

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Mary Farrell

Present: Cllr. Donal Kenny, Cllr. Maura Bell (remotely), Mr. Danny Forde (PPN Member), Mr. Joe Ryan (Trade Union), Ms. Mary Walsh (Business & Commercial - remotely), Mr. James Brennan (Agriculture), Carolyne Godkin Director of Services, Gerry Forde Senior Engineer, Brendan Cooney Senior Executive Scientist, Rory O'Mahony Senior Executive Engineer, Hugh Maguire Administrative Officer, Lillie O'Brien Assistant Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. Jim Moore, Cllr. Oliver Walsh, Cllr. Tom Forde, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Mr. Billy Murphy (PPN Member), Mr. John Somers (Construction Industry Federation),

Cllr. Mary Farrell welcomed everyone to the meeting in the Coast Hotel, Rosslare and remotely.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 10th March and 17th February 2022

A point was raised that a paragraph in the minutes the meeting of 17th February 2022 regarding the OPW flooding information and the Climate Central website should not be connected as they were two separate issues. Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed to remove the following piece from the minutes of the 17th February 2022, proposed by Danny Forde and seconded by James Brennan.

“A response is required from the OPW. The response was that www.floodinfo.ie gives online access to various flood issues, past flooding and information on mapping. It will determine whether cases for flood defences are properly mapped and will feed onto the OPW.”

The minutes of the 10th March and the amended minutes of the 17th February 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Maura Bell and seconded by Danny Forde.

2. Climate Action Matters Update – Gerry Forde

Gerry Forde gave a brief update on Climate Action Adaptation Strategy and Coastal Strategy and stated that the Policy is now being implemented. He informed the meeting of the following

(a) Coastline

- Series of measures involved in the coastline in terms of visual surveys and drone surveys completed by B. Cooney and GPS surveys carried out on the coastline are ongoing.
- Rosslare Strand is already on Today's agenda.
- Emergency works carried out in Seaview
- George Colfer has arranged for consultancy reports on St. Helens, Ballyhealy and Grange and if other areas arise from the surveys carried out they will come onto the agenda
- Environment & Climate Change will have an input into planning policy in terms of developments near the coastline.

(b) Climate Action general matters:

- The Climate Action team meets every month
- Working on Better Energy Community Programme where grant funding is received for various projects.

- Working on specific programmes e.g. Fire Station has a gas boiler and is looking at switching it to biofuels, feasibility study is looking promising.
- Wexford CC has 3-4 EV's (Electric Vehicles) on the road and is rolling out charging points at a number of locations around the County including Curracloe and Kilmore Quay
- The roll out of EV charging points is an issue in terms of responsibility and there is no National Co-ordinating Policy there. Clare Kelly is to give an update on the EV charging rollout at the next meeting.
- Climate Action Training – Regional office ran the training there was a disappointing turnout of elected members at it and if it can be brought up at the full County Council Meeting. It is hoped that the Regional Office will roll out the training for the SPC members.

The following queries were raised and responded to.

- Supporting the taking out of phone boxes and replace with charging points. All Blue Flag beaches should have several charging points.
- Issue with speed of charging? It was pointed out that the new charge points can give a travel range up to 500 km per charge.
- Need to know where the charging points are and especially fast charging points? Where can this information be found? There is an app called placetoplug.com where all EV charging points locations are shown.
- How much does it cost? If commercial operators take over it doesn't cost the Council anything but there would be a loss of parking spaces at a cost of €5,000 a year.
- If the charging points are put into communities, will it still be a private operator installing it? Some cases the Council can take it on and get the revenue. It warrants a formal presentation to examine and consider the matter.
- With regard to Town Bye-Laws if commercial business wanting to put in a charge point that they should be required to pay a licence and it should be paid to the Local Authority?
- The Council are in talks with the Churches in Wexford town about making available spaces for terraced houses. A further update is expected for the next meeting.
- Presentation on EVs is expected for the next SPC meeting.
- Is it a requirement in the planning conditions that charge points are provided for commercial building? The response was that it is part of the new plan.

3. National Septic Tank Inspection Programme Report – Ian Plunkett

Ian Plunkett gave an overview of the National Septic Tank Inspection Programme. He briefed the meeting on the following

- The Procedure involved in Inspections.
- The Pass and Failure rates.
- Reasons for failure rates – 40% to 60% fail. 20% water and discharge to waters.
- 3 Types of grants available since 2020. He also stated that regarding registration of septic tanks this does need to be changed at a national level as there are houses that have changed owners several times since 1st February 2013 (previous registration date).
- Legal proceedings taken – this is a last resort by the Council.
- National Inspection Plan 2022 to 2026 showing minimum number of inspections to be carried out each year

After the presentation the following queries were raised, points made and responses given.

- How are the tests carried out and what exactly is tested? All are visually tested, they put buckets of water down drains and put dye at back of septic tank to see where it flows and if leaking on the surface. It takes about 15mins to see where the leak is. Mostly non-bio detergents, cotton buds and wipes are the main cause of blockages as they don't break down.
- Is this programme the same as the National Drinking Water Survey results and the Group Schemes. Is that a separate that they analyse separately? Yes that is separate, if the septic tank test fails the Council issue an Advisory Notice similar to an NCT and answers all the questions and outlines at the end measures to take to pass.
- 20% are one off houses are discharging to streams but instances were found where a few houses are connected to the one septic tank which will still involve individual testing. Planning is not used as part of the testing programme for Septic Tanks.
- Ian Plunkett also stated that regarding registration of septic tanks, change is needed at a national level as there are houses that have changed owners several times since 1st February 2013. 97.3% of houses are registered so pressure needs to be put on the Government to change National Policy in order to permit grant applications.
- Gerry Forde suggested sending a motion from this to the full council people should be given the opportunity to register. Wexford has way exceeded its inspections.
- Is direct discharge the main problem? Direct Discharge can be solved but at a cost. A new treatment tank and pressure tank if you have a direct discharge with no septic tank you will need a new treatment tank and pressure tank that may cost €12,000.
- Is it a problem where people put kitchen waste down the pipes? There has been a few cases where kitchen waste is down but this is easy to resolve. If going to a soak pit and not surface water there isn't an issue.
- Can you apply for a Housing Adaptation grant? Only used in very extreme cases. If the applicants haven't any money the Council will work with them for as long as it takes to get the septic tank to the proper standard.
- G. Forde suggested that the Grant system for some problem sites where it's going to cost €12,000 to €15,000, there should be a higher grant available and means tested especially for the elderly and the Council should look into this problem.

4. Waste Management Matters Update – Rory O'Mahony

Rory O'Mahony gave a presentation on the Circular Economy Bill which is at the third stage in the Dáil at present. He briefed the Members of the Committee on the main points of the Bill.

- Policy Strategy – all existing frameworks and plans at present are regional and the new Waste Plan is now for the entire country.
- Fund – created specifically to assist all schemes to reduce, reuse and recycle and solutions to products causing harm.
- Levy on certain single use plastic items and certain products will be removed from circulation.
- Prepare a Food loss prevention roadmap within 6 months of the passing of the Act.
- Extended Fixed Penalties Notice to Waste Collectors and for Producer Responsibility Schemes.
- Legal change for the use of CCTV as a tool for enforcement – come up with management plans and have policies of how to use and deal with CCTV and for monitoring & storing of images in compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- Access to the CCTV footage – the Council and An Gardaí Sciochána
- Review of CCTV Plans every 5 years.
- Use of Mobile Visual recovering devices – any digital devices capturing images
- Household with no collection services – allowing the use of Eircodes.
- Waste Recovery Levy – new
- End of Waste By-Product

- Modifications to Litter Pollution Act in relation to the use of CCTV etc.
- Amendment to Mineral Development Act - no future licences for coal.

The following queries were raised and answered to as follows

- Drones & CCTV – what legal position regarding dash cam footage? This is covered in the provision for other digital devices and is a catch all for digital devices in the future.
- Is there a Levy for incinerators? Incinerators will have a levy over time but don't have enough reuse of waste materials at present so can't put a huge levy on them until the more uses for waste you can up the levy.
- When will Bill come in? there is 6 stages so it is expected to be finalised towards end of 2022.

4. Any Other Business

With regard to Education Workshop, is there a quorum for public representatives? It was advised that there is a quorum on the Committee as a whole rather than public representatives so 5 members are required to hold a meeting.

Mr. Billy Murphy has resigned as a PPN Member, and the Cathaoirleach and SPC Members expressed thanks to Billy for his dedicated service and assistance to the SPC Committee. Representations have been made and will come back with a new representative next week. The County Secretary and PPN have been contacted to arrange for the filling of vacancies created by the resignation of Karen Finigan and Billy Murphy.

The meeting concluded with a walk along the beach in Rosslare to see the rock groynes that were placed to prevent erosion and the elements of the proposed Coastal Protection Scheme for Rosslare Strand. The plans were made available to the SPC Members at the meeting.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Signed: Mary Farrell
Cathaoirleach

Date: 16/6/22.

