

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**Minutes of Special Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Tuesday 11th April, 2023
in the Council Chamber at 11.15am (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. Mary Farrell, Chair of Environment SPC**Councillors:**

BELL	MAURA (Remote)	FORDE	TOM (Remote)	OWENS	JACKSER
BOLGER	ANDREW (Remote)	HYNES	DAVID	SHEEHAN	MICHAEL
BREEN	PIP	KAVANAGH	WILLIE	SULLIVAN	JOE
BROWNE	AIDAN (Remote)	KENNY	DONAL	WALSH	OLIVER
BYRNE	CATHAL	LAFFAN	GARRY (Remote)	WHELAN	MICHAEL
CARTHY	GER	LAWLOR	GEORGE		
CODD	JIM	MCDONALD	LISA		
CODD-NOLAN	KATHLEEN	MOORE	JIM		
CONNICK	ANTHONY (Remote)	MURPHY	BARBARA ANNE		
DEVEREUX	DIARMUID	MURPHY	BRIDIN		
FLEMING	JOHN	O'ROURKE	JOHN (Remote)		

Officials:

Mr. Eamonn Hore, Deputy Chief Executive
Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services
Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance
Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services
Ms. Sinead Casey, A/Director of Services
Ms. Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services
Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary
Mr. Gerry Forde, Senior Engineer
Mr. George Colfer, Executive Engineer
Mr. Frank Burke, Climate Action Co-Ordinator
Mr. Mark Adamson, OPW (on-line)
Mr. Ciarán Conroy, OPW (On-line)

Apologies:

Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive
Cllr. Leonard Kelly
Cllr. Frank Staples

1. Introduction including Climate Change Mitigation

Ms. C. Godkin, Director of Services welcomed Mark Adamson and Ciarán Conroy from the OPW to the meeting. Ms. Godkin presented an introduction and overview of climate change. She outlined the critical nature of the global climate challenge and the need for mitigation and adaptation. Ms. Godkin then set out the policy and legislative framework in Ireland and the timelines for the Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan.

2. General Overview on Erosion in County Wexford - (Coastal Erosion, Coastal Flooding and Sea Level Rise)

Mr. Frank Burke, Climate Action Co-ordinator gave a presentation outlining the statutory requirement for a Climate Action Plan and the objectives at local level. Mr. Burke outlined examples of mitigation and adaptation. He explained the important role the Members will play in championing behavioural change.

Mr. Gerry Forde, Senior Engineer gave a presentation setting out some key statistics for the Wexford coastline. He also presented some key issues posed by coastal erosion and outlined several case studies.

Mr. George Colfer, Coastal Engineer outlined the challenges posed by coastal zone management, coastal erosion, coastal flooding, and sea level rise. He also advised how Wexford County Council manages risk and gave multiple examples of challenges facing the Wexford coastline.

3. Input from OPW

Mr. Mark Adamson, OPW gave a presentation outlining the role and function of the OPW in the area of coastal erosion.

4. Questions and Responses

The Executive and officials from the OPW responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members in regard to the following:

- Issue in relation to power for fast charging EV points.
- The need for a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of EV charging points.
- Does the 10km public coastal protection works and the 5km private coastal protection works quoted include Iarnród Eireann works?

- The need for quarries to supply rock armour.
- Is additional funding required to deal with erosion at Grange?
- Is there a plan to protect land and wall at Kearns?
- Is there a co-ordinated plan for location of EV chargers?
- Who is monitoring 21 coastal erosion risk zones and what supports are there?
- Any opportunity to review 1.5 rate for cost effectiveness for eligibility for funding?
- Serious concerns that there isn't a national body appointed as lead agency with responsibility for coastal erosion.
- Query in relation to the distribution of active travel funding and the need for a more equitable distribution.
- Query in relation to the amount of funding spent defending Courtown north to Kilmichael.
- Request for total expenditure on coastal protection in County Wexford in the past 20 years.
- Is Wexford's coastline the most vulnerable coastline in the Country?
- Who are the members of the inter departmental working group?
- The need for one single agency and one single funding stream.
- The need for meetings on coastal erosion on a far more regular basis.
- Who is responsible for the installation of EV chargers?
- What efforts are we making to install EV chargers?
- What has been done differently to alleviate the next flood in Bridgetown?
- What has been done with the sluice gate in Kilmore?
- The need for EV chargers in New Ross town.
- Query in relation to a specific planning enforcement case and if Wexford County Council will allow the individual to put in his own rock revetment.
- Is there a figure on what it would cost to hold the line along the Wexford coastline?
- Is the economic cost of coastal erosion being factored in?
- Is bureaucracy adding to the cost of protection measures?
- What is the position on the new bridge in Enniscorthy?
- Funding for active travel and flood protection scheme for Wexford was welcomed.
- Have we explored possibility of combining public lighting columns and EV chargers?
- What areas have we plans to save over the next decade? At a cost of €8m per kilometre, it isn't possible to save everywhere.
- Where will funding for Courtown beach nourishment come from and what efforts have been made to secure funding?
- Is it possible to build onto the end of the existing pier in Courtown?
- Why was Enniscorthy flood scheme rejected?

On the proposal of Cllr. Jim Moore and seconded by Cllr. Ger Carthy, the Members resolved that Wexford County Council engage with the SETU Land Sciences Department for monitoring, measuring, and developing a coastal management strategy in partnership with Wexford County Council.

On the proposal of Cllr. Ger Carthy and seconded by Cllr. Davy Hynes, the Members resolved that the Chairs of the Municipal Districts and the Cathaoirleach of the Council request a delegation to meet the Minister for the Environment.

On the proposal of Cllr. Lisa McDonald and seconded by Cllr. Michael Sheehan, the Members resolved to carry the following motion “this Council expresses its disappointment that there is no national agency appointed to deal with coastal change. As the county with the most vulnerable coastline to coastal erosion, we hereby call on the Government to immediately adopt a proactive national strategy with one national agency and a single funding stream to deal with the ever-present danger that the sea presents to our coastline”.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an lá de bealtaine, 2023.

Cllr. George Lawlor
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary