

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meeting held on Monday 14th December 2020 via ZOOM.

Present: Councillor Gerry Walsh Chair
Councillor Tom Fortune
Councillor Avril Cronin
Mr. Michael Ryan
Mr. Huw O’Toole
Ms. Ruth Donnelly
Mr. Killian McGreal
Mr. Michael Allen
Mr. Christopher Fox

In Attendance: Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Services
Ms. Christine Flood, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise
Ms. Susan Nichols, Administrative Officer

Apologies: Councillor Irene Winters
Councillor Mary Kavanagh
Councillor Pat Kennedy
Ms. Linda Healy, Administrative Officer
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield, Administrative Officer

ITEM 1

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support (EDES) SPC held on Monday 14th September, 2020 (copy attached).

On the proposal of Cllr T. Fortune seconded by Mr. C. Fox, the minutes of SPC meeting held on Monday 14th September 2020 as circulated were agreed.

ITEM 2

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

ITEM 3

Update on LECP: Economic Activities

Ms. C. Flood, Senior Executive Officer provided a report to the meeting (copy circulated) which covered the following:

Film Strategy

Wicklow County Council has appointed Saffery Champness Ireland with SPI to develop a Film Strategy for County Wicklow, this project is underway at present and is expected to be complete in Q1 2021. An online survey of the sector in Wicklow will go live next week to inform skill needs, demand for business supports and enterprise space, film induced tourism, support of local talent and promotion of county by Wicklow Screen Office.

Arklow Town Team

The Arklow & District Chamber of Commerce, Arklow MD & the Arklow Town Team continue to work closely together on a number of initiatives to promote a Shop Local Campaign. A competition was held to invite the community to submit ideas for a symbolic logo for Arklow Town. The winning logo, as chosen by a panel of judges, was designed by Aisha Sheridan.

To support the Arklow Shop Local Campaign, free Christmas parking is available in Arklow from the 16th November until the 3rd January 2021, including on-street parking also.

The results of the Arklow Town Public Survey were recently announced. The findings of the study will help future decision making on improvements to the town centre when funding becomes available. The results are a valuable resource for all those who have an input into the future shaping and decision making in our town and will greatly assist in making Arklow a vibrant and welcoming town for future generations.

Arklow Towns 6th Annual Christmas Festival was launched on 28th November. The popular Christmas tree Light Switch–On event went virtual for 2020. The Golden Ticket draw returns this year with lots of prizes to be won. The Best Christmas Window Display Competition really helps to create a wonderful atmosphere in the town. Online completions include best dressed Festive Pet, Find the Elf, Best Dressed Christmas Tree and many others.

New events for the 2020 festive season include:-

Arklow Festive Trail - Self-guided trail leaflets were distributed door to door and are also available online www.wicklow.ie One lucky winner who cracks the Christmas Code from the 10 clues at different location around the town will be in with a chance to win a family pass to Tayto Park.

Santa arrived in Arklow on 28th November and toured the town aboard Arklow's Fire Services, Fire Engine (giving the reindeers a break!).

Christmas Harbour Lights – Over the festive season walk down by the beautiful marina and see how it has been lit up for the Christmas holidays.

A full list of events and competitions taking place is available on the Arklow Christmas Festival Facebook page.

Bray Town Team / Bray Reopening Committee

Following a meeting in early November a number of extra virtual events were agreed to support the virtual switch on of the Christmas Lights. These extra virtual events are:

- Online Workshops for Christmas food and drink
- Children's Competitions
- Children's storytelling online
- Santa's Post-box
- Illumination of Town Hall and Civic Offices for the festive season

The virtual Christmas Light Switch on was held on 21st November 2020

Blessington Town Team

Members of Blessington Town Team continue to work closely to support the Hello Neighbour Campaign. Members noted the importance of continuing to promote the shop local campaign and celebrating the festive season with visual events including:

- Streaming of the Christmas light switch on took place on Saturday 28th November at 6pm
- Ringing of St. Mary's Church bells
- Streaming of message from Santa Claus to all the children in the area
- Santa's Post-box outside Credit Union which offers the opportunity of posting letters directly to the North Pole

Greystones 2020

'Greystones will shine bright this Christmas'

Greystones 2020 first switched on the Christmas Lights Saturday 21st November. Due to some technical hitches, the spectacular live streaming event which was hugely successful took place on Friday 27th November

- The event was live streamed worldwide with music, celebrities, theatre and featured Greystones families all over the world
- The town is illuminated as normal with two giant Christmas trees
- Five online Christmas workshops were held as part of the festivities
- Competitions online for children and adults with lots of prizes
- Twelve Days of Christmas Song painted on twelve shop windows
- Santa's Post Box for the children to deliver their letters

Wicklow Town Team

Particularly in the lead up to Christmas Wicklow Town Team continue to promote Wicklow Town and its retailers through their Facebook page and website www.wicklowtown.ie

Following on from the establishment of the Reopening Committee back in June The Wicklow and District Chamber of Commerce, Wicklow Municipal District along with the Town Team continue to work closely together on a number of initiative to promote Wicklow through the “Shop Local Support Wicklow” campaign.

The switching on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town this year was by way of a virtual event on Saturday 28th November. To add to the festive cheer additional lights have been added this year.

The Town Team together with the Wicklow Municipal District will again sponsor the Best Dressed Christmas Window competition. The winner and runner up will receive a Christmas Hamper and Wicklow Town Vouchers.

An application submitted by Wicklow Municipal District and the Town Team under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme has been successful in achieving funding of €40,000 for the purchase and installation of portable street awnings.

The final stages of the Historical Trail project and the backlighting project are nearing completion and it is the intention of the Town Team to continue to pursue their long term goals with the N11 project as well as the Wicklow Greenway.

URDF

There are currently three 2018 URDF projects underway;

Arklow Historic Town Core - First phase is complete involving the regeneration of Arklow Courthouse with improved court facilities on the ground floor and the upper floors providing a blend of co-working space and traditional office space which will be managed by Arklow Business Enterprise Centre (ABEC). The next phase of the project, which is due to start in 2021, will see the creation of a new public realm in the adjacent Parade Ground area.

Wicklow Library and Fitzwilliam Square – Works are nearing completion and expected to be substantially complete by Q1 2021.

Bray Public Transport Bridge – Project is at Detailed Design stage with enabling works such as site clearance, fencing, topographical surveys and environmental assessments complete.

URDF applications were submitted in May 2020 for three projects:

1. Regeneration of the Arklow Quays
2. Bray Harbour Regeneration

3. Wicklow's Waterfront, regeneration of Wicklow Quays

An announcement is expected in the coming weeks of the successful applications from this round of funding.

RRDF

Newtownmountkennedy

Wicklow County Council was awarded Category 2 funding of €357,750 for the design and plans for upgrades to the public realm, street landscaping, traffic management, public spaces and community facilities. The funding will be matched by a 25% contribution from the Council's resources bringing the investment to over €500,000. This funding builds on the €150,000 that Newtownmountkennedy received in 2018 from the Town and Village Enhancement Scheme, which funded streetscape improvements in the town.

Rathdrum

Wicklow County Council has acquired the old St Joseph's site in Rathdrum from the HSE. The site is centrally located beside St Saviour's Church, adjacent to the Memorial Park and car park, with children's playground and adult gym nearby.

A Rural Regeneration Development Fund application (RRDF) was submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development on 1st December 2020 seeking funding for the development of a multi-use Community and Enterprise Centre at the site, increased connectivity through improved road and pedestrian access and enhancements to public realm. The proposed development will help to regenerate Rathdrum and stimulate further growth in social, community and economic activities in the wider Rathdrum area.

Roundwood

An application in partnership with Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team was submitted on 1st December 2020 in respect of the construction of a new headquarters for the team at Roundwood.

TOURISM

The key themes in the Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan are as follows;

- Accommodation
- Towns as Visitor Hubs
- Thematic Experiences
- Marketing /Developing a common narrative
- Glendalough

Accommodation

The Accommodation working group commissioned a high level review of current visitor accommodation in the county. The study which has just been finalised has made a number of recommendations around the development of new accommodation. The working group will proceed to act on the recommendations and will develop an online portfolio highlighting Wicklow's potential.

Wicklow County is dominated by 5 star & 4 star hotels, 4 star guesthouses and 4 star caravan and camping parks. The budget, hostel and hybrid sectors are underserved in the county, which excludes more price conscious travellers that are overnighing in cheaper accommodation in Dublin city. Wicklow accounts for only 3% of all Ireland overnights and spend and 2% of available serviced visitor accommodation stock.

The Council is exploring models to determine the feasibility of new accommodation types to increase the overall quantum of visitor accommodation in the county. In tandem with future developments such as the Blessington Greenway, Avondale Forest Park and Glendalough, additional accommodation may be required in these and other key areas.

The County has a disproportionate level of day tourism and spend, currently €261 v's the National average spend per visit of €355. The number of overnight visitors is relatively low which decreases the overall average spend. The local authority is working to attract and maintain its fair share of longer stay visitation, while ensuring a reasonable level of spatial distribution of accommodation facilities throughout the County.

Recommendations

1. Determine optimum accommodation capacity for key areas including visitor attractions and smaller towns & villages.
2. Tender for and appoint specialist property firm or destination development agency to spearhead the process of making Wicklow County a highly sought after tourism investment location with targeted LA supports.
3. Review feasibility of Aparthotels, Hybrid, Traditional Hotels and Alternative accommodation
4. Design a suite of targeted supports (financial, advisory, PPP, JV) to encourage 'the right' type of development depending on location and demand. It must be financially sustainable and environmentally sustainable.
5. Prepare a SWOT analysis for the identified sites & developments to ensure viability.
6. Engage with stakeholders and invite submissions for development as part of a carefully designed incentive scheme to encourage a variety of accommodation types around the county.

7. Investigate the PPP and JV options as demonstrated in the UK and tailor 2 – 3 options for approval.
8. Encourage existing businesses to register with Fáilte Ireland (where appropriate) to ensure product quality and consistency.

Glendalough Masterplan and Wicklow Visitor Orientation Study

Faillte Ireland, with its strategic partners OPW, NPWS and with Wicklow County Council has engaged a team led by Consarc Consultants to develop a tourism master-plan for Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park and a Visitor Orientation Plan for County Wicklow. The Consarc led multi disciplinary team consists of tourism, environmental, heritage, public realm, traffic and parking consultants to develop the suite of plans and options for consideration.

Some of the issues considered include:

- Developing a detailed understanding of the volume, needs and motivations of the best prospects customers;
- Planning suitable visitor facilities and car parking sites within the park compatible with conservation objectives;
- Identifying the widest range of activities and sites of interest within the Park, compatible with conservation objectives;
- Development of physical links between all facilities to provide a flexible, interconnected visitor management plan;
- A seasonal strategy of ‘flexing up’ the visitor facilities to meet demand but visitor experience led;
- Identifying links of activities and sites of interest throughout Wicklow with Visitor Orientation Recommendations
- Compliance with statutory planning and environmental legislation, local and national government policies etc.

It should be noted that while the focus is on Glendalough as the major international tourist attraction – this is a Wicklow wide project and it looks at:

- Dispersal to more sustainable sites for outdoor recreation
- Improving the sustainability of existing outdoor recreation honey-pot sites
- Enhancing car parking and visitor service provision at key outdoor recreation sites
- Promoting alternative places to go – enhanced web presence
- Developing new products and product enhancement (walking and cycling)
- Creating strong Outdoor Recreation Hubs – spreading the load and the benefits
- Improving connectivity
- New routes around Glendalough/Laragh with the focus on softer modes of transport

- Interpretation and signage
- Enhanced visitor facilities

The above is not an exhaustive list.

The next steps are to engage with the stakeholders including the elected representatives and the local community to discuss the findings and to seek their views on how best to resolve some of the issues raised.

Other Tourism Activity

New Visit Wicklow website: the new visitwicklow.ie website is now live. The visitor's browsing experience has been enhanced to make it as user-friendly and easy to navigate as possible. This includes an extensive menu bar offering instant access to the various sections of the site. A new 'Specials' section has been included to assist in finding various seasonal deals and great offers.

Wicklow Passport: A Wicklow Passport aimed at encouraging locals and visitors to explore Wicklow have been introduced by the Wicklow Tourism Alliance. Passport holders can collect various Wicklow Stamps and discover the activities, attractions, and hospitality on offer across the county. Loosely based on the 'Camino Passport' in Spain, the Wicklow Passport is a series of stamps that can only be collected at the respective towns or villages represented on each stamp. For example, you can only get the Shillelagh stamps at stamping locations around Shillelagh.

The Wicklow Passport can be purchased for €2 online at <http://visitwicklow.ie/passport>. Or can be collected free-of-charge from participating stamping locations, or through the Wicklow Libraries at Bray, Greystones, Arklow and Blessington. Details of the circa 75 and growing stamping locations is available at <http://visitwicklow.ie/passport> by clicking on each icon.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGY

Wicklow County Council was awarded Leader funding for the implementation of the Food and Beverage Strategy.

Wicklow Naturally October Feast

October was focused on the delivery of the Wicklow Naturally Feast. Approximately 35 events (either physical or virtual) were planned and while many of the physical events were hit hard by the new restrictions, the online events were tremendously successful, including:

- Food demonstrations
- Foraging Tours

- Meet the Maker events
- Demonstration videos
- Supper Clubs

Social Media

A publicity/social media programme is being operated, and our social media coverage is increasing substantially.

- Facebook: 2030 followers (original target: 400)
 - Instagram: 846 followers
 - Twitter: 344 followers
- Facebook posts during October Feast were very strongly engaged with:
- Engaged use with Facebook page in October: The number of people who engaged with your Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users): 28 Days: 114,045
 - Organic reach: The number of people who had any content from your Page or about your Page enter their screen through unpaid distribution. This includes posts, stories, check-ins, social information from people who interact with your Page and more. (Unique Users): 28 Days: 1,227,909

Food Incubation Centre

The food incubation centre business survey was closed and is being interpreted. The final chapter of the incubation centre report is being written and will be submitted by the end of the year.

Structure of Wicklow Naturally

Wicklow Naturally has been established as a CLG. A structure document has been produced, outlining the recommended Steering Group/Subgroup structure. A full task/activity list for Wicklow Naturally is being drawn up for 2021, and individual responsibilities are being identified.

Membership

Membership is currently at 91, and we are waiting final information or confirmation from around 15 of these on different aspects of their blog/website listing. We are continuing to sign-up members but are trying to do this at a rate which allows time for the directories to be written.

Food Poverty

Stage 1 of the mapping initiative for Food Poverty Initiative is complete. A coordination plan is being drawn up and an activity calendar for 2021 is planned.

MARITIME

Maritime Strategic Review for County Wicklow

Wicklow County Council and the Maritime Business Development Group commissioned a Maritime Strategic Review to identify ways in which the economic base of County Wicklow could be strengthened through its ports and harbours and formulate recommendation for Wicklow County Council.

Key Recommendations:

- To maximise the Offshore Wind Opportunity
- To investigate the feasibility of a new harbour facility at Wicklow
- Aquaculture Support
- Marketing Strategy for County Wicklow as a Coastal Tourist Destination

The Strategic Review is at the core of the applications for Climate Action and URDF funding.

There are currently three wind farm projects in development:

- Arklow Bank
- Codling Bank
- Dublin Array

All three have commenced stakeholder engagement.

Development of joint substation to facilitate Wind Farm

Green energy developer SSE Renewables and Irish-owned data centre owner and operator, Echelon Data Centres have announced an agreement to develop a joint 220kV substation at the Avoca River Business Park, Arklow, Ireland. The new infrastructure will facilitate the development of Ireland's first large-scale offshore wind farm, off the coast of Co. Wicklow with an export capacity of 520MW, and Echelon's DUB20 (Arklow) 100MW data centre.

The joint initiative marks the first time in Ireland that an offshore wind farm and a data centre have agreed to develop grid infrastructure. The substation development is expected to require an investment of around €50m to deliver. Upon completion, the proposed offshore wind farm and data centre will both directly connect to the Irish national grid via the new shared substation.

The landmark deal is an innovative step forward for the renewable energy and data centre sectors. Sharing grid infrastructure and locating data centres closer to renewable sources of generation such as offshore wind delivers on a key decarbonisation goal set out in Ireland's Climate Action Plan to facilitate regionally-located data centres and minimise grid

reinforcements. It also helps deliver a Climate Action Plan target of installing 1GW of offshore wind by 2025.

The development agreement will support the delivery of 250 new jobs for Arklow. This includes the creation of up to 80 new jobs during the construction of the substation. Upon completion of both the technology and renewable energy projects, the data centre will support 90 full-time operational roles while a further 80 full-time jobs will be created locally to support the day-to-day operation of the offshore wind farm.

Maritime Business Development Group

At the October MBDG meeting three presentations were made to the group. RWE Renewables gave a presentation on the Dublin Array Offshore Wind Farm, RPS Consultants gave a presentation on the Bray Harbour Feasibility Study and Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions gave a presentation on an options study to consider two potential sites in Co. Wicklow for the creation of a deepwater harbour development.

ITEM 4

Update on LECP: Community Activities

Ms. Susan Nichols, Administrative Officer provided a report to the meeting (copy circulated) which covered the following:

Goal 1: Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban and rural regeneration

Regeneration Funding Schemes:

Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2019/2020 (RRDF)

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding Awarded
Baltinglass	Restoration of the Courthouse reuse as a library/Heritage and Digi-hub with outdoor event space Public Realm enhancement, parking improvement, pedestrian crossings, ramps, boardwalk and riverside fencing	€2.7mn (total cost €3,566,968)
Newtownmountkennedy	Main St. Design; mobility /transport plan; community facilities	€357,750

Both projects are underway but progress has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions

Urban Regeneration Development Fund: 3 projects submitted – Awaiting Decision

Area	Overview
Bray	Redesign Harbour area
Wicklow	Redesign Harbour area
Arklow	Redesign Harbour area

Town & Village 2020

This funding scheme supports economic and social development projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000. This year there are two elements to the Scheme.

2020 Accelerated Measure

This measure aims to assist communities and local businesses in the delivery of projects that address the short term challenges of social and economic recovery following the COVID-19 emergency. The focus is on adapting to public health requirements, particularly social distancing. Funding is available up to €25,000 - €40,000 in exceptional circumstances

2020 Town and Village Main Scheme

Round 1 Accelerated		
Dunlavin	Shop Local campaign	Funded €4,500
Roundwood	Public realm	Funded €36,000
Community Centres	Adaptations for COVID measures for 10 centres	Funded €16,200
Round 2 Accelerated – August 14 th		
Enniskerry	Car parking improvements, new footpath, new public seating, signage & shopfront improvements	Funded €39,600

Ballinaclash	Renovations to community centre	Funded €39,600
Laragh	Improvements to pedestrian movements; provision of safe pedestrian spaces and public awning	Funded €24,300
Tinahely	Tinahely Mens Shed building refurbishment after a fire	Funded €4,950
Baltinglass	Painting and planting scheme	Funded €9,000
App	App to encourage shop local – county wide	Funded €22,500
Round 3 Accelerated >10,000 – August 28 th		
Kilcoole	Age Friendly benches	Funded €18,000
BCPs	Fit out for BCP centres	Funded €40,000
Rathdrum	Age friendly benches and bus shelter	Funded €24,000
Ashford	Public space enhancement	
Glendalough	Public toilets	
Age friendly Care	Care packages multiple towns	
Round 3 Accelerated <10,000 – August 28 th		
Greystones 2020/MD	Footpath improvement around Burnaby Park	Funded €40,000
Arklow MD	Biodiversity project	Funded €35,550
Wicklow MD	Outdoor Shelter/awnings	Funded €40,000
Bray MD	Streetscape improvement	

Town & Village Main Scheme – September 30 th		
Stratford	Community shop/cafe/offices/living over the shop/playground	€199,800
Lacken	Community Centre/cafe	€100,000
Laragh	BCP/remote working hub	€100,000
Blessington	Masterplan for sports and recreation area	€200,000
Enniskerry	Public realm enhancement	€98,000
Avoca	Public realm plan	€68,455
Annamoe	Public realm	€100,000
Ashford	Public realm	€100,000
Aughrim	Age friendly works	€100,000
Shopfront scheme	Painting scheme - countywide	€90,000

A decision is awaited on these applications.

CLAR 2020

Wicklow County Council have successfully secured €60,000 for two projects under the CLAR programme; Knockananna Community Group and Asknagap secured funding for carparks.

Goal 2: Promote Active Citizenship and Public Participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making

Age Friendly

500 Age Friendly care packages are being distributed to those most isolated and vulnerable in December 2020. The packs will be distributed by Meals on Wheels and by participating Public Health Nurses. Included in the pack are the Age Friendly services guide for older people, Age Friendly eircode fridge magnet, hi viz armbands, sketch pad, colour pencils, hand sanitiser, LSP exercise guide, Environmental Awareness recipe book, deck of playing cards, hand cream, a chocolate bar etc.

Approximately 40,000 Christmas cards have been delivered to households in Wicklow. The Christmas card promotes the 'Keep Well' campaign and includes the community call helpline number. To date there has been some very positive responses and also some calls for assistance as a result of the cards.

Technology for nursing home is an ongoing project for December. Grant funding has been allocated through Age Friendly programme and the HSE to provide technology.

Comhairle na nÓg

The DCYA have provided funding for tablets for Comhairle na nÓg and six tablets are being allocated through the IT department.

Comhairle na nÓg have held their first online AGM event. Over 100 young people linked into the event. The top 5 themes/concerns of the day were mental health, stress, school, climate, exams and alcohol abuse.

Public Participation Network

The PPN activity included:

- Communicate and promote information regarding events and funding schemes to community groups
- Involved in the Migrant Integration Strategy development
- Working on the Sustainable Development Goals and how they link with the PPN work
- Involved in the 'Keep Well' campaign and the COVID-19 Community Response Forum
- Researched and published report on the 'Financial Impact of COVID-19 on Community Groups'
- 'Meet the Elected Reps' event ran virtually in the five MDs
- The annual members meeting was held on 7th December where the new website was launched

Goal 3: Strategic Direction – Develop high quality integrated services, available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups

1. Healthy Wicklow Strategy

Round 3 of Programme is underway but implementation has slowed down because of COVID-19. An extension to 31st December 2021 has been granted. €30,000 has been allocated to a number of groups under the Healthy Ireland Mental Health Small grants Scheme.

Under the Healthy Ireland Fund, Wicklow County Council has received €67,225 to help with the 'Keep Well' campaign. This is a national campaign, part of the government plan for 'Living with COVID-19' and focused on 5 major themes:

- **Keeping Active & Being Outdoors** – even during winter it is important to help physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- **Keeping in Contact** – staying connected with people and addressing isolation as person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing
- **Switching Off and Being Creative** - Switching Off and Being Creative or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax
- **Eating Well** – by nourishing your mind and body we can positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Minding Your Mood** – relaxation, mindfulness and asking for help if needed.

2. Migrant Integration Strategy

The DRAFT Migrant Integration Strategy has recently been completed and was presented to the LCDC. It will go to the full Council meeting in January.

Goal 4: Develop a vibrant and innovative community and social enterprise sector

Bray Area Partnership has teamed with Southside partnership and was successful in securing Dormant Accounts funding for a social enterprise support project. SEED, Social Enterprise Expansion and Development, provides both mentoring and training to Social Enterprises in the North Wicklow area.

County Wicklow Partnership's social enterprise project is providing support and training to social enterprises in the rest of the county. It also provides start-up funding through the LEADER Programme.

- A Rural Youth Online Social Enterprise Entrepreneurial Training Programme
- Covid 19 Training Support Programme for new and existing Social Enterprises in Co Wicklow

Following the report, the preparatory work for Town & Village Renewal applications was acknowledged and tributes were paid to the Community Call who are providing a highly valuable service especially to those who may be experiencing social isolation issues.

ITEM 5.

Update on Blessington Greenway

Ms. S. Nichols, Administrative Officer provided updates on the following:

Blessington Greenway Update

The walkovers of the entire route have taken place with the consultants Aecom, WCC staff and an ESB representative. The route alignment is agreed with the ESB.

Currently all the environmental reports, including the Appropriate Assessment and the Environmental Impact reports, are being updated and are nearing completion.

On the 9th of November, Minister Eamon Ryan, T.D. Minister of Transport, and Hildegard Naughton, T.D Minister of State, confirmed the allocation of €63.5 million funding for a range of greenways across the country. The Blessington Lakes EGreenway project will receive a sum of €6.4 million of this overall funding allocation in 2021. It is estimated that the budget for the project is in the region of €15 million.

The increased level of funding is representative of the fact that local authorities were originally funded at a rate of 60% pre COVID-19. In recognition of the negative impact COVID-19 has had on local authorities, funding will now be provided at a rate of 100%.

Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway Update

Route has been identified. The consultants appointed for the scheme have completed the Natura Impact Statement planning submission. The Law Department had advised previously that the appropriate land access procedure for this scheme was the 'creation of public rights of way' however they have been requested to consider if Compulsory Purchase Order could be used. This will be considered by the Law Department on receipt of the NIS. Once this is reviewed the land access documents will be finalised and both the planning and land access statutory procedures will take place at the same time.

Following the report Christine Flood updated the members on recent developments regarding the Wicklow to Greystones greenway:

- The project has not received funding under the Greenway fund but another application was made through another funding stream
- The ARUP report on Coastal Erosion has not been circulated by Irish Rail yet
- Proposals by Irish Rail do not impact on the proposed route
- The report looks at beach nourishment and the construction of offshore islands to break the wave action and reduce the impact on the coastline
- It is hoped that funding will be made available to bring the Wicklow to Greystones Coastal Path through an Environmental Impact Assessment to An Bord Pleanála

ITEM 6

Update on Wicklow County Campus: Content Creation Enterprise Hub

ITEM 8

Update on Business Continuity Response to Covid-19

Ms. V. Delahunt, Head of Enterprise provided a report which covered Item No. 6 and Item No. 8, viz:

- WCC has disposed of 0.226 hectares of land at Wicklow County Campus by way of 99 year lease to Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG.
- The site clearance is complete and contractor has submitted final account.
- The construction tender will be published on eTenders week of 14th December 2020 for 4 weeks.
- Construction contractor to be appointed in Q1 2021 and following stand still period construction to commence.
- Foul drainage system to be developed for the whole campus concurrently. Topographical and CCTV surveys being carried out currently to allow for design.
- Directors invited to the board of Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG.
- Insurance cover and lease to be arranged next.
- First REDF drawdown in Q1 2021.
- Promotion and marketing of facilities to commence, Q2 2021
- Recruitment of Centre Manager Q3 2021

#LookforLocal Campaign:

Nationwide shop local campaign organised, paid for and promoted through central LEO unit in Enterprise Ireland and 31 LEO offices.

Consumers and businesses in Wicklow are being encouraged to shop local this Christmas and are reminded of the huge range of goods and services they can access on their own doorsteps with a new Government campaign to 'Look for Local'.

The Local Enterprise Office Wicklow "Look for Local" campaign, which is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities, aims to highlight small Wicklow businesses in every sector, asking that people continue to build on the recent groundswell of support shown to local businesses when looking to buy goods or services. Wicklow County Council is also currently promoting a Love Wicklow, Shop Local campaign to encourage people to shop locally this festive season. The campaign like the Look for Local aims to keep the heart of our community going by supporting locally owned and operated businesses throughout County Wicklow.

The campaign is promoted by Local Enterprise Offices across the country along with Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities. It is supported by national and local advertising and marketing through radio advert, print media advert in the Wicklow Times and Wicklow People, on the LEO website, and in the media by highlighting the LEO supports available to small businesses.

The campaign will highlight Local Enterprise Office client companies across a range of sectors to spotlight the options out there for those who want to 'Look for Local' in the coming months.

Since January, the Local Enterprise Offices nationally have approved over 11,000 Trading Online Vouchers for small Irish businesses, helping them to create or adapt their online trading presence.

Over 12,060 Business Continuity Vouchers to small businesses have also been approved so far this year, while over 55,000 individuals have received Covid-19 specific mentoring or training from their Local Enterprise Office.

The Local Enterprise Office Wicklow has approved 364 of the 11,000 Trading Online Vouchers, 283 of the 12,060 Business Continuity Vouchers, and has provided Covid-19 specific mentoring and training to 1,237 of the 55,000 individuals.

Brexit:

- The LEO offers a suite of supports to assist small business prepare for Brexit and to be Brexit ready on 1st January 2021. The supports are listed on our website and include scorecards, checklists, information guides, workshops, currency exposure calculator, financial supports, mentoring, webinars, training events, and Lean for Micro programme as well as a weekly newsletter and social media promotion.
- Two dedicated Brexit Business Advisors are available to support small businesses to get Brexit ready by signposting these to available supports through the LEO and other agencies.
- Seven Prepare your Business for Customs workshops have been held throughout the year. Last one will take place on 16 December 2020. Book here: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Wicklow/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/Prepare-Your-Business-for-Customs-Workshop-16-12-2020.html>
- 42 One to One Brexit mentoring clinics have taken place with Brexit and customs experts.
- We advise small business to register for their EORI number now
- A Brexit presentation was circulated to members outlining supports and useful links.

Ms. V. Delahunt acknowledged the support received from Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Enterprise in the provision of additional support and staff, who will remain in place until June 2021.

In response to a query, Ms. V. Delahunt advised that the Board of the CLG had been agreed with Enterprise Ireland, as detailed in the REDF application. There are to be a minimum of two directors and a maximum of ten. At present the directors include the Chief Executive, Director of Enterprise & Corporate Services, Head of Enterprise, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow MD and the Manager of ABEC. A nominee from the film industry and Screen Ireland has been sought but has not been appointed yet.

ITEM 7

Shop Local Campaign; Love Wicklow, Shop Local and Look for Local

As the Look for Local campaign had been covered under report by Head of Enterprise, Ms. S. Nichols, Administrative Officer provided an update on the Love Wicklow, Shop Local campaign:

The Love Wicklow, Shop Local campaign was launched by Wicklow County Council in December which aims to encourage Wicklow residents to support local business throughout the festive season. Consumers and businesses in Wicklow are being encouraged to shop local this Christmas and are reminded of the huge range of goods and services they can access on their own doorsteps.

More and more people are now shopping online and Wicklow County Council would encourage them to also shop locally online and to avail of the excellent range of high quality, products, services and gifts to suit all tastes. The complementary Local Enterprise Office "Look for Local" campaign also aims to highlight small Wicklow businesses in every sector, asking that people continue to build on the recent groundswell of support shown to local businesses when looking to buy goods or services

The Love Wicklow, Shop Local campaign will link in with other initiatives around the county including:

- Look for Local by Wicklow LEO
- Wonderful West Wicklow
- Think Local, Buy Local in Greystones
- Shop Local, Spend Local, Stay Local in Bray
- Shop Local Arklow
- Shop Local Wicklow

The campaign is also consistent with the Visit Wicklow and Failte Ireland Christmas promotional campaigns.

The core message of the campaign is to keep the heart of our community going by supporting local businesses throughout County Wicklow. This festive season, why not purchase a locally made gift, book a dining experience, buy a voucher, order a takeout, treat yourself to a pampering session, shop online locally, book an activity, or hire a local tradesperson because now more than ever local businesses need your help.

Also, as part of the 'Love Wicklow, Shop Local' promotion, Cllr Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, has launched the '**Cathaoirleach's Christmas Challenge**' which challenges people to carry out their shopping in their local area in County Wicklow in the weeks up to Christmas. The Challenge video can be viewed on Wicklow County Council's social media channels.

Anyone completing the Challenge is invited to post a video showing how they shopped local, hash tag where they have shopped local in Co Wicklow (#Wicklow, #Arklow, #Rathdrum etc) and to 'like and share' the post. Entries must be received by Sunday 20th December 2020 and will be entered into a draw for some beautiful County Wicklow prizes. The winning entry will be contacted on Monday 21st December.

In response to a query, Ms. L. Gallagher advised that the Section 254 permits have been extended until March 2021.

ITEM 9

Update on Restart Grant Fund for small businesses

Ms. L. Gallagher paid tribute to the resilience and commitment of staff during the difficult year we have experienced. She provided an update on the following:

- To date over €14.2m had been paid out
- Over €1.4m is expected to be paid out before Christmas, comprising 45 restart grant top ups to be paid out and 363 Restart grant one appeals.
- The scheme is closed to new applicants since 31st October
- If there are any businesses that have not as yet sent in their declarations to receive their top up or restart grant one they need to send it in immediately as the scheme will be fully closed before Christmas

Rates Waiver Scheme

1. WCC has received to date €8.9m in funding from the Department in respect of the initial 6 months rates waiver scheme from end March to end Sept.

2. A further payment of €4.4m will be paid in December in respect of the 3 month waiver extension from end Sept to end Dec.
3. Total Waiver Income is €13.3m.
4. The full 9 month waiver has been applied to all customer accounts.

There is no application process required for this scheme. Wicklow County Council will automatically apply a 100% credit in lieu of commercial rates, for a six-month period, to classes and categories of occupied rateable property where the occupying business is not in the excluded category. In the event that a business qualifies for the six-month credit in lieu of rates and they have already paid your full rates bill for 2020, a refund or credit will be arranged by the Council.

The work of the Finance section was acknowledged in implementing these supports.

Ms. L. Gallagher gave a brief update on the Florentine Centre which has recently been rebranded to Bray Central:

- There is a lot of interest in the retail units
- It is expected to get to practical completion in Q1 2021
- Details of a number of committed retailers can be found on the website
- An announcement on an anchor tenant is expected shortly

ITEM 10

Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

Mr. C. Fox raised an issue in relation to the forestry sector in Wicklow:

- Serial objections are being raised to felling licences
- This is having a huge effect on all aspects of forestry – nurseries, sawmills, etc.
- None So Hardy nursery had to shred 2.5m trees as mature trees had not been removed to allow for planting
- There is now a 900 day wait for a felling licence
- Felling licences are administered at national level but some aspects are dealt with by the local authority

It was agreed that C. Fox would get some more details on this and the matter could be considered at a future meeting.

Next meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC will take place on **Monday 8th March, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.**

Signed:

Cllr. Gerry Walsh

Chair

Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date
