

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 10th July, 2023
in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. John Fleming, Cathaoirleach

Councillors:

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

Officials:

Mr. Eamonn Hore, Deputy Chief Executive
 Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance
 Mr. Gerry Forde, A/Director of Services
 Mr. Diarmuid Houston, A/Director of Services
 Ms. Sinead Casey, A/Director of Services
 Ms. Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services
 Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary

Apologies:

Cllr. Tom Forde
 Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive
 Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services

Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services

1. Presentations to the Council

1.1 Eirgrid Presentation - Offshore Infrastructure Development off the South Coast

Cllr. J. Fleming welcomed Michael Mahon, Chief Infrastructure Officer, and Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement with Eirgrid.

The presentation outlined who Eirgrid are and what they do, the demand on Ireland's electricity grid, Ireland's offshore energy future, the Waterford/Wexford offshore study area and the public engagement process.

Mr. Mahon and Ms. Dooley responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- Timeline for the foreshore licence process to be completed?
- Request for more public consultation, closer to Wexford.
- What's the capacity of a sub-station?
- Potential for community ownership projects.
- How do we manage thin line between demand and supply?
- Is the inter-connector to Normandy supplied by nuclear power?
- Request for clarity for fishermen as to where they can fish.
- Need to know the location and impact of infrastructure.
- Cod spawning grounds need to be identified and protected.
- What down time will customers experience during works and how will this be mitigated?
- Where does the role of the ESB start and Eirgrid stop?
- Will some conductors need to be upgraded?
- When will sub stations be built?
- What % of the grid needs to be upgraded?

1.2 Water Services Presentation - Update on Uisce Éireann Transition

Mr. E. Hore welcomed Ms. Fionnuala Callery and outlined the purpose of the presentation.

Ms. Fionnuala Callery, A/Senior Engineer gave a presentation in relation to the impending transfer of water responsibilities to Uisce Éireann on 6th September, 2023.

Ms. Callery outlined that the service to the public will remain unchanged, the SLA signed in 2014 will be replaced by the Master Co-Operation Agreement and the Support Services Agreement until December 2026, and Uisce Éireann will be the point of contact for all water services queries.

Ms. Callery advised that capacity registers are available on the Uisce Éireann website and a pre connection enquiry should be submitted with all planning applications. The cost of new connections is set by the Commissioner for Regulation of Utilities.

Ms. Callery advised that Wexford County Council remain responsible for the Rural Water Programme and highlighted legacy issues pertaining to 18 non-Uisce Éireann sewerage

plants, 4 disputed plants and 50 non-Uisce Éireann water plants that will require funding and management, if not accepted by Uisce Éireann post SLA.

Ms. Callery and Mr. Hore responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- Request for mobile contact number to be provided to Elected Members for relevant Uisce Éireann staff.
- Clarification was sought in relation to future communications with the Elected Members.
- Members strongly expressed the view that Uisce Éireann should be responsible for all water services including disputed legacy issues.
- Query as to who is responsible for outages after 6th September?
- Query if Uisce Éireann is responsible for all infrastructure after 6th September?
- Several Members expressed dissatisfaction with Uisce Éireann's follow up and communications with the Members.
- Concerns raised in relation to quality of road reinstatement works.
- Query in relation to potential of staff moving to Uisce Éireann.
- Dissatisfaction with current Uisce Éireann Councillor clinics.
- Dissatisfaction with cost of new connections.
- Query as to whether the taking in charge of estates will be affected.

It was agreed that subject to it suiting the Gardaí, the JPC on 11th September will move to 9am, to facilitate an Uisce Éireann transition briefing with the Elected Members at 11am.

Votes of Sympathy:

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to:

- The family of Ellen Furlong, mother of Martina Furlong, former employee.
- The family of Christina (Tilly) Dobbs, mother of Billy Dobbs, Housing Section
- The family of Sarah Ann Dunne, mother of Abraham Dunne, Roads Section

Votes of Congratulations:

Cllr.'s J. Owens, M. Sheehan, D. Hynes and F. Staples congratulated the organisers of the Relay For Life event, and the Wexford County Council team who participated.

Cllr. O. Walsh congratulated Blackwater Tidy Towns group on winning Ireland's Best Kept Village award.

Cllr. F. Ó' Súilleabháin congratulated Eileen Morrissey on becoming President of the Library Association of Ireland.

Cllr. J. Fleming congratulated Aidan O'Brien on training his 100th European Classic winner.

Cllr. P. Barden congratulated Paddy Power on his win at the ISPS Handa 2023 Spanish Open Blind Golf Championship and the Adamstown Show Committee.

Cllr. J. Codd congratulated the Bannow Rathangan Show Committee.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 County Council Meeting 12th June, 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen, the Council resolved to confirm the minutes of the County Council Meeting on 12th June, 2023.

2.2 Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council 26th June, 2022

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy, the Council resolved to confirm the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council on 26th June, 2022.

3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001

3.1 Intention to dispose of a property situated at 55 Kennedy Park, Wexford

After a lengthy discussion as to whether Wexford County Council could acquire the property, the Council resolved to dispose of the property situated at 55 Kennedy Park, Wexford on the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy, in accordance with the terms of the S. 183 Notice, as circulated.

3.2 Intention to dispose of land at Ballyboro, Clonroche, Co. Wexford

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B. Murphy, the Council resolved to dispose of land at Ballyboro, Clonroche, Co. Wexford in accordance with the terms of the S. 183 Notice, as circulated.

4. Adoption of Wexford County Council (Wexford Borough District) Traffic and Car Parking Byelaws 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Laffan, seconded by Cllr. D. Kenny, the Council resolved to adopt the Wexford County Council (Wexford Borough District) Traffic and Car Parking Byelaws 2023.

5. Invitation to New Ross Municipal District for delegation to attend the Eugene O'Neill Festival in Danville, California in September, 2023

There was a lengthy discussion in relation to the pro's and con's of foreign travel generally and this specific trip.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen, the Council resolved to approve a delegation to attend the Eugene O'Neill Festival in Danville, California in September, 2023.

Before the meeting adjourned for a comfort break, Cathaoirleach Cllr. J. Fleming presented Ms. A. O'Neill with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Members, to mark her final Council meeting after 43 years' service with Wexford County Council.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at this point.

Cllr.'s G. Laffan, O. Walsh, A. O'Donohoe, B. Murphy, J. Owens and J. O'Rourke left the meeting at this point.

6. 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:

- Possibility of the N80 being upgraded from a secondary to national road.
- Will resurfacing works on N80 go ahead as scheduled?
- When will house in Marconi Park be finished?
- In what circumstances can Wexford County Council purchase houses?
- How can the control of dogs be enforced to ensure dogs are caught?
- Request for an update on design of walking route to St. Helens, around disputed area.
- Update on Gorey Market House.
- Is local authority going to engage with local communities in relation to IPAS temporary accommodation?
- Request that sensory pods be funded through the Housing Adaptation Grant.
- Concerns raised in relation to the pace of progression on the St. Waleran's site.
- Request for update on progress of SETU campus lands.
- Issue of unoccupied Council properties.
- Request that the location and protection of the art installation on the New Ross bypass be reviewed.
- Update on the Murphy Flood's site. Has private investment been sought?
- Acquisition of land in Enniscorthy should have been communicated to the Members.

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

- A request that Wexford County Council take control of how we tell our own stories.
- Query in relation to the ownership of the building to the right of the Mechanic's Institute.
- Request for clarification in relation to Wexford County Council's role in enforcing hedges are cut.
- Query if Uisce Éireann currently have road opening applications with Wexford County Council.
- Will speed limits outside schools be reviewed before September?

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, 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.

Cllr.'s J. Hegarty and L. Kelly left the meeting at this point.

- Query if there is any update on assistance for those affected by mini tornado in Clongeen.
- Request that road markings be refreshed on the New Line and around Taghmon.
- Request that potholes on the Trinity to Taghmon road be addressed.
- Has Minister Ryan provided additional funding to Wexford County Council for roads since his visit to Wexford?

- Request for information in relation to the number of people who have been refused emergency accommodation.
- Timeline for works at Kilmallock water treatment plant.
- Request for strategy to be provided in September for provision of affordable housing in every Municipal District.
- Update in relation to funding for a nighttime economy officer.
- Need for consultation in relation to IPAS centres.

Cllr.'s W. Kavanagh, G. Carthy and D. Devereux left the meeting at this point.

- When will the Courtown Beach Nourishment report be available?
- What actions have been taken in relation to pyrite case?
- Update on odour issue at Ballyminaun.

Cllr.'s A. Browne & L. McDonald left the meeting at this point.

- Frustration at length of time to take housing scheme in Enniscorthy in charge.
- Status of Enniscorthy Sports Hub redesign.

7. Minutes of CPG

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the CPG of 3rd July, 2023.

8. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting):

- 8.1 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 8th May, 2023**
- 8.2 Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 17th May, 2023**
- 8.3 Borough District of Wexford Meeting– 15th May, 2023**
- 8.4 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 15th May, 2023**
- 8.5 Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 16th May, 2023**
- 8.6 Minutes Protocol Committee Meeting Borough District of Wexford 17th April & 26th May, 2023**
- 8.7 Climate Change, Biodiversity & Environment SPC Meetings 23.02.2023 & 27.04.2023**

The minutes of the above meetings were noted.

9. Correspondence and Communications

- 9.1 Letter from Wicklow County Council re: resolution dated 12th June, 2023**

The Members noted the above correspondence.

10. Councillor's Conferences and Training

- 10.1 Councillor's Conference Reports**

- KIMO Conference and Board meeting held in the Municipal District of Vordingborg, Denmark on May 11th, 2023
- Report on Official Visit to Dunkirk 31st May - 4th June, 2023

The Members noted the reports above, as circulated.

11. Notices of Motion

11.1 Cllrs. Barbara-Anne Murphy, Andrew Bolger, Pip Breen, Aidan Browne, John Fleming, Willie Kavanagh, Donal Kenny, Garry Laffan, Lisa McDonald, Michael Sheehan, Joe Sullivan & Michael Whelan

“The invasive plant Japanese Knotweed is spreading at an alarming pace throughout Co. Wexford and indeed the entire country. We call on the Department of the Environment to institute a programme of eradication and give property owners financial support and direct guidance in eliminating this invasive species from their property. “

Executive Response:

If passed, this Motion will be forwarded to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, for consideration.

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

11.2 Cllr. Michael Sheehan

“Now that we have a prospective opening date to work towards the reopening of the Accident and Emergency at Wexford General Hospital, this Council resolves to congratulate and express our gratitude and appreciation to all the Management, Staff, frontline staff, contractors and workers for their dedication, professionalism and outstanding efforts for completing the work done in a highly pressurised area.

Furthermore, we resolve to thank all patients and their families for their resilience and patience while the works were being carried out.

Upon passage, a copy of this motion is sent to the Minister of Health, CEO of the HSE, Waterford and KK County Councils for their attention.”

Executive Response:

If passed, this Motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Health, CEO of the HSE, Waterford and Kilkenny County Councils, for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell and carried.

11.3 Cllr. Andrew Bolger on behalf of The Fianna Fáil Group:

“In support of the letter sent to Wexford Council by Comhairle Na N’Og this council supports their proposals for legislation around the following:

- Vape packaging to be less attractive (especially to young people) while carrying clear health warnings beyond the addiction warnings already in place.
- A major reduction in flavours to reduce the appeal of vaping to young people, while mandating the available flavours to use basic names.
- Applying the same advertising regulations that are applied to cigarettes (i.e., a total ban).
- A complete ban of disposable vapes.
- A price increase of vapes in the form of excise duties.

We ask that legislation be considered around these key points.”

Executive Response:

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

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

11.4 Cllr. Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin

“This council recognises the tremendous service being provided by our firefighters. We also acknowledge that they often feel undervalued and are seeking urgent improvements with their pay and working conditions.

Independent of any decisions from the Labour Court, Wexford County Council will actively pursue practical measures at a local level to help improve the lives of our Wexford firefighters based on recommendations from their representatives who gave a presentation to the July SPC meeting. “

Executive Response:

The Director of Services with responsibility for the Fire Service will address this motion at the meeting.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. F. Ó’Súilleabháin and seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes.

Cllr. J. Sullivan proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan and agreed by all.

“This council recognises the tremendous service being provided by our firefighters. We also acknowledge that they often feel undervalued and are seeking urgent improvements with their pay and working conditions.

Independent of any decisions from the Labour Court, Wexford County Council will actively pursue practical measures at a local level to help improve the lives of our Wexford firefighters. “

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

12. Any Other Business

Mr. E. Hore acknowledged that this was Ms. A. O’Neill’s last Council meeting. He congratulated her on an outstanding career and described her as an exemplary colleague who is diligent and meticulous, and above all, a great friend. Mr. Hore acknowledged her work in presenting the annual draft Council budget on 28 occasions and the many projects she was instrumental in delivering. Mr. Hore highlighted the 10 million deficit which had been turned into a surplus under her stewardship. The Members joined Mr. Hore in acknowledging the fantastic contribution Ms. O’Neill has made to Wexford and wished her a happy retirement.

Ms. O’Neill said she was humbled and overwhelmed by the kind words and good wishes received from the Members and from the Deputy Chief Executive. Ms. O’Neill acknowledged the contribution of the team she has worked with through the years and expressed her appreciation for the Member’s support to deliver the annual budgets, many of which involved tough decisions.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an lá de Meán Fómhair, 2023.

Cllr. John Fleming
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea
County Secretary