WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Transcript of the County Council Special Meeting Held on 14 November 2016 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow



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<u>Wicklo</u>	ow County Council Special Meeting, Monday 14 th of November, 2016
CATH	AOIRLEACH: I would just like to welcome the members and just before we start, I think
Cllr Be	than has indicated that he wants to offer his sympathy to the family of Joe Horan.
Cllr BE	EHAN: Just I want to propose a vote of sympathy or support your call for a vote of
sympat	hy Cathaoirleach, on the very, very sad and shocking news that I got here a few minutes
ago, th	at Joe Horan, a former employee of this Council has passed away this morning. And for
those o	f us who were members of Wicklow County Council and also Bray Urban District
Counci	l back in the 80s and the 90s, Joe Horan was a very, very significant figure in the
admini	stration of this county. He was someone who would be particularly remembered for the
huge w	ork he did in little Bray after Hurricane Charlie, where he was delegated specifically by
the Cou	unty Manager at the time to work with the residents in little Bray to ensure that repairs to
houses	and all of the clean-up that had to be done after Hurricane Charlie was done and it was
done ef	fficiently, and professionally, and that really was the epitome of Joe Horan in everything
that he	did.
He sub	sequently became town clerk in Bray, and he led a huge expansion of Council activities,
particu	larly in the seafront area and I think he single-handedly is responsible for the magnificent
promer	nade and seafront we have today because he instituted a very, very proactive maintenance
prograi	mme on that seafront which still lasts today.
He thei	n became county secretary here in Wicklow County Council and again the work he did as
county	secretary obviously was again professional in every respect.
And we	e were all sorry to lose him but delighted for him at the time when he became County
Manag	er in Meath and he subsequently became one of the most senior county managers in the
country	when he was appointed the position of County Manager in Dublin South County
Counci	1. All I could say on my own behalf and I am sure other members who remember Joe and

1 officials will have something to say about him too, is that he will be greatly missed. I express 2 my deepest sympathy to his wife, Geraldine and his family. And I think the people of County 3 Wicklow, the people of Co Meath, the people of Dublin South have lost a true and faithful 4 servant. 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle. 6 Cllr RUTTLE: I would like to be associated with the comments of Cllr Behan on Joe Horan. I 7 knew Joe for a long time and a most effective public official, very helpful, co-operative and 8 energetic. He moved off to Meath and as Cllr Behan said he came back to Dublin then, very 9 near me at Tallaght and became involved there. I used to meet him sometimes at the South 10 County Dublin golf club at the end of my road so I knew Joe well over the years. He is far too 11 young to leave the scene. I want to be associated with that. 12 13 I would also like to propose a vote of sympathy to Cllr Doran on the sad death of his cousin 14 Darren Doran in Boolavogue in Wexford. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance. 16 Cllr VANCE: I am certainly not going to repeat what Cllr Behan has said about Joe Horan. I 17 was on the Council both in Wicklow County Council and Bray, particularly in Bray when he 18 took over as town clerk in Bray and he was a breath of fresh air to the town and the time that he 19 was there, he made a very significant contribution to it. And I mean I remember him as a fellow 20 who wanted to do things. He would never give you an excuse not to do anything. Any time you 21 went into the office to talk to him, he always had some proposal or something before him in 22 which he wanted to run by you to see if you thought it was a runner or not. He was a 23 tremendous worker, an innovator in regards to the technology in which ever county he was in, 24 here or in Meath, and in South Dublin, that he was certainly top of the list in regard to innovation 25 and IT technology as well. And I must say that I had a huge amount of respect for the man, and I 26 would like to - like other people - to offer my sympathy on to his wife Geraldine and his family 27 thanks 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would just like to say myself Joe Horan was born in Arklow, a proud 29 Arklow man. He actually lived six doors from where I lived for many, many years. And I am -30 while I hadn't experience of his work with the Council, I know he was totally committed. I think 31 Cllr Behan and Cllr Vance and Ruttle have said that. I was shocked this morning to get a phone 32 call early that Joe Horan had passed away. I knew he had been ill. I didn't know to what extent. 33 But to his wife and family and his three sisters, one of who now resides in the family home, I 34 want to offer my deepest condolences. A true Arklow man, as I say. A great man to talk to. He

1 was totally committed to this county in his time here and to the county of Meath and Dublin 2 South. And his loss is great. Thanks. 3 CE: Cathaoirleach, can I join with the members in sympathising with the family. As the members have said, he was a very high ranking Chief Executive, County Manager. He had a lot 4 of experience, had a lot of dirt under his fingernails, as a man that got things done. He was very 5 well respected in the CCMA for his forthright views. He was a tough man but a man that got 6 7 things done. 8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we have no other, we will stand for a minute's silence. 9 10 (A minute's silence was held) 11 12 CATHAOIRLEACH: The first - I am just going to the agenda, the first item is to receive a 13 presentation from Wicklow County Tourism, I think Eugene is coming up here and then Fred is 14 going to go. 15 Mr FINNEGAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, members, can I just - I just heard the 16 sad news about Joe Horan, can I just very briefly extend the sympathies, if I may, on the 17 business community of Bray, being a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and he was a great 18 man to work with the Chamber and with the business community in Bray. And if I can relay one 19 little occasion, where a few of us had got together, maybe some of you won't be old enough to 20 remember it, but we brought a seafront train on to the seafront. It ran up and down the 21 promenade. I remember going to Joe and wondering were we going to be allowed drive this 22 thing on the road and showed him some pictures. He got on the phone to Ralf Murray at the 23 time. There wasn't many people with mobile phones and ten minutes later, not only did we have 24 permission to go up and down the road, he was building ramps that we could put it up on the 25 wall of the promenade. He knocked down walls and did everything he could to help us. That 26 was the type of man he was, so I am glad to have the opportunity to mention it. 27 28 Okay, I am here today to talk to you about Wicklow County Tourism. We are very lucky in this 29 county to have a company such as Wicklow County Tourism and it's been so well supported by 30 the County Council over the years. I have recently been elected into the position of Vice-Chair, 31 unfortunately Pat Mellon, the Chair sends his apologies, he can't be with us here today. He is 32 involved in a little incident which doesn't do very well for most of tourism, it's a case of where 33 somebody got injured up on the mountains and they're taking a High Court case, so he is

involved in that. I can't go into more than that about it.

To talk about Wicklow County Tourism, the directors, you can see here first of all, tourism in Wicklow generally, it represents about 10,400 people. That's more directly. There is a lot of other shops, the pubs, and anyone else who are anywhere on the periphery because tourists come into the town or into the county, they're going to buy something, they're going to have a drink, or

go to a restaurant.

The industry generates an estimated 122 million. That's a figure that was given to us by the Irish Hotels Federation. And that's just in County Wicklow. The Wicklow hotels annual contribution is upwards of two million to local rates. Again that's just the hotels. For every one euro spent on tourism we reckon there is 1.26 generated - that's countrywide, that's something that Fáilte Ireland gave us. One in every five new jobs created since 2011 have been in tourism. And Wicklow County Tourism represents about 300 members, just short of 300 members at the moment. Again I repeat that doesn't take you into all of the others who - they benefit from tourism but don't see themselves on the frontline. Tourism nationally is up 12.5%. We can all see it even now if you go up to Glendalough, any weekend, there is still carparks full, coach loads are still coming in. The threat over Brexit. Personally I am not 100% sure about that. I don't think it will make - it might even be to our benefit but we won't get political or say anything more about that.

The current make-up of Wicklow County Tourism, Pat Mellon is the Chairman, and he is still with Wicklow County Partnership. There is myself Vice-Chair representing tourism and transport, mainly because I run a bus company in Bray. Mai Quaid is the secretary and representing the People's Participating Network and she is coming up in the ranks of the Active Retirement Association throughout the country. Gerard O'Brien is the Treasurer - the Manager of the Woodenbridge Hotel down in Woodenbridge. Miriam Murphy, a very enthusiastic Councillor with a passion for Wicklow as she says herself. Councillor Gerry Walsh, again has shown great support since he joined us. Pat O'Suilleabhain represents Bray Tourism, but is also the manager of the Sealife Centre in Bray. Sean Byrne runs a B&B accommodation, just up off the Wicklow Way and does very well out of it. Just beyond Lough Dan. Neasa Clissmann representing Caravan and Camping and her family for years have probably be the forerunner of the horse drawn caravan business in County Wicklow and they're still at it. Although my family was involved with it many years ago as well, but we moved out of it when things didn't go so well. Martyna O'Toole is doing activities, all these team building things and paint balling and

that kind of thing up in Roundwood.

Everybody that you have just seen there are doing it for the love of it. Nobody is paid. It's all completely voluntary. The only paid people we have is Fred, who will be talking to us later on, who does - who manages the organisation, and keeps it running on a day-to-day basis.

We have taken the groups of directors and we have divided them into two sub groups and you can see there one is basically looking at the finance and how the company is going to go on and how it's going to progress, survive and how it's going to develop. We are going to look at various funding structures including the membership and how we get more members in.

The second group, and I am heading the second group, this we have set up just recently and we are starting work on reviewing what's going on out there and looking at new projects, and new proposals. Three things that will come to mind and Fred will mention them further on: One is it's working on the idea of the Shillelagh and the village of Shillelagh. I'll let Fred develop that more. Another one is an idea of taking snippets of information, tourist facts and figures and posting them on different places, maybe on shop windows, to generate an interest. Somebody comes into Wicklow Town, they read a little snippet on a window, I must check that out, it maybe something like Lough Dan or Tara Brown who is buried up there. Maybe the people will go up.

The other one is one of the greatest I suppose amenities we have in the county, running right down the middle of it and that's the Wicklow Way. And it's completely and utterly under utilised. So we are going to be asking for your support, again as a project to develop this a little bit more, that people can come to the Wicklow Way, deposit their baggage in Marley Park or somewhere like that, plan a walk, have accommodation, plan for them along the way. There is a number of places accommodation already along that Wicklow Way, but if this is developed even more, more businesses will join. More businesses will actually benefit from it. So we are all aware of the Camino in northern Spain, I am not saying we are going to get a Camino, but let's be aiming for something like it. That's something that has developed big time over there. There are many, many walks throughout Europe, Britain, Scotland, Wales and some in the West of Ireland. Unfortunately the Wicklow Way does not rank high enough. So we are going to work on that. We are using that as a kind of a goal to get that working a little bit better and in turn to bring more business into the county.

So as I say, we are lucky to have a County Tourism company such as Wicklow County Tourism. We are delighted that we have had the support of the Council along the way. I don't think anybody here would deny that tourism is one of the major industries in the county. Any plan that has come up, any ideas, anything Think Tanks, you name it has always mentioned tourism as one of the main factors.

8 I am goir

I am going to hand over to Fred to go through the nitty-gritty of what we have been doing over the last year, what we plan for the next year and I'll come back then and hope to have your continued support. Thank you.

Mr VERDIER: Thank you very much for having us today. I am going to quickly go through what we have done in 2016, and then I'll introduce a bit of 2017 and finish it off with a bit of budget. The website and social media, this is our biggest and strongest platform at the moment. In 2016 we expect to reach 450 sessions, and each of those sessions, people browse an average of five or six pages, so probably going to reach two and a half million page views. Facebook and Twitter are very strong and we have a growing email database of people who want to get information about Wicklow on a regular basis.

We do trade shows so, we did the Holiday World Show in Dublin and Belfast. We went to Fáilte Ireland along with the Tourism Ireland to promote Wicklow with the tour operators in Denmark. We meet with the tour operators in the Irish ones, we also met the international tour operators on an annual basis and we help connect with the community in China as well. I'll go into that again.

Print material, we printed 60,000 copies of our very successful map. It's 10,000 more than we did last year. We did 15,000 directories and those are distributed throughout Wicklow, Dublin, Ireland and abroad. This is our basic print material that we hand over at trade shows and fairs. We try to get them as widely distributed as possible in tourist offices and others. We printed a few banners to go along the campaign that we ran "Wake up in Wicklow", displayed throughout the county at various events. And with Wicklow Tourism is very much involved in the friendship agreement with hand ion and the supervision of the Chairman who wept on the trip to China in June. We also had the Canadian Ambassador as patron of the Fitzwilliam paper project. Fitzwilliam papers, digitisation is to started in November, we are waiting for the funds to arrive and we will transfer those. The project is - the first phase of the project is to be

completed by June, and that first phase would include the digitisation of the famine era, which
have a strong link to people that went to Canada then, and at the end of this initial phase, we will
have a web portal, the data that would have been digitised, we'll be able to invite the Canadians
to go and browse those data, so we can try to connect - make connections with the Canadian
diaspora as well.
We have started making a connection with the Dublin Tourism Business Association, it's a start.
We have agreed to - they're going to distribute some of our brochures, maps and we are going to
distribute some of theirs into Wicklow and ours into Dublin. The difference between them
giving us 10,000 and us giving them 7,000 is because we just don't have enough maps. I could
print twice as many of those maps and they would go well, they'd be gone.
One of the big things, if not the big thing that we did this year was the PR campaign to launch
the hash tag #WakeUpInWicklow. Wicklow Tourism investigated 20,000 of its own reserves.
The campaign is still ongoing, it should be finished, there is still one more PR to be done for the
Christmas campaign.
Just to give us a breakdown of the various exposure we got, we did a week long competition
with TV3 Ireland Am, we got the main features on the national press, Irish Times, Sunday
Independent, Irish Mail on Sunday, and others, you can read them there.
We had a huge amount of online media on national media as well through the likes of
independent.ie, RTÉ.ie, business world, Sunday Post, etcetera. Social media shares, a lot of
companies use their own social media Facebook Twitter and Instagram to post about the
campaign. We obviously had the regional coverage from the press, Wicklow Times, Wicklow
People, Wicklow News and Wicklow Voice and we ourselves did a lot of campaigning through
our own social media. If nothing, the hash tag #WakeUpInWicklow has been very well received
and it is working, people are using it on a regular basis, and this is we still have to strengthen
that going forward in the next year.
So I am going into the planned activities for 2017. Part of the initial restructuring is we are
going to look at the office structure. Article of association, the staff structure and membership
fee structure and register as a lobby group, just to make sure we got value for money. We are
going to reengage with the members on the ground and be out and about as much as we can.

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2	Once again, a very strong emphasis on digital are marketing, website, we are going to increase
3	the traffic, increase our email database, send monthly design to that database and really push our
4	social media with daily entries, which we are doing at the moment. Print material, we would
5	like to increase the print run to 70,000 maps, and increase the distribution throughout Wicklow,
6	Ireland and Dublin and beyond.
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8	PR activities, we have a platform at least through our website and we need to - it is our focus to
9	really strengthen that media as well. We are going to work on developing our own teams like
10	working outdoors, gardens, food, flavours, weddings and golf, etcetera. We are going to try to
11	run international campaigns with Tourism Ireland and get financial support from the local
12	tourism trade.
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14	I am going to go to trade shows again, definitely going to do Dublin and Belfast. Tour operators,
15	very important that we keep reminding them that Wicklow is a destination, make sure they put
16	them in their offerings for their - for visitors and we will try to be more on the ground with local
17	events, at least have the brand of Wicklow Tourism and Wicklow Tourism being involved in
18	this, we are trying to get partnership with the County Council.
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20	New projects that we are going to introduce in 2017, we are partnering with a new start-up
21	company, Mobility Mojo and what they're doing there, they're creating a database of how
22	accessible places are and they're really focusing on Dublin, but we are going to implement that
23	into the Wicklow area as well. There is a market out there to be got, and it could be - it's easily
24	done, just to strengthen the partnership with them.
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26	Is the Shillelagh Stick, the idea came a year and a half ago where we put an application for
27	funding, the local community group like the - liked the idea and we had secured funding, 17,000,
28	not 20,000, to the town and village renewal scheme and I'll explain what we are going to do with
29	this. Very much in partnership with the local community group down there, and the County
30	Council and Christine Flood, where we are going to do that on Wednesday to meet with the local
31	representative down there.
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33	But basically this is the idea that we have, we will put a platform in one of the areas and there
34	will be a larger than life bronze stick on the ground, people can stand in frond of it and there is a

nice picture opportunity with the interpretation panel on the ground. The Shillelagh is a tremendous brand that's very well recognised throughout the world. And we just, all we are doing is reclaiming ownership of that brand. And giving it a home. And that's what it is.

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The other projects that we are working on is tales of Wicklow. Failte Ireland has set up a new destination along the east coast, and we are trying to make as much as possible - use this as best as possible and it's all about stories. So what we are going to do, we are going to try and source and interpret the stories around Wicklow and through the database of stories on the website. Then what we want to push forward is the develop a network of window story stickers and Eugene was talking about this as well. We are starting - and I explained, I'll show you what I am talking about in a minute. We are setting up a project in Wicklow Town in partnership with the Wicklow Enterprise Park, the Chamber. If that works and that should be successful, we will extend it to the county, and we are trying to secure funding from Fáilte Ireland on this, and obviously we are looking for the Council for support on that one. But I explained what it is. It comes from my home town there, they've put some stories on windows for the 150th anniversary of the local painter. And I felt why don't we do the same and design stickers that can go on window shops about stories about Wicklow, and this is a bit - a first try at doing this. So this is where we are going to push as well, making sure that the stories are kept alive, and it ticks a variety of boxes where we educate the local as well, we are getting people to engage and visitors when they walk down, they can read stories about what happened in the area. We try and make sure whatever story we produced is linked to a physical location, so people can actually look at where things happened.

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And then the last one in that was what Eugene was mentioning, we are trying to develop the Wicklow Way and it's very much again in partnership with the local Economic Think Tank. The idea is to look at ways to maximise local spend along the Wicklow Way. Create links to and from the villages, through trails and transport, and services. And enhance the services available, luggage transfer, I know there is some being done at the moment, but extending into the Dublin area, we can start from Dublin and get people into Wicklow and develop promotional activities to the overseas visitors and this is very much being done in partnership with Tourism Ireland. And that's that.

Mr FINNEGAN: Thank you Fred for that. Just to go on to the next one which is the actual budget proposal you can see the trade contribution, i.e. memberships, etcetera, adds up to €60,000. Then there would be on off or occasional promotions, again where the trade has

1	contributed and we would continue that. Around about another 10,000 per annum and we are
2	asking for the County Council to make the contribution to match the trade in the amount of
3	60,000. That's just back to what the funding that was given back in 2013. So I think we have
4	done fairly well for that amount of money over the years, and we are hoping to continue with
5	that type of funding as I say. 60,000 from the Council. As well as that into the 2017 projects
6	that we have been talking about, the story tales, the Shillelagh stick and the Wicklow Way, most
7	importantly, which I believe is going to be a great earner, and a great focal point to bring more
8	people to come to the county, and not only just to come and scarper, it's to come and stay and to
9	give the opportunity for the local businesses to make - to earn more of a revenue out of our
10	visitors. So we are asking for another 20,000, similar again to last year for another project to run
11	on that. So I hope you will give it your consideration, and that your consideration will be
12	certainly matched by our enthusiasm to promote the county. So thank you Cathaoirleach and if
13	there is any questions
14	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tommy Cullen there.
15	Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, the issue of the garden festivals, the heritage, Wicklow
16	Heritage are very concerned at the discontinuing of the Wicklow Garden Festival that was very
17	successful there for a number of years and brought a lot of tourists into Wicklow. They want
18	this re-instated. I think it was a very good project in fact, opened up a lot of the main gardens in
19	the county for tourists and worked very well. And the tourism group discontinued that festival
20	and there was a lot of corn expressed at the heritage that this was happening and they'd like it to
21	see when can it be re-instated.
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23	The other thing is the tales of Wicklow project, the heritage group are also doing dump projects
24	and we have even a heritage leaflet being done for West Wicklow, Cllr Ruttle and Cllr Doran
25	know about that as, that we don't want to duplicate works. Very good work that Deirdre and the
26	Heritage work are doing. Are you going to re-instate the garden festivals of Wicklow, after all it
27	is the Garden County, can we have an answer on that?
28	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.
29	MS WALSH: I want to thank Fred and Eugene for the presentation. As Eugene alluded to
30	there, the importance of tourism to the economy of Wicklow is huge, and the Think Tank and
31	presentation and as part of our LECP plan, some of the figures there, one in five jobs, represents
32	10,400 jobs in total in the industry. The Wicklow Way you alluded to, it being under-utilised

and I think we need to have a plan to extract the most out of that Wicklow Way, and maybe meet

the accommodation needs of the people that use it. I think that's one of the areas we need to look

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at and incentivise people to come into the business to provide the suitable accommodation for people coming into the county to utilise our vast facilities, our outdoor attractions are second to none. Our scenery up there, we have everything in close proximity to Dublin. Recently Fáilte Ireland there, at one of our AILG training seminars, made the point that bed capacity in the Dublin area - is at capacity should I say. We should be in a position to take advantage of that, the overflow here, we are in the ideal position to take advantage of that situation. And the plan, last year's project in relation to the Fitzwilliam Papers is something to be applauded, because that has huge potential there for the Canadian market and it's an area of south west Wicklow that might have been heretofore forgotten so, I applaud that one.

Other than that, the Ancient Ireland East initiative, we need to be on that with Fáilte Ireland I think, and maybe form an association with our surrounding counties like Kildare and Meath and Kilkenny and maybe come up with a joint approach to gain the maximum potential. I'll sign off on that thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Blake.

Cllr BLAKE: I would like to thank Fred and you for the presentation that you made here this morning. It's a big industry for Wicklow, Garden of Ireland as they have said. I welcome the contribution towards the Fitzwilliam Papers, they're very important aspects. The records are all there. I think back to four or 500 years worth of records. I know you are talking about the famine years first of all to start with, obviously a very important aspect, particularly with the Canadians. And the issue with Shillelagh as well, it's all part of the same area, south Wicklow, the Fitzwilliam estate took in best part of all south Wicklow at one point in time. So I certainly welcome the two projects that you are spending time on in the south Wicklow area. I know Cllr Cullen alluded to maps and so forth, we can never have enough of maps that can promote the entire county or parts of the county as well, and we have discussed it at the Baltinglass district meetings as well about drawing up maps for each particular area and we have one for the Blessington area, but it's important that we link in to maps as well for the rest of the Baltinglass area in south Wicklow as well.

One of the things I know certainly the Wicklow Way is a huge aspect. I am in the middle of it myself down there in the Tinahely area and we do see the potential for it. One of the things I do see is that people have a difficulty with is maybe spending half a day walking and suddenly they're in the middle of nowhere come the evening time and there is no way of contacting somebody to get back to a destination or something like that. Eugene, you are in the business,

1	the very particular business yourself in regards to that, that's one thing I do see with some
2	people, they have a difficulty of getting transport back to a location, whether it be hotel, bed and
3	breakfast or whatever else, somewhere halfway in the Wicklow mountains. So I certainly do
4	welcome the initiative that's been taken there, and I think to develop it and continue to work with
5	it, a lot of work and we do appreciate the work that Wicklow Tourism is doing and certainly to
6	see two projects here today from South Wicklow is very, very welcome.
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8	One final thing, we did back a few years ago draw up a road map aspect of it. You mention
9	there had the fact that Glendalough is where so many people, they come down through
10	Roundwood or Blessington and end up in Glendalough. But we did draw up a road map that
11	included other areas of Wicklow as well down the south of the county, coming in through when
12	the project there, I think Kildare is part of it as well, back a couple of years ago, and the thing all
13	got dropped in favour maybe of the - this Ancient East, all those kind of things got dropped. I
14	think it's only important that we do recognise those maps were there and I think we should link
15	into them into the future as well for developing the south and west of the county in that regard.
16	Thanks very much for your presentations
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.
18	Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach. And thanks very much for the presentation there, it
19	was very interesting. Two issues, I think Fred alluded to the need for a review of the Articles of
20	Association of Wicklow Tourism. Is that just a review in general or is there a particular need in
21	mind for it?
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23	Secondly, the possibilities of Chinese tourism are enormous obviously with the population living
24	in the People's Republic of China. What plans are in place to develop this market?
25	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.
26	Cllr MURPHY: I would like to say thanks for the presentation. I know most of it in my head all
27	the time. But it's just amazing to see it when you see it on a screen the work that's been done by
28	previous chairpersons and the committees. And it's also great to see new members have come on
29	board this time, young, enthusiastic members, and it's a very, very strong committee. But also to
30	say that we have lots and lots of little gems in our own villages and towns and I suppose
31	sometimes the villages are slow to promote themselves, and I think that's what Wicklow Tourism
32	will do in the futures to help promote the places like Aughrim, Shillelagh, Tinahely, Avoca
33	whatever, who have stories to tell, have great characters, and to link up. And also last week, we

sat here in the Chamber and we talked about the bye-laws of walks and promotion of walks, or

not promotion of walks. I think the walks are very important to County Wicklow. Because it is certainly a strong tourism attraction. But again as Cllr Blake just said, I think there is a problem with networking with transport, which is a huge problem in County Wicklow anyway, especially for tourist spots. But I am very excited about the next year. I am very excited about Wicklow Tourism linking up with Wicklow County Council, and Christine Flood, and lots of projects. And I think Wicklow County Council has supported tourism along the way and I hope they'll continue to do so.

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Councillor Shay Cullen.

Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thanks Chairman. Thank you again for the presentation. I would like to also wish Pat Mellon, the Chairman all the best in his new position. I know Pat has done a lot for tourism over the years through his County Wicklow Partnership, particularly with the trails across the county and I would like to think that that will continue. I suppose tourism is paramount for this county, and I have brought this up on several occasions, on different forums, but we probably have one of the most unique counties in Ireland for tourism with the mountains and the sea, and what that can do from a tourism point of view. I suppose as has been alluded to earlier, particularly Cllr Murphy there, tourism starts in the local villages and the small areas in rural areas around our county in particular, and the stories that come out of these areas, and it spreads through our county into the urban areas. And it's these stories and the information that is gathered that makes Wicklow Tourism what it is and what we have to offer. And I suppose the easiest thing for us is to talk about Glendalough, but there is so much more to this county apart from Glendalough. In every district in our county, we have such vast knowledge, we have tourism attractions. For example, our own one here, we have the Gaol in Wicklow, we have the Black Castle, we have Killmacurragh, we have Brittas Bay, we have endless amounts of attractions. And sometimes I feel it gets lost to try and get that message across to the tourists, that we don't have a plan in action for people who arrive at Brittas Bay, what else is in the area for them to do for example? I think that's something we really have to work on.

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It was mentioned earlier about the Wicklow Way, and look I live in Roundwood which is not too far from the Wicklow Way. But one of the issues that we would have and it's been mentioned earlier by Cllr Blake here, the Wicklow Way is fine. But people want to come off the Wicklow Way and experience what a village has to offer, right down across our county. And unfortunately, with all the things that the Wicklow Way offers, it doesn't offer too many alternatives for people to visit an area and enjoy the hospitality. It seems to be just a constant

walk from Dublin to south Wicklow and on so. And I would be curious Eugene, to see how we would open up the Wicklow Way to get more people to use it, but also to spend money within our county. And that leads me on to something else: The whole area of tourism for this county is seen as a one-day trip. And again we have to look at trying to promote Wicklow as a package that people will stay for three, four, five nights, and it's something we certainly have to look at. That leads me on to the accommodation within our county. And the area around value for money. And unfortunately, the boom back in the earlier years brought exorbitant prices for accommodation, not only in this county but the Dublin area as well. And unfortunately I have to say we are starting to see that coming back again, where I have heard of people looking for a hotel room for a night and hotels looking for in excess of maybe €200, 150 to €200. That's not acceptable if we want to promote tourism within our county and it's something we are going to have to look at and get the message out there. We can't be charging exorbitant prices to tourism.

Finally, Wicklow Tourism from what I can gather employed a PR company to oversee issues with regards to tourism in our county. Where are we at with that or has that fallen on its face? As far as I am aware, there was 20,000 put into that PR company to try and promote us and I would like to know where we are with that.

And finally the last point I would like to just add is the €0,000 that Wicklow County Council gave to Wicklow Tourism, maybe we could just get a breakdown of exactly what that money goes towards.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.

Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. Well like Cllr Cullen, I too would wish Pat Mellon every success. He is a guy I have a huge amount of respect for and I wish him well, but also to pay tribute to Noel Keyes, the outgoing Chairman who was very passionate about the job and certainly threw himself into the role 100%. I know Noel will offer his skills in other areas. I would like to thank Noel as well.

A lot of what I was going to say has been touched on but just in relation to the accommodation as Cllr Cullen has said, we do have - it's well documented that Wicklow is viewed as a day trip and the accommodation and the spend from tourism is in actual fact in Dublin, and it's very hard to garner any of that income into County Wicklow and I suppose the criticism I would have of walking is that it doesn't lend itself to getting income from it, because while JB Malone's concept of the Wicklow Way was a fantastic one, I think he designed it with having a packed lunch in

mind. Because it inadvertently does avoid a lot of towns and villages as it winds its way down through the count and certainly I am delighted to hear there is some sort of project in the pipeline to address that.

On the issue of accommodation, I feel there is not enough accommodation in County Wicklow. I mean if you take the north of the county, and you have Bray, Greystones, there is a very limited number of hotels in the north of the county. Which I think is to the county's detriment, because if you go online for a weekend away even, the first thing you will go is go into hotel websites and you will look for a bit of value and you don't necessarily have a particular location in mind, but you follow where the value is. And as Cllr Cullen said, there is limited enough value online in County Wicklow.

Finally, just in relation to our 300 - the 300 members. Are they active members? Are they just paying a subscription? What sort of issues are they raising? The PR company that was spoken about that was in the pipeline as well was to address I believe some of those issues. But what is the feedback like? Are the membership satisfied with how Wicklow County Tourism is progressing? Or are they just paying an annual sub and not actively participating in the day-to-day issues of Wicklow County Tourism? Thanks Chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Like previous speakers, I want to thank the lads for their presentation. But if I could just pick up on a few points there. As a member of the heritage committee for the county, I would like to see in regards to the Fitzwilliam estate and the digitisation of the records that that would be continued and, I know you have spoken about that, and really from a heritage point of view, we would be anxious that the good work that has been done would continue to be done. That has such a positive effect, not just for people in this county, this country, but throughout the world. I know Fred and Pat were here last week and they would have listened to the debate here on the rights of way in regards to the County Development Plan, and I think you would have gathered from that what you heard here, that everyone in the Chamber is in favour of these walking trails, they're in favour of exploring that side of tourism. But at the same time just to be very conscious as was outlined that you must at all times collate will landowners, and we would look forward to that and I know Pat has the expertise in his role with Wicklow Partnership to do that.

I have a couple of questions in regards to what is the next step in regards to the good links that

was made through previous committees in regards to tourism in - China has already been mentioned but not to forget Canada. I am just wondering what we are at in regards of bringing ambassadors in here. It's great for publicity, but it's really to follow up on it and build on the goodwill that's there. And as we all know that the transport through flights and that is becoming more accessible for everybody, so I would look to see what the tourism committee have in mind in regards to bridging them links between Canada and China.

We say that there is 300 members and I just want to know what the collection rate is on the fees, are they all fully paid up fees? Is there more people out there who could become members who

are reluctant to pay? Just to get an overall feel Eugene in regards to the collection rate on membership. And if I could just maybe recommend that rather than me and other members here tipping on our own constituencies in regards to electoral areas or Municipal Districts, I think it would be a good exercise for the tourism board or a selection of your committee to maybe go and sit in with each Municipal District to explore what each district have to bring to the table.

Because there is certain areas which perhaps could be tipped on a little bit more, such as the

Black Castle, I think it has been forgotten about.

And while I welcome in regards of all the PR and social media and it really is the way forward, but how does that collate in regards to feet on the street? Are we - while we get all these hits online, does it actually turn into people coming and visiting our county? And more importantly spending money and helping out the businesses. And again, I am a little bit unsure in regards to the budget which is coming up here this month, and are you asking for 60,000 to bring it up to the figures of 2013, plus 20,000? So it's 80,000 you are looking for

Mr FINNEGAN: Similar enough to last year where there was a figure for the administration and the general (INAUDIBLE), just a point of information here, Fitzwilliam was separate last year.

Cllr SNELL: Right so it's combined 80,000. Look it, thank you, I thank the lads for coming in,

for their presentation Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

Cllr THORNHILL: May I first of all say just as the other speakers said thanks to Fred and Eugene for an excellent presentation. And I'll just say, we all will agree that tourism is a very important industry to this country and I am sure we will all agree we have our great walks and gardens and food and we have some of the best golf courses in the country. I mean Druids Glen, the European course, there beside Brittas Bay. I was just watching the other night Oireachtas report, I just so happened to come across it, but Minister O'Donovan was on and he was speaking

about the tourism industry, and one of the things that he was talking about was the local authorities and their connection with the ETBS. And this would be in relation to the tourism industry in relation to maybe upskilling people, you know chefs and guides. And I mean after all, we should always remember when people do come to this country or like any one of us going to any country, you are always - the biggest impression is created by the people you will meet. I think this is very important. These people will go back to their countries and they will - they let these people know how they were treated in their host countries. So I think this is a very important thing to be thought about.

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Also during the year, I had the pleasure of meeting the mayor of Dublin, California, and he was very impressed by our culture, our Ceoltas Ceoltoiri Éireann, and that brings to the possibility here in Wicklow, as well the possibility of future Fleadh Ceoils. I mean after all Wicklow and Bray especially, it's becoming more multicultural, so we should be thinking about the aspect of culturalism. And someone did mention about China as well, and as a person who has been very involved with the Chinese people coming here for the last so many years, we should think about the future and show that we have an interest in these people, because they will come back and they'll say, well you know, I mean show an interest in their culture as well just like our own culture. Well done, congratulations.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill.

Cllr O'NEILL: I'll just be brief on it there. Fred mentioned stories to be kept alive, and I think it's a simple way of moving on. I put it two weeks ago, the local radio has a few times, about maybe half an hour per week in story telling of the county. And they're still playing around with the idea I think. But you know, when elderly people, they die off, that's the end - we did a book here, Lackan GAA, about 15 years ago and we recorded tapes with the old people, and the huge amount of knowledge we got from that was massive. And I just even talking to an old priest there yesterday in west Wicklow, he is well into his 80s, but he is a theologian, a historian, a master of a few languages, but his knowledge, he spent almost all his life in Wicklow. But I mean when he goes, that's the end of that, and his knowledge. So I would love to see maybe - I think the Council has a share in East Coast Radio, if I am right, and maybe even half an hour a week if you had a half hour dedicated to story telling and that being promoted by adverts for tourism in the county.

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Even today now, today is the anniversary of the death of St Laurence O'Toole, our patron for the county as such, he died in 1180. So although - on a lighter note I was in Lackan pub the other

1 night and I don't know whether it's true or false, but they're claiming anyway that Donald Trump 2 is from that part of the country so, we might be on to a good thing in Lackan. 3 Mr FINNEGAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. And thank you Councillors for - and I know we are taking up a lot of your time and I appreciate it. But there is quite a few points in it. Maybe if I 4 5 can combine them a little bit and Fred will obviously help me in answering them. 6 7 The Fitzwilliam Papers came up quite a lot and yes this is a very important project, and we are 8 delighted to have been involved and helping to get this off the ground. And the future of it is 9 absolutely amazing, because we all know that people nowadays are going on the internet on 10 ancestry websites and spending a fortune to find out. To have this kind of thing digitised and 11 again as Cllr Snell mentioned, the opening up of routes to Canada next year, or early next year, 12 there is a great possibility for a major development and we have always said it, if we get in there 13 first, they're going to start coming to Wicklow to look for their heritage. I can assure you all, 14 that's still on the go. 15 16 Fred, I want to ask you to answer Councillor Tommy Cullen's question on the garden festival. 17 Mr VERDIER: The garden festival, for five years we tried to keep it alive. First of all we need 18 to clarify one thing, the word festival was put originally to get funding. Festival, it's very 19 difficult to define what is a festival. And we tried both over the first five or six years that I was 20 there. Is it a one-day thing, or a weekend where we have a focus on gardens, we tried that? Or 21 is it a trail? Three years ago, we put in place a structure with a Chair for the garden festival I 22 know, and it just died its own death, meaning that nobody was keen to push the thing forward. 23 We kept the garden brand and we are very much open to reviving anything and actually I had a 24 long chat with Deirdre Burns about that. And obviously we are very much open to restarting the 25 thing. The problem we have is the big gardens don't need it because they get the volume. The 26 small gardens don't have any funding to push into this. So we need to come up with something 27 new, something exciting, but we definitely haven't given up on the brand Garden of Ireland, or 28 Wicklow being a destination for gardeners. We just are trying to find out what is the best thing 29 to move the thing forward. 30 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Is it the case there is a problem with the garden festivals like Kilruddery 31 House and other major houses around the county, was that you were looking for charges of 32 between four and 6,000 for each of them to participate? 33 Mr VERDIER: No, not at all.

Cllr Tommy CULLEN: You weren't looking for any money from the owners of the garden?

1	Mr VERDIER: We were looking for €150 participation to create a map to be handed out.
2	That's all we were looking for.
3	Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Any suggestions that you were looking for €6,000, any money from
4	these gardens to participate would be incorrect?
5	Mr VERDIER: €150, that's all we were looking for, we never asked for more. Now you might
6	confuse with the Carlow trail, which they will have bigger membership.
7	Cllr Tommy CULLEN: The garden the reason Chairman is the Carlow gardens is very
8	successful, very successful. And yet we have probably more such gardens in Wicklow and we
9	have discontinued it after five years. Now what you are saying contradicts with what I have
10	been advised at the heritage meeting this morning. So now I know that a lot of the heritage work
11	is done by the Council's in-house staff here, Deirdre Burns and people, her staff, have done
12	excellent work in the garden heritage. And what you are saying conflicts with the advice I
13	received this morning, which is different. But I think that if - you are looking for an extra
14	€20,000 from this Council. I think you should - part of that should reinstitute the garden
15	festivals which were very successful and got widespread national coverage in the national media
16	for many years and brought a lot of tourists to this county.
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18	If you are a tourism body, the great gardens of Wicklow, it is the Garden County, and to
19	discontinue the garden festival in a garden county, I don't think is a good PR statement from the
20	Wicklow Tourism. So I would ask you to reconsider re-instating the garden festivals in this
21	county and I think you should do that for this year. We have some of the finest gardens in
22	Ireland in this county. We are very fortunate, and they are available for tourism and I think you
23	should revisit your decision to discontinue the support of the garden festivals.
24	Mr FINNEGAN: Cllr Cullen, I have to say personally I would agree with you. So we will
25	revisit that and see where it goes from there.
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27	The number of - a number of Councillors spoke about the capacity that we have in the county
28	and Cllr Walsh mentioned that, and indeed quite a few more of you. And in fact I think it was
29	Cllr Blake was a little bit generous, no Cllr Fox, when he said that there was a little bit of lack of
30	accommodation in the north. In fact there is quite a lot of accommodation in the north. I would
31	say that we need to be looking to the west and the south for a little bit more accommodation.
32	Now I know Greystones is a bit of a black spot in the town in itself, but again all of this, all
33	water raises all boats, I think the more and more we can encourage people to come and it
34	becomes a viable idea to come to County Wicklow, then the hotels will open and they'll build.

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Like for example whoever thought a hotel in the middle of Newtownmountkennedy would do as well as it does? That's something I think across the county. Again particularly down the N81, I think we are a little bit short down that way, the Downsheer Arms is long gone, the Tulfarris is about it that only comes to mind. We will keep an eye on that aspect of it.

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Cllr Blake mentioned about the Wicklow Way, and the way it continues down, and you hit the nail on the head with the transport and the baggage. That's the real thing about it. I had a personal experience of meeting some people who wanted to walk the Wicklow Way, and I met them at Marley Park by total accident. They were two Israeli people and they had more bags than you think you could carry, and they thought they could drop their bags and walk the Wicklow Way. I was lucky enough I was able to help them out, but that's exactly what we are talking about in the development of the Wicklow Way. Plus the movement into the surrounding towns and I forget who mentioned that that's what needs to be developed for the Wicklow Way. That we can - I think it was actually yourself Cllr Cullen, Shay Cullen, that's you need to get the people then off the Wicklow Way, get them to make it an expedition that they're coming out for two or three days and that they will come down into the various towns along the way. Enniskerry is not far down off the Wicklow Way. Roundwood really is not that far down off the Wicklow way. Again, this is why the Wicklow Way is such a major, a major spine, an actual vein right through the middle of the county and we are so lucky that it runs on the middle of the county, because so many other counties have it on the edge of the county where half the catchment area is in, doesn't see.

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Councillor O'Connor mentioned the Articles of Association, and the reason for we are revisiting them.

Mr VERDIER: It's been 20 years there, we need to have a look at them and see if it's good practice. The grant PR, the PR that was introduced, it was there to promote the campaign around the "Wake up in Wicklow", it was not to do anything else but that. Obviously if we can manage other things with this, but that's what the money was spent, was dedicated to when the agreement was done on the campaign.

Mr FINNEGAN: Is there a requirement for changing under the new Companies Act, is there not?

Mr VERDIER: To connect with the Canadian, we are waiting for the Fitzwilliam Papers to be there and we will have another story to go after them to make sure we make a full - follow up on the Canadian diaspora. The Chinese, they're coming next week, there is a delegation coming down next week, we will see what can be built on the back of the partnership we have.

Members and membership fees...

Mr FINNEGAN: Cllr Snell asked that. The collection rate.

Mr VERDIER: The 300 we have are paid up members, yes we can increase this. I would love to have 500 members. It's matter of chasing. We are restructuring the fee at the moment and hopefully go back with a simpler more efficient way.

Mr FINNEGAN: Cllr O'Neill mentioned the story telling, we are totally in agreement with you on that. We are working with it. We do already have a festival in the Mermaid I think starting next week, is it, the art festival. This week was it? And I live in Bray, I should know. It's there, the nucleus is there and again working with the tourism company, we can go on, and I know a friend of mine did a project up in Bray as well, some of the Bray people will know Philip Byrne, he put on a thing called Industrial Yarns and he did exactly what you have talked about, getting people in recorded messages and then telling stories about working in Bray and thank you very much Cathaoirleach.

One last little point, I just wanted to say that a lot of Councillors mentioned the little gems, I think Cllr Murphy mentioned that and indeed many more of you did, the little things we have, places like Killmacurragh, the Gaol, which is more than a little gem, it's quite a big one. Various other little places all around. Even Avoca village, let's remember one of the big industries we have in this county as well is the film making industry, and the benefits that that brings and the vision that gives to the sites that we have. So we have so much to offer, we have so much to work with. And we want you guys to work with us all. Thank you very much for your attention. CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. We will go ahead now to item number two, to receive updates on countywide parking review. Helena I think, yeah.

HELENA: Good afternoon members. A report was distributed in relation to the review of parking countywide. This review was carried out and took regard of the following areas, so we have five existing bye-laws already. It was a matter of trying to bring these bye-laws together.

parking countywide. This review was carried out and took regard of the following areas, so we have five existing bye-laws already. It was a matter of trying to bring these bye-laws together. Following the review, a requirement was identified to apply bye-laws in a consistent and transparent manner across all areas of the county, which will result in avoidance of significant duplication of resources, and potential inconsistencies for members of the public in relation to the parking.

What we would propose to do is to have the draft bye-laws put on public display from the 28th
of November next. Municipal Districts will still have an input into deciding the schedules for
their areas, however the main body of the bye-laws, together with the agreed schedules of the
MDs will be put before this full Council at a later date for adoption.
So again, proposed to have the bye-laws on public display from the 28th of November next.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews, are you coming in on that?
Cllr MATTHEWS: Please Chairman, yeah. Thank you Chairman. I just want to get clarity on
my interpretation that the making of bye-laws is a Municipal District function, it's not a function
of the full Council? So if I could get clarification on that.
The second point I want to make is I think you are looking for the 28th of November to be the
date for Councillors to make submissions on this? I think that's on page two of your report there
I think that's far too soon. I would like to propose an extension to that, because it's important
that Municipal District Councillors sit with their respective roads department, district
administrators, town managers, and assess what we have there at the moment before we enter
into this process. So I am looking for an extension on this, because this was started in 2015, and
it was deferred for some reasons. So to extend it for another month or two, I don't think is going
to have a massive implication. And we actually do need this in the district. It's our function to
do this. I don't want it to be rushed.
I don't really want to be in a situation where the Municipal Districts are undermined further. We
have lost a lot of our functions to a centralised process. And I understand this is public sector
reform and cost savings, etcetera, to try and centralise this like that. I don't have a problem like
that, but I am not going to be rushed into it and I don't want to see any powers being taken away
from the Municipal Districts.
The third point I want to make is that you refer to the financial circular from the Department of
Finance from May 2014. That refers to Section 102. But what's presented there to us is not
what's in the Act. It's an interpretation of what's in the Act. And the Act doesn't mention that.
It states quite clearly that - it's about the setting of budgets, but it doesn't in anywhere say if you
increase parking or decrease parking you will suffer for that. That's how the Act has been
interpreted here for the last three budgets and I want to try and put an end to that now. It's quite

clear in that same Local Government Act schedule that refers to the making of bye-laws being for the Municipal District, it also refers in the first part of that schedule, reference number 25, reference number 24 says making the bye-laws is for Municipal Districts. Reference number 25 says "Making of resolutions to determine the manner in which fees in respect of parking shall be disposed of, is also a function for the Municipal Districts." Now so far what we have seen is that the fees for parking in the Municipal Districts have all gone into Wicklow. We never made any resolution in Bray for that to happen at all. That's just something that's happened over the last three budgets. Now I want to include that, if we are going to look seriously at centralising parking bye-laws, I want to also include section 25 in that as well. And the Municipal Districts, each one of them decides to pass a resolution on how the parking fees shall be disposed of, we can deal with that here in Wicklow. But that hasn't been done yet.

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So I want to propose that we also include addressing that reference in this consolidation of bye-laws.

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- I'll come back in if I need more information on that Chairman, if that's okay. Thank you.
- 17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.
- 18 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Just a couple of points about the parking bye-laws.
- That certainly I only know the Greystones one, but my general assumption is that the other ones
- in other areas are similar, but the grace period before people have to actually pay money is
- currently ten minutes. I would like to see that increased to 15 minutes. I think that we need to
- encourage the rapid turnover of spaces, of use of spaces, and people can just nip into a shop and
- buy a few things if there is if they have a reasonable grace period. And I think it should be
- increased from what it is at the moment.

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Secondly, I think we should also have -- the parking bye-laws in the main shopping area don't go from 9 o'clock until 6 o'clock, but they start at 10 o'clock or they end at 4 o'clock. And therefore people can come at the earlier time or later time and park for nothing, encouraging trade in the shops for people who won't be paying for parking in that time. And this will actually capture the people who are commuting for instance and stop them parking over the whole day, or those who work in the town, would stop them using the parking spaces outside shops.

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And thirdly, there is certainly a number of people have complained to me about confusion about single white lines in the middle of roads, but yet no yellow lines on the side of the road. And the

1	people have been getting tickets where they have parked in this situation. I understand the law is
2	that if the road is under a certain width and there is a solid white line, that you are not allowed
3	park there, but it's actually very confusing to people where in some cases, the double yellow
4	lines on the side of the road stop where the central white line ends, and therefore they think they
5	can park there and then they get a ticket. And I think we should try and deal about that and how
6	we mark out the roads. So people are very clear as to where they can and can't park. Thank you.
7	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.
8	Cllr BEHAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I would like to second Cllr Matthews' proposal
9	Cathaoirleach. And he said a lot that I would agree with. But I would just challenge at the
10	outset the statement that it was a decided that they should all be the same across the county.
11	When was that decided, or who decided that? Because I think the five Municipal Districts are
12	very different in many ways and what might be appropriate in north Wicklow might be
13	completely inappropriate in south Wicklow.
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15	For example, to me this is another example of a centralised decision-making when it doesn't
16	have to be centralised. And I would go a little bit further than Cllr Matthews and say that this
17	should be referred back, lock, stock and barrel to each Municipal District to draw up its own
18	terms of reference and its own bye-laws.
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20	In Bray, I think we have a unique situation in fact that we had people employed on the staff of
21	Bray Town Council as traffic wardens. I am not sure what is the case in Greystones, I think it's
22	been privatised. And I see this as being, and I certainly hope I am wrong, but I see it as being
23	certainly an attempt to privatise the service in Bray, which I would completely disagree with. I
24	would also say that we don't - we need to have flexibility where Cllr Mitchell was saying there
25	about grace periods and so on. There is a lot of things that could be tried in different towns that
26	haven't been tried to date that should certainly be tried. Because there is no doubt in my mind
27	that one of the big factors militating against people shopping in Bray and I am quite sure it's in
28	other towns is this idea of people having to go and fork out for the privilege of shopping in their
29	own town. And in north Wicklow we are up against particularly Dundrum and all of these mega
30	shopping centres and we need to do absolutely everything in our power to make it attractive for
31	people to shop in our towns.

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So you know, I think the spirit of what Cllr Matthews was saying is that really it should be referred back to the Municipal District and I certainly agree and I think that's what we should do.

1	CATHAUIRLEACH: Councillor O Connor.
2	Cllr O'CONNOR: I would like to associate myself also with Cllr Matthews' sentiment there. I
3	do think we need more time to address these issues, they are important issues, nothing more
4	frustrating than not being able to find a parking space.
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6	There is an issue, there are a number of issues in Bray, one of them being that the parking for the
7	disabled are not kept up-to-date in terms of how they're marked and the rest of it, they should be.
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9	Secondly there is an issue of a private car park run for the benefit of the Catholic Church off the
10	Main Street in Bray. I would like to encourage the Council to engage in negotiations with the
11	Catholic Church to try and take that over and run it, I would be steadfastly opposed to any
12	attempt of privatisation of the car parking in Bray, like Cllr Behan.
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.
14	Cllr WALSH: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I would just like to agree with Cllr Matthews with the
15	extension for submissions for Councillors, I agree with that. The major consultation in this
16	review should come through the Municipal Districts. The budgetary impact on the districts
17	needs to be taken into account and the disposal of parking fees. We have parking issues in
18	Greystones, we have a park and ride with over 430 spaces that's full to capacity every day. That
19	needs to be looked at. The 10-minute grace period that Cllr Mitchell referred to, I think should
20	be extended to 15. I thought we had that agreement following a meeting earlier in the year, but it
21	hasn't come into effect and the issue about continuous white line, while not having the
22	subsequent yellow lines opposite it is causing confusion in areas. They're a few small points, but
23	the major consultation should come through the districts, and in this instance maybe the time
24	limit should be pushed out, thank you.
25	CATHAOIRLEACH: Tommy Annesley.
26	Cllr ANNESLEY: As previous speakers have said, I would second Stephen - I would be
27	associated with Stephen Matthews there on the time period being extended. Every Municipal
28	Council has their own problems, like as Cllr Walsh said park and ride in Greystones, as Joe
29	Behan said in Bray, there is different problems, in Arklow we have a similar problem. We can't
30	get people to the Main Street and if you ask the people, it's the parking is the problem. And I
31	would have serious concerns that it would centralised to Wicklow County Council and that we
32	have the final say, we as in the officials, because every town is different.
33	

In Arklow, we have initiatives for rate payers when they pay their rates, we give them a bonus

for a parking space. It definitely worked in Arklow, but it mightn't work in Bray. It encouraged
people to come in and park all day for three euro. You can go down to Arklow Main Street car
park and you will swing a bus in it, there is nobody parking in the carparks on a Monday to
Wednesday. It seems to be Thursday and Fridays is the problem. Arklow has free parking on a
Saturday, yet the car park is not full. But every person I speak to, car parking is the problem.
But I'll argue, it's not the car parking is the problem, it's the policing of the car parking.
I happen to have recently been in Bray a month or two months ago, and parking in Bray is a
nightmare by the way. Eventually I found a car park space and I met the traffic warden and I
said what do I have to put in here, and he got into conversation with me and I told him where I
was going and I said listen stick in two euro there, I won't be back up here for two hours, you
will be all right. If that happened in Arklow it wouldn't happen in Arklow. And I am not
criticising the lads in Arklow, they have a job to do, but the officials are setting the job for them
gentlemen and ladies to do. So - if I had a chance to de-privatise the parking in Arklow and
bring back a gentleman like we have in Bray, I would definitely do it. But this is a serious issue
here. And we can't just bring it in willy-nilly. We have got to look at all the different situations
and I would probably agree that each municipal should look at their own districts and leave it out
of the centralisation.
CATHAOIRLEACH: You are certainly back with a bang Cllr Annesley anyway. Councillor
John Snell.
Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again I have no issue with what's been proposed here.
There has been a huge amount of work done on this already and I want to acknowledge that and
the effort that's been put in by the staff in particular. Declan O'Brien, I know he has been to the
fore on this.
If I could just raise the point and it was passed through this chambers and all the members can
recall, in regards to supporting Jake's Law, which was in the memory of a young six-year-old
from Kilkenny by the name of Jake Brennan, who was killed in a residential estate, and you
know every residential road here has been proposed for 30 kilometres, and it's a great pity that
we couldn't insert the 20 kilometres that that family and the campaigners were looking for.
Because as we all know, the difference between 30 kilometres and 20 kilometres is the
difference between life and death.
But I just wanted to put that on record, that this chambers did actually pass and ask for a letter to

1 be sent to the relevant Minister over a year ago to support Jake's Law. Thanks Cathaoirleach. 2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance. 3 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. I would have no disagreement whatsoever with what Cllr Behan has had to say in this. That we in Bray I think have suffered more than any other town in 4 5 the county in regard to centralised type of management structures that have come to Wicklow here, that effectively, that we have very little now left in the town in regard to planning functions 6 7 and various other functions there. And we even have to fight for the housing function to be kept 8 in Bray, despite the fact there were well over 1,000 Local Authority houses up there as well. 9 10 Certainly from my point of view, this is another effort to try and centralise the whole function in 11 regard to parking in the county and like what other Councillors have said, there is different areas 12 that have different needs, different prices they charge and various things like that. As a matter of 13 fact in Bray we had five parking attendants all employed by Bray Town Council. We now have 14 one. We have actually lost a fortune. This Council has lost a fortune by only having one 15 parking attendant in the town for the last I don't know how long. It might be a year. And I know 16 union difficulties, but my attitude to this is the union should not control the Council in regard to 17 giving people jobs in this particular area. And certainly in regard to privatisation, I know - I 18 have had more complaints about a town very close to me in regard to - that they have privatised 19 the parking up there, and I have had more complaints than that than I have had ever in regard to 20 Bray where we have had five car parking attendants who used a bit of common sense when they 21 were looking around the town as well. And I mean remember, Bray was bringing in a million a 22 year despite the fact that it's probably the cheapest parking in the whole of County Wicklow as 23 well, so from my point of view, I would certainly go along with my other colleagues in the 24 municipal authorities from Bray and saying listen, we will look after our own parking in Bray, 25 we will make our own bye-laws in regard to Bray and let the other municipal authorities in their 26 own area do exactly the same to suit them. Okay, thank you. 27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to come in there? 28 HELENA: Just in relation to these bye-laws, they are parking - the main body of these bye-laws 29 is in order to bring in consistency across the five Municipal Districts. It's the same - so that the 30 same things are applying. The schedules to these bye-laws are specific to each Municipal 31 District. So the schedules actually list out the different prices, the different zones, the different

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The main body in total should be consistent across the county. It's the same practices, same

parking areas that apply to each Municipal District.

1	things that are happening already in your existing bye-laws amalgamated into one document.
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3	Cllr Matthews' point about extending the time from the 28th of November, I mean we can do
4	that, we can extend that out a little bit further, but again the main point is it's the schedules the
5	Municipal Districts that we are asking to have an input into. The overall bye-laws will be
6	consistent across all five. We could extend that out if required.
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8	As regards the financial questions and the circular etcetera, possibly we will just have to clarify
9	that with finance and come back to the members in relation to it. Again if a Municipal District
10	has a specific query in relation to it, they might forward it on to us. I am not quite sure what the
11	proposal was
12	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen, sorry
13	HELENA: In relation to the grace periods, single white lines, all that stuff that's raised, that's all
14	stuff that's covered in the existing bye-laws anyway and the bodies of these bye-laws are an
15	amalgamation of those.
16	Cllr MITCHELL: So is it 15 minutes then?
17	HELENA: I'll have to look at the specifics, but I can come back to you in relation to it. The five
18	Municipal Districts are different, there have been differences across the existing five bye-laws,
19	however we have tried to amalgamate that. We have worked with the Municipal Districts
20	administrators and engineers and trying to combine it so that the public have one document that
21	is a reference document.
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23	The whole issue about employment of staff in Bray, that's all to do with a contract and the
24	operation. The bye-laws are in relation to the current bye-laws that are there at the moment. The
25	contract is separate.
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27	Different prices, etcetera, again are all covered in the specific schedules to each Municipal
28	District.
29	CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to come in there again Cllr Cullen?
30	Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, I think this should be referred back to the Municipal Districts
31	for their consideration. Because Wicklow, there is huge geographical and commercial districts,
32	you couldn't compare towns in west Wicklow say to Bray or maybe Wicklow Town or Arklow.
33	And the same uniform parking regime couldn't be expected to be imposed on those areas where
34	we are trying to keep businesses alive in the town, and the volume of traffic and parking will be

1	considerably different than what would be in other areas and given that large areas of west and
2	south Wicklow have no public transport. So parking is a completely different arrangement than
3	it would be in the more urban areas of the East Coast, the east and north Wicklow where they
4	have public transport, various forms of public transports. So I think Chairman that we should
5	refer it back to each Municipal District for the considerations because certainly the Baltinglass
6	electoral area with regards to parking is completely different with say the north electoral area
7	that has huge amounts of public transport.
8	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.
9	Cllr BEHAN: I think you should have a vote if necessary, I don't think there is a strong mood at
10	this meeting in favour of going the particular route that the officials are proposing. I think it
11	should be referred back, lock, stock and barrel to each Municipal District to discuss it from the
12	beginning to the end. It may be that officials discussed it and municipal administrators and
13	engineers discussed it and then we get handed a document and we are told then well this is it.
14	No, that's not the way it should work. We should be deciding on what happens in each
15	Municipal District and on that basis I think, Chairman, the whole thing should be referred back.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.
17	Cllr LAWLESS: Thanks Cathaoirleach just a little bit - I agree actually with Cllr Behan there,
18	but just clarification, so as functions, we have input on to the schedules, is that correct Helena,
19	you were saying? Yeah, but we don't have input into the overall body of the actual bye-laws.
20	HELENA: Of course as Municipal Districts, you have input.
21	Cllr LAWLESS: I thought we didn't have any input into the main body. I would welcome that
22	this is actually delayed a little bit so that we would have more time to go through the whole
23	document. I think it's a very, very important document.
24	CATHAOIRLEACH: Obviously I think most members would agree with that, that's been
25	proposed and that would be my view it should go back to the Municipal District for further
26	consideration. And I think if the members agree to that, we should do that.
27	MS GALLAGHER: So the proposal put forwarded by Cllr Matthews and seconded by Joe
28	Behan, are we going to park that, no pun intended, until it comes back?
29	CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that okay? All right.
30	Cllr MATTHEWS: I made two proposals.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: What was the second one?
32	Cllr MATTHEWS: The second proposal may come under some other area, but - I would also
33	propose that each district should make a resolution to determine the manner in which fees in
34	respect of parking shall be disposed of. And as they're empowered to do under the Local

- 1 Government Act in schedule 3, reserved functions.
- 2 Cllr BEHAN: I'll second that.
- 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan has seconded, what do the members think?
- 4 Cllr BEHAN: It's logic.
- 5 CE: Hold on there now. You probably will get it through. I would just like to say something. I
- 6 just want to point out that at the moment, as Cllr Matthews quite right and the members did
- discuss this briefly at last year's budget meeting, is that the all the parking fines are put into one
- 8 pot, and are shared as part of the process. That's what currently happens now. The proposal if I
- 9 am correct that's proposed and seconded there is that each Municipal District would retain its
- own fees. I just want clarity on that.
- 11 Cllr MATTHEWS: That's not it's that they should pass a resolution to determine the manner in
- which they'll dispose of the parking fees. I didn't say we were going to keep it or centralise it,
- we need to determine the manner in which that's our role under the schedule.
- 14 CE: That's fair enough, because what will happen is that we will deal with it in the budget, if the
- members pass that, but it will have an impact.
- 16 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I would be supporting continuing centralisation throughout the county.
- 17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Well you see...
- 18 CE: That's what happens in the current scenario, that there is no parking income in the
- 19 Baltinglass area.
- 20 CATHAOIRLEACH: So we will be losing out in the west.
- 21 Cllr MURPHY: We are all right in the south.
- 22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McDonald.
- 23 Cllr McDONALD: How does that work in respect to a private company? Retaining our own
- fees, not fines?
- 25 CE: The contract pays for the private company. If I may add, the Bray situation, I think we did
- intend as when the amalgamation was happening that we would have one service provider
- 27 rather than the three we have in Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow. And we did intend to have --
- include Bray in that matter. Hence we didn't reengage traffic wardens. Indeed we weren't
- allowed to engage staff with the staff embargo. So as a way around that. But we have agreed
- with SIPTU that we are to employ two traffic/litter wardens in Bray. And at present the funding
- for those two positions is included in the draft budget.
- 32 Cllr VANCE: It seems to me, Chairman, that SIPTU are running the parking operation in Bray.
- CATHAOIRLEACH: So be it. I think we should go back to the Municipal Districts.
- 34 Cllr BEHAN: Hear, hear.

- 1 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think the date on that was the 20th of November.
- 2 Cllr BEHAN: We have decided it's going back, we don't have to go by the 20th.
- 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: I didn't say that, I said we wouldn't get it done by the 20th is the point I
- 4 am making.
- 5 Cllr BEHAN: The New Year Chairman. Give us time.
- 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah, yeah, okay. January. We will set a date for that. It will have to be
- 7 January anyway at this stage. Are you suggesting a date Cllr Behan?
- 8 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, look, if we are going to do it properly, we need a bit of time and each
- 9 Municipal District has to obviously have a discussion and a meeting about it and so on.
- 10 Certainly February at the earliest, I would say.
- 11 Cllr MURPHY: I'll second that.
- 12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Everyone in agreement? There is no parking charges up your
- way. All right. Thanks Helena. Item number three, to approve the amendments to the
- 14 constitution, David Forde is going to come up here from Bray.
- MR FORDE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, the members were already circulated with the
- memorandum of report in relation to the constitution, it's just as a result of the new Companies
- Act, we have prepared a proforma constitution that they wanted funded organisations that are
- companies limited by guarantee to adhere to. The Mermaid undertook to adhere to this. They
- picked the best worded version from both documents for other articles. It was updated to reflect
- the passing of the Town Councils. Articles were included related to the members and these have
- been re-instated, Articles 3, 6, 57 and in the memorandums, it's Article 8 and Article 10. This
- new constitution has already been approved by the Board of the Mermaid, including Councillors
- Thornhill, McLoughlin and Ryan. A letter was received only Friday, it was issued to the
- 24 members by email today in relation to some amendments they requested. This has been done by
- 25 the artistic director of the Mermaid and resubmitted by email, the amended article, amended
- constitution. So it's just they're here for approval Cathaoirleach.
- 27 CATHAOIRLEACH: We need a proposer and seconder.
- 28 Cllr VANCE: I propose it Chairman.
- 29 Cllr BEHAN: I second it.
- 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone in agreement? Okay. Item number four to consider the
- 31 monthly management report.
- 32 MS GALLAGHER: It's been circulated Cathaoirleach.
- CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone got that, I presume? And read it.
- Cllr VANCE: Noted Chairman. Item number five to ask Irish Water to respond to questions

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submitted by elected members at Councillors' clinics held on the 5th of September 2016. It was Cllr Behan who first raised the matter. Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, thank you for putting that on the agenda. A number of members certainly in the north area, but in all parts of the Council, or in the county, met Irish Water representatives. As far as I can recall it was in September, 5th of September, which is now more than three months ago, and we were asked to provide questions in advance. Which many of us did. On the day in question, there was a line-up of officials all right, but there was no written response on the day to any of the queries or points that had been made in advance, even though I was certainly would have expected that there would have been. But there was a general discussion and I have to say it was helpful to have a general discussion. But we were promised that they would follow up with written replies to each of the queries. Now I have constantly and I want to thank Lorraine Gallagher for her assistance, I have constantly been on to Lorraine to go back to them to ask for responses, because if this system is to have any credibility, when we raise questions we are entitled to get answers, proper answers, that we can then consider. Now maybe it was just pure coincidence, but I got my replies on Sunday night before the meeting last Monday. So somebody in Irish Water was obviously burning the midnight oil or maybe my emails were just late coming in at the weekend. But I got my responses and I welcome it, but I don't welcome the fact that we had to kick up such a fuss to get the replies. And I would propose that we write to Irish Water and say that we expect timely responses to queries that we make in relation to the work that they're doing in the county. I think that's the very least we are entitled to as representatives of the people. CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tommy Cullen. Cllr Tommy CULLEN: First and foremost, I want to congratulate the Council staff and Mr Michael Guiney and his staff for this award that they've got for achieving the highest water performance in the Eastern region. I think that's a great - I suppose commitment, showing a great commitment by the staff of this Council to water quality and I think this continues the tradition of the Council of keeping a good water supply going. And I think the people of Wicklow should be very proud of the staff. Cllr CULLEN: Chairman drinking water is a hugely important thing for the people of Wicklow. What you turn on your tap, it's important that you get a good service and quality, there is none of us can live without it and Wicklow County Council here has got the highest water performance in the Eastern region. That is something we should all be proud of as Councillors, and proud of Michael Guiney and his staff and I want to commend them for that. I think it's very important

that we recognise that.

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Chairman, regards my view on this Irish Water business is that I think we should be sending a resolution to this Commission that's undergoing a review of the future of Irish Water, that management of the water services now should be returned to the County Councils, the Local Government. I think that's the big problem we had. Before this if there was problems with water, we could ring up local engineers or environmental staff and get them sorted along the ground. But there is a review going on there at the moment that the Government has set up and is going to report in a few months time. I think we should be, as a Local Authority making a submission saying look Irish Water, maybe this should be set aside and the maintenance and management of water supplies and sewage supplies in the county should be returned to the Local Government, to the County Council. We have the staff and we have the experience and the experience goes back over 100 years in this Council of managing water and sewage, and it's an excellent service we have.

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I think during that big frost and snow here in 2010/11, Wicklow was one of the only counties that kept the water running. And so I think Chairman that's what we should be doing because we can keep getting into these arguments with Irish Water. But there is a Commission there at the moment and I would propose that we would send a letter into that Commission to ask them that they - the Government would consider returning the management and resources of the public water supply back to the local authorities. Who I think are the best people to deal with it, and who have the public confidence.

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People have no problems and never did have problems with the County Council managing the water supply. But they do have a problem with Irish Water. And I think that's what we should be doing. We should - I propose we send a letter Chairman to them, proposing that the management and maintenance of water be returned to the local authorities.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Dunne.

Cllr DUNNE: I agree with Cllr Behan there. They didn't respond to any of my questions anyway, and one of them was very important, and I asked them on the day for a quick response, and they certainly haven't come back to us, well to me anyway. And I suggested at the meeting that we should meet them more often, maybe once every three, four months, and they were all for that, and if that's the response they're going to give, I don't see much point in meeting them.

1	It was very disappointing, and I think as a Council, we should write to them. We are dealing
2	with the staff in here, we always were, the environmental department with water issues, they're
3	very quick coming back to you, very good, but Irish Water higher up the chain, it was very
4	disappointing, thank you Chairman.
5	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.
6	Cllr WALSH: For the record, I can state I received a response three to four weeks ago by email
7	that in relation to a submission I made. It included details of how they were going to address the
8	issue I raised and with timelines, etcetera. Maybe I am the exception to the rule, thanks.
9	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.
10	Cllr LAWLESS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, actually I did get responses as well within a couple of
11	days from some of my questions from Irish Water. So maybe it's a bit of favouritism there Joe,
12	maybe they're trying to get us on side seeing as we don't like Irish Water.
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14	One of the questions I did ask them was about the Municipal Districts, if we make a decision that
15	we need something done in regards to a water services, it's put as like a motion and the motion
16	has to come to Wicklow and as we all know motions sit here on the agenda, can do up to a year.
17	When I raised this issue with Irish Water, they were a bit surprised, they were quite unaware of
18	this. Now there was ten of them I think, or eight of them in the room and not one of them
19	seemed to know what this was about. They felt if a Municipal District had a problem within the
20	area and all the Councillors within that district put forward a letter of some kind of
21	correspondence, it should be dealt with. I would like clarification, I raised this the last time at a
22	Council meeting and requested we write to the Minister in regards to this. We can't have work in
23	the Municipal Districts being held up, because it has to come down on a county level and then
24	we mightn't get to address it months down the road because as we say our water services are
25	quite important.
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27	I would like some very clear clarification around that or some way that we can actually change
28	that or look at that, because it's just not sufficient enough. Thanks.
29	CATHAOIRLEACH: Just on my own, I got the same email you got on the Sunday night, there
30	was someone working late. I did contact Irish Water directly myself, and the response was fairly
31	quick. But there were difficulties. We met them on the 6th of September, you get responses two
32	months later. It's not good enough. But look it, I mean I don't know what we can do about it but
33	I do take on board what Cllr Lawless is saying there, if there are issues in districts, I mean there
34	is a very slow I mean if you have a huge problem in the area, it's now done like on a cost basis.

1	If you have thousands of gallons of water flowing down the road, it's looked as, it's not done as
2	quickly as it was done under the old Council regime, what you stated is correct, there was total
3	disregard for the public representatives since the 6th of September in most areas, maybe the
4	Greystones area got preference over us, I don't know, but we certainly got one response I think,
5	Cllr Kennedy, I think we got one response out of all the questions we raised. Then we got them
6	all in a flurry. That's all I can say. Did you contact them yourself?
7	MS GALLAGHER: In response to Cllr Lawless, we wrote on foot of your request and we didn't
8	hear anything and the protocol in relation to the Municipal Districts coming through, that's a
9	protocol coming from Irish Water directly, it was emailed from the water services staff here in
10	the Council or Irish Water.
11	Cllr LAWLESS: They were completely oblivious, they had absolutely no idea whatsoever, they
12	didn't know, they didn't know anything about it at all like. They kind of look at - looked at me as
13	if I had ten heads, no, if you have a problem in your own district, that really needs to be clarified
14	It's just something I would not be happy with whatsoever. So it needs to change, either they are
15	or they're not.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Pat Doran.
17	Cllr DORAN: Thank you. I think you will all do very well, I asked a question three years ago.
18	The last time Irish Water was here, and it took me until last month to get clarification. They told
19	me the answer at the meeting, but they were to put it in writing because I wanted it for the
20	manager of the community centre. And three years later, I got an answer. So you are doing
21	well. I also want to second Cllr Cullen's proposal.
22	CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we have two proposals there, we will just put them to the meeting.
23	The first one from Cllr Cullen.
24	MS GALLAGHER: From Councillor Joe Behan that we write to Irish Water that we expect
25	timely responses to questions in relation to works they're doing within the county. I think
26	Councillor Dunne seconded that. Is that agreed?
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28	And then we have a proposal from Cllr Cullen that we send a resolution that they review the
29	water services and management of the water services be returned to the local authorities. That's
30	seconded by Cllr Doran.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: All right.
32	MS GALLAGHER: Agreed?
33	Cllr O'NEILL: Could I just find out there, I don't think there is much sense in writing to Irish
34	Water to tell you the truth. We met them here, Cllr Blake and myself met Irish Water from the

1	Baltinglass municipal area and they promised they'd be back to both of us. They haven't. So I
2	mean Irish Water is a law upon themselves. It's only a laugh writing to Irish Water to ask them
3	again to reply. I think this should be taken a step forward because for example, I have said it 100
4	times here that west Wicklow and the Blessington area there were depending on the upgrading of
5	the sewage until anything is done. So writing Irish Water is not going to make the slightest bit,
6	they're people of authority and they thrive on this, there is no sense whatsoever. And we either
7	have a Government of the country or we don't have a Government of the country and I think it's
8	the Minister that should be tackling this once and for all, because it's going on and on while we
9	are waiting, but we tried, Wicklow County Council, tried to build four Local Authority houses in
10	Blessington and Irish Water said no we can't. So you know, I think we are writing to Irish Water
11	is only a waste of ink.
12	Cllr BLAKE: What was the second proposer by Cllr Cullen? I would like to support Councillor
13	Gerry O'Neill about Blessington and the four houses in Blessington. They're saying there is no
14	water supply or sewage supply or accommodation in Blessington. We had the same problem by
15	the way in Aughrim and I see we are building three or four houses in Aughrim, Local Authority
16	houses, but we are not able to build in Blessington. There is a bigger need for them. I would
17	like to support Gerry on that issue in regards to the four houses and we should follow up with
18	Irish Water about the four houses in Blessington.
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: That's a fair point. All right Gerry?
20	Cllr BLAKE: What was Cllr Cullen's proposal?
21	MS GALLAGHER: To send a resolution that to give an undertaking that the management of
22	water services return to Local Authority.
23	Cllr BEHAN: That was passed.
24	Cllr BLAKE: Passed.
25	Cllr MATTHEWS: The Minister we are sending it to?
26	MS GALLAGHER: The Minister.
27	CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Number six, to discuss the recent announcement of the intended
28	sale of Ardmore Studios as a going concern. Tom Murphy is coming up here.
29	DIRECTOR MURPHY: Thanks Cathaoirleach. This matter was discussed at this morning's
30	Corporate Policy Group meeting. The members will be aware that Ardmore Studios has recently
31	been put on the market for sale. The three main shareholders we understand are Ardmore
32	Studios limited, Ardmore International Studios and Enterprise Ireland. And we understand that
33	Enterprise Ireland has a 32% share in Ardmore. Deputy Pat Casey has been liaising with us on
34	this matter on an ongoing basis. He has been trying to find out as much information as possible

1 about the sale. He has been trying to establish the reasons for the sale, the conditions attached to 2 the proposed sale, and as much information as possible basically. 3 4 I understand that he has raised the matter in the Dáil on two or three occasions at this stage. He 5 has submitted questions to the relevant Ministers. The two Ministers in question are deputy 6 Mary Mitchell O'Connor, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; and deputy Heather 7 Humphries, who is the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. 8 9 I also understand that Deputy Casey has been in contact with the CEO of Enterprise Ireland and 10 is awaiting further information from the CEO. Deputy Casey tried to obtain a copy of the 11 prospectus from both the agent appointed for the sale, and also from Ardmore studios directly, 12 but his efforts have been unsuccessful to date. It appears that this is an unconditional sale which 13 would suggest that there are no covenants preserving Ardmore for the sole use of film studios. 14 And this is obviously a big concern for us, as potentially the studios could be purchased by a developer who may have no interest in retaining the site for film studio purposes. 15 16 17 So potentially the only protection for the retention of the site for film studio purposes is through 18 the planning process, i.e. through the zoning process, that the members have control of. In the 19 meantime, it's understood that Troy studios in Limerick are now open for business. And the 20 members will be aware that there has been significant investment from Limerick City and 21 County Council, also by the State and also by private investors. 22 23 So I don't have to remind the members of the importance of the film industry for the county. 24 This has been very much reflected in the Mid-east Action Plan for jobs, where its potential to 25 create employment has been identified. The county's LECP, Local Economic and Community 26 Plan, as well as the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank action plan also contain a number of 27 objectives and actions in relation to the audio visual industry. If Ardmore Studios were to be 28 sold and used for other purposes, this would obviously undermine what we are trying to do in 29 Wicklow, by in effect breaking up the existing film cluster in the county. Consequently last

Tuesday, the Chief Executive arranged a meeting with Deputy Casey, and also with Councillor

Gerry Walsh, the chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC. Councillor

John Ryan, who was very active in the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank action plan,

which identified the potential of film industry was also invited, but unfortunately he couldn't

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33 34 The purpose of our meeting last week was basically to discuss the implications of the sale, and to see if there is anything the Council could do to address this. So as I have already mentioned, it was discussed at this morning's Corporate Policy Group meeting, and a number of suggestions and proposals were made. So to take us through these proposals, I'll now pass you over to Councillor Gerry Walsh, who as I said is the chair of our Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC. Cllr WALSH: As a Council we need to express our concern to this proposed sale. Ardmore, as we know, has a long local history in the film industry in the Bray and Wicklow area going back to 1958. We have a talented work pool in the county with the skillsets developed over decades. The site is crucial to the industry in Wicklow, with huge tourism potential, etcetera. The annual film spend in the county is upwards on 70 million. We have a number of associated small businesses with the industry. The Council has an objective to develop a film hub in Clermont. So as a Council we have led the way in promoting the industry with the 100% reduction in development contributions to add to the Government's Section 481 tax credits cap extension. The issue over Enterprise Ireland's 32% stake is one that causes concern. They've been very

together a number of proposals in relation to the sale, and I'll just go through them. There is four proposals: The first is to write to Mary Mitchell O'Connor, Minister for Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, and to Enterprise Ireland to ensure that the State retains its interest in Ardmore Studios. The second proposal is to write to Heather Humphries, Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional and Rural Gaeltacht Affairs and Mary Mitchell O'Connor asking that they

silent on the matter so far. It is an unconditional sale we are led to belief. So as a Council we

need confirmation that the sale is conditional on Ardmore being retained as a film production

centre and as a Council we need to ensure that the site in question continues to be zoned for film

production only. So as a result of this morning's CPG meeting, it was agreed that we would put

Thirdly, write to the five Oireachtas members for County Wicklow asking for their support in arranging a meeting with the two Ministers and seeking their support for the proposal that the State retains its shareholding in Ardmore Studios and lastly to request a copy of the prospectus for the sale, again which has been denied and Deputy Casey so far.

receive a delegation from Wicklow County Council to discuss the importance of Ardmore

Studios to the film industry nationally and locally, and to the economy of County Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Behan.

Cllr BEHAN: Could I thank Cllr Walsh for his pro-activity in raising this issue last week and the work he has done since, and the Chief Executive and Mr Murphy and the rest of the Council staff. And in particular Deputy Casey for constantly highlighting this issue since it became public.

The one aspect of it that's very, very concerning to me is that there seems to be no announced or no public Government position on this sale. It seems to be impossible to get the Government to actually declare are they selling the stake or are they not? And it's essential in my view that the State retains its stake and that's obviously a very important part of the proposal made by Cllr Walsh, and I thoroughly agree with it.

We all know the huge advantages film making has brought to this county, and the establishment of the County Wicklow Film Commission, probably more than 15 years ago at this stage, was a recognition by the previous County Manager of the absolute essential nature of film work and film production for the economy of this county.

And obviously a new studio has been established in Ashford, which is working well. But I think it's essential that we continue to give the same attention to the film studios in Bray and we ensure that we have a twin-track approach to film production into the future.

Now as Mr Murphy said and I fully agree with him, one of the strongest cards in our hand at the moment is the fact that we control the planning and the zoning of that site. And Councillors who are no longer public representatives, but Councillors at the time in Bray; I am thinking particularly of former deputy former Minister, former Councillor Liz McManus, and others, in their wisdom insisted on a particular zoning on that site to protect film production. And that zoning has remained ever since, and everything that has been said here today I think would convince I think everybody that it's important that in principle we agree here today and decide here today that in any new Development Plan in the Bray town, Bray Municipal District, that that zoning is kept secure. I think that's the most important thing we as the local politicians can do. But I also think it's very important that we support what the national representatives are doing in insisting that the State retains its stake, and that -- insisting that they answer the question what do they intend to do or what are their plans? It's absolutely disgraceful that we can't get a straight answer to that question.

1 Finally I commend Cllr Walsh, Deputy Casey and everybody who has been involved in this 2 action to try and preserve film production in the Bray area. Thank you. 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Mr O'Connor. Cllr O'CONNOR: I would like to express my concerns also. It would appear that the directors 4 5 of Ardmore are also involved in the setting up of Troy studios in Limerick. To facilitate Troy 6 studios in Limerick the local authority purchased a 6 million euro building. This studio will 7 operate in competition with Ardmore Studios and it's somewhat strange that the same people are 8 involved in both studios. If one had a suspicious mind and one saw Ardmore goes up for sale 9 after the setting up of a new studio in Limerick, it would cause concerns. I am concerned that 10 the owners of Ardmore are not committed to the future of Ardmore as a film and production 11 facility, but might be more concerned about the future of Troy in Limerick. I know there has 12 been talk of selling Ardmore as a going concern. That was initially what we heard. However it 13 would appear now from the information that's being presented to us that this will be an 14 unconditional sale. The - I suppose the important fact about this is that the land in which 15 Ardmore is located would be extremely valuable as development land and this is very worrying. 16 17 I would like to add my voice to the calls to Ministers Mary Mitchell O'Connor and Heather 18 Humphries to be proactive on this matter, and I would like to put it on the record that I for one 19 recognise the importance of Ardmore to the future economy of Bray, Wicklow, and indeed the 20 State, will never vote in favour of any planning application for this land that changes its use from 21 film production to residential. 22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance. 23 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. I think I was just on the Council with Cllr Behan at the 24 time that this originally came up for sale, and the two gentlemen in Enterprise Ireland, I 25 remember at the time, wanting the town clerk to buy that land for Bray Town Council. And I 26 didn't realise that there was a significant amount of money in the coffers at the time, and he 27 wouldn't do it. But I wanted to buy it at that time, film studios were not in and I wanted them to 28 buy it as a sports centre and there was a huge amount of land there, and a huge amount of 29 facilities there for indoor sports facilities and all. But he wouldn't do it, and what happened 30 then? I think the Minister at the time was Albert Reynolds, and he got together and put 31 obviously with Enterprise Ireland and they put the two gentlemen that was in there and they 32 started back as a film studio and it's had its problems over the years. And it has never had up to 33 the last couple of years significant funding. It was certainly - there was no real significant

funding now, there was funding there, but nothing significant over the years. And certainly Cllr

Behan would remember this as well, a number of years ago, we were on the Council and we were approached by Ardmore Studios who told us that they had all the facilities they needed and that if - but they wanted to invest more money in Ardmore, and that if we zoned a bit of land which is now Ardmore wood, that then the trade-off was that the land down on the river bank would come into the Council. And that effectively that they would have then the finance to put it in and bring it up to modern standards. Now the Council done that, and the land was transferred from Redhills land, which is now in our control. But then we have a situation then in the last few years where we are told that the studio space isn't big enough and effectively the decision that was taken at that particular time stopped the studio from advancing. So in the last couple of years it has moved on, there has been a bit of investment in it, and it has been very, very successful and I think it's turned over a profit in the last few years. And like anything else that's turning over a profit, obviously the two gentlemen that are involved in it, that were more interested in selling a profitable, a profitable studio rather than obviously one that wasn't making money, which had been the case for a long number of years.

There is this perception out there that this is a very valuable land bank and that it's going to be turned into a very valuable housing and various other activities on it. And like the other Councillors, I was involved in this from the very word go, and I can tell you from my point of view, I can only speak for myself, it is never - it has never ever been the case that we were going to rezone that studios for anything other than a film studios. And I can guarantee you my position on this has not changed in the meantime. So if we have a prospective, they can have all the perspective they like, but at the end of the day, like Cllr Behan said, that the municipal authorities control the zoning on that and if the zoning stays the way it is, that's exactly the way it is and certainly I won't be involved in any way, shape or form in zoning that to meet any developer's needs. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, again I am delighted to hear some of the previous speakers, because I had a fear that perhaps would mixed signals be sent out to potential buyers, and from what I am hearing in the chambers today, that certainly is not happening. Unfortunately, we are playing catch-up on this.

Over the last eight years, I have sat in this chambers listening to a number of presentations being given by the owners and directors of the company. And there was one quite recently here even, and it would seem even since that last presentation we got that it hasn't followed through in

regards to what they said. We now discover that it will be sold and that there is no safeguards in
place in regards of it being kept for a film studio. I really feel this should be in front of the Bray
Municipal District Councillors at their next meeting, and I think if they brought some sort of a
proposal back here. I commend Councillor Gerry Walsh for what he has in front of us. The
CPG are 100% behind this. It sounds like everyone else in the Chambers and the officials are
supportive as well. But unfortunately in one foul swoop, we could be down a huge part of north
Wicklow's employment potential if this goes the way it looks it is going. So I am delighted to
hear on one hand that everyone is on the one hymn sheet, but I would issue a word of caution,
because I do think that people will be approached in regards to the Bray Local Area Plan, and if
that's the case, while we are in desperate need of housing, on this occasion not over the head of
jobs, certainly not. Thanks Cathaoirleach.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.
Cllr MATTHEWS: Thank you Chairman, just with regards to the meeting there, I was
disappointed to hear there was a meeting and I would have liked to have been invited to that as
Cathaoirleach of the district. It was probably an oversight and I am sure we will be invited to
any other meetings that may take place in regards to that.
Our Development Plan says Bray is an important centre for film making and our policy is to
strengthen and further development the film industry. That's the policy for the area and we have
it zoned for FI. The zoning, it's probably not the strongest hand in the world, but it's the only
hand we have, so we need to play it very well and I think it would be good for the Municipal
District Councillors to look at how we can actually strengthen that zoning so that the land is used
for the film industry only, with advice from the planners. That's something we will do in the
Development Plan I would hope. Thanks Chairman.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh has put a proposal in front of us there.
Cllr VANCE: I second that Chairman.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we all in agreement with that? This is all we have to do at this stage,
there is nothing coming from the Government to give any indication whatsoever, and there was
concern when so much money was made available for the development in Limerick and was
being pushed - I beg your pardon, it was concerning some months ago to find out that so much
money was being made available for the Limerick venture, which would have given cause for
concern back in May or June.

Look at, it needs to be fought, because it's a huge loss to this county and it's very important, I

1 mean the Bray plan is very important too as Councillors said to make sure that there is no fall 2 back that the zoning stays as is. Houses might be needed, but not to that - I mean not in that 3 manner anyway. I just, obviously, if everyone is in agreement Gerry, that letter will go ahead to Mary Mitchell O'Connor, to Heather Humphries, and write to the Oireachtas members as well. 4 5 And obviously I think to get a copy of the prospectus has been very difficult so far, it hasn't 6 been, let's say, made available for whatever reason. So maybe we could get that on to the 7 Minister. Okay. Cllr Fox. 8 Cllr FOX: Very quickly, I wasn't going to comment because most of what had to be said was 9 said, but just very quickly the tenants that are there, are the two gentlemen in question the 10 operators of attracting film, the film industry to Ardmore, or are they just the owners? I mean is 11 it possible for the site to continue if it was a going concern? I mean I am not familiar with how 12 it operates, but if it was a case where the two gentlemen who own the site are in fact the same 13 people who attract business to the site, I mean have we had any indication from the tenants that they would be able to continue under new ownership? Or is it totally intrinsically linked to the 14 15 owners of the site? 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll just hand that over to the Chief Executive. 17 CE: I suppose until we see the prospectus, it's very hard for us to comment. I raised it at a 18 regional level with Enterprise Ireland and I got nowhere either. We had a symposium in the 19 Clermont College for the audio visual sector last Thursday week, we had over 120 people at it. 20 And the general vibe that we got there is there will be a difficulty, that you should - we should 21 have concerns on the basis that the major people that are there are obviously a magnet for 22 investment. You know I think - but that was just a talk around the thing, you would have to say 23 that. 24 25 The other question we have asked for information purposes is that there is a very small pipeline 26 of projects currently, so as a going concern you are not taking over a whole lot of content. Now 27 there are other people booking in and out and other people have offices there, so again we don't 28 know what the kind of -- what way it's going to happen. But it was on that basis that we said we 29 better get something together quickly. It seemed to have gone unnoticed and it's important for 30 the members of Wicklow County Council and they've seen it here today, they've supported the 31 call, but we need to open doors somewhere along the line, and it's very hard as officials to get 32 those doors open. And hopefully now that the resolution will give our TDs the opportunity to 33 kind of request the meetings and some of the information, and see that we are concerned because

we talked about skillsets earlier on, but there was a recent announcement of extra funding for

1	upgrading of skillsets down in Limerick at the same time, so there is as one of the Councillors
2	said, there is too many coincidences of people being involved down there and that. But to be
3	fair, we also heard that there is not exactly a pipeline of projects for Troy either. So there seems
4	to be a lot of either misinformation or no information.
5	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.
6	Cllr WALSH: Just to come in there on a slightly positive note, the symposium that the CEO
7	referred to in Clermont, the keynote speaker was the CEO of Ardmore, she acknowledged that
8	the site is for sale and said it was her understanding or hope that it would remain in the industry
9	and that she would be continuing her involvement with it, but that's what she said.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.
11	Cllr MURPHY: Just maybe I am not clear, can there not be a direct invitation to the executive
12	management or for these people to come in and set up a meeting, you know, would that not be
13	on the cards? Like I mean surely to God they've came in here every other year promoting the
14	Ardmore studio around now when there is crisis, there doesn't seem to be any forthcoming
15	responses, and I mean surely to God it's Wicklow County Council's responsibility to meet them
16	face-to-face?
17	DIRECTOR MURPHY: In the absence of information and efforts have been made to gather
18	information in relation to this sale or proposed sale, and in the absence of that, it was felt having
19	discussed it at the Corporate Policy Group meeting this morning that it needs to be ratcheted up a
20	level, and consequently the wording of the motion or proposal from Cllr Walsh there was felt as
21	probably the best way to move the process forward.
22	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.
23	Cllr VANCE: Chairman, I'll be very brief. The key to this as far as I can see is the five TDs.
24	Two of which are in Government. One a senior Minister and one a Junior Minister. Really and
25	truly now, this is where Enterprise Ireland own 32% of that. They have to agree to any sale of
26	that. And I think it's very - and they have to know that we will not agree to anything else other
27	than a film studio zoning on that particular land, so effectively that reduces the amount of money
28	I presume anyone would want to come in and pay. But the key members to this as far as I am
29	concerned, we have five TDs now of which two of them are in Government and they have to
30	deliver on this as far as I am concerned.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: So we are all in agreement that we go ahead with the letter anyway okay.
32	Item number seven. There are two requests here from last month and Cllr Lawless, you would
33	have number one.
34	Cllr LAWLESS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I was asked by Albert Kerr if he could come in and

1	address the Council in December's meeting hopefully. He wanted to talk about an unused quarry
2	up in Calary. Himself and some other interested parties are looking to see if there was a
3	possibility to create a water based recreational centre at this, so I am just looking for the
4	members to approve Mr Albert Kerr to come in and actually address the Council on this matter,
5	thank you.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan?
7	Cllr BEHAN: Could I second that proposal. Some of the members in Bray will have already
8	heard what to my mind was an excellent proposal from Albert Kerr, a man with a long track
9	record of community and activity and supporting adventure sports in the Bray and general North
10	Wicklow area. He maintains this particular place could be one of the greatest natural diving
11	pools available anywhere in the country, and you know, he is a visionary person himself and I
12	think he just wants to share that vision with members of Wicklow County Council as well as the
13	Bray area.
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15	You know, he has been a Councillor himself, he has credibility, and I would feel even if he had
16	ten or 15 minutes to make a presentation, members I think would be certainly very interested to
17	hear what he has to say. I'll second Cllr Lawless' proposal.
18	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.
19	Cllr FOX: Thanks Chairman, I certainly would agree that Albert Kerr would be a highly
20	respected person and have a lot of credibility in the Bray area. But just to say that the quarry is
21	in private ownership. It's currently in a very dangerous state. It is also subject to a live planning
22	application at the moment with this Council where Roadstone, the owners of the site propose to
23	in-fill the lake. So does that preclude us from talking without their permission? I don't know.
24	But I certainly wouldn't have an objection to Albert coming in for a ten or 15 minute
25	presentation
26	CATHAOIRLEACH: Mr O'Connor.
27	Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I think Mr Kerr's ideas are absolutely fabulous, what
28	he is trying to do up there. And I would certainly agree entirely that he should be allowed in and
29	explain them to the members. I am sure they'll be impressed
30	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Pat Vance.
31	Cllr VANCE: Chairman Albert Kerr has already addressed the municipal authorities in Bray.
32	It's about land that he doesn't control or privately owned. And I just worry about the precedent
33	that would be set by this. Also if we invite people in, are we giving them an expectation that we
34	are going to do something about this? And that that's what would concern me as well that if we

do this then other people will come in with an expectation, once they're invited in, that the Council are going to do something about this. I think it's maybe a desirable project, but it's in private ownership. We are talking about a huge amount of money. We are talking about nothing, you know everything about this is money and support from the Council, and I don't think we have the wherewithal in regard to this at all. And I think it's gone through the process in Bray Municipal authorities. Now I don't care if Albert Kerr comes in and addresses the Council, but I am concerned that people, there would be an expectation level that something is going to happen here and to be fair now, and even with people who are proposing this, there is nothing going to happen on this particular land, because it's not in our ownership, not in our control and we don't - we have so many other things that we need to do in North Wicklow area other than this. CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen. Cllr Shay CULLEN: Chairman, I am slightly confused on this. I don't know anything about this

Cllr Shay CULLEN: Chairman, I am slightly confused on this. I don't know anything about thi individual, but if it's in private ownership, should this person Albert Kerr be not talking to the owners of the land? I mean what has this to do with Wicklow County Council at this point in time? I suppose I'll be brief. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again I did receive correspondence from this individual in the past. I am sure like everyone else, like previous speakers, I want to know where we stand on this in regards of we have a situation where there is going to be a budget to be passed here in a couple of weeks time, and we have already been threatened previous years where we can't keep swimming pools that we have open. And we are talking about now someone coming in to look for money to do a project, which we would all love to see, but am I to believe from previous speakers that the Council are going to pay for this? That's what's being insinuated here. I don't see where we are going with this at all, because we are inviting people in to talk about hypothetically something that they don't own, and if they don't own it as Cllr Cullen has already said, surely the first port of call would be to talk to the people who own the quarry. And then I want to know before you invite anyone in here are they looking for money from a budget which is already a huge demand on as you know yourself Cathaoirleach, we seen at the corporate policy meeting last week and again this week, and the figures that's being bandied around, a tough budget coming up. So is this individual looking for money from Wicklow County Council? Is the Council to fund this project or what is happening?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I would have concerns that have been

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echoed that we don't really have money to deal with what sounds like a very major problem and he did write in, write to me and also write to the Greystones Councillors and we didn't think we should have this presentation. Now it's not in the Greystones area, so maybe that's clearer. But I would say that this Council has been very supportive to diving and to the group which Albert Kerr is associated with. We have given a free clubhouse in Greystones Harbour, and also a free compound for boats and a building which can house a compressor for the diving club in Greystones Harbour. So we have been fairly supportive of diving here, and to be very straight Albert Kerr was extremely supportive of the concept of rebuilding Greystones Harbour at a time when it wasn't sometimes easy to support that. So he does have some long-term vision, but we have certainly given the diving club a place and a building for a compressor and a place to put the boat CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan. Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, look I honestly think it's worth giving ten minutes of our time to hear the man make the proposal. We are just looking, Cllr Lawless's proposing that we just give him a hearing for ten minutes. Fine if people think that what he is suggesting is impossible, well that's fine, there is nothing else can happen. But I do think it would be worthwhile listening to what he has to say. He knows the restrictions terms of time and so on. He won't go overtime if he is given a time limit. What he is talking about is a natural feature that's there, it's a disused quarry that could be a huge benefit to this county in terms of its natural features. He has been talking to Roadstone. It's not that he is completely unrealistic, but obviously what happens between him and Roadstone is not something I have any knowledge of. But he is not naive enough to believe that he shouldn't be talking to the people who own the land. But I think, I don't see what the harm would be in actually letting him say what he has in mind and then reject it if you feel you want to reject it. But people are rejecting it without having heard the detail of it and I think it would be better to just wait and give him the opportunity Cathaoirleach, that's all. CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor. Cllr O'CONNOR: Contrary to what Cllr Snell said, I don't think anything is being insinuated here. It's a superb idea in my view and I really would think that the Councillors here would benefit from hearing it. I don't think he is coming in here necessarily to ask for this that or the other thing. I think we should hear it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

1	Cllr LAWLESS: Cllr Behan covered more or less what I was going to say. He is not coming in
2	with the expectations that Wicklow are going to open up the purse and give out money which we
3	all know we don't actually have but I just think we should give him the courtesy of just
4	addressing us and listening to what he has to say. As Cllr Behan says, we can reject it if we
5	want. This man is not unrealistic, he has been in talks with Roadstone and if my information is
6	correct, there is a lease sign on that land up there in Roadstone, so I know they do own it, but
7	maybe there is room for negotiations or maybe the lease sign is up for another reason, but sure
8	that's another day's talk. I think we should give Mr Kerr just the courtesy of coming in and just
9	addressing this Council just for ten or 15 minutes and after that, if us as Councillors don't agree
10	with what essaying or we don't think it's plausible and we are not saying it needs to be done now
11	or next year or whatever, but I think we should just listen to him and if we reject it, we do, but at
12	least the man will have had the opportunity to speak to us
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.
14	Cllr MATTHEWS: It's my understanding there is no request for funding here in this address, but
15	Albert Kerr came into us about 12 or 14 months ago in Bray and it is quite a visionary idea he
16	has for there. He is not somebody that gives up easily, I would say he has been working away
17	with this since he came into us. If something has developed, I think it would be worth hearing it
18	and we should have him in and get the presentation. We can make up our minds then.
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Dunne.
20	Cllr DUNNE: I am just worried about the timing of the whole thing, like there is a live planning
21	application there, should we not wait to see how that planning application is determined? I am
22	not sure what the planning application is about, but surely we should wait to see what happens
23	with that planning application. Thank you Chairman.
24	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.
25	Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman, just to say that look Cllr Snell is not far off the mark in
26	fairness. When the presentation was made to the Bray Municipal District, it was a request to
27	purchase the site. It is an extremely dangerous site. You go in one foot and there is a 60 foot
28	drop. It's not a natural lake. It's totally manmade. It's been quarried out of the hill. It is an
29	extremely dangerous site. There is already illegal diving being carried out at this location which
30	has concerned, I know the Gardaí, but look, let's be real, this is a request for money. But Albert
31	Kerr is a man that I would hold in high regard and I have no problem hearing him out again. But
32	we do it in the knowledge that it's a request for money, whatever way you want to dress it up.

Cllr ANNESLEY: Build it and they'll come. Three years ago we were approached in Arklow to

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Annesley.

build an airport. The man had no land but he had public meetings, hundreds and hundreds of
people turned up at them, he had the Council's full attention and I would be curious what this
man has to say. If this quarry in Bray is not suitable, I'll get him a quarry in south Wicklow. If
you don't want it, we will take it. We had a presentation from Wicklow Tourism board, this is
another thing on our agenda lads, this is tourism, this will bring people to Wicklow. I would
certainly like to welcome this man into the Chamber and listen to him. I couldn't guarantee he is
going to get any money with the promise of the budget, the way it's been tweaked already. You
are getting as good as the Government letting leaks out of it how bad the budget is, I don't envy
your job Cathaoirleach. I definitely would welcome this one.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks for that. The Chief Executive wants to come in.
CE: Cathaoirleach, I'll circulate the description of the planning application to the members to
make - to give them an idea of the extent of the works that Roadstone are to carry out in effect to
restore a quarry which is what we all want people to do with a quarry to restore it, not fill it full
of refuse. But they do intend to bring in over three million tonnes of natural inert waste into this
site. That will give you an idea. Cllr Fox has mentioned the depth. The depth is at present
according to the EIS, is 244 metres. So I'll just send out the information. I don't know how
much the remediation of that site is going to cost Roadstone and indeed it might even provide a
facility, a licensed facility to deal with the building waste and whatever. That's what's on the
table at the moment from Roadstone. I'll circulate the details to the members so that they'll have
both sides of the discussion.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Obviously there is mixed opinions on it here, so I don't want to be taking
votes on things like this.
Cllr BEHAN: I think, I accept what the Chief Executive has said and that's information then that
Councillors will have and that's a balanced discussion then. I still think it wouldn't hurt to hear
the man for ten minutes
CATHAOIRLEACH: I have no issue with it, if the members agree, I have no issue with it. there
is going to be no money, looking at the budget this morning, there will certainly be no assistance
from this Council. I am only
Cllr VANCE: When is it expected that a planning decision will be made on this, in the normal
process Mr Doyle, when is the planning
CE: I haven't that information.
Cllr VANCE: Would it not be sensible for the adjudication on the planning application that's
there at the moment and then we can decide whether we invite Albert Kerr in or not. I mean
there is an existing planning application on this land. I don't think it's a responsible thing for

1	somebody to come in and talk about land that there is an existing planning application on. I
2	don't think it's right.
3	Cllr DORAN: Sure they're getting it built up anyhow.
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: The best bet is take a vote on it, it's going on too long there. I think we
5	will, we are at the stage now where we can't get agreement, the best thing is we will take a vote
6	on whether we receive the deputation or not. It's going on and on here, there is arguments on
7	both sides.
8	MS GALLAGHER: Proposed by Cllr Lawless and seconded by Cllr Behan.
9	
10	(A vote was taken)
11	
12	MS GALLAGHER: 12 for, eight against, and 12 not present.
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: So that is on the agenda.
14	MS GALLAGHER: If that's what members want.
15	CATHAOIRLEACH: The members agree it's on the agenda for December 5th.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number two, Cllr Behan brought my attention to, request to have a
17	discussion on wild deer crossing the N11 particularly in the vicinity of the Glen of the Downs.
18	Cllr BEHAN: Chairman thank you, it won't take long, I briefly mentioned it last Monday.
19	There have been a number of very serious accidents on the N11 in recent weeks and one
20	certainly that I am personally aware of the people who were involved in the accident and they
21	had a very, very near miss with a deer, actually jumping on the bonnet of the car from the
22	median on the N11 near Barry's Bridge. Now I have heard Cllr Ruttle talking about this problem
23	in the past, I have heard Cllr Fox talking about it in the past, I have certainly heard the IFA
24	members talking about the huge and rapid increase in the population of deer in the Wicklow
25	mountains. And obviously what's happening now is they're getting closer and closer to the urban
26	roads. Obviously this problem has been a problem on rural roads probably forever. But it's now
27	becoming a very serious issue on highly trafficked roads such as the N11. Now I am not saying
28	that we necessarily as Wicklow County Council can prevent the deer coming on to the road. But
29	there has to be some agency responsible and I presume it's the National Parks and Wildlife
30	Service. And whether you try and fence some of it, certainly what's needed is a cull, a very
31	major cull of wild deer throughout Wicklow mountains.
32	
33	And the other thing that could be done is more prominent signage to warn tourists particularly,
34	this particular accident I am aware of happened on a Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. And you

can imagine if there is a lot of traffic on the road at a busy time and a deer jumps out in front of a car, it's a recipe for carnage actually. And rather than talking about that situation when it's too late, I wanted to raise it today, and I would ask that we write to the TII it's now called I think, it used to be the NRA to improve the signage. There are one or two signs along the N11, but they're not very great really I don't think, not very prominent, to warn motorists particularly, but also that we write to the Department of Agriculture/Park and Wildlife Service as well to ask them to get more directly involved in culling the wild deer population in the county, and also maybe seeing what can be done to fence some of that property. I know it's going to be very difficult to do that.

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I saw something in the media at the weekend that there is some sort of a trial or pilot scheme being introduced, but I don't have the full details, but if there is, I'll welcome it, maybe Cllr Fox or Cllr Ruttle might know more about it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox, followed by Cllr Cullen.

Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. Certainly I would thank Cllr Behan for raising the matter. I know there has been a number of concerns in relation to the increase in deer numbers in County Wicklow, not just from a road safety point of view but from a forestry point of view and from a farming point of view, and on foot of these concerns, the Minister set up a deer management forum called the Irish Deer Management Forum and all the stakeholders involved with deer have representatives on this. I happen to be on it myself, representing a farm organisation, so I have my farmers hat on that. And certainly the road safety concerns have been highlighted, but I would suggest that we would circulate any correspondence to the Irish Deer Management Forum and I can forward on the address to the secretary. But just in relation to the cull or any potential cull, you may or may not know that it is now suspected that deer are contributing in the spread of TB in the Wicklow cattle herd. And Wicklow is the worst county in Ireland unfortunately for the incidents of TB in cattle. And they carried out a pilot cull in the Calary area, in a 75 square kilometre radius, where they shot 103 deer. They were then sent to a laboratory in Lucan, and tested. And showed at a rate of 16%. So it has become a huge problem, not just from the spread to other animals, but even within the deer population themselves, to have a rate of 16% TB in their own species is a startling statistic.

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On foot of that, Minister Doyle, our own Junior Minister has announced a cull to start this year in the Calary area. Obviously farming and forestry stakeholders would like it to be extended to a wider area in County Wicklow and hopefully a cull of that sort of nature will have first of all an

1	improved health status for the deer themselves, but it also would have a knock-on effect on
2	farming, forestry, and road safety matters. So I certainly would welcome a reduction.
3	
4	They estimate there are in excess of 150,000 deer living in County Wicklow, which is more than
5	there are humans funnily enough. But certainly that the introduction of the Sitka species, which
6	is a non-native species introduced by Lord Powerscourt back in the day. They've become an
7	invasive species and our own native red deer are almost a novelty to see them unfortunately. So
8	certainly I personally would welcome a reduction in deer numbers, and I will bring the matter
9	that Cllr Behan has raised to the attention of the deer forum.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Shay Cullen.
11	Cllr Shay CULLEN: I too would like to thank Cllr Behan for raising this issue. I have raised it
12	on numerous occasions at Municipal District level and I suppose it's ironic to think that this
13	problem was primarily a rural problem up until recently where we are seeing the deer makes
14	move towards the more urban areas. And indeed only a couple of weeks ago a person I was
15	speaking to in Kilcoole about 100 metres from the sea had several deer on their property. That
16	will tell you the level of movement of deer we have in the county. There is no doubt the deer
17	population is out of control, you know, there has been strong lobbying from farmer organisations
18	to try and reduce the numbers and it's something that Cllr Fox has alluded to which hopefully is
19	going to happen in the near future.
20	
21	Again, he quoted there the TB problem within the deer herd, and as I say I am not going to go
22	over the figures he has mentioned, but they're quite correct from the point of view that there is a
23	huge level of TB in the deer population, and it's something that has to be addressed.
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25	The upland areas, we've probably successfully made people more aware of the deer crossing the
26	road from the point of view of more signage we have in more upland mountainous areas
27	particularly with tourists coming across the Sally Gap and Wicklow Gap and so on that they're
28	made aware be careful of deer because as I say, the population of deer is massive in those areas.
29	
30	Indeed recent meetings in Roundwood and Tinahely only last week, the level of anger amongst
31	the farming community with the amount of deer that is in this county, and it is having huge
32	knock-on effects from the farming point of view, not only through TB, but the amount of grazing
33	that herds of deer are doing on farmland and again that's causing an issue. Look anything that
34	we can do to raise this issue at national level I think is important and I certainly would support

1 Cllr Behan's views on this. 2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy, followed by Councillor Dunne. 3 Cllr KENNEDY: I suppose I live in rural south Wicklow as well and we need a major cull urgently needed to combat TB. It's also suggest that had there are 16 to 18 deer per square 4 5 kilometre in Ireland. In south Wicklow, we have one or two herds in every 12 herds locked up because of TB. They're causing farming families difficulties in terms of loss of income, but 6 7 they're also causing a huge problem for motorists in my area and I would call for a major cull to 8 take place in Wicklow, because we have one of the highest deer populations in Ireland and I 9 thank Cllr Behan for bringing this subject to the Chamber. 10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Doran. 11 Cllr DORAN: Thank you, there isn't much left to say about it, but we have problems every other 12 night, there is people's cars being broken up. And lucky enough there is people could have been 13 killed, deer jumping on the bonnets of the cars, and breaking up their - and it could be a new car, 14 and you can't claim off of anybody. There is no-one to claim. Nobody owns the deer. But 15 everyone is worried about it. 16 17 Cllr Cullen said there about the number of cases of TB. The national average is about 3% of 18 herds with TB. It's 7 and a half in Wicklow. I believe that we should have a cull of the whole of 19 County Wicklow, not just in Calary. Something has to be done. Thank you. 20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy. 21 Cllr MURPHY: Yeah, I would just like to agree with what everyone says, but I actually had the 22 experience of that happened to myself last year, coming in from a hotel, and it was quite 23 frightening and only because we were in the van, I think that actually saved us. But I think a lot 24 of town people who is used to town life, but were out travelling they don't understand what these 25 are, whatever. I think the first thing would be signage as Cllr Behan has said. I mean even sign 26 with deer and slow down. The Woodenbridge Road is where it happened to us and I mean that's 27 the main Avoca road. But there is lots of areas in our county that this has happened too and it's 28 becoming more common, but I think we have to start with signage. CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Mitchell. 29 30 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I juice want to say that I joined the N11 on the 2nd 31 of November in the evening at about 8 o'clock at the Greystones south entrance on to it, and a 32 little bit further along before I got to the bend at the Glenview, there was a dead deer in the fast 33 lane and it was very difficult to see because there is no street lights there because it's a condition 34 of the planning permission for that section of road that there should be no street lights there

1	because of the animals. And a little bit further on there was a car with a wrecked bonnet,
2	obviously it hit this deer and I had to swerve quickly and brake very heavily to avoid this deer
3	which was lying there. And on a busy road like the N11, there is a lot of oncoming traffic, so the
4	glare from the lights makes it very difficult to see something stationary on the road. It's quite a
5	significant problem.
6	
7	There was also something on Facebook, Greystones page on Facebook, that there were deer on
8	the Windgates Road. That's significantly slower road and they were wandering around there, but
9	that's significantly slower and it is lit. But it's actually extremely difficult to see this dead deer
10	lying on the road on a major national dual carriageway.
11	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.
12	Cllr WALSH: Just in relation to the road safety concerns there mentioned by the previous
13	members, I can say from a previous life I would have attended the scene of numerous accidents
14	in the Windgates area, the Glen of the Downs area in particular involving deer and I would have
15	witnessed the extent of the damage caused to the cars and personal injury in some cases. Also
16	Cathaoirleach, I would have attended scenes of reckless discharge of high velocity firearms in
17	the vicinity of dwellings involving dear and poachers. That in itself causes a lot of concern to
18	rural dwellers.
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.
20	Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Chairman, I am not going back over what everyone else has said, but I
21	thank Cllr Behan for bringing this to our attention here today. Ten or 12 years ago we had a
22	significant cull of deer in Wicklow and it obviously had the desired effect at that particular point
23	in time. Obviously the numbers have increased and as Cllr Fox said something like 150,000
24	deer throughout County Wicklow at the moment is unmanageable for any farming community
25	out there. And we are dependent on the farming community to take out the deer. It's not
26	practical for the farming community to be able to do that. I think there is a need for a
27	co-ordinated approach to reduce the number of deer in County Wicklow. Apart from the TB and
28	the dangers to the roads, are only two aspects.
29	
30	As Cllr Cullen said, farmland, a huge number of deer, they can clean out a field of grass in a
31	very, very short period of time. I think there is a need for a co-ordinated effort in terms of
32	ensuring that the farming point of view, the TB and equally from the safety on the roads as well,
33	so I certainly thank Cllr Behan again for bringing it to our attention but I think there is a need for
34	a co-ordinated effort out there to reduce the number of deer. Somebody said 30 to 40,000 a year

1 would need to be taken out of the herd at the moment to bring it back to a manageable level. 2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle. 3 Cllr RUTTLE: The issue with deer, the collisions are an aspect of it on the national roads, but certainly from a farming point of view and I would be a member of various groups trying to deal 4 5 with the deer issue at the moment. First of all the correlation of the deer population to the TB 6 problem in Wicklow, which is the highest ever recorded rate of TB, is clearly demonstrated. 7 That's number one. 8 9 And secondly if they never were involved in the TB situation, the issue of grazing, it's an 10 economic issue, deer just graze you out. My farm you could look out any evening, see 30 deer 11 grazing your land, if that were another farmer, you know who owns them, see tag numbers. 12 How do you deal with that was you can frighten them off, they'll come back again. As I was out 13 of the room when my colleague Cllr Fox mentioned about the numbers. The numbers in 14 Wicklow and the amount of the cull needed, it's the view of all of us on the deer committees that 15 recreational shooters will never achieve this. This has to be a co-ordinated effort because the 16 numbers that have to be culled. From all of those aspects and another aspects we would have 17 found in the various groups we have had is that even people with non-farming people who are 18 living in rural areas, their gardens are being grazed out, they're being destroyed by deer in areas 19 of West Wicklow. I get complaints from Ballyknockan, Lackan, Valleymount, Manor Kilbride, 20 just in one night they virtually destroy properties where investment has been huge in shrubs. 21 Meanwhile, the element of the TB problem is there, a huge problem is there. And then you have 22 the grazing element as well, plus what Cllr Behan is talking about, collisions on the road, which 23 is going on all the time. In our group, we have monitored the collisions and we are reporting on, 24 building up the case all the time towards that. But deer in Wicklow are a huge problem across a 25 number of areas and certainly as someone who has to cross the gap regularly at night or both 26 gaps, but I notice particularly the Sally Gap, deer are a huge threat to you. They're there in large 27 numbers, they can jump, come against lights. It's a problem that has to be dealt with and I thank 28 you very much for bringing that forward Councillor. 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke. 30

Cllr BOURKE: Just at a point of information for yourself there, they're actually down as far as Arklow, because I was combining winter barley there in July and the big field over the ferret where you used to work, and there was a stag, a lovely stag, he was a beautiful animal, I had to stop to admire him, but he was out following me around in the combine in the field of winter barley. I thought to myself, it's a wonderful sight but I wouldn't have liked to see a herd of them

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1	destroying the crop on me. I would have had no barley to put in the trailer. It's becoming a big
2	issue when you see them that far, that land joins the motorway and all they had to do was jump
3	over a ditch and they were on the motorway. It's something we should be taking cognisance off
4	and taking steps to reduce the dangers to the public.
5	CATHAOIRLEACH: From memory, I think it was with Cllr Behan in 2007 in Lawless' hotel in
6	Aughrim and it was an IFA meeting, and the chap wanted to know what we wanted to know
7	about deer. And we started laughing about it. I said I don't know a lot about deer, the only one I
8	know about is the one at home.
9	MS GALLAGHER: It's proposed we write to the TII to improve the signage to warn motorists
10	and also to the department to see if we can get more involved in relation to culling and fencing.
11	Cllr RUTTLE: Deers can't read!
12	MS GALLAGHER: Which department Councillors?
13	Cllr FOX: Irish Deer Management Forum. It's made up of two departments, the Department of
14	Agriculture and the Department of Heritage, Gaeltacht.
15	Cllr RUTTLE: Minister Humphries.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.
17	Cllr BEHAN: It would be very valuable if Cllr Fox and Cllr Ruttle conveyed the issues that
18	have come up. I think, what we have heard of the experience of so many members, it's
19	something we should keep on the agenda that maybe in another six months we could even see,
20	have a quick discussion on it to see what has happened in the six months because obviously
21	something radical needs to be done. Thanks Cathaoirleach.
22	CATHAOIRLEACH: Just, I think we are breaking at ten past five if the members agree. There
23	is some food inside.
24	MS GALLAGHER: We have protocol at quarter past five to half five.
25	Cllr RUTTLE: We haven't much time to eat so.
26	CE: If you are on the protocol, you don't get anything.
27	CATHAOIRLEACH: Just as we have a few minutes there, is there any
28	MS GALLAGHER: Correspondence, and this letter has been circulated by email, a letter from
29	the Department received on the 11th of November. A submission in relation to the meeting with
30	the LPT. It's on your email if that's okay.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.
32	Cllr FOX: Can I say how disappointed I was with the response, this was in relation with the

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is very, very disappointing.

20% equalisation fund and the Minister has declined meeting a delegation of the Council which

1	MS GALLAGHER: An invitation from the Mermaid Wicklow arts, that's also on your email.
2	Thank you.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Just if the members agree there, I know if we could just do a few of the
4	motions while we have ten minutes, if there is agreement. I know Cllr McLoughlin is not here,
5	but motion number two are all present here except Cllr O'Brien is not there. Cllr Snell. The
6	notice in the names of you - all the Sinn Fein Councillors if you don't mind. We have ten
7	minutes there, so I am not rushing you but
8	Cllr LAWLESS: But I am.
9	CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not really.
10	Cllr O'CONNOR: We will sort out the housing situation in ten minutes. The Government at this
11	State, the difficulty here in general is that Government in this State, like the last couple of
12	Governments have been enthralled in the free market and the alleged abilities of that free market
13	to sort out the housing situation. Where that leads us is we lumber from boom to bust with the
14	housing in this State and it's never at a normal price, normal inverted commas. Houses are
15	always really, really cheap or houses are way too dear and then beam get burned at either end.
16	That's not good enough. The State has to do more than just trust speculators and vulture funds to
17	try and sort out housing in this society.
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19	Because of the mess that they've created, we have situations where families have to stay in hotels
20	for months and months on end. Single mothers wander the streets all day because their bed and
21	breakfast won't allow them to stay there during the day. Children have no place they can call
22	home.
23	
24	What I am trying to get across and I know everyone here recognises how important housing is.
25	We are calling for the Government to declare a state of emergency, not as in martial law or
26	anything like it. What we are trying to do is get the Government to realise that there is a serious
27	housing crisis in this State. And that their lack of ability and their lack of action on the situation
28	leads to all these difficulties. It leads to individuals going to sleep at night not knowing where
29	they're going to be in the morning. That's actually what it comes down to. There is all sorts of
30	things that the Government can do to intervene in the housing market. They haven't. And it's
31	about time this they started to do so.
32	
33	We are calling on the Government to declare that this is one of the most important issues facing
34	Ireland right now. People have, in my view, a right to a house, and at the end of the day, because

1	the free market isn't going to give them the house, the State has to step in and try to sort out the
2	mess and we are calling on them to declare a State of emergency to sort out that mess. And I ask
3	everybody to support this motion.
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor, a seconder for that.
5	Cllr LAWLESS: I'll second it.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed? I think we have time for - did you want to come in there?
7	Cllr LAWLESS: No, no, if you are ready for the next motion.
8	Cllr BOURKE: Before you move on there, I wouldn't like to diminish the hard work that the
9	Council here are doing in solving the housing crisis in County Wicklow.
10	Cllr O'CONNOR: I am not doing that.
11	Cllr BOURKE: We have a very good Director and staff working on solving the problem here in
12	Wicklow.
13	Cllr O'CONNOR: Absolutely.
14	Cllr BOURKE: And they should be commended with what they're able to achieve with the
15	limited resources.
16	Cllr LAWLESS: I would second that, yeah, definitely.
17	Cllr O'CONNOR: And I couldn't be more in agreement with that, I am not blaming the Council,
18	but I think it's a policy matter that Central Government has to sort out.
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless, you have a minute and a half.
20	Cllr LAWLESS: I have a very quick statement. It's just a motion in regard to TTIP and the
21	CETA, so as we know there has been talk about it throughout the country and some people do
22	know about it, but by and large people don't like what they have actually seen in regards to this.
23	From the start it was very evident that the key components of the strategy of TTIP was to keep
24	citizens in the dark by preventing information entering into the public domain until it was almost
25	too late. The reason for this motion before you today is to declare Wicklow a TTIP and CETA
26	free zone to show the people of Wicklow that we are willing to protect our workers rights,
27	agriculture, environment and food safety.
28	
29	As there is no surprise to learn that our Government is among the chief cheerleaders of TTIP. In
30	fact Fine Gael led Government is fully square behind any EU trade dealing regardless of the
31	consequence to Ireland. Sinn Fein opposes TTIP under the current mandate and we will
32	challenge any efforts that attempt to reduce the standards that we have to come to expect on
33	environment, food, rights of workers. The Irish Government should do the same. But we know

they will not do this unless they are forced so it's up to us to force them. So that's why I am

asking you here today to support this motion to declare Wicklow a free zone for TTIP and CETA
and just to note that Leitrim County Council only recently just passed a similar motion there at
their last meeting. Thank you.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to come in there Cllr Mitchell?
Cllr MITCHELL: I would like to say we have come to an agreement with Canada on free trade,
which has been signed. I have to say I can't see anything wrong with having an agreement with
Canada. It seems to me a small country and it would be a good idea to see how these agreements
work. I am not familiar with all of the issues behind it, I gather it's been negotiated at EU level.
It's not really a matter for Wicklow County Council to go into something as complex as this. So
I would support a free trade agreement with Canada, which has recently been engaged in and I
just point out that an enormous number of people who live in North Wicklow, Bray and
Greystones work in companies based in North America and we have gained as a country
enormously from free trade and the investment of those companies in this country. And
anybody who has seen the Google headquarters, except it's not a Canadian company, but
anybody who has seen the Google headquarters and the number of people buzzing around it, all
on well paid jobs on the DART line, which is available to people in North Wicklow, I think it's
very impressive to see it, to see them here and to see - I think it's the largest employment centre
for Google outside North America and California, where all these things are apparently invented.
So I think we should be very sceptical about saying they're not welcome here and I very much
welcome the American companies and the jobs they bring and the technology which they bring
to this country, which many Irish entrepreneurs are learning their trade in these companies and
then going off and inventing things which they then sell their companies for zillions to these
companies back in America. And if we didn't have those companies here, they wouldn't get this
experience. They wouldn't be able to employ all these people here. So I first of all support the
Canadian agreement, and I think we should see how it works. I don't see Canada as a very
threatening country. And I think in any case, the North, the one with the United States, I think
with the recent change in Government, or the coming change in Government in the United States
is probably much less likely to happen. I don't think we should give the idea that Wicklow is
against free trade. We benefit so much, the residents of people - maybe in Leitrim people
haven't benefited much from free trade, but we here have a very large number of people in Bray
and Greystones who work in these industries, and I would support what we have done in relation
to having a free trade agreement with Canada and we should see what happens with the
American one. Thank you.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

1	Cllr BEHAN: I know time is up, but this is a very, very complex issue but Cllr Mitchell
2	mentioned what happened in America. If people step back and look at what happened in
3	America, and look at the huge numbers of people in America who feel completely excluded from
4	what is called free trade, and globalisation, their meaning to themselves, their worth as
5	employees has been taken away. Huge groups of blue collar workers, not only in America, but
6	in Europe, in Britain, and in this country have been effectively rendered unemployable because
7	of globalisation, because of seeking to get the cheapest place possible to pay wages. And you
8	know, there is a huge you shall shoe at stake not only for America and Europe but also for this
9	country and on that basis, I think any attempt to sign TTIP at this point and time would be a big
10	mistake and on that basis, I would support the motion Cathaoirleach.
11	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.
12	Cllr O'CONNOR: This isn't actually free trade, this is a trade agreement. I think there is all
13	sorts of I haves and or butts and all sorts of clauses agreement in it which limit free trade. To
14	say anyone who is opposed to any of these developments is against the likes of Google being
15	present in Ireland, they're not listening to what we are saying, we are entirely in favour of
16	investment.
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Have we a seconder for that motion? Cllr McDonald. Are the members
18	in agreement?
19	Cllr MITCHELL: I am not in agreement with the motion, I believe signing the one with Canada
20	was the right thing to do and I think we should have the free trade with Canada and as I have
21	said I support the tech workers who work for these big companies which are here and on the
22	basis of our prosperity.
23	CATHAOIRLEACH: All right, obviously we will just take a vote.
24	For and against the motion.
25	
26	(A vote was taken)
27	
28	MS GALLAGHER: That's six for, ten against and 16 not present.
29	CATHAOIRLEACH: Just to - the protocol meeting is not until half five. The meal is in next
30	door there.
31	MS GALLAGHER: Light refreshments.
32	CATHAOIRLEACH: Disappointing to see so many members leaving the Chamber here.
33	Cllr LAWLESS: Was there a quorum there?
34	CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes. It's just disappointing at this stage of the meeting.

1	Cllr MITCHELL:	What's next,	protocol	at 5.30?

2 MS GALLAGHER: County Development Plan at six, refreshments now.

3

4 The meeting concluded at 5.15pm

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