

**Climate Change, Biodiversity & Environment Strategic Policy Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting - Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 in County Hall, Wexford & Remotely**

**Cathaoirleach:** Cllr. Mary Farrell

**Present:** Cllr. Jim Moore, Cllr. Donal Kenny (Remotely), Cllr. Maura Bell, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Mr. Danny Forde (PPN Member), Mr. Kevin Molloy (PPN Member remotely), Mr. Allen Holman (PPN Member remotely), Carolyne Godkin Director of Services, Rory O' Mahony Senior Executive Engineer, Frank Burke Climate Change Co-ordinator (Remotely), George Colfer Coastal Engineer, Clare Kelly Climate Change Officer, Hugh Maguire Administrative Officer, Catherine Mc Loughlin Heritage Officer, Cliona Connolly Environment Education & Awareness Officer, Melissa Goff Senior Staff Officer.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Tom Forde, Cllr. Oliver Walsh, Mr. Joe Ryan, Mr. John Somers, Ms. Mary B. Walsh.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes of SPC Meetings held 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2023**

It was noted that a Special Meeting of the Wexford County Council on Climate Change, Coastal Erosion, Coast Flooding and Rising Sea Levels was held on 11<sup>th</sup> April. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Maura Bell and seconded by Cllr. Donal Kenny.

**2. Biodiversity Update – Catherine Mc Loughlin**

Catherine Mc Loughlin gave a brief update on Biodiversity matters under the following headings:

- Funding for the Biodiversity Action Fund Grants has been increased to €100,000 and Catherine Mc Loughlin in partnership with Cliona Connolly have submitted a number of applications.
- The first Meeting of the Co. Wexford Heritage Forum was held. Public Consultation regarding the County Heritage Plan will occur later in the year and the SPC will be updated.
- Biodiversity week will take place from 19<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 with some events planned.

The Committee Members raised a number of queries and responses were given on the following topics;

- The type of grant applications made for the Biodiversity Fund – Phase 2 Wetlands Survey, Tree Policy Application, Hedgerow Surveys, Dune Restoration works etc.
- It was confirmed that any proposed Tree Policy will be brought before the SPC.
- It was noted that the Planning Department deal with the list of protected monuments and structures in County Wexford.
- Biodiversity guidelines, surveys and scoping exercises are all part of the Biodiversity grant application process.

### **3. Climate Action Matters – Frank Burke**

Frank Burke gave a presentation to the Committee giving a brief overview on Climate Action Matters which included;

- Climate Action Team Members introduced.
- Key Milestones for the new Climate Action Plan involving some of these headings;
- Local Authority Risk Assessments.
- Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI).
- Stakeholder Engagement.
- Draft CAP SES/AA & Stakeholders Report
- Special Meeting on CAP
- Public Consultation.
- Adoption of Climate Action Plan (CAP).
- Training
- County Climate Action Programme Project Examples;
  - Home/Energy
  - Travel
  - Shopping/Recycling
  - Food and Waste
  - Local Climate & Environment Action.
  - “Pocket Forest” in Ferns, Gorey & Wexford.

Following the presentation, the Committee Members had a number of questions to which responses were given;

- The involvement of the Department (DECC) in approving Community Climate Action Applications – It was noted that each LA will submit applications to the Department for approval.
- There was some discussion on the provision of EV charging points. It was noted that Councils may become involved in the provision of destination or some residential charging points but unlikely to be involved in a widescale rollout of chargers.
- While it was noted that DECC has €667,000 available for Community Climate Action Projects it was expected that funding might be 100% for the projects. Concerns were expressed over the ability of Community & Voluntary groups to be able to spend and then recoup costs from the Department.
- Local Waste Prevention Grants were discussed an example recycled hurleys.

### **4. Coastal Matters – George Colfer**

George Colfer, Coastal Engineer gave an updated report to the SPC Committee Members on Coastal Matters covering the following topics;

- A Special Meeting of Wexford County Council was held on 11<sup>th</sup> April dealing with Coastal Erosion, Coastal Flooding, Climate Change and Rising Sea Levels.
- The presentation outlined details of the Wexford Coastline – 260 km long, over 70 Beaches, 6 Blue Flag Beaches, 2 Blue Flag Marinas, 10 Green Coast Beaches, 35 Beaches covered by Beach Bye-Laws and 11 Piers/Harbours.
- Coastal Erosion Risk Zones outlined.
- The approach of eliminating risk through planning, monitoring erosion over time, identify Schemes, Secure Funding and Progress Coastal Protection Schemes.

- In the County Development Plan 2001- No Development within 50 metres of the coast, now the distance is 250 metres in 2023.
- Environmentally Protected Areas were highlighted.
- The process involved with Coastal Protection Schemes was outlined together with the various methods of monitoring erosion risk areas.
- Seaview, Ballyhealy and St. Helens proposed Schemes examined.
- Piers and Harbours and DAFM Brexit funded improvement scheme outlined.
- Rosslare Strand and Wexford Town Coastal Erosion and Flood Relief Schemes outlined.
- New Duncannon Wastewater Treatment System highlighted together with the Environment Improvement Project in partnership with farmers in Duncannon.
- Details of Beach operations and Beach Bye-Law signs featured in the presentation.

There followed some questions and queries from the Committee Members to which answers were provided;


- When was the rock armour installed in Cullenstown? – around 2000.
- The reason for the stones on the Beach in Rosslare Strand – erosion mainly.
- Some of the members highlighted problems with dogs on beaches and the need for better signage – New Beach Bye-Law Signage is expected to be erected.

#### 5. Any Other Business

The Committee Members raised a number of queries which were discussed and responded to on the following matters;

- Flood relief schemes are in place for towns but other areas including villages likely to be affected and the accuracy of the flooding maps upon which the surveys and studies are based and if this will be enough for the effects of climate change. In particular the Wexford Town Flood Relief Scheme was discussed and it was agreed to request Special Projects Section to update the Committee on this project.
- The situation with regard the provision of litter bins or not by Wexford County Council and the obligations of commercial businesses in complying with the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended) for example in Kilmore Quay. It was agreed to request the Environment Warden for the area to examine the matter.
- A provisional date was set for the next Litter and Waste Action Sub-Committee Meeting of Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 at 11.30 before the Full Council Meeting.

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

Signed:   
Cathaoirleach

Date: 29/6/23

