

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

**Friday, 24th March 2023 at 12.00 am
By MS Teams and In Person (Council Chamber)**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. Aidan Browne - (Public Sector)

LCDC Members: Cllr. Lisa McDonald (Public Sector)
Cllr. Anthony Donohoe (Public Sector)
Cllr. Leonard Kelly (Public Sector)
Mr. Tom Enright – Wexford Co. Co. (Public Sector)
Ms. Patricia Delaney – Dept of Social Protection
Mr. Michael O'Brien – WWETB
Mr. Brian Kehoe, Wexford Local Development
Mr. John Carr - PPN Community & Voluntary Pillar
Ms. Aislinn Dunne - PPN Community & Voluntary Pillar
Mr. Jer O'Mahony - IFA
Mr. Brian Toomey – PPN
Mr. Jonathan King – PPN Social Inclusion
Ms. Breege Cosgrave – Wexford County Council (Public Sector)
Ms. Karin Dubsky – PPN Environmental

Also in attendance:

Ms. Dymphna O'Connor, Chief Officer, Wexford County Council
Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services, Wexford County Council
Mr. Claude Clancy - Wexford County Council
Ms. Tara Farrell - Wexford County Council
Ms. Alice O'Gorman – Wexford County Council
Mr. Ronan Griffin – Wexford County Council
Mr. Tom Bermingham – Wexford Local Development

Apologies:

Ms. Derval Howley – HSE
Ms. Karin Dubsky – PPN Environmental
Ms. Sharon Kennedy – PPN Social Inclusion
Ms. Mary Browne – Chamber of Commerce

1. Check and verification of attendance

Mr. Claude Clancy confirmed attendance of each member, The Chairperson welcomed all members.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of Meetings of the 1st February 2023

In order to maintain the appropriate balance between private sector and public sector members, Tom Enright and Breege Cosgrave left the meeting for this agenda item.

Proposed: John Carr Seconded: Aislinn Dunne

At this point, the Chairperson adjourned the LCDC meeting to allow for a LAG meeting.

Following the LAG meeting, the LCDC meeting resumed.

Tom Bermingham left the meeting.

3. Matters arising

No matters arising

4. Community Support Fund

Dymphna O'Connor gave a presentation on the Community Support Fund 2022. She explained that the CSF existed to assist community groups, particularly in hard to reach areas, with non-pay running costs and repairs & improvements to facilities.

Applications were capped to €5,000 in value.

It was proposed that any applicants seeking €1,000 or less would receive the full amount requested in line with Department Guidelines. The remainder would be distributed on a pro-rata basis, subject to a minimum funding amount of €1,000.

It was also put to the LCDC to approve re-allocation of funds at the discretion of the Chief Officer, subject to meeting the guidelines.

Conflicts of Interest were noted, and the relevant projects approved, as follows:

Clonroche Development CLG

Conflict: Aislinn Dunne

In addition, Tom Enright and Cllr. Aidan Browne absented themselves from this approval in order to maintain private sector / public sector balance.

Proposed: Jonathan King

Seconded: Jer O'Mahoney

Wexford Volunteer Centre

Conflicts: Jonathan King

Cllr. Leonard Kelly

In addition, Tom Enright and Cllr. Aidan Browne absented themselves from this approval in order to maintain private sector / public sector balance.

Proposed: John Carr

Seconded: Brian Kehoe

Ryland Wood Resident's Association

Conflicts: Brian Toomey

In addition, Tom Enright and Cllr. Aidan Browne absented themselves from this approval in order to maintain private sector / public sector balance.

Proposed: Jonathan King

Seconded: Jer O'Mahoney

Rapparees / Starlights GAA

Conflicts: Cllr. Aidan Browne

Brian Kehoe

In addition, Tom Enright absented himself from this approval in order to maintain private sector / public sector balance.

Proposed: John Carr

Seconded: Aislinn Dunne

Aislinn Dunne enquired as to whether St. Ruan's Church was permitted to apply. Claude Clancy responded that the church had applied to provide a public amenity, and as such the application was eligible under the guidelines.

Karin Dubsy enquired regarding the fact that two applications had been provisionally approved from Tomhaggard Women's Shed. She also requested a map or breakdown by area.

Claude noted that the funding was "three-pronged", with money set aside for Women's Sheds, capital works and non-capital works, and that Tomhaggard Women's Shed had been approved for two separate streams of funding.

He would attempt to put together some form of analysis of the geographical distribution of the grant funding.

Brian Toomey advised he was aware that some groups applied for major amounts of funding over the €5,000 limit. Claude took that on board, but noted that applications for over €5,000 were assessed on the basis of having applied for €5,000.

The remaining projects, ie. with no Conflicts of Interest were approved:

Proposed by: John Carr

Seconded by: Aislinn Dunne

5. LEADER Programme 2023 - 2027

Cllr. Leonard Kelly left the meeting.

Carolyne Godkin gave a presentation on the proposed operation of the LEADER programme 2023 – 2027. She noted that this matter had been requested at the previous meeting.

In this she outlined that Expressions of Interest to create a Local Development Strategy (LDS) and run the LEADER programme had been approved from both the LCDC and from WLD.

WLD have advised the Council that they are unwilling to continue the existing arrangement with the LCDC acting as LAG, WLD as the Implementing Partner (IP), and Wexford County Council as Financial Partner (FP).

It was proposed therefore, that the LCDC withdraw from the LDS process, that 4 Council members and PPN representatives would be added to the WLD board, and this would act as the LAG from now on. In addition, 3 members of Council staff would join the Evaluation Committee for LEADER.

Brian Kehoe advised that LEADER had been in existence since 1991 and the 2014 – 2020 programme was the first programme to have the LCDC acting as LAG and the IP / FP structure. He advised that this was due to a stated preference by the then Minister, Phil Hogan, to run the programme in this way.

He noted that on this occasion, the October announcement from the Department of Rural and Community Development, was very neutral and thus WLD felt this represented a policy shift from the DRCD. He admitted he was surprised that both Eols submitted were approved, and indeed noted that as far as he knew, all Eols submitted nationally had been approved. He felt the issue had been badly handled by the Department.

Tom Enright concurred that the approval of two Eols was unfortunate, and felt that assurances given to WLD by Wexford County Council would have been sufficient to maintain the current model. However, with this not being the case, he was concerned about the optics of both the Council, on behalf of the LCDC, and WLD running separate, concurrent, consultation for separate LDSs at the same time. He said that this would damage the reputation of both organisations and that the Council and WLD had been forced into a difficult position.

He felt the concentration at this point should be on the successful delivery of the next LEADER programme.

Cllr. Aidan Browne expressed disappointment that the current model cannot continue and stated it worked very well. He asked did the €50,000 provided by the DRCD have to be returned if the LCDC.

Jer O'Mahoney stated he felt the Dept. had 'touted' this dual process and agreed it'd be a bad look for two concurrent LDSs to take place. He congratulated the Council and WLD for coming up with a solution and noted that delivery of the programme was important.

Aislinn Dunne asked Brian Kehoe why WLD were not happy to maintain the current system.

Brian Kehoe stated that the WLD board took the view that the LDS process was open, and that the programme could be run more efficiently without the LCDC acting as the LAG. He also noted that the WLD board was responsible for its staff, but in the case of LEADER, they were responsible for the staff working on a programme over which they had no control.

Finally, he noted the reduced budget of the new LEADER programme, and advised that it would result in them having to lay off at least one staff member as things stood. This could potentially increase in the event of shared costs with the LCDC.

Karin Dubsy asked could the Council not share their consultancy work with WLD. As an example, the Council were currently producing a climate change strategy. She asked where and when the LCDC would have to make this decision.

Carolyne advised that timing was an issue with sharing consultation work. She advised that climate change strategy was not due until year end, whilst the LDS was being closed off mid-year.

Michael O'Brien asked what the composition of the WLD board would be.

Brian advised that the WLD board was currently 18 members, but could allow 23 members. It was divided into four pillars, Community, Local Government, Statutory Bodies and Social Inclusion.

Patricia Delaney asked what would happen with members of the new LAG?

Carolyne advised they would be members of the WLD board.

Brian Toomey asked was the appointment of LCDC members to the WLD board a once off?

Brian Kehoe advised that board members brought on board as part of this process would be rotated in line with WLD procedures. PPN would nominate PPN members.

It was agreed that the LCDC would reconvene to vote on this matter on Tuesday the 28th of March at 3:30pm

6. Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2028, Stage 2. Public Consultation.

Claude Clancy gave a brief presentation updating the members on the status of public consultation for the LECF, the bulk of which was due to happen next week. He encouraged members to put the word out about this to ensure that public consultation events were well attended.

7. AOB

None.

8. Date for next meeting

28th of March 2023 as above.



Chief Officer

Dated on the 15 day of June 2023.



Cathaoirleach