Members considered the report of the Head of Finance in relation to this matter.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan, the Council resolved to approve the additional borrowing requirement of €1,694,597 for the 2021 Housing Mortgage Programme.

The Members further noted that the Local Authority Homeloan Scheme will be introduced shortly and welcomed the proposal of the Council to widely publicise the availability of the Scheme to prospective applicants.

3.2 Audit Committee Report to Wexford County Council

The Members noted the submission by the Audit Committee of the following documents to the Council in accordance with Section 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and Regulation 15(1) of the Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014:

- (a) Consideration by the Audit Committee of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) 2019 and the Local Government Auditor's Statutory Report on the accounts of Wexford County Council for 2020.
- (b) Wexford County Council Audit Committee Annual Report 2021
- (c) Audit Committee Work Programme 2022

5. Return of Annual Declaration – Notice under S174 (b) of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended)

The County Secretary (Ethics Registrar) advised the Members that he would shortly issue a notice to each Member under Section 174 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) advising each Member of their obligation to make an Annual Declaration to the Ethics Registrar in accordance with Section 172 of that Act.

6. Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended:

Consideration of the creation of a subcommittee of Wexford County Council called *Wexford County Council Women's Coalition* which will comprise of the female elected representatives on Wexford County Council in line with the Women's Caucus in the Houses of the Oireachtas & other local authorities.

On the proposal of Cllr. Bell, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes, the Council resolved to create the above Committee in accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended:

7. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive and members of the Management Team responded to the queries of the Members in relation to the following matters:

- Wexford Inner Relief Road – draft maps to be circulated for Member's information
- Technological University for the Southeast – site acquisition in progress – being pursued by agreement, with CPO option to be considered if required
- Choice-based Letting – commencement date to be outlined at Feb meeting
- Re-allocation of houses at Belvedere Road – will be pursued
- Members Portal – response times continue to improve as resources added
- Water treatment plants – provision of ultra-violet facilities – being pursued with IW

- Development of Carrigfoyle Activity Centre – Part 8 Planning application for boathouse to be lodged in Feb
- Provision of special needs technologies in libraries (e.g. Reader Pens) – Council will consider adding to existing catalogue of such facilities
- Use of Mobi-mats at beaches to improve access – this is being currently developed under the auspices of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Planning statistics for 2021 – additional breakdown detail to be provided to the Members
- Pre-planning – timescales – current 32 days lead-time – efforts being made to reduce further
- National Rail Review – Members are frustrated by impact on proposed Wexford to Rosslare Greenway– WCC will make a submission - to include request for transport of bikes on trains
- Litter enforcement statistics – available in the CE Report
- New Ross Port - expenditure and income Report to be presented to the March meeting of NRMD
- Ambulance Services – Council supportive of provision of Gorey base
- Defibrillator maintenance – training available to community-based organisations
- “World of Work” Programme – Council commended for its support
- Improvements to Muga at Min Ryan Ryan – Council to consider providing nets behind goals
- Oyster Lane / Mechanics Institute – Future uses to be considered and advised to the Members of WBD
- Active Travel funding – Council meets NTA monthly - confident promised funding will be secured
- Trinity Wharf- tenders for access road currently being assessed – works expected to start Q1 2022 – confident that timelines and milestones can be achieved
- Monck St Development – to commence Q1 2022
- Kilmore Sewerage Treatment Plant – WCC will put pressure of IW to provide start date for the construction contract
- Flood damaged houses – concerns that humanitarian aid falling short – not intended to replace like-for-like but instead to offer a more basic redress
- Flood defences in Bridgetown and Duncormick areas – Council to meet OPW
- Securing of site for additional hotel in New Ross – shortlist of sites being prepared together with list of criteria against which each candidate site will be considered
- New Ross Courthouse – Council is process of acquiring a number of neighbouring properties
- John Street – notice of entry to be served on owners/reputed owners
- New Ross Advance Factory – design details being finalised in cooperation with interested funding/construction partners
- Review of speed limits – Likely to commence in Q2 2022 – Chief Technician Roads to visit each MD with more details
- Murphy Flood Hotel – Council’s intervention and ambition for site is appreciated
- Enniscorthy Country Walk – improvement plans to be presented to Jan meeting of EMD
- Curracloe Water Sports Activity Centre – Failte Ireland has issued Stage 2 approval
- Enniscorthy Sports Hub – Council awaits Dept approval of tender documentation

- Collapsed bridge at Chapel, Clonroche – Council appreciates level of disruption to persons living locally - “bailey bridge” proposed as interim measure
- Hedgerow removal – Council to support afforestation proposals where feasible

8. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting):

8.1 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 10.11.2021

8.2 Rosslare Municipal District Special Meeting – 11.11.2021

8.3 Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 17.11.2021

8.4 Borough District of Wexford Meeting – 15.11.2021

8.5 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 15.11.2021

8.6 Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 16.11.2021

The Members noted the above Minutes

9. Correspondence and Communications

9.1 Email from Private Secretary to Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD dated 20th Dec. 2021.

9.2 Letter from Louth County Council re Motion dated 23rd Dec.2021.

The Members noted the above correspondence

10. Councillors Conferences and Training

10.1 Conference Report - Cllr. Garry Laffan - "Housing for All - How will it help people find homes", Carlingford, Co. Louth

10.2 Conference Report - Cllr. Pip Breen - "Delivering Plan Led Development Annual Conference 2021, Whites Hotel, Wexford

10.3 Conference Report - Cllr. Fionntan O Suilleabhain – Mental Health & Wellbeing Conference, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

The Members noted the above conference reports

11. Deferred Notices of Motions

11.1 Cllr Davy Hynes

“This council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to scrap the RAS scheme or remove the discriminatory criteria and allow tenants to remain on the Housing Transfer list as is the case in the HAP scheme.

On the proposal of Cllr. Hynes seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor, the Council to adopt this motion.

11.2 Cllr. Michael Sheehan

“That this Council reaffirms our commitment and support for the local Greyhound and Equine sports industry; we commend the Government for its continued financial support and calls on the Minister to guarantee the level of grants for the life of the government so that the organising bodies can continue to invest in the sport locally and the standards of aftercare for retired animals. Furthermore, we call on our Oireachtas members to state their position on this issue and commit to oppose any moves to reduce the support.”

Response of Executive:

If the Motion is passed, the County Secretary will arrange for a copy of the Motion to be forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD for consideration, and will also arrange for the Motion to be forwarded to the six Wexford members of the Oireachtas as outlined in the Motion.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan and seconded by Cllr. P. Breen.

Following debate, it was unanimously agreed to amend the Motion as follows:

“That this Council reaffirms our commitment and support for the local Greyhound and Equine sports industry; we commend the Government for its continued financial support and calls on the Minister to guarantee the level of grants for the life of the government so that the organising bodies can continue to invest in the sport locally and the standards of aftercare for retired animals.

We ask for oversight to be added to provide security to all participants.

Furthermore, we call on our Oireachtas members to state their position on this issue and commit to oppose any moves to reduce the support.”

The amended Motion was agreed unanimously.

11.3 Cllr. Andrew Bolger

“Wexford County Council undertake to increase its use of Irish Sign Language (ISL) in public communications. Irish Sign Language is the first and/or preferred language of 5,000 Deaf people in Ireland and approximately 40,000 people in general will communicate in ISL.

Response of Executive:

Wexford County Council currently offers services in ISL at it’s headquarters at Carricklawn, Wexford. ISL service will be available in all public libraries by the end of Qtr 1 2022 and in all Municipal District Offices by end of Qtr 4 2022.

If Motion is passed, Wexford County Council proposes that any new public-facing Council-made videos will also be made available in ISL. We will also consider the provision of ISL at all public events where Council members or Council officials are making an address.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Bolger, seconded by Cllr. D. Devereux and agreed unanimously.

11.4 Cllr. Tom Forde & Cllr. George Lawlor

“We ask that this council allow for the representation of all parties and none on the Corporate Policy Group.”

Response of Executive:

Section 133 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) provides the following:

“The elected council of each local authority shall form a committee, to be known as the corporate policy group and in this section referred to as the ‘policy group’, consisting of:

- (a) the Cathaoirleach of the local authority who shall chair the policy group,*
- (b) the chairpersons of the strategic policy committees of the local authority, and*
- (c) where for any period of time, a policy group does not contain a member from a municipal district to whom paragraph (a) or (b) relates, a municipal district member for each municipal district concerned”*

As only the members identified at (a) (b) and (c) above can be members of the CPG, it is not be possible to comply with this Notice of Motion.

Having reviewed the response of the Executive, the Council agreed to withdraw the Motion and instead resolved to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to seek an amendment to the legislation in order to allow representation of political parties (and non-party) on the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).

The County Secretary agreed to correspond with the Minister as requested, while pointing out that the composition of the CPG was designed to be reflective of the work areas of the Council rather than reflective of the various political parties within the Council.

11.5 Cllr. Andrew Bolger and Cllr. L. Kelly

“We propose that Wexford County Council considers piloting the Space-Finder App or similar technology in County Wexford to assist disabled drivers in the identification of vacant disabled parking spaces and to provide real-time navigation to the nearest available disabled space”.

Response of Executive:

Wexford County Council has been in contact with relevant staff of Limerick City and County Council (where such a system has been recently installed) with a view to the provision of a similar service to users of disabled parking facilities in County Wexford.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Bolger, seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly and agreed unanimously.

12. Notices of Motion

12.1 Cllr. M. Bell

“Wexford’s Women’s coalition calls on the Minister for Education to implement a programme to tackle adulthood domestic violence through early education in our schools”.

The current SPHE programme provided in secondary schools teaches our young people how to be safe and protect themselves. Instead, the Women’s Coalition is calling for “respectful relationship education” to be introduced in schools during secondary school education. Respectful Relationships Education teaches our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence and also teaches our young people what constitutes criminal activity in a relationship such as the sharing of intimate pictures. This programme was initially rolled out in Australia in 2016 and is proving successful in preventing gender-based violence”.

Response of the Executive:

If the Motion is passed, the County Secretary will arrange for a copy of the Motion to be forwarded to the Minister for Education for consideration.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Bell, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and agreed unanimously.

The Council also noted the success of the nationwide Manuela Programme of awareness raising and education activities aimed at and preventing and combating violence against women, which was delivered between Sept. 2017 and March 2020.

12.2 Cllr. J. Fleming

“That this Council calls on Education Minister Norma Foley T.D. to ensure that third level institutions treat students from Meánscoil Gharman and other non-Gaeltacht meánscoileanna the same as students from meánscoileanna in Gaeltacht regions”.

At present, third level institutions offer restricted entry pathways on education courses for applicants from meánscoileanna located in Gaeltacht regions. Restricted entry pathways usually require less points than the general entry pathways to education courses. Given the benefits of Irish speakers sharing their knowledge as teachers, it is important that third level institutions equally share the benefits of providing a restricted entry pathway to students leaving meánscoileanna in both Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht regions. “

Response of the Executive:

If the Motion is passed, the County Secretary will arrange for a copy of the Motion to be forwarded to the Minister for Education for consideration.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Bell, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and agreed unanimously.

12.3 Cllr. T. Forde

“I ask that this council review its policy regarding mutual transfers to make the process easier and quicker for tenants.”.

Many requests for works are often made as a prerequisite for a transfer taking place. In the case of mutual transfers, these should be relaxed to facilitate the transfer, provided that both applicants are happy with the current condition of the properties and that there are no safety issues outstanding.”

Response of the Executive:

The current requirement for transfer applicants to ensure each property is presented to an acceptable standard, prior to the transfer taking place, is a reasonable provision and reflects the terms of the original letting agreements. If transfers are allowed in cases where properties are below an acceptable standard, this will create different standards of rented properties and ultimately increase demand on the Council to carry out repairs.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde and seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes.

Following discussion, it was agreed to refer the matter to the Housing SPC for further consideration. It was also agreed that Cllr. Forde would be invited to the SPC to speak on the Motion.

12.4 Cllr. J. Fleming Fianna Fáil group

“That Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Housing Daragh ‘O Brien TD to allow pensioners purchase their homes under the tenant purchase scheme even if their only source of income is social welfare payments.”

Response of the Executive:

If the Motion is passed, the County Secretary will arrange for a copy of the Motion to be forwarded to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for consideration.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Fleming, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and agreed unanimously.

12.5 Cllrs. Aidan Browne, Pip Breen, John Fleming, Willie Kavanagh, Donal Kenny, Garry Laffan, Lisa McDonald, Barbara-Anne Murphy, Michael Sheehan, Michael Whelan.

“There are 82 children in Ireland with Spina Bifida and or Hydrocephalus who require urgent orthopaedic intervention. Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Health to fast track these children for surgical review as a matter of urgency.

We also call on the Minister to ensure that provision of services is made to Disabled Children within elective hospital settings as well as acute hospitals to avoid a repeat of this situation.

Response of the Executive:

If the Motion is passed, the County Secretary will arrange for a copy of the Motion to be forwarded to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, TD for consideration.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Browne, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen and agreed unanimously.

13. Any Other Business

The Cathaoirleach and Members offered the sympathy of the Council to the families of the following recently deceased:

- Ms. Julie Kehoe, Ballinacoola, Craanford,
- Mr. John Doyle, The Duffry , Enniscorthy
- Mr. James Prendergast, father of Marie Kavanagh, Motor Tax Department.
- Mr. Richard (Dan) McGrath, father of Colm McGrath, Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- Ms. Dolores Mitchell, mother of Mark Michell, IT Section
- Mr. Joe Doyle, Brother of Siobhan Doyle, FOI Section
- Ms. Tara Manning, Mother of Eamon Manning, General Operative, Enniscorthy Municipal District and Mother-in Law of Joanne Kehoe, Senior Executive Engineer, Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District.
- Michael Byrne former Town Foreman in New Ross and brother of former Councillor/ Deputy Hugh Byrne.
- Mary Byrne Airhill Templetown

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an

lá de Feabhra, 2022.

Cllr Barbara-Anne Murphy
Cathaoirleach

David Minogue,
County Secretary