

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council
Held via MS Teams on Wednesday 5th January, 2022 at 2.30pm**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. B. A. Murphy Cathaoirleach.

Councillors:

BARDEN	PAT	DONOHUE	ANTHONY	MCDONALD	LISA
BELL	MAURA			MOORE	JIM
BOLGER	ANDREW	FLEMING	JOHN	MURPHY	BRIDIN
BREEN	PIP	FORDE	TOM	O’ROURKE	JOHN
BROWNE	AIDAN	HEGARTY	JOHN	O’SUILLEABHAIN	FIONNATN
BYRNE	CATHAL	HYNES	DAVID	OWENS	JACKSER
CARTHY	GER	KAVANAGH	WILLIE	SHEEHAN	MICHAEL
CODD	JIM	KELLY	LEONARD	STAPLES	FRANK
CODD-NOLAN	KATHLEEN	KENNY	DONAL	SULLIVAN	JOE
CONNICK	ANTHONY	LAFFAN	GARY		
		LAWLOR	GEORGE	WHELAN	MICHAEL

Officials:

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive
 Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services
 Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services
 Ms. A. O’Neill, Head of Finance
 Ms. C. Godkin, Director of Services
 Mr. D. Minogue, A/DoS, County Secretary
 Ms. F. Callery, A/ Senior Engineer
 Mr. G. Forde, Senior Engineer
 Ms. S. Casey, Senior Engineer
 Mr. Larry McHale, Project Resident Engineer
 Mr. Neville Shaw, Senior Executive Engineer

Oireachtas Members: Minister J. Browne, Deputies J. Mythen, V. Murphy

Apologies: Councillors: D. Devereux, M. Farrell, O. Walsh

The Cathaoirleach welcomed all to the Special Meeting, which was convened to review the severe flooding event of Christmas Day, 25th December 2021. The Cathaoirleach summarised the nature of the incident and the response of the Council staff to same.

The Cathaoirleach outlined her desire to see the Council put in place a Swift Water Response Team, trained and resourced to respond to such incidents in the future.

The CE Mr. T. Enright summarised the incident and briefly outlined the scale of the severe weather event and the actions of the Council staff in responding to the challenges that emerged during Christmas Day and the days immediately after. While extensive damage had been caused across the County, then main areas to experience significant flooding were Enniscorthy, parts of Gorey, Bridgetown, and surrounding areas. A number of bridges were severely damaged with extensive damage to road surfaces in many areas.

Mr. Enright congratulated and thanked all who responded to the emergency event, including the Elected Members, Roads Staff, Fire Personnel, Water Services Staff, Civil Defence, An Garda Síochana, RNLI and Coastguard, OPW, Dept of Social Protection, members of the Executive and the local communities.

Mr. Enright also thanked Minister Patrick O'Donovan for travelling to Wexford to view first-hand the affected areas, and for his promise to support the Council's request for the necessary funding to remediate the significant damage caused.

Ms. Carolyne Hore, DoS, outlined the details of the emergency response by the Council to the event, describing the response as timely, professional, significant and on-going.

Mr. E. Hore, DoS gave a detailed presentation on the scale of the damage caused by the flooding, the remediation costs of which were currently estimated at €3.6million but may well rise to approximately €5 million following ongoing inspections. Mr. Hore advised that the process of determining the nature and extent of the damage was continuing.

Mr. D. Minogue A/DoS provided the members with an update in relation to the Enniscorthy Flood Relief Scheme.

All members contributed to the ensuing discussion and joined in congratulating and thanking the staff for the manner in which they had responded and taken a leadership role in managing the event.

Members pointed to the role of the OPW in river management and asked that the Council engage with the OPW in relation to future drainage and maintenance in the affected areas.

The Council reconvened following a brief comfort break.

Members asked that the Humanitarian Aid Scheme be applied as flexibly as possible to allow owners of flooded properties to be compensated to the greatest extent possible.

The Members also asked that the Wexford Oireachtas Members support the Council in its request to Government for the necessary financial assistance to allow the extensive damage to be remediated as quickly as possible.

It was agreed that emergency road diversions currently in place would be reviewed to ensure that disruption to road users will be minimised.

The Members expressed thanks to the representatives of the Department of Social Protection for their prompt response to the flooding emergency.

It was agreed that the Council's Flood Emergency Plan be reviewed to include Wellingtonbridge, Duncormick and Bridgetown areas.

The role of Rescue 117 Helicopter in responding to the flooding incident was noted and the Council requested that the service be maintained and adequately resourced into the future.

It was agreed to consider an information campaign in the Spring to encourage landowners to properly maintain drainage networks on their lands.

It being past 5.30pm, and on the proposal of Cllr. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald, the Council agreed to amend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue for a further 30 minutes.

Council agreed to call on the Wexford Oireachtas Members to support the Council's request to the Minister for Public Expenditure to expedite the Enniscorthy Flood Scheme.

The meeting concluded with the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive thanking all involved for the manner in which they had responded to the flood emergency event

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an

lá de Feabhra, 2022.

Cllr Barbara-Anne Murphy
Cathaoirleach

David Minogue,
County Secretary