

**Minutes of the Wexford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)  
meeting**

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at 10.00 am  
By MS Teams and In Person (Council Chamber)**

**Attendance:**

**In the Chair:**

Dymphna O'Connor (Chief Officer, Acting Chair)  
Cllr. Aidan Browne (Public Sector)

**LCDC Members:**

Cllr. Lisa McDonald (Public Sector)  
Cllr. Anthony Donoghue (Public Sector)  
Mr. Tom Enright (Public Sector)  
Ms. Breege Cosgrave (Public Sector)  
Ms. Patricia Delaney, Dept. of Social Welfare (Public Sector)  
Mr. Michael O'Brien, Wexford-Waterford ETB  
Ms. Derval Howley, HSE (Public Sector)  
Mr. Brian Kehoe, Wexford Local Development  
Mr. John Carr, PPN Community & Voluntary Pillar  
Ms. Aislinn Dunne, PPN Community & Voluntary Pillar  
Mr. Brian Toomey, PPN Community & Voluntary Pillar  
Ms. Sharon Kennedy, PPN Social Inclusion Rep.  
Mr. Jer O'Mahony, Farming Rep.  
Ms. Bridget Neville, Wexford Council of Trade Unions

**Also in attendance:**

Ms. Carolayne Godkin, Director of Services, Wexford County Council  
Mr. Claude Clancy - Wexford County Council  
Ms. Tara Farrell - Wexford County Council  
Mr. Ronan Griffin – Wexford County Council

**Apologies:**

Cllr. Leonard Kelly (Public Sector)  
Mr. Jonathan King, PPN Social Inclusion Rep.  
Ms. Mary Browne, Business Sector  
Ms. Karin Dubsky, PPN Environmental Pillar.

**1. Check and verification of attendance via videoconference.**

Mr. Claude Clancy confirmed attendance of each member and confirmed their ability of speaking to and being heard by all attendees. Ms. Dymphna O'Connor as Acting Chairperson welcomed the members.

**2. Election of LCDC Chairperson**

Ms. Dymphna O'Connor acknowledged the fine work of Cllr. Lisa McDonald as chair, and Cllr. Leonard Kelly as vice chair, during a difficult period for the LCDC and thanked them both for their efforts. Nominations were sought for the position of Chairperson of the LCDC.

Cllr. Aidan Browne was nominated to the position of Chairperson of the LCDC.

**Proposed:** Mr. John Carr

**Seconded:** Mr. Jer O'Mahony

As no other nominations were received, Cllr. Aidan Browne was declared elected as Chairperson.

Cllr. Browne thanked the members for the nomination, and thanked Cllr. Lisa McDonald and Cllr. Leonard Kelly for their efforts as chair and vice chair to date. He then assumed the position of Chairperson for the remainder of the meeting.

Cllr. Lisa McDonald entered the meeting.

**3. Election of LCDC Vice Chairperson**

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chairperson of the LCDC.

Cllr. Lisa McDonald was nominated to the position of Vice Chairperson of the LCDC.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Aidan Browne

**Seconded:** Mr. Jer O'Mahony

As no other nominations were received, Cllr. Lisa McDonald was declared elected as Vice Chairperson. Cllr. Lisa McDonald thanked the members for the nomination.

**4. 2023 – 2027 LEADER Programme Update**

Mr. Claude Clancy gave a presentation regarding an overview of the new LEADER Programme 2023 – 2027, based on a webinar hosted by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) regarding same on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November.

Following the presentation, the floor was opened to questions.

Cllr. Lisa McDonald asked when community groups will be able to apply for LEADER funding under the new programme. Claude advised the indicative date for the new Local Action Group to be functioning and in a position to animate projects was August 2023.

Ms. Aislinn Dunne raised the issue of the application process for LEADER being difficult for community groups, particularly smaller ones who may not have members with professional experience which they are able to provide on a volunteer basis.

Mr. Brian Kehoe acknowledged it was a difficult process, but advised that some aspects of same are based on DRCD and European Commission rules. He advised that Local Development Companies had raised this with DRCD through the IDLN, and had asked could the DRCD to consider relaxing some requirements, particularly for smaller projects.

Aislinn asked could the LCDC formally raise this with the DRCD, or alternately, provide training or capacity building for smaller groups.

Mr. Tom Enright agreed that the application process was proving difficult for some groups, and a greater number of groups in disadvantaged areas, who may not have the expertise to make successful applications without assistance, needed to be targeted.

Brian Kehoe advised that WLD's Project Officers do work with community groups to assist them with applications, but that a lot of their time was taken up around funding applications which reduced the time they had for capacity building. He also noted cost was an issue as the applicant had to have 25% of the cost from their own resources in most cases.

Aislinn sought commitment from the LCDC to address this issue. Ms. Carolyne Godkin suggested the new Local Development Strategy could build more capacity for training and work more on capacity building, and less on outright financial throughput. She agreed with Aislinn's suggestion that the LCDC formally write to the DRCD about this issue.

Cllr. Lisa McDonald suggested a seed fund for community groups to get set up as formal incorporated companies, or funding of consultancy services should be considered.

Mr. Michael O'Brien agreed that seed funding or funding for training / consultancy would be a good idea and suggested that smaller community groups would also benefit from assistance with administration costs.

Ms. Dymphna O'Connor advised that Community Development in Wexford County Council were considering work groups and information sessions across the county to provide more assistance to community groups with applications for funding. She also suggested the LAG could seek to ringfence some LEADER funding for training and capacity building.

It was agreed that the LCDC would contact the DRCD regarding the complexity of the LEADER application process and the potential inaccessibility of same for some community groups.

## 5. AOB

Ms. Dymphna O'Connor gave a presentation on the Community Support Fund 2022, which was announced the previous week by the DRCD. Funding of €340,233 has been

made available to the Wexford LCDC to assist community groups with running costs and minor facilities improvements. She put it to the LCDC that a percentage, to be determined, of the fund be ringfenced for grants of €1,000 or less, and that the remainder be used for grants of €5,000 or less.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Lisa McDonald

**Seconded:** Mr. Jer O'Mahony

The proposal was carried.

Mr. Brian Kehoe highlighted that there had been a cut to funding under the LEADER programme. He stated that the funding Wexford received for the 2023 – 2027 programme was €2.5m less than that received for the previous programme. He further noted that applicants in Wexford received a further €1m approx. under the LEADER Food Initiative, and no replacement or continuation of same had been announced, resulting in a total loss of €3.5m. He advised this reduction may require the focus of the programme to be altered vs. the previous programme. In particular, capital works and large equipment purchases may be reduced. He advised he had sought clarification from the DRCD on how the funding for the County is calculated.


Ms. Derval Howley asked was it possible for us to appeal the budget cut. Claude Clancy advised that no breakdown had been provided as yet, but it was within the LCDC's remit to write to the DRCD about this matter.

It was agreed by the members to seek further complimentary funding from the exchequer.


Cllr. Lisa McDonald placed on record her thanks to the LDCD and Wexford County Council's support staff for their assistance during her time as Chairperson of the LCDC.

**Date & Time for Next Meeting:**

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 10am, Block A Council Chamber.

  
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Chief Officer

Dated on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Dec 2022.

  
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Cathaoirleach