

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Wicklow County Council
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

Transcript of the County Council Meeting Held on 8 June 2015 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow



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6
7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon members you are all very welcome. Just before I
8 formally open, can I express my deepest sympathy to Cllr Fortune on his recent loss, his mother
9 Maise Fortune passed away recently, a remarkable and extraordinary lady, a Limerick lady.
10 There was a large turnout at her funeral over the weekend and I would just like personally on
11 behalf of myself, and all the members to express our deepest sympathy to Tom and his family.
12 Have we other votes of sympathy?

13 MS GALLAGHER: We do Cathaoirleach, Mr Shay Fother, Bray Fire Station, Noreen Colt, and
14 Rita Byrne, mother of a former colleague, Eamon Byrne.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen?

16 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I would like to be associated with your remarks to Cllr Fortune on the
17 bereavement of his mother, a lovely lady, she will be sadly missed by the Fortune family, also
18 Mr William Moore Winetavern, a great footballer for Stratford.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We will stand for a moment.

20
21 (Minute's silence)

22
23 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's my intention just to defer the start of the meeting, we are going to go
24 straight to welcoming our guest. His Excellency Jianguo Xu, the Chinese ambassador, you are
25 very welcome. I note Deputy Doyle has joined us as well, thank you, Andrew. So on behalf of
26 the elected members and staff of Wicklow County Council it gives me great pleasure to welcome
27 here today His Excellency. Mr Walter Pan is also here, head of the political section of the
28 Chinese Embassy. I would also like to welcome Noel Keyes, he is Chairman of Wicklow
29 County Tourism and his colleagues. I understand they'll be meeting with you afterwards,
30 directly following this meeting to further collaborate and co-operate with links between Co.
31 Wicklow and China. I would also like to welcome to the Chamber former member of the
32 Oireachtas, Cyprian Brady. Cyprian is knocking around there somewhere, I know him for a long
33 time. He is from Council for Irish and Chinese co-operation and his colleagues, Dr Dominic
34 Dillane, Dr Brian Murphy, Mr Yu Peng from the DIT and interested guests John Dillane and

1 Michael Byrne from Greystones.

2
3 It's wonderful to get the opportunity to welcome you here to Wicklow. The relationship between
4 Ireland and China is very strong. Both countries established diplomatic relation this is 1979,
5 exchanging ambassadors in 1980. Ireland has an embassy in Beijing, a general consulate in
6 Shanghai and an honorary consulate in Hong Kong. Of course China has an embassy here in
7 Dublin. There are some 16,500 people of Chinese descent living in Ireland today.

8
9 In the past 35 years, there has been trust and mutual respect between both countries, and
10 geographic distance has been no barrier to enhancing the warm and friendly ties that both
11 communities are committed to working together. The importance of China on the world stage is
12 growing of course, and the increasing interest in studying the language is also growing here in
13 Ireland and indeed in Co Wicklow. The Loreto Bray secondary school implements a very
14 successful Chinese studies business programme and offers Mandarin Chinese classes to students.

15
16 Bray of course has tremendous links with the Chinese community. The visit here by a 54 strong
17 delegation of Special Olympians from the People's Republic of China in 2003 will live long in
18 the memories of the volunteers and athletes that took part and it was a very proud time for all
19 involved. By day the athletes trained at various venues around the town, including the Carlisle
20 Grounds and the Lawn Tennis Club and by evening they sampled Bray's hospitality. The
21 Council for Irish Chinese Co-operation works closely with the provincial Government of Hainan
22 Province in Southern China in areas of education, tourism, forestry, technology and culture and
23 has facilitated a number of official delegations to visit in recent times and indeed I know Cyprian
24 and Gerry, Cllr Walsh, brought a delegation to my own farm over the past few months and we
25 had a great time showing them around. There are collaborations and joint programmes between
26 Hainan University and DIT in the area of tourism, food safety and event management.

27
28 I would like to highlight the role of Wicklow Campus which was of course established in the
29 area of enterprise and education, research, development and innovation in Wicklow, and would
30 encourage and welcome any collaborations between itself and Hainan University. Officials of
31 Wicklow County Council Enterprise Unit and the Local Enterprise Office are always on hand
32 and ready to assist in this way.

33
34 We are looking forward to working closely with visiting and Government officials and

1 delegations from China to Co Wicklow, in the areas of education and technology. And we are
2 grateful for all the support that the Chinese Embassy in Dublin has given us. So I'll hand you
3 now over to Bryan Doyle, our Chief Executive, who would like to say a few words.

4 ACTING CEO: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I would like to join with the Cathaoirleach and
5 elected members in welcoming the Ambassador and embassy representatives to the Council
6 chamber here today, as well as visitors from the Council for Irish Chinese Co-operation, I nearly
7 say this all the time, DIT, but it's Dublin Institute of Technology and Wicklow County Tourism.
8 Wicklow County Council is working very hard to promote tourism, heritage, culture and
9 economic development. The Council is looking forward to exchanges and co-operation between
10 China and Wicklow County Council to develop links that will be beneficial to both communities.
11 Our economies are complimentary with the Irish economy stabilising and showing encouraging
12 signs of sustainable recovery, Irish companies and Chinese companies are positioned well to
13 capitalise on opportunities created by both countries. Both countries have an immensely rich
14 cultural heritage, stunning landscapes and common links and the sharing of these experiences
15 can create tourism and employment opportunities as well as educational opportunities from
16 which both communities can benefit from. Co Wicklow has a very favourable business
17 environment as well as a young well educated workforce and has the potential to create new and
18 meaningful synergies between communities in China and Co Wicklow in areas of investment,
19 education, culture, science and technology. Wicklow County Council is committed to
20 developing a relationship that will foster and encourage developments in this and other fields. It
21 is fantastic to see the level of delegation exchanges between Ireland and China coming,
22 continuing to expand and grow. As the Cathaoirleach said, Wicklow County Council is looking
23 forward to welcoming a high level delegation of Paracel officials and academics from the
24 province of Hainan on the 29th of June this year with the express aim of furthering relationships
25 between the province of Hainan and Wicklow County Council. Forging links with China fits in
26 with our overall strategy to encourage economic development in the county. We encourage and
27 welcome delegations to Co Wicklow to experience first hand the world class facilities County
28 Council Wicklow has to offer to business, tourism and cultural experience. Wicklow is an
29 attractive destination for the business tourism sector in China and we would like to work closely
30 with the Chinese business education and cultural sector to highlight all that Co Wicklow has to
31 offer.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Okay, I'll hand over to our ambassador.

33 AMBASSADOR XU: Thank you Mr Christopher Fox, the Chairman of the Council of
34 Wicklow, Mr Brian Doyle, Chief Executive of the Wicklow Council, Councillors, ladies and

1 gentlemen, good afternoon. I am so happy to visit Co Wicklow and attend this Council meeting.
2 Thank you for your kind words to China and to Chinese Ambassador in Ireland. Even though
3 this is my first time official visit to Wicklow, I already know that this county is known as the
4 garden of Ireland. I have been greatly impressed by the beautiful scenery in Wicklow. It
5 reminds me of New Zealand where I spent time as Chinese Ambassador for over three years.
6

7 In April this year, China is a national broadcast on China Central Television which is also widely
8 known as the CCTV, sometimes confused with your country's cable TV. The CCTV send a TV
9 crew to Ireland and they shot a documentary titled Charming Ireland. In this newly made TV
10 documentary, Wicklow has been significantly featured. Although a date has yet to be selected
11 for airing this documentary in China, I am sure that the impressive footage of Wicklow will
12 potentially charm millions of Chinese people. A copy of this documentary, Charming Ireland,
13 was presented to the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, as a gift by Chinese Premier during a successful
14 visit to West of Ireland in the last months. Ladies and gentlemen, you may have already learned
15 that in 2014 China's outbound tourists is 100 million and about 4 million Chinese tourists come
16 to visit Europe. Currently the number of Chinese visiting Ireland is still small. I personally see
17 a lot of potential. With the introduction of a British Irish visa scheme, BRIVIS, last October,
18 Ireland has been a rise in the number of Chinese visitors. It is agreed to raise Ireland's profile in
19 China and Asia at large, I believe the potential of tourism of this beautiful country can be
20 unleashed by just a visit to the UK last week, I found the more Chinese tourists visit the UK than
21 here. I also visit your beautiful gardens, the postcard gardens many times and compare with the
22 UK's, I found that they have big potential. We need to do more.
23

24 Wicklow is also renowned for its agriculture productions and the processing. In June 2014 I
25 accompanied a high level delegation on a visit to a farm in Newtownmountkennedy, and as the
26 visiting Chinese leaders were greatly impressed with Wicklow's advanced food quality and
27 certain assurance scheme. China has a huge population, but also a fast growing middle class
28 which means that China has potential of becoming the world's largest and the most promising
29 market. According to the Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Irish food exported to
30 China reached €20 million in 2014, increasing by almost 40% over 2013. The demand of
31 Chinese consumers for the high quality agri-food products will remain strong in the coming
32 years. As a matter of fact China has already become one of the largest markets for Irish foods
33 and the Chinese outside of the EU. Before we had this meeting, I just discussed with the
34 Chairman - he told me that during the 1993, at times New Zealand and Ireland is the same scale

1 for the dairy products but unfortunately I think maybe Ireland is only one quarter of the New
2 Zealand's. But I think that New Zealand exports much more dairy products to China. I believe
3 in the future more and more Irish dairy products will be going to China.
4

5 Early this year, the Chinese Government decided to lift the ban on Irish beef imports, I believe
6 this is a very important significant decision, and the EU milk quotas have also been abolished,
7 both developments will bring opportunities for Ireland to sell its quality beef and good dairy
8 products into the vast Chinese market.
9

10 Ladies and gentlemen, the frequent superb actions between Irish and Chinese Government as
11 opposed to national and - at both local and national levels are creating favourable conditions for
12 the deepening friendship and strengthening economic ties between our two countries. I am
13 delighted that now Wicklow Council is interested in exploring the possibility of twinning with
14 China's Hainan Province. As Tourism Ireland, Hainan Province also developed very well in
15 tourism and agriculture. I believe that twinning between Hainan and Wicklow will be mutually
16 beneficial to the development of the both countries and the people in future. I look forward to
17 seeing Co Wicklow play a big and more active part in enhancing the mutual beneficial
18 co-operation between China and Ireland. Please convey my best wishes to the people in Co
19 Wicklow. Thank you, thank you so much. (APPLAUSE)

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thank you Ambassador. You done a better job pronouncing my
21 name than I did pronouncing yours! Okay, Cllr Mitchell.

22 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, and thank you Ambassador. Just on behalf of the
23 Fine Gael group, I would like to welcome the Chinese Ambassador to the headquarters of
24 Wicklow County Council. And China is a very major world power and has had stunning
25 changes which we have all seen. I think a very large number of people in Ireland aren't really
26 aware of what a change it's been in China in the last 20 to 30 years, and how important it now is,
27 and I know myself that in the area I represent, there is one factory which makes bottles or bottle
28 tops for baby formula I think, most of which ends up being exported to China. This is a
29 substantial factory. I imagine that there are those connections in many places in Wicklow and
30 Ireland. I would certainly welcome what the Chairman said about one of the schools in Bray,
31 Loreto convent was I think one of the first in the country to learn Mandarin and I hope that that
32 can be repeated in more schools throughout Wicklow.
33

34 Personally, I visited Hong Kong in China earlier in the year and I was amazed and impressed by

1 the pace of development and the creation of infrastructure. In this county and country we
2 struggle to create adequate infrastructure and to see most Chinese cities, I think have an
3 infrastructure and planning building, and this consists of a massive plan with various rail lines
4 and bridges, etcetera. And when you look at it, you would have great confidence that those rail
5 lines and roads are going to be built, somewhat maybe in contrast to some of our planning it
6 really is very impressive. And certainly I would hope for more of a connection between
7 Wicklow and China in future. Tourism being an obvious one and also the twinning relationship
8 can progress. Thank you Ambassador.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Fortune.

10 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, Mr Ambassador on behalf of the independent group
11 here in the chamber, I would like to say thank you very much for coming to visit us and you are
12 most welcome to our wonderful county. There obviously has to be tremendous opportunities for
13 us and for yourselves. We have a fantastic agricultural product in this country as you alluded to.
14 We also have a fabulous tourism product. We have many, many Chinese people already living
15 in our country and particularly in Co Wicklow, and it would be fabulous if we could develop
16 something along those lines where we can both benefit and Ireland is a beautiful, beautiful place,
17 and Wicklow has everything in Wicklow that you will get anywhere else in Ireland. So we
18 would hope that when you decide to come in greater numbers that you will always come into
19 Wicklow, so if links and ties can be developed with you, I think that would be a tremendous
20 benefit for everybody.

21
22 So again you are most welcome and thank you indeed for your visit and thank you for your kind
23 words.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Walsh.

25 MS WALSH: Thank you Chairman on behalf of the Fianna Fail group I would like to take the
26 opportunity of welcoming the Ambassador to Wicklow, to the chamber here and of course to the
27 garden of Ireland as he referred to himself. I note there a few number of weeks ago your Premier
28 Li received a warm welcome in the West of Ireland on a wet day. Today the sun shone for you
29 here. During that visit I think he referred to the lifting of the beef exports which just happened
30 there a few weeks prior to that and it was a signal of the deepening of relationships between the
31 two countries. I think our Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to the growing friendship
32 between the countries and he looked forward to intensive co-operation between the countries in
33 the future. Your premier spoke of the two countries again and he viewed Ireland as a gateway to
34 Europe and again looked forward to building relationships. For Wicklow, as you refer, we have

1 many tourist attractions, as I think you know now. The number of the 100 million tourists that
2 leave your country, we would love to divert even a small fraction of those in this direction. I
3 know some of them go to the UK but we need to keep them coming further west. I look forward
4 to seeing the TV documentary there on Wicklow. I saw some footage there on TV news when
5 they were making - I think they featured hurling in the making of the video. That should be well
6 worth viewing. As our chairperson pointed out quite correctly earlier, there are opportunities
7 here for both communities. Wicklow are committed and we want to enhance those opportunities
8 and especially with Hainan Province, I think we have a lot in common with Hainan Province in
9 areas such as tourism and agriculture. Again thank you for the presentation and for taking the
10 time out to come here today.

11 SPEAKER: Cllr Thornhill.

12 Cllr THORNHILL: (He speaks in Chinese).

13 (APPLAUSE)

14 Mr Ambassador, I welcome you to Wicklow. I have a lot of Chinese friends in Bray. I must
15 apologise I speak Chinese poorly, but today I am very happy to meet you. Mr Ambassador, for
16 the past 25 years, I have developed a very good working relationship with the Chinese people in
17 Bray. My former work before I became a member of the Wicklow County Council was that I
18 was a Community Garda in Bray for many years. It so happened that many Chinese people
19 settled in Bray. At one stage during the boom years, there must have been approximately 800
20 Chinese living in Bray. Some were working, running their businesses, that is shopkeepers,
21 mobile phone repairers or hairdressers. In all my time in Bray, I was very impressed with the
22 great work ethic of the Chinese community. They are a very hard-working race, very
23 independent, also a very humble and noble race. When I say this, I say it from my heart, because
24 I had a great experience with the Chinese people living and working in Bray. Indeed, when I
25 was going for the local elections last year, many of them gave me their DE, number one. When
26 Ireland hosted the Paralympics, Bray hosted China. Gaelscoil Ui Cheadaigh hosted the Chinese
27 delegation during the Paralympics in Ireland. The school organised an Irish music and cultural
28 show for our Chinese visitors. Now Bray of recent times developed a very good history and
29 working relationship with China. After the Sichuan earthquake in 2008, St Cronin's National
30 School built a winning relationship with a National School in Beijing. Chinese students came
31 twice to the school to learn Irish dancing and English. Vaughan Dodd, the principal of St
32 Cronin's was the person behind this project, ably assisted by his staff and friends. That is
33 Catherine Lyons, also Chinese friends Shoo Wong, Robert Wong and Sumi Wong to name but a
34 few. St Cronin's also went to Beijing to visit the National School there.

1
2 In 2014 Bray again played host to another Chinese project. Students from the school of
3 computer science and engineering university of electronic science and technology of China.
4 This project was organised by the Association of Chinese Professionals in Ireland. I in my
5 position as Leas Cathaoirleach in Bray last July 2014 enjoyed and had the pleasure of meeting
6 these students from Sichuan province. Professor Wu in Ireland was responsible for this meeting
7 and if anyone goes on to YouTube, they'll see my interview with the Professor. Last year, in
8 Bray, I met another Chinese group from Hainan Province representing a nature reserve project in
9 China.

10
11 Finally, as a County Council, we can show our support for the Chinese community in Wicklow.
12 There is a group called the Southside Chinese residents, and they are actively engaging with the
13 Chinese Embassy. The Chinese are very keen that their language and culture be preserved also,
14 just like our own culture and language should be fostered and preserved. Each year, the Chinese
15 Embassy provides assistance to the Chinese community that these young people can go back to
16 summer school for a few weeks. If we are looking to forge a solid link with our Chinese counter
17 parts we should do our best to assist the Chinese living here also. Mr Ambassador, I wish you
18 the best in your new role as Chinese Ambassador in Ireland. (APPLAUSE)

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady. No pressure.

20 Cllr BRADY: That's a difficult act to follow and I'll keep it simple. You are very welcome
21 Ambassador. (SPEAKS IN IRISH). I'll use our Irish native tongue. You are very welcome here
22 this afternoon. A very impressive speech there by Cllr Thornhill and I hope all the
23 pronunciations of the words were correct. You are very welcome here and your delegation.
24 There are a lot of connections between Ireland and China over many, many years, and hopefully
25 the interaction between yourself and this Council here will strengthen those bonds. I know an
26 awful lot of Chinese people who have settled here in Co Wicklow going back over many, many
27 years, and Councillor Thornhill has alluded to that fact. In Wicklow we have a very, very large
28 Chinese community and the Southside Residents group that Cllr Thornhill spoke about do
29 tremendous work within the region here, and every year, they provide an awful lot of Chinese
30 people to participate in our national celebrations on St Patrick's Day, they participate in our
31 parades. But there are very, very strong links, economically, between China and Ireland. And
32 thankfully through the Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney, and the conversations with the
33 Chinese Government, the ban on beef was lifted which has to be welcomed. It is a huge part of
34 our economy here, and hopefully that can be strengthened in years to come. That the exports of

1 our dairy and our beef is huge to our economy here and obviously very beneficial to the Chinese
2 people, because it is a top of the range product.

3
4 Another product that we have here in Ireland is tourism, and again you spoke about the 100
5 million Chinese tourists that leave China on an annual basis and a figure of 4 million Chinese
6 people come to Europe on an annual basis. We would love a lot more Chinese to come to
7 Ireland and particularly here to the garden of Ireland, Co. Wicklow. And if, through our
8 interaction with yourself, the Ambassador, and the embassy and whatever ties can be built with
9 the Hainan Province, if that can be strengthened, I know you spoke about Hainan and how
10 beautiful it is, and yes we would like Wicklow people to travel there, but we would also like
11 people from there to come to Wicklow as well. So again just to conclude, to welcome you and
12 your delegation here and thank you on behalf of the Sinn Fein group here within the Council.
13 Thank you ambassador.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Ruttle.

15 Cllr RUTTLE: Yes Cathaoirleach, Ambassador you are very welcome here today to Wicklow,
16 and to be with us with your group as well today. Look, I will be coming from the position of
17 being a farmer, and certainly we have exciting times ahead in that area, both in the area of, as I
18 mentioned earlier dairy products and beef products. Now we have no hope in the world of
19 supplying enough of either to 1,200 million people. But we have every opportunity and indeed I
20 would work as well for the Irish Department of Agriculture, we have every opportunity to supply
21 a high quality product in the dairy sector and we believe there are infant formula for children,
22 babies, is very, very sought after. We are also aware there is a strong growing middle class in
23 China have the wherewithal and money to buy quality. Our meat products are on the way as
24 well. We have a great system, we have largely grass based, very safe, very clean, very free of
25 additives, and that is something that again I think your people will appreciate a product that
26 doesn't require supplementation, but off grass production essentially a lot of it, and that's very
27 good.

28
29 So we are into a niche market area but we can't feed 1200 million, we can't do that, but certainly
30 we can do the other. It's not all one way. My next-door neighbour is involved in the
31 development of dairy industry system in China itself, setting up milking parlours, how you
32 establish huge herds of cows, the genetics, the implants, everything like that for breeding and
33 setting up the structure. It's going both ways. We are supplying expertise that we have like your
34 friends south of you in New Zealand, but we think we have it better and visiting China regularly

1 and there is the subject of the niche, the quality market that we can supply. Your leader was here
2 a number years ago and we have a photo that's often produced of him holding the year of a calf
3 down the south. I don't think that was the Chairman's calf that day. Obviously it's paid
4 dividends because things are moving in that regard and we as an export nation with a high
5 quality product are glad to meet a potential customer that we can supply obviously not all, but
6 some of the needs in a niche area, and we can supply expertise as we have done say in other
7 parts of the world with Alistair McGuggan and the mass stock system for the housing of cattle.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. I know Cllr Brady paid tribute to Minister
9 Coveney and the work he had put in but also our own head, Chairman of the Oireachtas
10 Committee in agriculture, he is in the gallery, Deputy Doyle has done a lot of work in the area as
11 well and I think we should acknowledge the role that Deputy Doyle has played in that as well.
12 So that's it, we are going to make a presentation to yourself.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have a picture of Glendalough.

14 AMBASSADOR XU: Thank you. I would also like to take this opportunity to present to you
15 this plate. Thank you so much.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks again. (APPLAUSE)

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Back to the agenda.

18 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, just one thing, I didn't like raising it when the people were
19 here, but was the Minister of finance, state of finance, Simon Harris invited to this reception
20 today

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: The invite only extended the Councillors.

22 MS GALLAGHER: No the TDs were invited.

23 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I didn't hear an apology being read out.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have apologies.

25 MS GALLAGHER: From Minister Harris and deputy Ann Ferris.

26 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I think those should have been read out here Chairman.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: My apologies. We have apologies from Deputy Ann Ferris and Minister
28 Harris, okay. Okay, we will move on, if I can find the agenda. Confirm and sign the minutes of
29 the Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 13th April, 2015. Have I a
30 proposer. Proposed by Cllr Casey, seconded by Cllr Snell. Agreed?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to request a suspension

32 Cllr RUTTLE: I do, I'll request a suspension of standing orders later in the afternoon, there was
33 something we discussed at length at the SPC this morning, concerning the sale of works of art at
34 Russborough Blessington.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, how do the members feel about that.

2 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I'll support that.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's been seconded, is that agreed? We will set aside ten minutes.

4 Cllr RUTTLE: 15 maybe.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: A quarter to five. Because we have to finish on time, the Community
6 Awards are being presented in Arklow at six o'clock, so we can't extend the meeting if at all
7 possible, we would like to get out of here at five, okay. Okay, item two, confirm and sign the
8 minutes of the Special Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 27th April.
9 Proposed Councillor Shay Cullen, seconded by Cllr Fitzgerald. Agreed? Okay consider the
10 disposal of 0.0167 hectares and building of 193.8 square metres or thereabouts in the townland
11 of Dunlavin Co Wicklow to Dun Luain Foods Limited, Church Road Dunlavin. That was
12 previously circulated. Have I a proposer?

13 Cllr RUTTLE: I wish to propose that, I have pleasure in proposing that. The men involved have
14 done excellent work there and I view it forward to the expansion of their business which they've
15 already proven their worth in that area to the two Wilson brothers involved.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Secunder?

17 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I'll second it.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Neill. Okay, do we want to take a roll call on that? Is it agreed?
19 No dissent? Okay. Agreed. Item five, is Síun here? Okay, we will move on and come back to
20 item five, we gave a time of three o'clock, so we will press on with the other issues. Item six,
21 consider report on legal expenses for three years 2012, 2013, and 2014. Report enclosed. Do we
22 want to give a...

23 ACTING CEO: Cathaoirleach, it's been a little while, but we have managed to pull the items
24 together as an item for you to note. I think it's important that the members are familiar with the -
25 some of the detail on one of the larger expenditures, and we did present back in 2011 for three
26 years, so it has been a bit of a time getting there. If there is any queries or anything like that, we
27 will endeavour to try and answer them. I think we weren't expecting to get to it at this point in
28 the agenda and all my fellow directors, most of them have left me. I am on my own! If there is
29 any queries, I'll try to answer them.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is two of them here! Okay, we will go straight to queries, okay.

31 Cllr Winters.

32 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I suppose I looked at them and over the three years,
33 they have trebled, the legal costs. They went from 800,000 to 2.7 million in 2014. And I realise
34 with CPOs and there is different issues and particular items that are very costly. I am just

1 wondering if the trend is that we are going to be spending a couple of million on legal fees a
2 year, would we be better off applying to the Minister to have in-house representation and
3 actually have...

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just hold on for a second, sorry we can't have recording of the meeting,
5 can I ask you, okay, thank you, sorry Councillor continue.

6 Cllr WINTERS: If we could perhaps have additional staff in the law department, just to spend
7 2.7 million, I am wondering if we had additional legal staff in our department, could we have
8 done some of that work ourselves, and maybe had - used then the money that we have paid really
9 in consultancy fees to solicitors to better serve the residents of Co Wicklow?

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. I am working on numbers here, sorry about this. Cllr Kavanagh.

11 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach, my question was much the same really as Cllr
12 Winters. I did look through the figures and everything, while obviously some jobs are bigger
13 than others and require a certain expertise that we would have to buy in, some of the figures
14 were very low, the lowest one I saw there was something like nine euro and I just wonder if this
15 is - these smaller little jobs, legal jobs, signing things and Land Registry fees and stuff like that,
16 if they are - that's something that we can do in house, and if we look after the pennies, maybe the
17 pounds will look after themselves. Just to say as well that I only received this on Friday
18 evening, and with family wedding over the weekend, I didn't actually get time to look at it and I
19 wonder when it says to consider the report, can we come back on this when we have had time to
20 read it and study it, it just seems to be a bit late to get it on a Friday evening for consideration at
21 a Monday meeting when we haven't really had time to go through it properly. Thank you.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's only for consideration.

23 Cllr KAVANAGH: I didn't know what that actually meant for consideration.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's there...

25 Cllr KAVANAGH: We can refer back to it.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: You can refer back to in the future. Okay, thank you Councillor. Seat
27 19, Cllr Mitchell.

28 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, just as Cllr Winters has said, the total cost from
29 2012 to 2014, has gone from 860,000 to 2.5 million or so, tripling of it, three times. Not so
30 much in the housing section which I suppose there hasn't been a great deal of housing
31 construction, but it's basically in the roads and the water and environment and in the planning
32 section which has gone up by a factor of five. And this is a very large amount of money, which I
33 would like to see, or prefer to see spent on providing services for the people of Wicklow rather
34 than services for the solicitors of Wicklow. I just wonder is it really - first of all can we be more

1 economic in the total cost of this?

2
3 And secondly, what is causing this huge increase in fees, an increase of 1.5 million, and you get
4 an awful lot of roads or an awful lot of other services, environmental services or whatever for
5 that money, and it's a huge imposition on the property tax pairs and the rate payers of Wicklow
6 and I just have a concern at how much litigation seems to be going on. Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Snell.

8 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again look, I understand that the legal profession, they
9 don't come cheaply. But there is an awful lot of solicitors firms and barristers out there making a
10 lot of money out of this Local Authority and many other local authorities. I just feel that looking
11 through the figures, particularly when it goes to arbitration and I know it's a necessary tool for
12 local authorities to use at times, but the astronomical figures here, and I just feel that yes when it
13 comes to enforcement, it's a statutory obligation on a Local Authority to follow through. But it's
14 the same, when you look through the cases, it's the same names, and it's just the figure is just
15 huge. Legally I think that sometimes, and I am sure we do as local authorities, sit down and try
16 and negotiate and work out things before they ever get to a legal perspective, but I think some of
17 these figures are quite shocking to be honest, and I think the amount of legal professionals that
18 are making money from the Local Authority is mind boggling. There is solicitors firms making
19 more than junior counsel and barristers in some cases. I feel that it's something that we as a
20 Local Authority going forward should be looking at individual cases to see whether it's
21 worthwhile, certainly, or is there other ways around - maybe sometimes talking is probably
22 better than jumping into the middle of a legal case. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Vance.

24 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. Just Chairman this expenditure, is there anything on
25 income given that I presume the Council didn't lose all the court cases that they were involved in
26 over this period of time and is there any income coming in? Or maybe for a later date if we
27 could get a list of the court cases that the Council have won on and they're awaiting costs or they
28 have been paid costs over the last number of years as well. So they can balance it out against the
29 type of expenditure that's here moment. I presume a lot of these costs there would be no come
30 back and paying other people's costs, but I presume there is other cases where we did get costs in
31 court and we won the case. Maybe -- I don't expect it today, but maybe not too long away that if
32 we would get a list of the cases that we won and the income that's expected from that as well,
33 thank you.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thank you. Cllr Brady.

1 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, firstly can I just welcome the fact that we have been given
2 these, and certainly the figures there are enormous it has to be said, and Cllr Winters alluded to
3 it, the jump on the previous figures that we have been given, and I suppose if anyone was to go
4 through it you will see there is a substantial amount of costs actually go to cover the Council's
5 legal defence I suppose, fighting the case in relation to the two firemen, Brian Murray and Mark
6 O'Shaughnessy, and a rough calculation there of the cost there, it's over 1.3 million euro under
7 the different headings there, which seems enormous, 1.3 million to defend a case which
8 inevitably the Council, after a number of days, changed their plea and entered a guilty plea on a
9 number of different grounds so I just - I question that amount of money being spent first and
10 foremost when the Council inevitably ended up pleading guilty.

11
12 And a I have asked previously for a full breakdown on all costs relating to that particular case,
13 not just the legal end, but also the costs of bringing in consultants, we had many different
14 consultants, including Slattery's and others brought in, and I did ask for those figures previously,
15 I had been told at the time that not all the bills or the figures had been compiled at that stage. So
16 certainly I would still like to see all of those figures added up, because it's certainly turned into
17 obviously a terrible, terrible event for the families involved, but certainly a very, very costly
18 affair for this Council and I would like to see all of the figures there, so can I ask for that again,
19 as to whether all the figures have been in, and indeed if these are all of the figures relating to the
20 legal defence, or is there any more outstanding.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you, Cllr Fortune.

22 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just like Cllr Kavanagh, I think getting stuff like this on
23 a Friday isn't appropriate. I think we need to really revisit it when we send out paperwork to
24 members. I have raised that before.

25
26 It's just mind boggling the amount of legal people that we actually use. And I am just wondering
27 how is this controlled? Does it just happen and then it's all tabulated together? Is there someone
28 in the system that keeps some kind of control on where all this goes? I am just looking and
29 maybe having only looked at it now, I see there on two different pages, page nine and page
30 eleven, I am just picking them at random from the list, the Wicklow Town Port Relief road
31 229,000 for arbitration. I won't mention the solicitor's name but it's there for everyone to see.
32 On page eleven, there is the same kind of a heading and it's 282,000. And again it's - I don't
33 know what that's for, it just seems an awful high figure and then the Greystones Marina further
34 down, arbitration again. 249 - almost 250,000. These are colossal figures. And while I know

1 you said we have this report just for consideration, I just think there needs to be some more
2 explanation behind the numbers. Cllr Brady has - I was looking at that has referred to the legal
3 and the fire end of it, that money is colossal. And maybe there needs to be a rethink on how
4 often we get this information and how we get it, because at end of the day, we are told when it
5 suits that we are the board of directors, but as we have had this discussion before, we are not
6 really because we don't have that kind of authority, just by what's said - despite what's said if I
7 can be cynical, only when it suits. I would like to just get some kind of understanding of where
8 these big numbers come from. Maybe there is a perfectly straightforward simple explanation of
9 the background to it. They just seem to be very high figures, lots of other figures, but these ones
10 when you go through it, they just jump off the page.

11
12 As I say Cllr Brady has already covered the astronomical amount of legal money that seems to
13 have been spent in regards to the unfortunate Bray situation. They're just the quick observations.
14 As I say, I think also it shows that we are not getting the paper work soon enough from the Local
15 Authority as members of the Local Authority. That does need to be looked at. To give us a
16 report like this, I am not making a personal excuse for myself and I don't wish to do that, but to
17 get a report like that on a Friday in your post and be expected to come in here on a Monday and
18 have a rational conversation on it, I just don't think that's the way to run business. I think we
19 need to change that rapidly.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. I can understand the point that's been made, but I
21 would welcome the fact that the new Chief Executive or the acting Chief Executive has given us
22 this information, which is a step in the right direction. Okay. There are astronomical figures set
23 out in it. And there are a lot of it, as Cllr Vance has said, well we potentially could have
24 recouped costs, there is a lot of unauthorised development proceedings. Now I know various
25 judges have been heard on the Local Authority - hard on the Local Authority by not awarding
26 costs in cases where we have actually won. But I'll let back in the Chief Executive just to
27 answer the queries.

28 ACTING CEO: I suppose the embargo ensures that we cannot increase the number of staff
29 generally, and that this is the same for the law agents office. However, we have added staff to
30 the law agents office over the recent past and they have taken over some of our waste
31 management, just to stick on waste management, some of the waste management cases that we
32 would send out to outside solicitors to deal with. In the case of waste management, very seldom
33 do we get any - even though we win our case, very seldom do we get any fees awarded to us by
34 the - awarded to us by the courts. That is an issue for us. With regard to the outside solicitors

1 that we do use, we did have a competition, very few people were interested in that, as you can
2 see we have just a limited number of personnel involved in it. And they are across a broad area.
3 We have highlighted a few of them. Just as Cllr Vance said about the income side of it, IPB
4 recouped in its entirety the cost of the Bray fire case. In relation to Whitestown and monies that
5 are involved for Whitestown and the unauthorised landfill, all that funding has been recouped by
6 the Department of the Environment. So I take the point that we do need to do a bit of work,
7 particularly in the planning area.

8
9 With regards to the roads area, the - some of the works such as the Newtown Ballinabarny or the
10 Rathnew Arklow road, all that money is recoupable. Not so on the Port Access Route which the
11 members will be aware from our AFS shows a deficit. And that balance has been refunded over
12 time by the special levies that the members have put in place for those roads.

13
14 What I suppose - even if we increased the staff in the law agents office, the need to engage
15 senior and junior counsel is a problem and you can see the amount of funding that's allocated to
16 those specialists, and we do have to engage. Unfortunately there is a lot of litigation. We are
17 required under planning law to take enforcement action. It's a requirement. If we get a
18 complaint, we are statutorily obliged to take enforcement action or have a very solid reason for
19 not proceeding. That catches us in a point in that regard. Perhaps if Sean wants to talk about the
20 arbitration, generally either Greystones marina or some of the roads jobs would have an
21 interaction with arbitration, it's not a great process to get involved in, it's costly, and generally
22 costs the Local Authority substantial funding.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sean, do you want to step up to the plate? Arbitration on the marina.

24 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: I don't have the figures in front of me but.

25 ACTING CEO: Page eleven and page nine.

26 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: We did have two arbitration this is relation to Greystones Harbour.
27 Both for lands that were taken as part of the CPO. Extensive efforts were made to try and settle
28 these, and this settlement figures that were achieved as a result of arbitration were considerably
29 less than the amounts claimed prior to the arbitration. Both for the marina and roads, arbitration
30 is something we avoid because it's an absolutely no win situation for us in 100% of the cases
31 because where there is a lodgement, even if a lodge meant is made, the arbitrators tend not to
32 award costs against the landowner. So we end up paying our own fees, and the reasonable fees
33 of the landowners as well. As I say, there are, they were unavoidable in the case of the
34 Greystones Harbour project. And they're generally unavoidable in the cases of roads jobs also.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

2 ACTING CEO: Just one, Cllr Brady raised the question, Michael Slattery's fees are in there, I
3 am not sure they're all of the fees, I'll check that and certainly the experts are not there. they
4 weren't just legal fees, just included under that heading. I'll circulate those to the members, that's
5 not a problem.

6 Cllr BRADY: There is one other query here just in relation to - I know that covers probably the
7 criminal case, and that was - you are saying that was the legal costs were covered by IPB there.
8 Now we are aware that there are a substantial number of civil case, up to 20 civil cases, and
9 obviously there will be a lot of costs incurred there on legal expenditure. Is it anticipated that
10 IPB will cover those costs or is that - where will the costs lie in relation to those?

11 ACTING CEO: The defence of those and the costs involved in defending those claims will be
12 borne by IPB directly.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

14 ACTING CEO: If any member has any specific queries on any of the figures, just to come back
15 to the relevant directors.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so if you have specific queries on any of the item front of you, you
17 can discuss it with the Director directly.

18 Cllr RUTTLE: Cathaoirleach, vis-à-vis Cllr Vance's query, how much money is being brought
19 in as well.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have taken note of that. Okay, we will move on I would like to
21 welcome the delegation from Ardmore, Síun Ni Raghallaigh, CEO of Ardmore Studios. Thank
22 you very much for coming along, do you want to - Christine is going to say a few words.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are very welcome. Christine is going to say a few words first. As
24 you know Ardmore has been a long established film and TV location in Bray. There has been
25 recent speculation in relation to Limerick, but we obviously would like to remain at the heart of
26 the film hub and see ourselves as the film hub for Ireland in Co Wicklow here. There has been a
27 long historical link to the film industry in both Bray and Co Wicklow. So I would welcome you,
28 thanks for coming along, I am going to let Christine come in first, she is going to say a few
29 words.

30 CHRISTINE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I am speaking in my capacity as co-ordinator of the Co
31 Wicklow economic think tank. And as you know, there is a real and immediate opportunity for
32 Ireland, and indeed for Co Wicklow, to build on the existing strengths of the film industry. This
33 is arising out of the success of the Section 481 tax credit scheme which has shone a highlight on
34 the film industry in Ireland and is of enormous benefit to Co Wicklow. But our major problem is

1 to be able to meet that demand, the demand that exists, and has increased since the first of
2 January this year.

3
4 The vision proposed by the Co Wicklow economic think tank with the support of the key
5 players, such as Síun and Ballyhenry studios, Ashford, is the development of a film industry
6 cluster centered in Co Wicklow. This would involve the key actors in the sector and associated
7 sectors working together to improve competitiveness in the global market place, with the support
8 of national and Local Government. The gross added value would be very significant for the
9 county. There is a robust rationale for supporting this vision. There is already a studio
10 infrastructure in the county. We have Ardmore studios which have been in place for over 58
11 years in the county and indeed we have Ashford studios, more recently established just six years
12 ago. So we have co located geographic cluster within the county. There is an opportunity for
13 the creation of sustainable thematic and geo-clustering that are innovation led, export orientated
14 and linked to the assets of the Co Wicklow film sector.

15
16 There is a strong opportunity for an internationally visible brand. There is genuine potential for
17 co-ordination on agreed objectives, and it will make a major contribution to regional
18 development in the light of the designation for Co Wicklow as part of the greater Dublin area.
19 And there are significant opportunities for foreign direct investment. Wicklow already has a
20 significant talent pool in this regard, and we have enormous assets in addition to the natural
21 assets that we have in terms of scenery, our beautiful mountains and the sea, our coast line. We
22 have proximity to Dublin airport. We have access - easy access to Dublin City centre. And then
23 we have opportunities like the Co Wicklow campus at Clermont, and an opportunity to create a
24 hub and to create a number of business spin-offs there. So there are enormous potential
25 opportunities for the county.

26
27 The audio visual industry production sector is worth 550 million nationally, and employs over
28 6,000 people. That's excluding your extras, which are obviously significant numbers there. But
29 there are over 500 small and medium businesses operating this sector at the moment. Wicklow
30 County Council has always been supportive of the film industry. And always willing to go the
31 extra mile with the film industry, and in fact it's set up the Co Wicklow film commission in the
32 1990s for this purpose. There are also many opportunities for the county arising out of film
33 tourism, training and education, opportunities to develop specialist industries associated with the
34 industry, such as animation, C G I graphics, etcetera. And the multiplier effect of any major

1 production in the county is estimated to be 1.4. As mentioned, the section 481 tax credit of up to
2 32% has been hugely successful, and this demand is driving the demand for studio space, so
3 much so that we have the likes of pine wood studios now establishing an office in Dublin.

4
5 The Welsh Government has established the Welsh media fund, that's a 30 million sterling
6 investment fund, and has partnered Pinewood studios to develop 180,000 square foot four stage
7 studio facility to be known as Pinewood Studio Wales. Northern Ireland has very rapidly
8 growing film industry. The 2014 to 2018 investment programme will see a total of 43 million
9 investigated in the industry. The 2010 to 2014 investment of 27.3 million entitled driving global
10 growth provided 146 million, that's euro, return on investment in Northern Ireland. Northern
11 Ireland has 42,000 square feet of purpose built studio space at the Titanic quarter. A similar
12 amount at the mill and various locations within a short drive of Belfast.

13
14 Ardmore Studios and I am sure Síun will tell you more about this, has 40,300 square feet of
15 on-site space across five stages, but I'll let her elaborate on that. Ashford studios has 57,000
16 square feet consisting of three stages.

17
18 The Co Wicklow economic think tank has been engaging with representatives of the film
19 industry as far back as the establishment of the think tank in 2013. Members of the think tank
20 held a number formal meetings with representatives of the film industry. The first one this year
21 was January 27th, and we had a number of meetings in January and February with the view to
22 identify issues and making a submission to the expert group on studio infrastructure which was
23 set up under action 152, the action plan for jobs 2015. A submission making the case for
24 supporting a film industry structure with input from the film industry, the Local Enterprise
25 Office and the Wicklow Film Commission was made to the expert group on the 13th of March.
26 Deputy Andrew Doyle also raised a number of parliamentary questions and topical issues in this
27 regard in relation to the film industry. The expert group on the film industry infrastructure was
28 chaired by John Callanan, Assistant Secretary at the Department of the Taoiseach. Other
29 members of the group include James Hickey, CEO of the Irish Film Board, Mary Nash principal
30 officer Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, representatives of the IDA and
31 Enterprise Ireland. On the 28th of April this year, a presentation was made by Joe O'Connell of
32 Ashford Studios to the Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The main
33 points put forward were the need for a large scale studio space, a separate classification for
34 commercial rates purposes for studio space, and exemption or a nominal charge for commercial

1 rates and planning contributions.

2
3 On 30th April, myself and Vibeke Delahunt on foot of the submission made to the expert group
4 met with a group representing the Irish Film Board and the Department of Arts Heritage and the
5 Gaeltacht. We met with Mary Nash principal officer with responsibility for film at the
6 Department of Arts, and James Hickey, Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Film Board. The
7 deputy chief executive of the Board, and other officials from the Department of Arts and the
8 Irish Film Board.

9
10 The expert group had considered the submission and had re-branded themselves to take in, to
11 broaden the remit of the expert group to deal with the creative industries generally.

12
13 On the 14th of May of this year, Pinewood studios announced as mentioned previously that it
14 would have a presence in Ireland to avail of the 32% tax credit available under section 481. And
15 on the 25th of May, Limerick County Council, it was announced in the press, agreed to purchase
16 350,000 square foot facility for six million euro, as part of its strategy for infrastructural
17 development. And according to the media, the Local Authority, that's Limerick, remains in
18 discussion with Ardmore. Thanks very much Cathaoirleach.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thanks Christine. I'll let in Síun, I know the Council met with you
20 over the last few months and it's a hive of activity in there still so it's great to see. You press
21 that, and I'll let you in, okay.

22 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: Thank you, and thanks for the invitation to address you all here
23 today. Some of you I have met already, as you said, we have met already and you would have
24 seen Ardmore and know a bit about our plans. But for those of you who haven't, I'll just quickly
25 fill you in.

26
27 So Ardmore Studios has been around since 1958 when the first stages were opened. On the
28 Herbert Road in Bray. And we have 40,000, as Christine said, 40,300 square foot of what we
29 call sound stages, so those are the stages that we hire out for productions to make their, to make
30 whatever content it is they're making. We also have another roughly little over 100,000 square
31 feet of space which is for the purposes of the support facilities needed, such as workshop space,
32 production office space, wardrobe space, props, all of the things that go along with the circus
33 that is making films and television. And so Ardmore as a studio I suppose it's fair to say since
34 1958 has been in operation and made well over 100 movies. And it would be globally

1 recognised, certainly well known by all the major studios in LA. And so we have a really strong
2 brand. Wicklow has a really strong brand in terms of Ardmore. We have been saying for some
3 time that there is a lack of studio space available in Ireland, particularly now that the
4 Government has decided to do some changes to the section 481 tax, film tax incentive, has made
5 the country even more competitive. So we have this fantastic tax credit that is very inviting for
6 productions to come in, but unfortunately we don't have the space to accommodate them. So we
7 are in Ardmore, I am in the position where I am actually turning away work, which I don't
8 particularly like to do. So in total Ireland has roughly 111,000 square feet, and as I say, the
9 Government has stated through its - well the last report that was done which was in 2011, the
10 creative capital report, they set out a strategy, which is this is the Government's strategy, to
11 double the value of the audio visual sector, which at that time was at 500 million and double it to
12 one billion. And as a result of that, create roughly an additional, on top of the 6,000 jobs already
13 there at that point in time, an additional 5,000 jobs. But the lack of studio infrastructure is again,
14 it's one of the big issues that we have.

15
16 Since 2013, sorry, I just took over in Ardmore three years ago, but since 2013 we have been
17 operating at full capacity. And since that time, we have invested 1.4 million euro in
18 redeveloping the Herbert Road site, we have done that by modernising and upgrading some of
19 the buildings. We have done things like modernising the electrical distribution network there.
20 We had switch gear in there that had been there since 1958 so, gladly that's all modernised.
21 Repairs to things like the water system, believe it or not we have reduced our water capacity, our
22 water usage by 90% which was due to leakage within the site. We sit on 16 acres of land, so you
23 can imagine that there is a fair amount of drainage and so on and so forth on the site.

24
25 And our investment programme is to ensure that Ardmore continues to be fit for purpose, and
26 continues to attract world class television and film productions. So we have plans to increase the
27 studio size, the studio space on the site in Herbert Road and we have also just recently taken an
28 interest in the Hind building at the Bray Business Park on the Southern Cross road. We will use
29 this as additional spillover space. The building is a good size, 47,000 square feet in total of
30 which 35,000 square feet will be the Warehouse space, whilst it's a good size, it doesn't have the
31 necessary height for film studios, film studios, height is very important. Studios currently being
32 built would have a height of 50 foot. Unfortunately that building doesn't have that. So we are
33 not - it doesn't have the necessary height basically to justify a major spend on sound proving. So
34 what I would say to you here today is as Christine has pointed out, if you want to see the

1 production of film and television grow in Wicklow, then you really need to look at how you can
2 as a county encourage the existing studio operators to grow their operations. You are unique in
3 this county. You are the only county in Ireland that has such a concentration of studio space
4 accruing and you need to think and strategies about how you can help grow the industry even
5 more. If you think about it between Penny Dreadful which is the current show in production in
6 Ardmore and the Vikings which is the show in the Ashford Studios, there is roughly 70 million
7 euro a year of Irish spend pumping into this county. I don't know if you realise that. So there is
8 - and if you take even what I would say a conservative multiplier that Christine had there of 1.4,
9 I would say it's three times. This is not insignificant. That's basically what I would say to you,
10 we are committed to Bray and that's where we are remaining. Okay.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Brady.

12 Cllr BRADY: Thank you Cathaoirleach, and thank you for coming in here this afternoon and I
13 know I have spoke - I was one of the Councillors that did take up the opportunity to go into
14 Ardmore Studios, I think it was November last year.

15 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: It was a cold day.

16 Cllr BRADY: Very wet day when I was there but it was fantastic to go around and see some of
17 the set there for Penny Dreadful and it just gives you a sense of the work that goes on up there,
18 the scale, and how dense it is up there on site. And it has to be said that that followed on from
19 our previous discussions, because we did have Joe O'Connell here from Ballyhenry in Ashford
20 into the Council chamber here previously and he outlined some of his concerns and the concerns
21 of the studios there in Ashford.

22
23 So obviously there has been a lot of focus on the film industry over the last while. Some of it
24 very positive in terms of the newly enhanced tax credit scheme which has to be overwhelmingly
25 in my opinion welcomed, but the biggest problem and you outlined it when I and others were in
26 Ardmore Studios, the biggest problem there is space. And thankfully the Sinn Fein group here,
27 we tabled a motion which passed at our last Council meeting here unanimously calling on the
28 Government and the expert group that is now in place to look at that whole issue in terms of
29 putting in place a strategic fund to allow the development of additional recording space and
30 studio and all of that. And just the pay back as you outline there, I probably tend to agree with
31 you, you know is one in four as opposed to 1.4. The dividend is there. It speaks for itself.
32 Hopefully the expert group does come back favourably and puts in place a strategic fund. And
33 my concerns and I know I did email you back in March around some of the national coverage
34 around Limerick, the plans by Limerick city and County Council in terms of purchasing the old

1 Dell site in Limerick for six million, and I know it has been extensively covered and I think that's
2 now, that deal is done and dusted and according to some media reports that deal is done also
3 with Ardmore Studios for a five year term and the estimate is it will bring up to 750 jobs to
4 Limerick. It will bring something like 80 million to the local economy in Limerick. And my
5 concerns, because most members here would know the history of Ardmore Studios, the
6 difficulties over the years, and difficulties in the more recent past when a sizeable proportion of
7 the site there had to be sold off just to fund I suppose the long-term viability of Ardmore Studios,
8 and my concerns as a public representative was that look Limerick was now being used as a
9 mechanism, maybe in the mid to long-term, to get out of Bray, to get out of Wicklow, and to
10 move en masse down to Limerick. And I as a public representative looking at this and following
11 the media reports, which was - it seems to have been headed up by one of the directors of
12 Ardmore Studios there, Ozzy Kilkenny, I am not sure of the involvement there, but that deal is
13 now done as far as I can see with Limerick in Limerick, so I am glad to hear that you are saying
14 the long-term plan for Ardmore Studios is to remain in Bray. And I know an awful lot of work
15 has gone on here within the county going back over the last year, more it has to be said. But
16 certainly since the time Joe O'Connell was in and he outlined a number of areas that he felt when
17 quizzed what could this Local Authority do to help the film and TV production industry here in
18 Wicklow, because we know the importance to the economy and jobs etcetera, so I think I speak
19 for everyone here, I know all members will probably want to come in themselves, but I want to
20 ensure that Wicklow remains as the number one destination and location for film and TV
21 production. We are blessed to have two excellent studios here in Wicklow, and that's the way I
22 want to remain, it to be into the future. Any dilution of the services or the industry in Ardmore
23 Studios to Limerick, I have fears that how viable economically it is to run two sites at two
24 different ends of the country, how viable that is. Hopefully you can say yes it is viable, even in
25 the short-term five years, or whatever, but I think we need to get to a situation and having
26 spoken to you back in November, you said you were in the process of trying to identify other
27 locations within the North Wicklow area to locate additional studio space. You did say you were
28 going to be hopefully coming in for planning permission to redevelop some of the on site
29 facilities to upgrade it to increase the height as you said, it needs to be 50 foot high to make it
30 viable. So maybe you could give us an indicator or an update on what - I know you outlined
31 more recent developments in terms of an additional facility you did acquire or are using up off
32 the southern cross business park, so are there any other plans within the area to develop I
33 suppose purpose built facilities? Because, look, there is some positive work going on in terms of
34 commercial rates, in terms development charges and that, and hopefully something will be

1 brought to the Council to focus on all of that. But I want to I suppose hear that look Ardmore
2 Studios is committed to Wicklow, wants to stay in Wicklow, not just in the short-term but also in
3 the long-term. So hopefully anything that we can do here in Wicklow will be done to ensure that
4 Wicklow remains as the film destination and location for Ireland. I think there needs to be a lot
5 of work done at a national level as well. I think Wicklow needs to be designated as - there is all
6 talk of hubs and all of this sort of thing but Wicklow, we need to be clearly identified. Ardmore
7 Studios was set up as the national film studios, so we need Wicklow to remain that way, thanks
8 Cathaoirleach.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Ryan.

10 Cllr RYAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach, thank you for the presentation. I suppose we see the film
11 industry in Wicklow as an important partner in going forward, and the future of the film industry
12 really important, and we would like to be a dynamic partner in that. I think the economic think
13 tank, one of the core pillars of that was the film industry and obviously we have been liaising
14 strongly over the last number of years with the cluster that has built up really in Co Wicklow
15 around film and a great expertise that has grown up. So I know you say you think we should
16 think strategically, I probably would say I think we are thinking strategically and if you believe
17 that we are not, I would love to know what other things you think we should be doing. So I
18 think we are also engaging at a national level through Christine with a number of different
19 bodies to ensure that we understand the industry and its needs and understand the backdrop that
20 you are working to in terms of the funds that are available and accessible. I suppose we have - in
21 terms of trying to ensure the development of the film industry, we have come up against a
22 number of obviously challenges because there is legal frameworks that we are working to around
23 planning fees and the like, and certain things that we actually simply can't change. Controllables
24 is what they talk about, and there is some things we can do and development levies is one and
25 we are bringing forward proposals with regard to that. We have been working hard on that to try
26 and see if we can make some changes for the film industry to really deliver the best environment
27 possible to see an expansion of facilities. And I think that collaboration is really, really
28 important, and I think it's important that all the players are coming together. That's why I
29 suppose it did come as a shock and surprise to read in the paper something that we hadn't had in
30 the discussions up until that point. I do understand there is confidentiality and the like, so I
31 suppose what we are really asking here today is, is there any truth in the papers and what they're
32 saying about Ardmore moving to Limerick? So I think that's a very clear-cut question that I
33 would love an answer to. While you say you are committed to Bray and that's where we are
34 remaining, that could be just as a simple head office and there is very few staff foot print in Bray

1 when you consider where the shooting locations would be, that's really where the people are
2 employed. If I understand the industry correctly, the Dell site itself, I don't even know the
3 height, but as far as I know it's far off the height required to shoot the type of films you talk
4 about at 50 feet and the like.

5
6 So I suppose we just want to know, I mean I am actually quite excited by the idea of the
7 development of the Ardmore site itself and what you are talking about actually doing there,
8 because I would love to know what kind of investment are you talking about, because I think it's
9 important that again we are partners in that, and that we would, as far as possible, once those
10 plans are reasonable, I think would support that development of that site and I know already I
11 think you have moved into the JJ Lowe part of that site and expanded your footprint there
12 slightly and I think that's a short-term thing, I am not sure if that's what you are talking about
13 right now as a long-term plan and obviously maybe the John Hind site, if we got more of an idea
14 of what that might actually include. Just for me, like other Councillors here, surprised hearing
15 stuff in the newspapers, would love to believe that we have a close enough relationship that we
16 can actually share information if there is any truth in it. If there isn't any truth in it, fantastic,
17 let's work together to develop and maximise the potential of the film industry in Wicklow here.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor, Cllr Mitchell.

19 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the presentation and I also attended
20 the visit which you hosted to the studios late last year and was very interested indeed to see
21 around it, and the buzz and the number of people who were employed there was impressive.
22 And certainly of significant interest to me. And the Council has over a while been trying to do
23 something about this. We understand that there are pressures there. My understand something
24 the economic think tank which we adopted an outline in January of this year, has something on
25 this. Now we had - I had understood at some stage in recently that we were coming forward
26 with a proposal to reduce the development levies, as has been said before, the studios require a
27 very large amount of open space and vacant space, much more so than a conventional factory or
28 Warehouse operation. And this results in very large development levies because of the area.
29 And I thought we had agreed in principle to try and move forward with this that we would
30 reduce the development levies by either making it exempt or possibly at 10 or 20% of the
31 development levies for an equivalent sized warehouse. Because of this low utilisation of the
32 space, that we were going to do this. I - as far as - I can't see whether it's being done at the
33 moment or not. I had thought it would be, but I haven't seen any activity. And I would very
34 much like to see a proposal brought to the next Council meeting in July as to how we should

1 move forward on this. Any change to the development levy structure is bound to involve
2 significant statutory consultation and a period of - which it must take at least six months for any
3 amendment to take action so I would like to see an outline proposal of how this would work, and
4 a way forward brought to the Council at the July meeting, thank you.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor. Would you like to respond to some of that?

6 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: Okay, just do talk a little bit about the history that Cllr Brady brought
7 up there. And the - historically, I think Ardmore has had a chequered history, I can't - I am only
8 there since 2012, so all I know is what I went in there, there was tumbleweed blowing through it,
9 and it was quite a neglected site. So now thankfully not just through a re-invigoration of it, but
10 just the industry itself has kicked up a bit. But I think that the nature of the industry in the past
11 has been that it was cyclical, and it's because we never actually reached this critical mass where
12 we were creating sustainable jobs, you know fairly healthy full-time equivalent numbers, career
13 paths for people want industry. And we are now this close to be able to do that now and that's
14 why it's important for everybody, it's important for the industry, it's important for Wicklow, that
15 we try to get to that stage - however we do that, to the benefit of Ireland Inc if you know what I
16 mean. I think that's just one thing to put it in context.

17
18 The planning permission for Herbert road, like what I had gone through when you were there, I
19 had shown you a model of what we planned to do and specifically what we planned to do on the
20 site is demolish one of the stages and what we call the old props store, buildings that have been
21 there since 1960s, and then build a larger footprint of a stage, like a 25,000 square foot stage on
22 that footprint, and another facilities building and multi-storey car parking. Car parking is a
23 continuous issue. So to answer you as well Councillor Ryan, we estimate that that's somewhere
24 in the region of 7 to 8 million euro to do. We can't do that at the moment because we are
25 completely full, so in order to do it, we practically have to close down the studios for a period of
26 time, because as you can imagine, demolition and building is going to create noise, and one thing
27 productions don't like is noise. That's why we have sound stages, sound proofed, so - and
28 currently we are committed to Penny Dreadful which is - looks like it's back for a third season,
29 and we don't know whether there will might be a window next year to be able to do something at
30 that point so that's all I can say about that.

31
32 And in relation to Limerick, so I can't talk about Limerick. I am as surprised as you all are about
33 what I am reading in the papers. I haven't commented in the papers. Limerick has decided to
34 look at creating a hub there. We have talked to them. We have not agreed anything with them.

1 And if - even if we did which I don't know, it will not affect anything we are doing in Wicklow.
2 There is such demand for studio space that I don't, whoever does Limerick, whether it's Ardmore
3 or whoever, I think there is plenty of room for it. But we are committed to Bray. So I hope that
4 answers that.

5
6 In terms of the - what else could be done, I think that what you are doing is great. It's great to
7 hear that there is work starting on the various issues around the various types of fees that are
8 involved. Rates, as well. I mean the nature of the business is that you can have a production in
9 for seven, eight months of the year and then you have the remainder of that 12 months where
10 you are just fixing it back up again and all of that. So rates is always an issue in that respect
11 because we are not getting the income in for it. And to put it into perspective, in terms of
12 studios, like I said to you a figure of around 70 million in terms of Irish spend on Penny
13 Dreadful and Vikings, roughly, say those two productions. That doesn't mean that Ardmore
14 Studios or Ashford Studios is getting that money. We get a tiny proportion of that money, and
15 so we see ourselves as the enablers for the industry. So we build the infrastructure and we rent it
16 out. We don't produce the films or the TV series. We are simply enabling the industry to be
17 able to do that. So the amount of revenue that we get and I think I might have said this several
18 times to people, our ability to pay back capital investment, a return on capital for us is a long
19 period of time. So it's not like we can just throw up the studios and we have tonnes of money
20 there, we actually don't, so it all has to make commercial sense for us to do that. That's why yes
21 we did speak about looking for premises in and around Wicklow if there had been something
22 suitable to refurbish, but there just wasn't. Hopefully that answers the questions.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yep, okay.

24 Cllr FORTUNE: Just a clarification on that last point. Did you actually come in and talk to the
25 Local Authority at any stage and try and figure out where space might be or where space could
26 be got in Wicklow?

27 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: Yes and I think the Local Authority knows well that I try to do
28 something with the AO Smith building at one point. I talked to them, couldn't do anything with
29 that. I tried - I have tried several different approaches to this. I mean I have scoured Wicklow.
30 But height, I am telling you height is where it's at.

31 Cllr FORTUNE: Just if I may make an observation, it seems as if we are having an awful lot of
32 conversation and talk, but - looking at the media over the last number of months, the last year,
33 last year and a half, there are a number of counties in Ireland now trying to project their location
34 as where film can be based and done. We have a head start, so I just think and it just reminds me

1 of the meeting when Ashford studios came in when Joe O'Connell came in I just think we have a
2 meeting like this, we have a conversation, and nothing seems to happen. I just think listening to
3 what you are saying and listening to what the Bray Councillors are saying, there is a level of
4 urgency, and I think just my own, just reaction listening to what is going on here today that, the
5 number one priority should be for all concerned parties to sit down as quickly as possible and
6 find - I mean there is oodles of land around the place, we need to come up with a solution. If not
7 I think we are going to lose all this. I think that shouldn't be allowed happen.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We have a few looking for clarification, Cllr Vance?

9 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. You are very welcome to Wicklow County Council. In
10 the discussions before Christmas, well I took it up you indicated that you were looking for a
11 green field situation in the Bray area. well that was the indications that I was picking up anyway.
12 Would that be the case? I felt that you had identified a particular area there but you wouldn't
13 elaborate on that and that was of course before Christmas, I can understand that, if negotiations
14 were going on at that particular time. Could I ask have you continued with that or have you
15 dismissed that as an option for further provision of space on a greenfield situation rather than
16 trying to locate a building - most of the buildings I think we are well aware are unsuitable for
17 filming because of the heights and stuff like that. That's really, I think you said at that time, I
18 would like to know what exactly that position is, and could I just say there is a bit of unrest in
19 Ardmore Studios at the moment. A number of months ago I was approached by a number of
20 people who work up there who are quite concerned about the situation who were able to tell me
21 about six weeks before it ever appeared in the newspaper that there was, that the Ardmore were
22 doing business with Limerick County Council, and I even approached officials in Wicklow
23 County Council here with this, and they knew nothing about it as well, so I mean information
24 goes both ways, and obviously if the film industry are looking for co-operation with the local
25 authorities, I think it would be certainly appreciated by the local authorities if they knew what
26 was going on in the film industry as well as the other way around as well, because I think it's fair
27 to say certainly as long as I have been on this Council and Bray Council as well, that we have
28 done everything possible in our power to keep Ardmore Studios going, going to the fact that a
29 number of years ago we zoned land up there when we were told they didn't need any space, and
30 we allowed - zoned it and housing was put on it as long as that money was re-invested in the
31 studios, which I think a lot of people were sceptical about what all that money was re-invested
32 there or not. I just would like to know have you got a blueprint for the development of the
33 studios in the Wicklow area and does it contain buildings on greenfield sites? Thank you.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are going back into questions here, okay 14, Cllr Casey.

1 Cllr CASEY: Thank you Chairman and also welcome Síun's presence here today and there is a
2 genuine fear around the table here today about where we are going into the future. And you said
3 yourself that Wicklow was unique to the film industry. But when you have the Minister for
4 Finance of the country backing a proposal in Limerick, it's very hard to see how we can defeat
5 that here. And if 350,000 square feet of studio space becomes available in Limerick, that's
6 trebles what's available in Wicklow here today and that will have repercussions down the line.
7 You are right, we have the head start on most of the other - on anywhere else in Ireland. We
8 have the skill sets here in Wicklow that's not anywhere else. And we have an existing 111,000
9 square feet of industry. So what I am asking is what do we need to do to deliver the
10 infrastructure that you talk about? You mention height is critical and the John Hind studio is not
11 really suitable because of its height? Is the current Ardmore studio, has it got the height to
12 develop or realistically are we looking at trying to find a greenfield site to develop the film
13 industry in Wicklow and is Ardmore interested in that or are they more interested in working
14 with the Minister for Finance in delivering this film hub in Limerick? Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. 32. Cllr Whitmore, sorry.

16 Cllr WHITMORE: Just to pick up on something that Cllr Casey mentioned that while Wicklow
17 has the head start, it will be difficult to I suppose fight or present our case against Limerick, but
18 we have had in the media recently a couple of executives within the film industry saying that
19 Limerick is actually too far from Dublin and that it isn't the ideal site. So we can actually build
20 on those comments and use that as part of our argument. And just for people's information, and
21 also as something that Cllr Fortune said, we - the discussions about this have been ongoing for
22 quite a while and if we don't actually make some solid progress quickly, opportunities like
23 Limerick will come in and they will take from us, because the industry needs to have some
24 certainty in how they're going to grow and what their investments will be. And just as part of
25 that, I understand that Deputy Steven Donnelly has written to each of the Councillors requesting
26 a cross party working group or some - everyone just to work together to see if we can progress
27 this, whether it's through development levies or other concrete actions that the Council can do
28 and in ways that we can help so that's something that's on the board and I would encourage
29 people if they have any questions to talk to Deputy Donnelly about that and how we can work
30 that forward.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Cullen.

32 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, is it the fact that - is Wicklow big enough to have two film
33 studios? I mean ultimately, that's probably going to be the basis of what happens and basic pure
34 economics. Is Wicklow big enough to have two film studios? There was warnings at the time

1 when various planning permissions were coming in or going through here that this would cause
2 long-term down the road problems for Ardmore. A number of Councillors from Bray predicted
3 this and this would happen and there would be a problem with competing with state of the art
4 new facility. It seems to me now, it seems to be, maybe a base of part of the problem. But I
5 don't know. Perhaps it's - there is not enough space for two film studios in the county and that
6 maybe is a harsh reality. That would be very disappointing for the county and we have to find
7 out from the purely economic term, is it the changing of the guard with regards to film studio
8 capacity in the county? You have Ardmore which is - it's kind of dated facility at this stage, and
9 as opposed to the state of the art new facility down the road, down the N11, and I just wonder is
10 the situation rescue-able if there was provision made for the extension of floor area and height
11 area and the various requirements. But has the ship already sailed when the Council approved
12 planning permissions for the new film studios down the road from Ardmore, and I think that's
13 probably the question that you might call the elephant in the room question, and maybe that's
14 harsh reality that we have to look at. Other than that, are you looking now for a competitive
15 Greenfield site, and are you then maybe sell off the existing complex for perhaps other, you
16 know, residential maybe use of it. Some of the land you sold went into residential, I don't know,
17 I am just - but Chairman, that's what I would just say, a pure economic point, is Wicklow big
18 enough to continue for the two film studios or is it not? We have the benefit that we are close to
19 Dublin. And that a lot of the film executives and that want - we are on the direct route now to
20 Dublin airport, so it's very - that's very cost effective, and time is money, so maybe that's a factor
21 that goes for Wicklow. But maybe you have maybe better contracts or links into the film
22 industry than others would have, because of the longevity of your existence. I don't know really
23 Chairman whether it's going to be a new Greenfield site or a sell-off of the existing site but you
24 seem to have a substantial problem and I think you are going to have to come before the Council
25 with some draft, some proposal, something tangible and realistic to be considered. It's all right
26 coming in and saying we have this problem, but you know you need to show us a plan and what
27 you are going to do.

28
29 In fairness, the other people who did have plans, they came in and put their best foot forward and
30 over a period of time they got what they looked for. It seems to be working out. I would like to
31 see a very detailed structured plan of where you intend to go forward and everyone has
32 problems. You have problems. This Council has problems. But it's solutions we are looking
33 for. Thank you Chairman.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, well I actually think it's good problem, it's capacity issue. It's not

1 the opposite.

2 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: Both studios are full.

3 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I know but for how long and look at the long-term, they don't look at
4 the short-term in that game. You look at ten years down the road.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady, real quick, I have let you in before.

6 Cllr BRADY: Just to concur with that point, I think the film industry, it's an international
7 industry, they're coming to Wicklow because we have everything there is to offer here in the
8 county. Both studios are full, and hopefully that will remain and it will be the case into the
9 future. This is a purely capacity issue. And just to go back to the Limerick thing, that's where
10 my primary concern here is and the latest report carried in the Irish examiner is saying look this
11 is a done deal, there has been ongoing discussions there with Ozzie Kilkenny over the last year
12 and the lease, it's five year lease with the option to purchase the facility down in Limerick at that
13 point. Now if I was in this industry and there was going to be a six million euro purpose built
14 facility in Limerick or the option there was to invest seven to eight million in Ardmore Studios,
15 the economics are there. I am not completely convinced Síun by what you said. You mention a
16 number of sites there. One in particular that I think would and still could be ideal close to
17 Ardmore Studios and that's the former AO Smith site in Bray. It's two minutes across the road
18 from Ardmore Studios. I would love to know what the outcome there was, you said it was
19 unsuccessful. I would love to know the reasons why. And maybe this is an issue that should and
20 could be taken up by the planning SPC - if a list of sites in the North Wicklow, in the Bray area
21 could be identified by yourselves and Ardmore Studios and they could be looked at, if Limerick
22 can invest six million euro of Council money into developing something, surely this Council
23 should go some of the way to keeping the industry here as well. So I think as a starting point
24 that should be done: A list of sites in the area, whether they be greenfield or sites that have old
25 buildings on them, I know there is probably zoning issues around Ardmore Studios, or around
26 AO Smith, I for one would have no problem in changing the zoning to accommodate Ardmore
27 Studios. But just to put this warning down, I would have a serious problem with the re-zoning of
28 Ardmore Studios and I'll put it down now, if any proposal comes in to rezone any of the land in
29 Ardmore Studios for residential or otherwise, I for one will be adamantly opposed to it. It
30 remains as a film studio and that's it, and any attempt to sell it off at any point will be --

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Be fair, she has said she has trawled Wicklow.

32 Cllr BRADY: If that information could be shared, it could be looked at. I would love to know
33 the reasons why AO Smith's was deemed to be unsuitable.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Obviously the experts have deemed it unsuitable. It's not for you or I to

1 deem something suitable.

2 Cllr BRADY: I did ask the Director of Planning at a previous meeting as to what pre-planning
3 meetings have taken place with Ardmore Studios. He said under data protection and he wasn't at
4 liberty to say. I would like to know what sites have been looked at and why have they been
5 ruled out.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

7 Cllr BRADY: It's a reasonable request.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

9 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Thank you very much for coming in. I am not quite sure whether it's a
10 greenfield site you are looking for or a site that's already built that you can develop on to. I
11 know for example that in Greystones we have an IDA site that's just sitting there and we would
12 be delighted to have you out with us to have a look at it and show you around. I think we should
13 have a cross party group put together to meet with yourselves, to discuss exactly your needs,
14 because we might see something that you mightn't know exists and if we can help you, I mean
15 that's what it's all about. We are not going to achieve anything on your own or on our own, we
16 can maybe achieve something to working together. But come out to Greystones, we have a
17 fantastic site available!

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

19 Cllr WALSH: I too was on that business on the wet November day. I was alarmed to read in the
20 newspaper article there in relation to the Limerick initiative, it started off saying Ardmore has
21 been on the look out for studio space over the past months after being forced to turn away work
22 and then it quotes the Limerick city and Council CEO saying it was an important step in their
23 plan to create an international film centre and major sustainable employment in Limerick. He
24 added that the next step was to finalise the discussions with Ardmore Studios and they've been
25 encouraged by the response to the initiative so far. Christine pointed out in relation to Ardmore
26 it's been globally recognised with over 100 movies, well known and well regarded by all the
27 major film studios, and with the recent tax incentive announced it makes the country even more
28 competitive. But again we are back to the situation where we have not enough studio space. We
29 are looking at a situation where we have a possible additional 5,000 jobs, we have already spent
30 1.4 million, I think Síun talked about investing and modernising Ardmore. I would sincerely
31 hope we get a commitment that you would look at plans to increase the studio space if at all
32 possible in Ardmore or at other potential sites in the North Wicklow area and anything this
33 Council can do to assist in that we should certainly go out and do that. That's it, thanks.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor. Cllr Kavanagh.

1 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I suppose what I would like to see is that maybe
2 the Council and us as Councillors would see it that we would invite both studios to submit a
3 wish list. I mean it's the first I have heard that Ardmore was looking at various places, and were
4 unsuccessful with it and I know there are planning issues but how can we make it successful, so I
5 would like to see a wish list and that that wish list would come back to the Councillors or maybe
6 as Cllr McLoughlin suggested, a cross party group. Because I brought this up at last month's
7 meeting about the Ardmore going to Limerick and I was assured no, no, no, we have had
8 assurances they're not going to Limerick and now we are looking at 350,000 square feet in
9 Limerick there. So I mean as I said last month, we have to be proactive in this but we need to
10 know what exactly it is that both studios need. There were I know Joe O'Connell mentioned
11 residential accommodation for instance in Ashford for the crew and staff and the actors and
12 everybody involved in the industry, so that's something maybe that can be looked at as well.
13 That's an ancillary service that needs to go with the studio, not only just studio space, but as
14 regards development levies, accommodation, and other sort of ancillary services for the industry.
15 So if we could invite both studios to submit a wish list, we can then see what we can do about it.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. 24. Tom again.

17 Cllr FORTUNE: I am probably repeating myself. I just think that the more I listen and the more
18 I listen to the contributions, I just think this is so urgent that it's a major, major priority, because I
19 hear all members saying that if land, I mean we obviously have oodles of zoned land for
20 commercial land all over the county as we know from previous discussions here in the chamber.
21 So I just think that we just need to get to use that term, get our finger out, and - because if we
22 wait month on month on month, it's going to be too late and you see what's happening as well
23 here and there is no doubt about it, politics is getting involved in this as well. And there is an
24 election over the hill and Limerick has a big plant down there that had massive employment in it.
25 It's gone. And people need brownie points so if we are not careful, we are going to be too late
26 despite the fact that we have this lead. So I just think from both sides we just need to get in
27 around the table as quickly as possible, and start thrashing this out. And it's a major challenge
28 obviously for Ardmore, it's a major challenge for the chief executive, but also for ourselves, we
29 need to all get in here and make this happen. No point in having talks and nothing happening
30 and someone else does it for us. That's what's going to happen. That's the big fear I have
31 coming out of this conversation. I think this has become a talking shop. We had a meeting
32 previous with Ashford and really nothing has happened since then. I said at the time I think in
33 the chamber we need to follow this up quickly, bring them in, do things and talk and talk, I have
34 seen nothing since and I know we have got think tanks and everything going on, but time is

1 running away on us on this one and I think it's an absolutely urgent priority. It could continue to
2 bring in and build on massive income into the county and from a tourism and commercial
3 perspective and really we just need to leaving this meeting today, we need to have an urgent
4 follow-up to get this sorted out. If not someone is going to do it for us.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, I am going to let Síun have the final word but before I let her in as
6 Councillor Ryan said we can only control what we can control. I think as a matter of urgency,
7 the development contribution scheme should be looked at. If we are talking about a Greenfield
8 site, one of the biggest obstacles to somebody developing a studio, and when you pair everything
9 back, it's a capacity issue, it's studio space, obviously there is not many existing buildings that
10 are suitable for this. It's a very specific type of building we are looking for. So realistically we
11 are probably talking about a new build if we are talking about Wicklow. So one thing we do
12 control is the development levies. We have to review that immediate. We have to look at the
13 film industry, maybe look at exemptions, there are other industries in this county that are exempt
14 from development contributions. Let's make the environment friendly for building a studio. We
15 do not control commercial rates. That's a national issue. We all know that. We cannot control
16 that. It's out of our control. But we do control development contributions. And if it is an
17 obstacle to somebody developing a site of a studio, we have to look at that issue immediate.
18 And I would certainly be happy to propose that the development contribution and the
19 exemptions towards the film industry would be looked at straight away.

20
21 So I'll let you have the final word.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: There will be no more contributions, this is it.

23 MS NI RAGHALLAIGH: What I am hearing is people's concerns about Ardmore not being
24 committed to Bray. I can't say it any plainer than this: You can choose to read stuff in the
25 papers which I don't know where it comes from, or you can hear what I am saying. Ardmore is
26 committed to Herbert Road, Bray. Okay. We are not going anywhere. We are not developing it
27 as a housing estate. We are not doing any of that. We are in the studio business. I can't say it
28 any plainer. Thanks again for...

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Now I did say that was the final word but Christine has spoken nicely to
30 me.

31 CHRISTINE: You asked for clarification, the county Wicklow economic think tank, the
32 Steering Committee of the Co Wicklow economic think tank deals with film, with the Steering
33 Committee and the Co Wicklow Film Commissioner Vibeke Delahunt are the film committee.
34 And then we bring in industry experts from time to time, as is required. And we have a Steering

1 Committee meeting tomorrow so we can discuss whether there is options for meeting with the
2 cross party committee or expanding on that. So I'll take it up with the Steering Committee first
3 thing tomorrow morning.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thanks Christine and thanks again Síun. Thank you very much for
5 coming in, and don't be afraid to keep in touch because you are pushing an open door, okay.

6 Thank you, we will move on. Item seven, to note the monthly management report of the County
7 Council for May. Is that noted? Okay. Eight, to note the Local Community Development

8 Committee Annual Report. Copies enclosed as well? Noted? Okay. Nine, to receive the
9 recommendation from the community, cultural and social development Strategic Policy

10 Committee on the allocation of 100,000 tourism promotion fund that, circulated. Michael.

11 DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT: Thank you very much Cathaoirleach, as a way of
12 background to the members to remind them, at your annual budget meeting on the 24th of
13 November, 400,000 was provided from the NPPR monies, 100,000 for tourism projects, 100,000
14 for economic development projects, 60,000 for community grants, 60,000 for environmental
15 community projects, and 80,000 for the library book fund. At the CPG, the next CPG, it was
16 agreed that 400,000, sorry 300,000 of the 400,000 would be referred to the SPC for Community
17 Cultural and Social Development to determine how it would be allocated. What you have before
18 you now is the 100,000 allocated under the tourism projects. The CCSD, Strategic Policy
19 Committee have been considering this for the last few meetings and have finally recommended
20 five projects, one project per each Municipal District. And you have a report in front of you
21 setting out the five projects, the first one is the Greystones Municipal District, allocation of
22 20,000 for development of Saint Crispin's field, part of Rathdown Heritage Park.

23
24 The site is owned by the County Council and contains the ruins of St Crispin's cell and Captain
25 Tarrant's farmhouse and outbuildings. It also contains evidence of prehistoric early Christian,
26 medieval and post medieval settlements. The Rathdown Heritage Park Design Strategy, which
27 was prepared in co-operation with Greystones Tidy Towns, proposes revival and development of
28 the site on a phased basis as funding streams become available. Funding will be used to
29 construct the footpath through the site which will facilitate access to the tourists visiting the
30 monument.

31
32 The second one, Bray Municipal District 20,000 for the Sugar Loaf Way Walking Trail, really to
33 link the Bray/Greystones Cliff Walk with the Wicklow Way. By connecting this walk to the
34 Wicklow Way via Kilmacanogue and Sugar Loaf mountains, it will create the opportunity for a

1 variation of either walk, and also include a third town served by public transport for commencing
2 or finishing the walk. It means that you can and finish the walk in Co Wicklow without having
3 to start it in Dublin.

4
5 The 20 grand in this case will be used to commence the works on the southern end and to look at
6 a feasibility study on the northern end.

7
8 The third project for the Wicklow Municipal District, again 20,000, a very exciting project to
9 upgrade the walkways around Vartry reservoir, known as the Roundwood walking route.
10 Roundwood and district community Council had developed a 7.2 kilometre walkway around the
11 lower Vartry reservoir and there are other routes which the community Council wish to bring
12 back into active use and these works will include surface restoration, way marking, interpretive
13 map board etcetera. I walked part of this route recently. It's a very exciting project. It will bring
14 loads of tourists to the area. The funding will be used to continue the above works which will be
15 carried out on a phased basis.

16
17 The fourth project, Arklow Municipal District, 20 grand they want to look at the possibility of
18 establishing a much needed Arklow pottery museum, visitor centre. And also to incorporate a
19 Wicklow GAA museum. They already have a lot of pieces which have been donated for display
20 and there is no way of displaying them at the moment and the fear is that they'll be lost,
21 particularly as there is no more pottery being made and it's important to preserve what's down
22 there. And this funding will be used to commission a feasibility study on this initiative to ensure
23 it's sustainable.

24
25 The fifth and final project, again 20,000, Baltinglass Municipal District, again a very exciting
26 project, invest Blessington green way. This project has been endorsed by Bord Fáilte and would
27 have been funded by Fáilte Ireland. It should have been funded by it some time ago. But part,
28 phase one of the trail has been completed, that's Avonree to Russellstown, and this funding will
29 be used to commence phase two of the trail.

30
31 So the SPC have recommended, they approved these five this morning at the meeting and they
32 recommend they be adopted by the Council to spend 100,000 allocated to the CCSD SPC.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thanks Michael. Cllr Ruttle.

34 Cllr RUTTLE: Yes Cathaoirleach, thank you very much and thank you Director, five worthy

1 projects in the five municipal areas, always a very strong added benefit for tourism promotion
2 and I would formally propose them here now as well.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, have I a seconder? Councillor Lawless. Okay. Seat eight, Cllr
4 Fitzgerald.

5 Cllr FITZGERALD: I support it. I just make the comment on the Arklow one there, there is a
6 lot of work been done there over the last few years by a group in Arklow and we had the pottery
7 back in Arklow in the 40s and a lot of piece haves been gathered in, and they have been donated
8 for display and safekeeping, record keeping, and there is a huge interest in it, and I see there is a
9 reunion taking place in July here of all the staff who used to work in the pottery and I know the
10 GAA have linked in and they're having support from GAA headquarters linked in with a visitor
11 centre, so certainly I am delighted, I would be delighted if that funding went through today as
12 part of 9 five recommendations, because we need things like that to happen in the town and I
13 think it will be a great boost for tourism in the town, and I would be wholeheartedly supporting
14 that and the other measures.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Casey.

16 Cllr CASEY: Yeah, thank you Chairman, I have no problems with the five projects that have
17 been presented today. I have concerns moving forward that when this happens again that there
18 may be is a better process carried out in how the money is dispersed, because in all fairness, I
19 feel it's disappointing that Wicklow County Tourism weren't even given a phone call to say that
20 there was 100,000 strategic fund available that maybe they could apply for to do a project that
21 maybe they were interested in. So just - the other thing I might like to know in relation to the
22 60,000 additional community fund that was made available in the budget process, has that been
23 spent and where it has been spent? Because I think there is an opportunity missed there from
24 Wicklow Tourism point of view.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Vance.

26 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, I would agree with this to a certain extent but I mean I look at it rather
27 than opening up another walkway in Bray, we are talking about the Sugar Loaf way, there is a
28 big problem in the Cliff Walk and the accessibility for people on the Cliff Walk. Now this is
29 obviously the work between Bray and Greystones. There is a huge amount of people that are
30 going on that walk, and some of the terrain is very difficult and whereas the Council have done
31 an awful lot of good work on parts of it, I would prefer to see a completion of that work, so that
32 to make it more accessible for a greater amount of people than go on to another walk with
33 20,000 which is not going to go much, not going to go very far. I would prefer to see a situation
34 that Greystones and Bray with their 20,000 each in that, would put that money into the

1 development of the Cliff Walk, which I think is probably one of the best assets and certainly the
2 walkways, it's the most popular now certainly in the North Wicklow area by a long shot. I think
3 we should be looking at that, developing that, because it's a great attraction, whether people start
4 out in Greystones and end up in Bray or the other way, people are going right the way through
5 now and I think it needs development, it needs work and I think we would be better off
6 concentrating the sparse money we have on something like that, rather than going into another
7 walk that you are going to do very, very little work on to make it viable. That's something that I
8 think and I think maybe Bray and Greystones municipal should look at that in regard to the
9 spending.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

11 Cllr Shay CULLEN: I would like to concur with the earlier speakers. As a member of the
12 community SPC, I fully endorse these five projects; five different municipal areas getting 20,000
13 each and a lot of work being done by the voluntary committees of all five of these groupings.
14 From a tourism point of view, walking and outdoor activities are paramount for Co Wicklow,
15 and this is an example, taking Blessington, taking the Roundwood reservoir walks, taking the
16 cliff walks and so on from joining up the Wicklow Way, I mean they're great projects, it's how to
17 get people to come to these areas, and more importantly spend money in these areas, make it an
18 economic benefit to the areas and I think we have picked five very, very worthy projects, and I
19 would like to obviously give it my recommendation, thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor. Cllr Kavanagh.

21 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I have no issue with any of the projects, they're all
22 very worthwhile projects, but it just says on the first paragraph here, suitable projects were
23 requested, and I would just like to know what process was used to invite projects for
24 consideration, how - you know who was invited or how the information got out there for people
25 to submit projects for consideration, thank you?

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Cllr McLoughlin.

27 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Yes, thank you, I would concur with my colleagues and I think all these
28 five projects are very worthwhile. I do understand what Cllr Vance was saying with regards to
29 the Cliff Walk, but 40,000 would do nothing on the Cliff Walk, and while I think we should be
30 looking at the expression of interest at both Co Wicklow partnership and the LCDC have put
31 forward, one of the aspects that there will be funding going forward as a collaborative tourism
32 project that there will be funding available if all goes according to plan, but this would look
33 favourably at projects where two sections of the area could come together and I think that would
34 be a fantastic project for Bray and Greystones to come together and apply together for funding

1 for something like the Cliff Walk but decent funding so we can do a proper finishing job, you
2 won't get much with 40,000 on the Cliff Walk.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Councillor Kennedy.

4 Cllr KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I fully endorse these five projects as well
5 Cathaoirleach. I think these are tourism projects and they will bring footfall to the county and I
6 want to thank the chairperson of the SPC, Cllr Ruttle for the airing and the time he gave all of
7 this, because it's been discussed at two meetings, so I fully support these five projects.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so we have a proposer and a seconder to accept the SPC's
9 recommendation. Have I any counter proposal?

10 Cllr KAVANAGH: Just I asked a question and I didn't get the answer.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay yeah, do you want to answer that Michael.

12 DIRECTOR NICHOLSON: The process used, it was left to the SPC members to promote the
13 particular scheme in their own areas and that's what they did. I don't think there was any public
14 advertisement as such. But it was up to each member representing their area to delve deep into
15 their own area and find out what projects were best suitable, it wasn't actually publicly
16 advertised as such.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

18 Cllr RYAN: Could I suggest in that regard that sometimes that may not have happened so just
19 moving forward, I think it would be good if there was a formal process whereby that actually
20 does happen.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay that's...

22 Cllr CASEY: Just in relation to the 50,000 Chairman.

23 Director NICHOLSON: That 60,000 has been spent, it was the social innovation fund that was
24 used by the CCSD directorate and awarded some months back you may recall at a function.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay on this specific recommendation.

26 Cllr MITCHELL: Is that the NPPR money you are talking about? That's been spent on
27 something.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: This is all the NPPR money. Apart from the discretionary funding given
29 to the municipal districts, this is the rest, okay. Okay on the proposal, have I any counter
30 proposal? So is that agreed? Agreed, okay. Thank you so the SPC for spending the time on
31 that. Okay item ten, to consider the nomination of three elected members to the East Coast
32 Regional Drugs Task Force.

33 MS GALLAGHER: Cathaoirleach, just to say that we received a letter from the East Coast
34 Regional Drugs Task Force and what they're advise something that the elected representative

1 members of any task force is limited to an upward limit of five seats comprising two from
2 members of the Oireachtas and three members of the Local Authority. It must be note that had
3 the East Coast Regional Drugs Task Force area incorporates part of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown
4 and the Dublin City Council areas. It's also directed that these seats should be filled on an
5 agreed rotational basis by the relevant local authorities and by local members of the Oireachtas.
6 So currently we have one member of the Oireachtas on our task force as funding is very limited,
7 expenses for this role cannot be met by the task force. They're looking for three members from -
8 to be rotational between the Dun Laoghaire and the Wicklow County Council, and elected
9 members were circulated with this letter.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: So do we elected three do and the three go together or do they rotate one
11 after the other?

12 MS GALLAGHER: It seems there is three members of the Local Authority on it and they have
13 to rotate between Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown and ...

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: So the meetings are either in Dun Laoghaire one meeting and the
15 following meeting is in Wicklow.

16 MS GALLAGHER: But the seats should be filled on an agreed rotational basis by the relevant
17 local authorities. It's the seats that rotate.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will go ahead and elect three members, is that right?

19 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: How often do they meet?

20 MS GALLAGHER: It doesn't say.

21 MS GALLAGHER: It's definitely three. It's probably more pertaining to the northern area.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's looking for three members of the Local Authority, and two members
23 of the Oireachtas, okay. And then the rotation can be agreed among the three members after that
24 I suppose. Okay, so we are looking for three members for the regional drugs task force. Have I
25 any proposals? Well then I would suggest that maybe...

26 SPEAKER: I am actually on the task force from Kildare, South Dublin side, you know, and I
27 wouldn't be going probably but it's a pity that we don't have people to take these positions
28 because it's - the drugs problem is a huge problem in the areas, and I know they try to get a TD
29 on the task force out our way and to no avail, you know, there is no interest, and it's pity.

30 Cllr FORTUNE: Rather than us sitting here, can we not refer it and sort it out that way.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy.

32 Cllr KENNEDY: I propose Councillor Pat Fitzgerald.

33 Cllr CASEY: I'll second that.

34 Cllr LAWLOR: I propose Councillor John Snell.

1 Cllr McDONALD: I'll second that.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay and a third one.

3 SPEAKER: I would suggest Councillor Thornton might be interested in that position, but maybe
4 we will consult him.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would suggest the final member would be agreed between the Fine Gael
6 group and the independent group to find a member, is that okay? Okay, thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Seat five, Cllr O'Neill, you are finished, are you? Okay. Okay. We will
8 move on item eleven, to discuss warnings and attachment - water charges and attachment orders,
9 the proposed civil debt procedures bill, debt enforcement measures. This was requested by Cllr
10 Fortune. I am not sure we have much information on this.

11 MS GALLAGHER: It was an item raised under suspension of standing orders last month and
12 because we didn't have enough time, it was requested we put it on the agenda as an item for
13 discussion. And did we receive correspondence back?

14 MS GALLAGHER: The housing section hasn't received anything officially from Irish Water or
15 the department recollection of water charges via attachment orders or other mechanisms. The
16 position is that if an occupier is liable for charges, and the owner is presumed the occupier,
17 unless proven otherwise, therefore for a tenant who doesn't register with Irish Water, the
18 landlord will get the bill unless they provide Irish Water with the tenant's details. Once the
19 landlord has done so, he can no longer be liable. Wicklow County Council has provided the
20 names of tenants to Irish Water but this does not include the names of RAS tenants. I think...

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so the housing section has got no information nationally on this
22 issue, okay. Cllr Fortune, I know you were...

23 Cllr FORTUNE: I raised it and we ran at the time of the last meeting and what we said was we
24 would put it on the agenda and I just feel it's a worthy agenda item. And irrespective that the
25 department has informed us or not, I think it's, it needs to be addressed by us as members as
26 well. I think to put attachment orders on top of people both in public housing and private
27 housing, equally people in private housing are affected who really can't afford it, you are trying
28 to put a quart into a pint bottle. I think it's grossly unfair. We are reading all kinds of stuff in the
29 media about how brilliant things are, and how fantastic the way things are going. There is a little
30 bit of spin I suppose going with that for obvious reasons but to be coming along and putting
31 attachment orders, we as a Local Authority in our own right are the landlord, so I suppose what I
32 am trying to do here is express my disgust and objection to this being done, and I think as a
33 Local Authority I would hope we would all agree that it is wrong. I just think it's wrong. It's
34 like we are talking earlier, something is either fair or unfair. This doesn't make sense at all. It's

1 contradictory in my view because if everything is so wonderful now, why are we doing this? I
2 mean making people suffer who genuinely can't afford it, I don't know about any other members
3 but I certainly have had - not a massive amount of calls but I have had calls from people asking
4 me about it and the view I take from stuff like this is how do I feel about it myself, I just feel it's
5 wrong, and I think as a Local Authority we should express that, because - it's disgusting when
6 you read all the stuff and listen to the television programmes and what's going on in reality and
7 we are still doing this. I mean, you know, austerity has been very punitive to an awful lot of
8 people and here we are now, we are in this kind of a semi-kind of what I would call honeymoon
9 where we have this election coming forward so everything is great. Everything is marvellous
10 and still we are doing stuff like this. I think it's wrong. I wanted to express that the last day
11 when I looked for suspension of standing orders. I would just hope other members feel as I do
12 about it because it's beyond words really, I am disgusted with it to be perfectly honest with you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

14 Cllr BRADY: Look I think it's fitting that here we are talking about debt enforcement and
15 attachment orders and that when we are looking at the bigger picture at a national level and the
16 news around Siteserv and write-offs and hundreds of millions being struck off and that sort of
17 thing and here we are discussing ordinary citizens, and attachment orders being attached to their
18 properties or whatever, effectively to pay for all of these write-offs and international gamblers'
19 debts and that. It's absolute craziness. My specific concern and I articulated this at the Housing
20 SPC and it relates to...

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance, Cllr Vance. Go ahead.

22 Cllr BRADY: It relates to tenants of ours who may find themselves in a situation that they
23 haven't paid the unjust water tax, and it had been highlighted there recently that those unpaid
24 bills will be handed back to the Local Authority to collect after a 12 month period if the tenant is
25 in arrears. My fear is that whatever way that is done, that will be attached to the tenant's rent,
26 and if that particular tenant still fails to pay for that, it will deem them to be in breach of their
27 tenancy. And the fear, the knock on effect of that, if a tenant is in breach of their tenancy, there
28 could be enforcement action taken to have that individual taken out of the home and the house
29 repossessed because they're in breach of their tenancy. I asked the Director of Housing to give a
30 categorical assurance that that wouldn't be the case, that no tenant of ours would become
31 homeless and I would ask the CEO or the acting CEO now to maybe give a commitment that no
32 tenant of ours will become homeless if these unpaid bills are handed back to this Local Authority
33 to chase up on behalf of Irish Water against the tenants of this Local Authority. So can I ask for
34 a commitment that no tenant of this Council will either be under threat or become homeless as a

1 direct consequence of not paying for an unjust water tax?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you, Cllr Kavanagh.

3 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thank you Cathaoirleach. We spoke earlier about the increased legal bills
4 that we have here that have multiplied. And also about staff embargos and staffing shortages
5 that we can't allocate to the law department. I don't see it as part of the remit of this Council or
6 any Council to chase after water rates. It's not our business to do it. And I don't think we should
7 be doing it, nor can we do it and we are under-resourced as it is. I think we should make a firm
8 commitment that we are not going to do it on behalf of the Government. I mean it's a crack pot
9 idea, it always has been, and the sooner the better it's abandoned as a lost cause, so I think we
10 should as a Council make a commitment that we are not in a position to do it and there is no
11 point in even going down that road.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is a lot of merit in what you are saying but national legislation is
13 handed down to us. I mean the executive has to carry out its functional - if the Minister, if the
14 department decides that the housing section must do it, you can't just say we will make a
15 commitment not to carry it out.

16 Cllr KAVANAGH: We can make a commitment...

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Let's be real here.

18 Cllr KAVANAGH: There are people calling to the desk out here, homeless people and the staff
19 unfortunately are having to tell them that there is nothing they can do about it because they're
20 understaffed and they haven't got the houses to provide them with. They're well able to tell the
21 public we can't do it, we are under-resourced so I think we can flip that table and say to the
22 Government we can't...

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have statutory obligations.

24 Cllr KAVANAGH: We have statutory obligations to house people. We can't evict them on the
25 basis they haven't paid their water charges.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can't make throw away remarks that it's not within our remit to carry
27 it out. I am not a big fan of attachment orders. The Minister has said that he is using it to
28 replace imprisonment, right as a final form of sanction. It's not only water as well, it's other
29 issues, and it says here, Lorraine has looked into it, that welfare payments, deductions from
30 welfare payments will be limited, so that's - this is the sketchy informs we are getting, okay. To
31 ensure claimants have enough for day to day living. So until we get the full stream of
32 information ... I know.

33 Cllr FORTUNE: I just think this is madness, I think we need our TDs in here straight away
34 explaining why this is happening. Because I mean we are getting this correspondence a bit like

1 something you talked about earlier, we are not getting clear communication from the relevant
2 departments on various issues. I just think this is off the wall. Now we are being asked now to
3 collect - is Irish Water a public company or a private company or ... what is it?

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Look we are speaking in a vacuum here. We haven't been asked to do
5 anything yet. We haven't got any information. Cllr Mitchell.

6 Cllr MITCHELL: As I understand it this bill hasn't gone through the Dáil yet and therefore there
7 is no - as I understand it, this is not the law and therefore the Department of the Environment or
8 anybody else can't tell us what to do about it, only after it becomes the law as I understand it.
9 Now I understand that this arises at the moment people who owe money in a civil matter can be
10 sent to prison as a debtor's prison or some sort of prison. And this arises out of a proposal of the
11 Law Reform Commission in 2010 report to abolish prison for the payment of debts. Now it's
12 unfortunate in a way it's got tied on to the issue of water charges, but that's how it arises with
13 abolishing the prison for the non-payment of civil debts. And that to me seems a good idea.
14 Now there are some rather strange things on it, I think somewhere in the Water Charges Act or
15 maybe it's in the Civil Debt Act I am not sure, it prohibits landlords from paying for the water
16 charges of the tenants which I think is a rather peculiar thing to do, if a landlord wants to pay for
17 the water charges of a tenant, it should be allowed to do so. Many might find it convenient to do
18 so rather than go through more bureaucracy. That certainly seems to be a mistake. But the
19 concept of attachment orders is a widespread thing in Europe and it's - it arises as I say from a
20 2010 report and I think that in principle it is a good idea to abolish the prison and use this
21 instead.

22 Cllr FORTUNE: I just want it on record I don't agree with attachment orders I think it's a
23 disgusting way to treat the citizens of this country at a time when we are being spun and spoofed
24 about how good things are. I don't accept what Cllr Mitchell is saying at all. I wouldn't agree an
25 inch with what he has just said. I think it's absolutely disgusting what is going on.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: What I would suggest is when the information is corresponded down to
27 the Council here, we would have a further discussion on the content of actually what's sent to us,
28 okay. Because we are talking in a vacuum here. The legislation hasn't been finalised.

29 Cllr FORTUNE: It will probably be rushed through before summer recess and we won't get a
30 chance to look at it.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's not our function to pass national legislation, okay.

32 Cllr BRADY: Don't send them to prison, maybe give them 50 lashes or something instead, keep
33 the prisons free, you know, six months hard labour.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. I believe councillor Thornhill has agreed to take the third position

1 on the drugs task force if the members are happy with that. Proposed by Cllr Matthews,
2 seconded by Cllr Snell.

3 Cllr RUTTLE: And he can speak Chinese too. Very good with opium you know!

4 Cllr BRADY: I think that's a terrible remark now.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: None of us actually know if it was Chinese or not. Okay thanks to Cllr
6 Thornhill for taking that. We will go through correspondence

7 MS GALLAGHER: Just one. The elected members have been circulated with the geological
8 survey (reading) just basically if you would like to know more about it, please see our website
9 on www.telesat.ie, and if you would like a briefing, they would be delighted to provide same.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we have a question as well.

11 MS GALLAGHER: We do. Question from Cllr John Brady, a portion of the private residential
12 tenancy board registration fees are given over to Wicklow County Council on an annual basis to
13 carry out inspections of private rented properties in Wicklow. How much has Wicklow County
14 Council received from the PRTB, how many inspections have been carried out, and how many
15 improvement orders have been served. And the amounts received from the PRTB since 2010 to
16 2014, so 2010 53,906. 2011 146,747. 2012 138,274. 2013, 52,273. And 2014 75,300. Number
17 of inspections carried out, 2010 793. 2011, 681. 2012 722. 2013, 496. 2014, 366. No
18 improvement orders have been served.

19 Cllr BRADY: Can I ask that that be emailed out.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We have also received correspondence from a member of the
21 public querying the Councillors' declaration of interests. So under the legislation, the chief
22 executive and myself have written to the councillor for clarification and we will be going
23 through the proper procedures to clarify the matter to the satisfaction of everyone. Okay, so
24 when we have concluded that, we will make the members aware of it. Okay. We will move on
25 to the suspension and then we will have time hopefully for...

26 Cllr WINTERS: What do you mean about the...

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: All the Councillors that submit declaration of interest, a member of the
28 public has queried one of the councillor's declaration of interest.

29 Cllr WINTERS: Oh, that's it's not accurate.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah. Okay, are you ready to take the suspension councillor.

31 Cllr RUTTLE: I feel I put on the wrong aftershave this morning, everyone's left.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: You must be fielding silage already. Are you feeding silage already.

33 Cllr RUTTLE: The weather keeps cold we could be at it again, feed it before you put it in the
34 pit. Just on this issue which I asked for a suspension, we discussed this at length at this

1 morning's SPC and it refers to the ongoing controversy which has been in the public domain in
2 recent times both on radio, television and the written media regarding the sale of works of art at
3 Russborough House at Blessington. I suppose most people here, probably all people would
4 know the origin of the art collection at Russborough. Russborough was bought in 1952 by Sir
5 Alfred and Lady Beit from the O'Daly family, and over the course of the years since that period,
6 they got together a large and very valuable art collection which they assembled there from
7 various Dutch Masters, painters, Spanish School, some English painters and etcetera, a major,
8 major, major works of art. The same works of art were attacked in 1974 by the IRA, and in the
9 house and assaulted, some of the paintings stolen, they were retrieved again; they then had two
10 further robberies and suffered obviously trauma of that again.

11
12 The family still maintain their great faith and attachment to Ireland, and they donated 17 of their
13 top paintings, their Dutch Masters, and the Velasquez and the Goya and the Metsu, to the
14 National Gallery in Dublin. Now they're not the paintings that are in question. They are
15 completely in the ownership of the State. The paintings that are in question are the ones that
16 were left at Russborough and on display. They then set up the 1987, the Alfred Beit Foundation,
17 where a foundation was established to administer and to carry out the cultural advancement of
18 the house, and the provision of art works for the public as a remit under the foundation. And that
19 went forward.

20
21 Now all of these houses are extremely difficult to maintain and to make profitable, any of us who
22 have ever seen them, ones around the country and some of them in England, would be aware of,
23 even a place like Castle Howard in England, which would have 250,000 visitors a year, and
24 would have thousands of acres of land, cannot maintain commercial viability. It's very, very
25 difficult to make this pay, but they are the subject of again endowments from what's called in
26 England the National Trust, which is a great benefit to them in that regard. And they can do that.

27
28 However, the Beit Foundation ran into severe problems with maintaining financial viability. The
29 figures over the years would amount to deficits of 460 to 500,000 after you pay everything, the
30 insurance, etcetera. A building like that is exceedingly hard to maintain. Any work that has to
31 be done, you can't drive down the road and find a local builder, you have to go for conservation
32 architects, everything has to be done in a certain way. It cost a million to do the roof a few years
33 ago, that was a good idea securing the roof but all of these things cost a lot of money. Last year
34 we would have had visitor numbers there of 24,000. Some members here I know would have

1 been there in various capacities, Cllr Fortune would have been a number of times and seen the
2 gem that it is and what's available, Cllr Casey as well there and perhaps others too over the
3 years. This is part of a situation where these deficits that we had three main efforts to get money
4 in to cover deficits, and in December 2006, the Alfred Beit Foundation put up a collection of
5 Italian bronzes for sale for Christie's and that brought in 3.8 million at the time. I raised that
6 issue publicly at that time, I had it raised in the Senate on that occasion by the Arts and Culture
7 Spokesperson at the time, Labhrás Ó Murchú. We went to the Arts Minister and the answer was
8 of course as you would predict, this is a private trust, it's very, very difficult, things happen, they
9 need money and they have to try and keep things going.

10
11 In November 2013, the Beit Foundation sold a collection of Chinese porcelain like a Ming vase
12 for 1.2 million, and that went quieter because when you think of places like Russborough you
13 think of paintings, you don't think of bronze and vases, but now it's announced the intention to
14 sell paintings including one by the great Paul Rubens. And that really has got things going.

15
16 So where do we go from here? How do you preserve a building like that? When we look at
17 those that were preserved and were kept, they either had huge benefactors or were places in the
18 end that the OPW took them over themselves. Extreme example of a very large house, much
19 bigger than Russborough where the OPW in the end took over would have been Castletown in
20 Celbridge and that worked there. Another example down the country, one in private ownership
21 but again front loaded by a very wealthy businessman was Strokestown Park was bought in
22 Roscommon, some of you would have been there over the years, the famine museum is there
23 etcetera, by Jim Callery, the Westward Garage's owner and he again would cement that. We
24 have a situation again where just to keep it going, this keeps happening.

25
26 The Beit Foundation and Russborough employs people in the entire locality. There are people
27 there from Lackan, Hollywood, Blessington and Ballymore Eustace and further afield who work
28 there and are very committed to it and very loyal to it. And there would always be concerns that
29 as things would escalate, get difficult, or something would need to be done, what more would
30 have to be sold to do that. Remember people are going there to see paintings. They're not going
31 there to say it's nice and warm now. It's essentially a gallery of the Beit Collection. That's what
32 it is. And as those paintings through the Beit Collection go, what happens is they're replaced by
33 paintings held in storage at the National Gallery by the Milltown Collection who built the place,
34 the Milltowns in the 17th century. But that's not why people go. This is the Beit Collection that

1 they assembled. It was hugely generous, they gave their main collection to the State, the
2 building to the private trust to look after it and keep it going, and on the head of that, they were
3 the only two people of the area to be made honorary citizens of this country by the State on the
4 head of that.

5
6 Now where do we go from here? Some of the comments in the papers have been ill informed,
7 and of a certain nature, but it wouldn't really solve the problem. I think the only thing that can
8 be done and I have been in communication and I have written to the Minister for Arts and
9 Culture on this issue, is to establish a liaison between that ministry and the Beit Foundation to
10 develop a higher level or a better level of commerciality as possible, accompanied by,
11 accompanied by a level of financial support to keep the thing going, because while it wouldn't be
12 essentially have to be directly to there, there is every year a large financial grant goes to the
13 National Gallery in Merrion Square where the Beit family donated their 17 masters, and in that
14 allocation, you could have, you could have an allocation which would cover the Russborough
15 situation, but it cannot operate as what I would call a comfort blanket. It has to operate in
16 tandem with a commercial plan to how it can be improved greatly. There are issues there, there
17 are 24,000 visitors there two years ago, it went up to 100,000, but the 100,000 on occasions, in
18 recent times, a very fine playground has been built there and people come and go to that at no
19 charge or cost whatsoever, there is no commercial base to that. There are restaurants, there is a
20 restaurant, tours of the house, there is the very fine 3D display of the photography of Alfred Beit
21 in the basement, I think some of you have seen that, very good, very interesting. We don't have
22 all that many, certainly not in West Wicklow, buildings like that, castles the same man designed,
23 the Courthouse in Dunlavin, a very fine building as well. We have two of them over there. I
24 think we need to do everything possible, but historically, and practically, this type of building is
25 really never able to sustain itself completely unless it gets some form of help either from a rich
26 benefactor, a State aid like in England from the National Trust, OPW if it becomes involved or
27 in this case the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Now I welcome as well the
28 decision that Minister Humphries has made that she has established a committee to see how all
29 of these buildings, all heritage buildings in Ireland can be made to go forward, because certainly
30 the intention of the Beits and I knew both of them personally, was to leave something with
31 Blessington where they loved, where they're buried and not to have it dismembered, the parts
32 went and disappeared, had to be sold just to keep it going, because you could end up then with a
33 building with no paintings, if that kept repeating itself and that can't be done.

1 So my proposal would be, I could go on longer about other issues but my proposal would be that
2 Wicklow County Council would call on the Minister for Arts Culture and the Gaeltacht to liaise
3 with the Alfred Beit Foundation to establish a solid commercial base for Russborough and to
4 consider financial support for the continued existence of Russborough without the sale of works
5 of art. That's what it is. If people go there, they don't really want to see the Milltown paintings.
6 That's the Beit Collection. And we are lucky the 17 at the gallery, that's all right, the Vermeer,
7 the Letter, the Priceless, they're there, but there is so many left behind at Russborough that can
8 be sold and we cannot just let that go on forever. That's my proposal today that we have to do
9 something to rescue the situation and I propose that we send a resolution like that to the Minister
10 to see what can be done and as I said I have written to her, I am in communication as well.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

12 Cllr O'NEILL: I like a lot of people in West Wicklow wonder really where the money is going,
13 there has been a lot of money pumped into Russborough over the years and yet they're in debt
14 and yet they're selling off these paintings that you would wonder where the money was
15 generated for that actually bought the paintings in the first place. We know the monies were
16 generated in South Africa in work that I don't think were exactly union jobs. I think before
17 anything is done in Russborough, I think there should be a full honest open financial statement
18 of where monies are going. I know the Council here gave another 10,000 there last week to
19 Russborough, so Cllr Ruttle does point out that it does create some local employment there, but
20 there are tourists jobs there, there is 19 pound a week jobs there. So I know there was 124,000
21 people visited the gardens last year, 24,000 visited the house. There is money being generated. I
22 would love to know, like a lot of people asked the question out our way where is the money
23 going and again I would ask how much money over the last five years has Wicklow County
24 Council pumped into Russborough?

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

26 Cllr RUTTLE: I have made my proposal Cathaoirleach.

27 MS GALLAGHER: Can we have the proposal.

28 Cllr RUTTLE: That Wicklow County Council calls on the Minister for arts, culture and...

29 MS GALLAGHER: Physical.

30 Cllr RUTTLE: "To liaise with the foundation to establish a sound financial base for
31 Russborough and to continue... (reading) without the sale of works of art."

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have that?

33 Cllr RUTTLE: What's your writing like?

34 MS GALLAGHER: Seconded by Cllr Fortune.

- 1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?
- 2 Cllr O'NEILL: We have no problem supporting it on one condition that there is a full financial
3 report released. That we know exactly where the money is going.
- 4 Cllr RUTTLE: Just on that, I can assure you there is no money going to the foundation, they get
5 nothing.
- 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are sending this to...
- 7 Cllr RUTTLE: Heather Humphries.
- 8 Cllr BRADY: I think that's an amendment that Cllr O'Neill is putting forward there. What's the
9 amendment?
- 10 Cllr O'NEILL: That until we get a full financial report on the running of Russborough.
- 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle are you happy to include that?
- 12 Cllr RUTTLE: I don't particularly mind but that's not the issue. I am trying to get a situation
13 where the Government becomes involved with this issue as an overarching, remember the Beit
14 Foundation is a private trust, they don't particularly have to become involved with anyone
15 whatsoever, and I don't think antagonism at this point of time, all the issues that Gerry has raised
16 will come out in the course of that.
- 17 Cllr O'NEILL: The Government has already stated they can't get involved in this, that the
18 paintings are being sold, their hands are tied.
- 19 Cllr RUTTLE: I am asking them to liaise with them. Look, we got a great gift there. That
20 family could have given the whole lot to his nephew Alan Munroe but he said we as a country
21 got it and we should just look - review the whole thing for commerciality and all those issues
22 will come into that. All of it.
- 23 Cllr O'NEILL: Well I stick until we get a full financial report on the runnings of Russborough
24 that I couldn't support that.
- 25 Cllr VANCE: How can we get a full financial report from a private foundation, if Cllr O'Neill
26 was saying how much money we put in as a public body, that's a different matter.
- 27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do they receive grants from the department.
- 28 Cllr VANCE: Yeah, that's public money, but I mean I don't know if, like we don't have I don't
29 think the authority to ask somebody for something like that.
- 30 Cllr O'NEILL: Council money is public money in my book.
- 31 Cllr RUTTLE: That's no problem, we can disclose what you are doing, but you are dead right
32 you can't establish that out of that.
- 33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to proceed with the amendment Gerry or are you happy to
34 go with the original?

1 Cllr O'NEILL: No, I would proceed with the amendment that there is a full - that we know what
2 money is being spent in Russborough and how much public money they're getting, how much
3 public money is going into Russborough. Public money is public money.

4 Cllr VANCE: That's a different matter.

5 Cllr RUTTLE: That's a different matter now than the original. It's a totally different matter.
6 Public money is no problem. No member of the foundation gets paid for anything I am just
7 saying. In case anyone thinks they do.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we inquiring how much public money is...

9 Cllr RUTTLE: You can't do that to the Minister you see, what you can establish is from the
10 various bodies, establish ourselves, you can't ask the Minister to establish that.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Read out your amendment there Gerry or give it to us there.

12 Cllr O'NEILL: I don't accept the motion until we have a full financial report on the runnings - of
13 the public money that's gone into Russborough.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not sure that's an amendment now.

15 Cllr RUTTLE: Ah no, that's a different thing.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's going a little far away from the original. If you want to put in a
17 separate motion, but to amend it is to amend the original.

18 MS GALLAGHER: Add a word or take a word out.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to put in a second motion, a resolution, that's fine.

20 Cllr O'NEILL: As I have already pointed out, the Government have stated clearly they can't get
21 involve in this. If those paintings are going, they're going. I am trying to say that I like other
22 people in West Wicklow are worried, concerned about the runnings of Russborough.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will put that as a second...

24 Cllr O'NEILL: I accept Cllr Ruttle's argument that the Beit Foundation is a separate entity but to
25 me Russborough is Russborough.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll take them as two separate motions.

27 Cllr RUTTLE: They're not exclusively mutual.

28 Cllr LAWLESS: I'll second Gerry's motion.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we happy with Cllr Ruttle's -- agreed?

30 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Who are we asking?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is it agreed?

32 Cllr SNELL: Just agree the two motions.

33 Cllr VANCE: I think we have to take a vote on it. I mean I think Cllr Ruttle's is very reasonable
34 now. And see what we can achieve.

1 Cllr BRADY: Ask them to see what public money is gone in.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is it agreed then?

3 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I don't know who we are asking for where this money is being spent who,
4 are we asking.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just read out again.

6 Cllr O'NEILL: We will amend it - I support his motion, but that we would also ask how much
7 public money, what public money has gone into Russborough.

8 Cllr VANCE: That's fine.

9 Cllr RUTTLE: I have no problem with that.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: The level of public funding towards Russborough House.

11 Cllr VANCE: That's a separate issue.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Agreed.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we are out of time now. Thank you very much.

14 MS GALLAGHER: It's deferred until we go to Arklow.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is no protocol. No.

16

17 Meeting concluded at 5pm

18

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