

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2026 in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance)**

**Attendance:**

**In the Chair:** Cllr. Joe Sullivan, Cathaoirleach.

**Councillors:**

<b>Barden</b>	<b>Pat</b>	<b>Forde</b>	<b>Tom</b>	<b>O'Rourke</b>	<b>John</b>
<b>Barron</b>	<b>Vicky</b>	<b>Kehoe</b>	<b>Pat</b>	<b>Owens</b>	<b>Jackser</b>
<b>Boland</b>	<b>Nicky</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	<b>Leonard</b>	<b>Shannon</b>	<b>Raymond</b>
<b>Breen</b>	<b>Pip</b>	<b>Kenny</b>	<b>Donal</b>	<b>Sheehan</b>	<b>Michael (Online)</b>
<b>Byrne</b>	<b>Patricia</b>	<b>Laffan</b>	<b>Garry</b>	<b>Staples</b>	<b>Frank</b>
<b>Carthy</b>	<b>Ger</b>	<b>McDonald</b>	<b>Darragh</b>	<b>Staples</b>	<b>Robbie</b>
<b>Donohoe</b>	<b>Anthony</b>	<b>McDonald</b>	<b>Lisa</b>	<b>Walsh</b>	<b>Catherine</b>
<b>Doyle</b>	<b>Craig</b>	<b>Murphy</b>	<b>Barbara-Anne</b>	<b>Walsh</b>	<b>Oliver</b>
<b>Dwyer</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Murphy</b>	<b>Bridín (Online)</b>		
<b>Farrell</b>	<b>Mary</b>	<b>Murphy</b>	<b>Marty (Online)</b>		
<b>Fleming</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>O'Brien</b>	<b>Aoife Rose</b>		

**Officials:**

Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary

Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services

Mr. Eamonn Hore, Director of Services

Ms. Liz Hore, Director of Services

Ms. Lynda Lacey, Director of Finance

Mr. Alan Quirke, Director of Services

Mr. Eddie Taaffe, Chief Executive

**Apologies:** Cllr. Aidan Browne, Cllr. Jim Codd, Cllr. Paddy Kavanagh

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Barden, seconded by Cllr. R. Shannon, it was resolved to suspend standing orders to allow Cllr. M. Murphy's motion to be moved as Cllr. Murphy was in Hartford as a member of an official delegation and had an engagement which overlapped with the Plenary meeting.

Cllr. M. Murphy proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr. P. Barden "This Council calls on the Department of Education to immediately include Ramsgrange Community School in the current schools building programme so that it can proceed to tender for its major redevelopment project."

Cllr.'s O. Walsh, T. Forde, J. Owens, and V. Barron voiced their general support for Cllr. Murphy's motion but felt it should be amended to include all Wexford schools.

Cllr. P. Kehoe proposed the following amended motion which was seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly and carried:

"This Council calls on the Department of Education to immediately include all Wexford schools which are at stage 2b or more advanced in the current schools building programme so that they can proceed with their redevelopment projects."

**Votes of sympathy:**

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to:

- The family of Anna May (May) Delaney (née Doyle), mother of Padhraic Delaney, Clerk of Works Housing
- The family of Michael Berry, father-in-law of Shirley Berry, Procurement Department.
- The family of Matt Banville, father of Geraldine Berry, Finance Department.
- The family of V. Rev. William Howell, Former Parish Priest, Gorey and late of Boley, Camolin.
- The family of Alice O'Connor (née Shannon), Kereight, Galbally, Wexford, aunt of Cllr. Raymond Shannon.
- The family of Sean O'Rourke, 22 Ross Road, Enniscorthy, Wexford, uncle of Cllr. John O'Rourke.
- The family of Anne O'Rourke (née Lacey), 11 Fr. Murphy Park, Enniscorthy, Wexford, aunt in law of Cllr. John O'Rourke.

**Congratulations:**

- Cathaoirleach Cllr. J. Sullivan congratulated Derek Kent on being elected Uachtarán Tofa Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, a huge honour for himself, his family, and his county.
- Cllr. P. Barden congratulated Denny Bookle on winning the European Pool U18 single and team titles.

- Cllr. C. Walsh wished every success to all drama groups participating in the Wexford Drama Festival and New Ross Musical Society and Wexford Light Opera Society for their productions of Me and My Girl and Jesus Christ Superstar.
- Cllr. V. Barron congratulated Robyn O'Connor who was named Wexford Women's Refuge Woman of the Year for International Women's Day 2026. Cllr. Barron congratulated all groups who held events to mark International Women's Day including Wexford Women's Refuge who had speakers at their annual event who addressed key issues such as gender-based violence and consent.
- Cllr. T. Forde and Cllr. A.R. O'Brien congratulated all schools who fought against cuts to the number of SNA's and those who turned out to protest.
- Cllr. J. Fleming congratulated Emma Hickey (St. Mary's Secondary School, New Ross) who claimed the senior 123.ie All-Ireland Schools Cross Country Championship.
- Cllr. J. Owens congratulated the Wexford boys and girls who won five medals at the Leinster boxing championship.
- Cllr. A.R. O'Brien congratulated the residents of Hazelwood, Bridgetown, Mr. E. Taaffe, Chief Executive, and the housing staff for how they handled the recent challenges presented by the threat of mass termination of tenancies.

## 1. Confirmation of Minutes

### 1.1 County Council Meeting 9th February, 2026

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald the Council resolved to confirm the minutes of the County Council Meeting on 9th February, 2026.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. V. Barron asked that training be provided for all Councillors and staff around gender-based violence. Cllr. Barron outlined that a motion had been passed at a previous meeting requesting the provision of such training.

While Cllr. V. Barron was addressing the meeting on the issue of consent, the Cathaoirleach called for an adjournment. The party whips and representatives of the independent members were invited to convene, and Cllr. Barron and members of the executive also attended this meeting.

On resumption, Cllr. V. Barron noted the importance of the requested training and the need for such training.

### 1.2 Special County Council Meeting 9th February, 2026

On the proposal of Cllr. J. O'Rourke, seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming the Council resolved to confirm the minutes of the Special County Council Meeting on 9th February, 2026.

**2. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001:**

2.1 Intention to dispose of property at Cherryorchard, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Kehoe, seconded by Cllr. P. Byrne the Council resolved to dispose of property at Cherryorchard, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

2.2 Intention to dispose of property at Ballinaslaney, Oylegate, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. O'Rourke, seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming the Council resolved to dispose of property at Ballinaslaney, Oylegate, Co. Wexford in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

**3. Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)**

3.1 LAC2509 - Proposal to construct a new wastewater pumping station at Sluice Lane, Seafeld Close, Fethard, Co. Wexford.

Having considered the report of the Chief Executive, on the proposal of Cllr. J. Dwyer, seconded by Cllr. P. Barden, the Council resolved to approve the Part 8 for the construction of a new wastewater pumping station at Sluice Lane, Seafeld Close, Fethard, Co. Wexford in accordance with the terms of LAC2509, as circulated.

**4. Approval sought for Delegation to Travel to Fleurus, Belgium to Celebrate the 144th Calvacade of Fleurus - 4th to 7th April, 2026**

On the proposal of Cllr. C. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. R. Staples and agreed by all, the Council resolved to send a delegation to Fleurus, Belgium to celebrate the 144th Calvacade of Fleurus on the 4th to 7th April, 2026.

**5. Annual Service Delivery Plan Q4 2025 - Update for Noting**

The Council noted the Annual Service Delivery Plan Q4 2025 update, as circulated.

**6. Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive and members of the Management Team responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- The importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing and it was stated that fifteen people expressed an interest in purchasing one affordable house in Enniscorthy.
- Update sought on the second-hand acquisition programme.

- There was a request for a review of the situation in relation to housing need where fathers have majority custody of children. Clarification was sought if full custody is needed for the child(ren) to be reflected in the housing need.
- Request that a housing estate be taken in charge as the developers have passed away and the family need the estate to be taken in charge to address probate issues.
- Query if there are figures available for the affordable housing scheme in Rosslare and request for ongoing updates.
- Minister Browne's comments in relation to rural planning were welcomed but it was noted that very few places have wastewater capacity. Request that Wexford County Council facilitate capacity in small rural areas.
- It was noted that wastewater infrastructure is needed in Glynn and it was queried if reed beds are a potential solution.
- Clarification was sought on the process for transferring from an AHB property to a local authority property.
- Clarification sought on the length of time to process a social housing application.
- Observation that Wexford County Council may need to work with other groups who can provide assistance to people who need support to live independently.
- View expressed that Wexford County Council should be considering a parent and two teenage girls for a three bed rather than a two bed.
- Query if guidance has issued in relation to the proposed planning changes for one off houses in rural areas.
- Request that Wexford County Council provide more clusters of housing in rural areas.
- Update sought on recent meeting with Minister Boxer Moran.
- Where can reports on air quality and noise pollution in Enniscorthy be accessed?
- What is the process for joining a group water scheme?
- Why hasn't safety scheme at Ballymackessy been approved?
- Request for clarity on when the roads in the New Ross district will be repaired.
- Query if Wexford County Council can assist in expediting the payment of compensation to business owners following the recent flood event. It was stated that one business has been approved for €170,000 in compensation but has only received €5,000.
- Frustration expressed at the level of funding received for roads in the Enniscorthy area relative to the need for funding. It was stated that €5m a year for three years would be needed to address the roads issues in Enniscorthy.
- Frustration expressed in relation to six roads in Ballyfad and Coolgreaney which were raised numerous times but do not appear on the list of roads to be addressed.
- Request that the drainage on roads be improved.
- Query if the districts have enough General Operatives.

- View expressed that the Gorey to Arklow road which was resurfaced was in good condition and it would have been better to repair rural roads such as Ballyfad and Inch instead.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at this point.

Cllr.'s C. Doyle, J. Owens, J. O'Rourke, G. Carthy, and R. Shannon left the meeting at this point.

- Query if the Economic Department has engaged with Irish Rail re: increasing capacity on the rail service.
- Does Wexford County Council need to reimagine what will be developed on the Trinity Wharf site considering the current global situation?
- Update sought on the outcome of the procurement process for Trinity Wharf.
- Ms. L. Lacey was thanked for compiling a report on Wexford County Council companies. It was noted that the Model County Enterprise Group and HPBA are not included in the list of companies. There was also a request for a full financial report.
- Is New Ross Port Company controlled by Wexford County Council, and if so, should there be a Council representative on the board?

## **7. Minutes of CPG**

### 7.1 Minutes of CPG Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2026

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. D. McDonald, the Council resolved to confirm the minutes of the CPG Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2026.

## **8. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting)**

- 8.1 Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 20th January, 2026
- 8.2 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 14th January, 2026
- 8.3 Borough District of Wexford Meeting – 19th January, 2026
- 8.4 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 20th January, 2026
- 8.5 Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 21st January, 2026
- 8.6 Housing SPC - 5th November, 2025
- 8.7 Special Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 10th February, 2026

The Members noted the minutes, as circulated.

## **9. Correspondence and Communications**

- 9.1 Email from Office of Minister for Transport re: Community Involvement Scheme dated 6th February, 2026
- 9.2 Letter from Galway City Council re: motion dated 12th February, 2026
- 9.3 Letter from Office of An Taoiseach re: motion dated 25th February, 2026

The Members noted the correspondence, as circulated. Cllr. T. Forde expressed his disappointment at the content of An Taoiseach's correspondence regarding a referendum on unity.

## **10. Councillor's Conferences and Training**

### **10.1 Conference Reports**

The Members noted the conference reports of Cllr.'s M. Sheehan and J. O'Rourke pertaining to the Celtic Conference "The Finance Act, 2025" in Carlingford, Co. Louth, as circulated.

## **11. Notices of Motion**

### **11.1 Cllr. Lisa McDonald and Cllr. Ger Carthy**

"Wexford County Council calls on the OPW to act as a matter of urgency to address the serious threat posed by coastal erosion to Rosslare Strand and to immediately prepare and implement a scheme of emergency works to protect Rosslare Strand from the encroachment of the sea."

On the proposal of Cllr. L. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen and agreed by all, the motion was carried.

### **11.2 Cllr. Aoife Rose O'Brien**

"Wexford County Council extends its deepest sympathy and support to all mothers and families who have experienced the loss of an unborn child as a result of criminal or negligent conduct.

This Council supports calls for legislative reform, which seeks to ensure that all victims and their families are fully and fairly recognised within the justice system, and that the dignity and significance of unborn children are appropriately acknowledged, both emotionally and legally.

We refer to this legislation as 'Jax's Law'.

Accordingly, this Council calls upon the Oireachtas to engage meaningfully with bereaved families, advocacy organisations, and legal experts, and urges the Government to prioritise the development and enactment of legislation addressing these matters.”

On the proposal of Cllr. A.R. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell and agreed by all, the motion was carried.

### **11.3 Cllr. Tom Forde**

"This Council notes with serious concern, the paused planned reductions in Special Needs Assistant (SNA) allocations to individual schools following reviews by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), despite no reduction in the needs of pupils with additional requirements and recognises that while national SNA numbers may be increasing overall, individual schools are losing vital supports that are essential to pupils’ safety, participation, wellbeing and access to education.

We acknowledge that the criteria being applied under Circular 30/2014 narrowly interprets the SNA role as limited to primary care needs, failing to reflect the broader, practical supports SNAs provide in areas such as emotional regulation, communication, engagement and inclusion and acknowledges the essential role that SNAs play in enabling children with additional needs to attend school, access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.

We call on the relevant Ministers and the government to:

- Ensure no child loses SNA support where needs remain unchanged.
- Review Circular 30/2014 and update existing policy to reflect modern inclusive education practice and the practical supports that SNAs provide.
- Guarantee a fair and transparent process, including consistent communication that takes into account the views of parents and school staff and all stakeholders.
- Provide sufficient funding and resourcing to meet the growing needs of students requiring additional supports."

Cllr. B.A. Murphy proposed the following amendment to add an additional point: “Ensure that, where possible, children are assessed during two years of preschool to allow for more accurate identification of needs and better-informed decisions on appropriate supports.”

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and agreed by all, the following amended motion was carried:

"This Council notes with serious concern, the paused planned reductions in Special Needs Assistant (SNA) allocations to individual schools following reviews by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), despite no reduction in the needs of pupils with additional requirements and recognises that while national SNA numbers may be increasing overall, individual schools are losing vital supports that are essential to pupils’ safety, participation, wellbeing and access to education.

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supports SNAs provide in areas such as emotional regulation, communication, engagement and inclusion and acknowledges the essential role that SNAs play in enabling children with additional needs to attend school, access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.

We call on the relevant Ministers and the government to:

- Ensure no child loses SNA support where needs remain unchanged.
- Review Circular 30/2014 and update existing policy to reflect modern inclusive education practice and the practical supports that SNAs provide.
- Guarantee a fair and transparent process, including consistent communication that takes into account the views of parents and school staff and all stakeholders.
- Provide sufficient funding and resourcing to meet the growing needs of students requiring additional supports."
- Ensure that, where possible, children are assessed during two years of preschool to allow for more accurate identification of needs and better-informed decisions on appropriate supports.

#### **11.4 Cllr. Marty Murphy**

"This Council calls on the Department of Education to immediately include Ramsgrange Community School in the current schools building programme so that it can proceed to tender for its major redevelopment project."

Standing orders were suspended for this motion to be moved at the start of the meeting.

#### **11.5 Cllr. Leonard Kelly**

"Wexford County Council calls on the Government, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities, and ESB Networks to introduce a fairer domestic electricity tariff that reflects, in principle, the lower per-unit and network charge structures currently available to large energy users such as data centres.

This Council notes the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on households and the disparity between domestic electricity costs and those paid by very large users and requests a review of electricity pricing structures to ensure greater fairness for domestic customers."

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Kelly, seconded by Cllr. A.R. O'Brien and agreed by all, the motion was carried.

#### **11.6 Cllrs. Michael Sheehan, John Dwyer, Marty Murphy, Bridín Murphy, John Fleming and Pat Barden**

"In an effort to protect valuable agricultural land and support our farming community while meeting our obligations of achieving sustainable and renewable energy targets, this Council directs the Executive to start the process of a Variation of the County Development Plan 2022-28 to identify, amend and regulate what lands are protected from large scale planning application while we are awaiting National Guidelines.

Furthermore, the Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to immediately issue Solar Farm National Planning Guidelines as a matter of urgency.”

Cllr. P. Barden proposed the motion with the following amendments which was seconded by Cllr. J. Dwyer:

“In an effort to protect valuable agricultural land and support our farming community while meeting our obligations of achieving sustainable and renewable energy targets, this Council requests the Executive to start the process of a Variation of the County Development Plan 2022-28 to identify, amend and regulate what lands are protected from large scale planning application for solar farms while we are awaiting National Guidelines.

Furthermore, the Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to immediately issue Solar Farm National Planning Guidelines as a matter of urgency.”

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe, and on foot of a roll call vote, the Council resolved to carry the following amended motion:

“This Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to immediately issue Solar Farm National Planning Guidelines as a matter of urgency.”

The result of the vote was 14 in favour and 10 against. The voting was as follows:

Barden, Pat	A	Kelly, Leonard	F	Walsh, Catherine	A
Barron, Vicky	A	Kenny, Donal	F	Walsh, Oliver	F
Boland, Nicky	A	Laffan, Garry	F		
Breen, Pip	F	McDonald, Darragh	F		
Byrne, Patricia	F	McDonald, Lisa	A		
Donohoe, Anthony	F	Murphy, Barbara-Anne	F		
Dwyer, John	A	Murphy, Bridín	A		
Farrell, Mary	A	O’Brien, Aoife Rose	A		
Fleming, John	A	Staples, Frank	F		
Forde, Tom	F	Staples, Robbie	F		
Kehoe, Pat	F	Sullivan, Joe	F		

### 11.7 Cllr. Aoife Rose O'Brien

“I call on Wexford County Council to:

-write to the Minister for Housing and request immediate intervention for the mass eviction affecting 36 families in Hazelwood, Bridgetown.

-To also request that the Department ensure all 36 affected families receive immediate housing supports so that none are forced into homelessness, including access to emergency accommodation, tenancy protection measures, and alternative suitable housing;

-To request that the Department engage directly with the residents, the local authority, and all relevant bodies to secure a fair and sustainable resolution;

-To further call on the Department to introduce safeguards and oversight mechanisms to prevent any other housing estate or large group of residents from experiencing similar displacement as a result of regulatory or market changes;

Failing to prevent this mass eviction, we call on Wexford County Council to request funding from the Minister for Housing to purchase these homes.”

On the proposal of Cllr. A.R. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. T. Forde and agreed by all, the following amended motion was carried:

“I call on Wexford County Council to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage calling on him:

-To introduce safeguards and oversight mechanisms to prevent any housing estate or large group of residents from experiencing displacement as a result of regulatory or market changes;

-To introduce clear and enforceable legislation to prevent the circumvention or side-stepping of the Tyrrelstown Amendment, ensuring that its intent is fully upheld.

-To conduct an immediate review of income eligibility thresholds for social housing to reflect current cost-of-living pressures and housing market conditions, ensuring working families are not unfairly excluded from access to social housing supports.

Failing to prevent the mass eviction of tenants in Hazelwood, Bridgetown, we call on Wexford County Council to request funding from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to purchase these homes.”

#### **11.8 Cllr. Tom Forde**

"This Council recognises the need for emergency accommodation across county Wexford and that access to emergency accommodation is currently uneven with some districts lacking local provision.

We ask that this council aim for the provision of accommodation within their own district for residents that face an immediate housing emergency with an emphasis on those who have children and employment in their district so that their homelessness is not compounded further by greater disruption to their education and employment."

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. A.R. O’Brien and agreed by all, the motion was carried.

#### **12. A.O.B.**

Cllr. P. Barden enquired if there are any guidelines in relation to the new planning requirements for short term lets. Mr. E. Taaffe outlined the position as per the circular and committed to clarifying the situation in relation to short term lets in rural areas.

Cllr. L. Kelly wished all those travelling to the USA as part of official delegations safe travels.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.**

Daingithe ar an

lá de Meitheamh, 2026.

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*Cllr. Joe Sullivan*

*Cathaoirleach*

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*Michael Drea,*

*County Secretary*