ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

HELD AT WICKLOW COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW TOWN

ON MONDAY, 3RD JULY 2017 AT 2:00 P.M

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GWEN MALONE STENOGRAPHY

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, 3RD JULY 2017 AT 2:00 P.M.

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4 CATHAOIRLEACH: [Irish spoken]. First of all, I'd like
5 to welcome the stenographers who return here today. 14:04
6 Very good to see them back. Welcome all the members
7 back here again.

- 9 Just before I commence the meeting there is a couple of
 10 votes of sympathy. 14:05
- 11 **MS. GALLAGHER:** Yes, Cathaoirleach, a vote of sympathy 12 for Renee Ryan, mother of Cllr. John Ryan and for Tommy Metcalf, father of our colleague Margaret Coyne. 13 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr. Gráinne McLoughlin. 15 **CLLR. McLOUGHLIN:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would 14:05 16 like us to remember Eric Archer of Greystones. Eric 17 was a stalwart of the community. He was certainly, as much a part of the Rugby Club as bricks in the wall. 18 19 He was absolutely the most wonderful gentleman in 20 Greystones and it is such a sad loss to Greystones that 14:05 21 he is gone and our thoughts and prayers go to his wife 22 Ruth, their children, and everybody who knew Eric, you will be dearly missed. 23

24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Irene Winters.

CLLR. WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'd like to 14:06
offer sympathy to Padraig Harney, in light of the
agenda today where we're going to be discussing the
safety of cyclists. Padraig was knocked off his bike
there last week off. He was originally from the Town,

off the main street and our thoughts are with his wife
 and his young children.

I would also like to offer a vote of sympathy for
Mark Geraghty who, on his way home, having taken a taxi 14:06
home, died last Friday week. Our thoughts are with his
parents also.

8 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Gerry Walsh.

9 CLLR. WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Again, I'd just 10 like to be associated with the sentiments expressed in 14:06 11 relation to Eric Archer and I'd also like to express 12 condolences the family of Laura Dempsey, who passed 13 away suddenly and tragically last weekend while on 14 holiday. Thank you.

15CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. Gail Dunne.14:0616CLLR. DUNNE: Thank you. Chairman. I'd like to propose

16 CLLR. DUNNE: Thank you, Chairman. I'd like to propose
17 a vote of sympathy for Kathleen Dooley who lost her
18 battle with cancer, long battle with cancer and to her
19 husband, our sympathies to her husband, Eugene. Thank
20 you. 14:07

21 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Derek Mitchell.

22CLLR. MITCHELL: I'd just like to echo the point about23Laura Dempsey who died and Eric Archer, who was

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24 stalwart of the community.

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25 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR. FITZGERALD: Yeah, I just want to offer my
sympathy to the family Mr. Matt Hudson Senior. Matt
was a leading businessman in the Arklow, or in the
Wicklow/Wexford area there and he was buried just last

1 Saturday week. 2 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, members. I'd like to just 3 reiterate sympathy for all of those people, but especially John Ryan's mother. Thank you. Sorry, 4 Cllr, Cullen? 5 14:07 6 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Mrs. Groves. Her husband of 7 (inaudible). 8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. MS. GALLAGHER: We'll stand for a minute's silence. 9 10 14:08 11 [ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE OBSERVED] 12 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Just before I commence the meeting, I'd 13 14 just like to highlight there's going to be a Suspension 15 of Standing Orders at 4:30, called for by Cllr. Blake 14:08 and Cllr. Behan, just to discuss briefly the issue of 16 17 cashier closures by Bank of Ireland in the south and southeast of the county. Is that agreed? Agreed. 18 19 And, secondly, there's going to be a brief mention shortly afterwards, but not a full suspension of 20 14:09 21 Standing Orders discussion, but just a brief mention of 22 the perilous situation at Bray Wanderers' Soccer Club. MS. GALLAGHER: Just to say that Cllr. whitmore has 23 sent in an urgent question for ten to five. 24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okay. Cllr. Thornhill. 25 14:09 26 [Irish spoken] Go raibh maith agat. CLLR. THORNHILL: 27 Cathaoirleach, I was speaking with you earlier and I 28 just mentioned, it's just something that I would like 29 to propose that should be done, that a book of

1 condolences should be opened in memory of the 2 Grenfell Towers tragedy in London and we as a local 3 authority should express our condolence and solidarity to those people involved in this terrible tragedy. A 4 tragedy beyond huge proportions and it's something that 14:09 5 6 we should learn, it should be a lesson to us in 7 relation to tragedies of that nature. And I propose 8 that that book of condylions should be opened and that it should be done in a way like we have done it for 9 other people and I think that we should really show 10 14:10 11 people across in London our support at this moment. 12 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Is that agreed by members? MS. GALLAGHER: Can I just have a seconder for that? 13 Seconder, Cllr. Behan and agreed. 14 15 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. O'Connor do you want to come in? 14:10 CLLR. O'CONNOR: No, I'm grand. 16 17 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okay, thank you. Item 1 on the agenda: To consider the disposal of 0.25 acres of land being 18 19 land situated in the townland adjacent to 20 Coláiste Bhríde, Carnew to KWETB, Church Street, 14:10 21 Wicklow Town, County Wicklow. Before I get into this 22 item, could I just point out to members that there are five members of Wicklow County Council who are also 23 members of KWETB, including myself. So in the 24 interests of ethics legislation I think it's 25 14:10 appropriate that myself and the other four members, two 26 27 of which are actually not here at the meeting today, 28 Nicola Lawless and Tommy Annesley, who is coming later, 29 and Cllr. Ruttle and Cllr. Whitmore, I think it's

appropriate that we absent ourselves from the meeting 1 for this item. Thank you. So I call on Cllr. Vance 2 3 just to sit up here for this item. CLLR. VANCE: Okay, members. That's item 1. 4 Proposed by Cllr. Blake. 5 MS. GALLAGHER: 14:11 6 CLLR. VANCE: Seconded by Cllr. Doran. 7 **MS. GALLAGHER:** Is that agreed by all? 8 **CLLR. VANCE:** Any objections whatsoever in regard to 9 this? Is that agreed? 10 MS. GALLAGHER: Agreed. 14:11 11 **CLLR. VANCE:** Agreed. That's fine. Thank you very 12 much. They can come back in. 13 MS. GALLAGHER: Thank you very much. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr. Vance, that will be your 15 last time up here this year! 14:12 16 17 Item 2: To consider report in accordance with Part VII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, 18 19 Blessington Greenway, Blessington, County Wicklow, 20 report attached. Before the members speak I would like 14:12 21 to call in the Director of Services, Michael Nicholson, 22 to say a few words. 23 **MR. NICHOLSON:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Members will 24 be aware that we have been trying to develop a greenway around Blessington Lakes for some time now. 25 Members 14:13 26 will also be aware that Phase 1 was completed some 27 years ago and has been extremely successful. Members 28 will also be aware that a couple of years ago we made 29 an application to Fáilte Ireland for a grant to

1 complete the remaining part of Blessington Greenway. 2 That application is still with Fáilte Ireland. At the moment there is a consultation process going ahead with 3 regard to greenways in general. So they've parked all 4 5 the applications pending that investigation. In the 14:13 6 meantime we are very much going to get our ducks lined up and we're going to hopefully secure planning and 7 8 have everything ready so that in the event of us getting funding from Fáilte Ireland, hopefully before 9 the end of this year, that we should be ready with 10 14:13 11 regard to this Greenway. We're also anticipating in 12 the event of there being competition for funding that those local authorities that have their plans at an 13 14 advanced stage with planning secured will get a far 15 better hearing if they're oversubscribed, which they 14:14 probably will be. 16

So in that regard we have gone through a Part VIII 18 19 process and the report is in front of you. We had good public interaction with the Part VIII. The development 14:14 20 21 is for 46 kilometres, roughly, around Blessington 22 Lakes. Uniquely we are dealing with one landowner and we have full cooperation from them. That's the ESB. 23 Also, uniquely we received 293 submissions and whereas 24 ordinarily those people in favour of the development 25 14:14 26 wouldn't normally put pen to paper, known as the silent 27 majority, what happened in this case was, of the 293 28 submissions, almost 280 took the time out to write in 29 expressing their support for the development which is

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1 quite unusual and we had 15, I say opposed but I 2 suppose opposed is probably the wrong word, the 15 had 3 comments to make in relation to the development. There was only one or two outright oppositions to the whole 4 5 thing but most of those opposing it were making some 14:15 6 suggestions about, and rising some concerns about 7 fencing and culverting and drainage and security, 8 litter, dog control, stuff like this, parking, flora and fauna. So the report is in front of you. 9 Cathaoirleach, myself and the Director of Roads and 10 14:15 11 Transportation, Sean Quirke, have been working on this 12 together because it cuts across both directorates and the recommendation is that the proposed Blessington 13 14 Greenway proceed, subject to the following condition: 15 Liaison with those with site-specific concerns to take 14:15 place to ensure that the development proceeds in the 16 17 manner which addresses those concerns. So mv recommendation is that we proceed with the Part VIII as 18 19 per the report. Thank you. 20 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, Director. I'd like to call 14:16 21 on the Director of the SPC, Cllr. Ruttle. 22 **CLLR. RUTTLE:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. As Chairman 23 of the SPC and the sponsor of this Part VIII I welcome 24 greatly the bringing before the Council of this 25 proposal today being brought before the members. It 14:16 26 represents a watershed in recreational use and 27 development of the Blessington Lakes area. 28

In 1940, when the lakes were flooded it represented to

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the local community and indeed further afield virtually a total lockout of any activity at the time. Over the years an easing took place where added value to the community was gained, but still it was limited enough.

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6 Sunday week last I took part in an event, the Ballymun 7 Festival, which commemorated the families who lost farms under the lake in 1940. I am a member of one 8 such family that lost a farm at the time of the 9 Some of those families will 10 flooding at Blessington. 14:17 11 have seen the negative side of the lake because of what 12 happened to us and others at that time. But today. however, is a positive, positive day as the lake can 13 14 greatly add to our area with this type of development. 15 Over the years we have seen various places throughout 14:17 Ireland, in the West of Ireland, and more recently in 16 17 the Déise one in Waterford, the Waterford to Dungarvan walkways being used which add greatly to the economic 18 19 and the whole community development and opportunities 20 for locals to take advantage of great beauty. There is 14:17 21 great beauty around the Blessington Lake with a 22 backdrop of mountains, water, and a historic town beside it, as well as the lovely villages of 23 Ballyknocken, Lacken and Valleymount. 24 In the course of 25 this, some people who are developing the project, the 14:17 initial project, the first one, which is up and running 26 27 and very successful, visited one such place in England 28 but they had no backdrop at all. I understand you 29 couldn't see beyond the next hedge, but a huge visitor

1attraction all the same. That is very successful there2and I'm sure this will be successful here.

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This will be an opportunity for people in the area, 4 5 particularly in the outlying villages to gain something 14:18 6 from the actual presence of the lake because it will bring visitors; it will bring people who need 7 8 accommodation to stay; to walk; to eat; perhaps have a drink and that will all be beneficial. Because, as 9 outlined by the Director, this is a long walkway it's 10 14:18 11 not a short one so it's something that will take quite awhile and will give a great spin-off benefit to the 12 13 area.

15 I note the report and how it dealt with all aspects of 14:18 16 the various issues and I also compliment all of those 17 who participated in the process, overwhelmingly those who wrote in in support of it and the local people will 18 19 be, by and large, very supportive of this because they 20 see it, as I said, as something of an opportunity to 14:18 21 gain something from the facility that before now was 22 not available to us.

24Over the consultation period there were various25meetings in Valleymount and Lacken. The various26concerns were expressed or views were expressed over27walking and fencing and culverting and all these issues28and I'm glad to see that these issues have been firmly29addressed in the report to deal with these issues. And

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1 I would then propose that, as well as proposing that 2 the Greenway proposal Part VIII go ahead, where we have 3 the recommendation, liaison with the site-specific concerns to take place to ensure that the development 4 5 proceeds in a manner which addresses these concerns, 14:19 6 that that would also include culverting, fencing and 7 egress and entry to the walkway because they are other 8 issues, I would be proposing that those issues be included in the actual final passing of the Part VIII 9 So it would be liaising with those site-specific 14:19 10 here. 11 concerns at certain places. However, the issue of 12 fencing is completely all around the lake and culverting is around the lake. To ensure that the 13 14 development proceeds in a manner which addresses those 15 concerns, and also, culverting, fencing and egress and 14:20 16 access to the proposed Blessington Greenway.

But, look, it's part of a national strategy. It's good, healthy environmental recreation. It has huge potential for an economic benefit to our area and it brings a realisation to the locality where I was born and reared, all around those lakes, to actually pull something back.

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The first portion which was done has been proved to be very, very successful, but short, but it was very, very successful and some of the concerns were expressed over the periods of the two consultations never took place there and it's working very well.

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1 On that note I would also like to compliment and talk 2 John Horan for his great work on this project and 3 indeed the first one. Wonderful work to bring it to this stage where we have it today at the Council 4 Chamber. 5 14:21 6 7 So I would formally propose that we adopt, as Chairman 8 of the SPC, that we formally adopt and pass the 9 Part VIII with the site-specific concerns, plus the issue of fencing, culverting, egress and entry to the 10 14:21 11 lands concerned. 12 So it's a good day, it's a progressive day and it's a 13 14 day looking forward to a new future for the whole 15 Blessington Lake Project, which started in more 14:21 uncertain circumstances in 1940. 16 17 Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach. 18 Thanks. Cllr. Blake. 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: 20 **CLLR. BLAKE:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and I certainly 14:21 21 would like to second Cllr. Ruttle's proposal. He has 22 probably given a very good outline of the history of 23 the whole place up there and also in relation to all aspects of it. Equally so to the Director of Services 24 for his contribution to the community, to John and all 25 14:21 26 the people who have worked up there in relation to 27 developing this. Certainly I think the Director of 28 Services outlined to us the need for probably to, for 29 the use of another word, get our ducks in line in terms

1 of ensuring that if funding does become available in 2 the future - and I'm confident that it will - that we 3 actually are in there in the mix that we do get the necessary funding to develop this length of walkway 4 around the Blessington Lakes. I was very much involved 14:22 5 6 in the last project up there in terms of the leader 7 from the Wicklow County Partnership in developing the 8 initial walkway around the lakes, great success and the linkage and everything to it. I think this probably 9 10 will really put Blessington and West Wicklow on the map 14:22 11 as well in that regard.

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So certainly, as Jim has outlined there and gave a very 13 14 good account of it, I very much support it and I second 15 Jim's proposal. Thanks, Chairman. 14:22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. Gerry O'Neill. 16 17 **CLLR. O'NEILL:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach. As one who has been involved in the project here for a while I had 18 19 hoped when I got in here to propose it, if not second 20 it, but sure I may as well third it now! But in doing 14:23 21 so I mean, I was all for this for a long time from my involvement in the forum and I think it's going to be a 22 great -- it's a way, as someone said to me earlier, 23 that maybe West Wicklow is finally going on to the map 24 25 today, you know. I know it's a long way down the road 14:23 26 before the finance and whatever are in place but. 27 again, I'd just like to thank -- we're in here doing 28 the easy work. The people who have driven this here, I 29 see John Horan and Cillian McGrail in the public

gallery, they're two people who it should be acknowledged that without their drive, and others, that we wouldn't be here, we wouldn't be at this point today.

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I would also like to thank Michael Nicholson of Wicklow
County Council, Theresa O'Brien as well, and Sean
Quirke for all their work, from the word go on this
issue. There are -- we organised -- I proposed some
meetings in the area with local people to maybe just to 14:24
discuss their fears or their concerns on the route and
we had a few successful meetings there.

14 There are, as mentioned earlier, somebody mentioned 15 culverts, that's omitted from this submission but I 14:24 think that, you know, this thing will work, especially 16 17 for the people of Lacken and Ballyknocken and Valleymount and all, you know, it's something brand new 18 19 to those people. I talked here earlier on at the rates 20 meeting about the shops in the area, there's no shops 14:24 21 around the lake, you know, whether it's rates or rent 22 they're run out of town. So it's a very rural part of 23 Ireland, let alone Wicklow.

I would be delighted to see this. It's up and running 14:24 now and we will work, I know the Council and I know the public representatives and all will work hand-in-hand with the people who have driven this and also the people who would have concerns, small concerns I might

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1 add, in the locality. So I've no problem in supporting 2 this and I hope we have the support of every Councillor 3 in the Chamber. Go raibh maith agat. Cllr. Gerry Walsh, Director of the SPC. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: 5 **CLLR. WALSH:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach. As chair of the 14:25 6 Economic Development SPC and a member of Wicklow 7 Tourism I'd be delighted to support the Part VIII 8 process in relation to this valuable public recreational amenity. It has huge potential there for 9 10 tourism for the County and particularly for the west of 14:25 11 the County. So, again, I'm just glad to be able to 12 support it. 13 14 Again, can I just add, Cathaoirleach, that I hope that 15 Fáilte Ireland will see fit to provide the necessary 14:25 funding to see this project over the line. As 16 17 Director Nicholson said, it's a no-brainer. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Mary Kavanagh. 18 19 CLLR. KAVANAGH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, I'm delighted 20 to support this as well. I'm a big advocate of 14:26 21 greenways, for all kinds of reasons, health benefits, 22 tourism, development of areas. We see what's happened 23 down in Westport, how it has come on in leaps and The same with Waterford. And I just can't 24 bounds. 25 wait for the day when we have a greenway that goes all 14:26 26 the way around the County, or at least one on the east 27 of the County as well as on the west. But I'm 28 delighted to see this one has come so far down the line and I think it's terrific and the sooner it starts the 29

1 better, as far as I'm concerned. Thank you. 2 Thanks. Shav Cullen. CATHAOIRLEACH: 3 CLLR. SHAY CULLEN: Thanks, Chairman. I would like to compliment the Committee on the huge efforts and works 4 5 they've put into this over a long number of years. Ι 14:26 know John and Cillian and indeed Michael Sergeant have 6 been involved in this and other members for guite a 7 8 long time and it's -- I'd the pleasure of walking the first phase of this back a few months ago and it's 9 certainly fantastic, what work is done so far is 10 14:27 11 fantastic for the public to have this amenity. And the 12 efforts that has gone into it, you know, just to see what it can add to Blessington and West Wicklow but not 13 14 alone West Wicklow, the boost for the economy in County 15 Wicklow will be significant, from a tourism point of 14:27 view and getting tourists into our county. 16 But 17 certainly this will draw a lot of people from all over Ireland and abroad and I just want to wish everybody 18 19 well with ongoing work and compliment Michael for 20 keeping the pressure on to try and get the funding in 14:27 21 place. And look, it's onwards and upwards and I just 22 want to compliment and wish everyone well, thank you. 23 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Gráinne McLoughlin. 24 Thank you, Cathaoirleach. CLLR. MCLOUGHLIN: As Chair 25 of the LCDC I very much welcome this project and 14:28 congratulations to Michael and Theresa and all of the 26 27 people, particularly in Wicklow, in Blessington should 28 The forum down there has been doing huge work I say. 29 over the years and I congratulate everybody concerned

1 and hopefully we will get this to a perfect conclusion 2 for everybody and if we can do anything to support it 3 on the LCDC, you can may be sure you will have it. SO I wish you well for this project. 4 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Tommy Cullen. 14:28 6 **CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN:** Chairman, thank you. I'd like 7 also to support this project and to congratulate the 8 Committee on the work they have been doing to bring this about. I would like to see it linked to the West 9 Wicklow Heritage Trail that yourself, Chairman, and 10 14:28 11 myself and other members are currently working on and 12 drafting up it's leaflet. We hope to shortly show the rich culture and heritage of West Wicklow and that's 13 14 now defining the area. I think you are going to launch 15 that shortly, the Heritage Trail. 14:29 16 17 Chairman, I welcome this and I think we should have an integrated tourist and heritage programme because 18 19 that's where all the money now is in tourism is in 20 heritage. That's where you get the big money spenders 14:29 21 now coming into the tourism area is in that. I'd like 22 to congratulate all involved in this, Chairman. Thank 23 you. 24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. As Chairman I'd like to voice my support for this project as well. It's really 14:29 25 26 worthwhile and compliments to all those involved. I 27 think 95% of the submissions were in favour so it's

project and we all wish you every success. Thank you.

very clear there's overwhelming support for this

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1 I'm now going to take a vote on it. 2 3 [VOTE TAKEN] 4 5 That's 25 for and 7 not present. MS. GALLAGHER: 14:30 6 MR. NICHOLSON: Thank you very much, members, 7 appreciate it. 8 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, members. The next item on the agenda, item 3: To consider report in accordance 9 with Part VIII of the Planning and Development 10 14:31 11 Regulations 2001 in respect of the proposed development of 51 housing units at Convent Lands (Radharc an 12 Fharraige) Wicklow Town (copy report attached). Do I 13 14 have a proposer? Proposed by Cllr. Shay Cullen. 15 Seconded by Gail Dunne. 14:31 16 **MS. GALLAGHER:** Take a vote. We'll take a vote, 17 Cathaoirleach. 18 19 [VOTE TAKEN] 20 14:31 21 MS. GALLAGHER: That's 23 for and 9 not present. 22 Part VIII carried. 23 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thanks. Next item, members. Item 4: 24 To receive a presentation of the Avondale Masterplan 25 Project, Rathdrum, County Wicklow. This presentation 14:33 26 is going to be overseen by Cooney Architects and in 27 particular Frank Cooney and Catherine Murphy. 28 **MR. NICHOLSON:** I am just going to introduce, just 29 before our colleagues take to the podium. Just the

members will be aware, this, again, has been on the
cards for some time and this is a multimillion euro
joint project between Wicklow County Council, Coillte,
the landowners, and Fáilte Ireland. It is going to
change Avondale and make it a completely interactive 14:33
facility.

A design team has been appointed now. The brief has
been prepared between Coillte and Fáilte Ireland.
Interestingly, in this particular project Fáilte
Ireland are fully behind it so they're funding the
project completely. They see it as one of their
flagship projects in the Ireland's Ancient East
product.

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16 Just a brief bit of history. Avondale Forest Park is a 17 200-acre estate owned by Coillte. You all know where It's just outside Rathdrum. At the moment it 18 it is. 19 has some passing usage but it's not really being 20 utilised for the potential it has. So part of the 14:34 21 brief is to convert this into a complete redevelopment 22 of the facility. So I am just going to hand over now 23 to Catherine Murphy and Frank Cooney from Cooney 24 Architects who are going to give a PowerPoint 25 presentation on where they are. Thank you. 14:34 26 **MR. COONEY:** Okay. Cathaoirleach, Councillors, thank 27 you very much for the opportunity to make the 28 presentation today.

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1 In March of this year, Coillte and Fáilte Ireland issued tenders for the appointment of a design team for Avondale. The process that they required the design team to go through they set out in a quite a lot of detail and I will run through that briefly in a few 14:35 moments.

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8 We put together a design team who won the tender. So a little bit of background on the team. We are Cooney 9 10 Architects. Our role is design team lead, project team 14:35 11 coordinators, architects, but also conservation 12 architects. Our team came together, I suppose, first for an earlier project. It's a visitors' centre you 13 14 will see there on the right-hand side at the Hill of 15 Uisneach in County Westmeath. We've also worked on 14:36 16 Sports Campus Ireland. Various projects there 17 including the courtyards to the large house there and back in 1991 we had worked on a prototype energy 18 19 efficient green buildings sponsored by the EU.

21 The design team also includes Levins Associates, 22 quantity surveyors, Jennings O'Donovan and FDA who will 23 be looking after all the engineering, environmental 24 civil works.

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On our team we've also got Alan Hill. Alan is a tourism development specialist with 30 years' experience in this whole area.

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1Our interpretative consultants are a company called2TellTale. They've been involved with Ireland's Ancient3East now for a number of years and their role is to4interpret the story of Avondale. They've already spent5five days on site actually living on site earlier this 14:376month and they've been back for two days in the last7while.

9 The way our branding consultants Turtle Bunbury is an 10 historian and Turtle's role is to ensure that 14:37 11 everything is based in history and correct.

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TellTale have also brought on board Past Pleasures.
They're a company who specialise in living history
presentations.

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17The brief that was prepared by Coillte and Fáilte18Ireland sets out a process that the design team are to19follow. We started on this process in June, so it's20early days. The first thing we deal with is on the21left-hand side on the bottom of the slide you will see22the interpretation framework. We are currently working23on this.

25The interpretation framework sets out to identify the
overarching theme story of Avondale. It also sets out26overarching theme story of Avondale. It also sets out27to identify the visitor touch points and the mediums28through which the story will be communicated.

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1 On completion of the interpretative framework we will 2 move on to the interpretation and visitor experience 3 plan. That builds on the interpretation framework and the visitor touch points. It will set out the phases 4 5 for development. It will show how the development 14:39 coordinates and interacts with Ireland's Ancient East 6 brand.

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Thereafter, we move to the detail design. The detail 9 10 design will involve preparing drawings/models that come 14:39 11 out of the interpretative framework and thereafter the last phase is a planning application. The programme 12 13 for this is, we would hope to be having completed each 14 one of the earlier stages making a planning application 15 towards the end of the year. 14:40

17 So I have set out there the four stages and then, as I said, the programme is to go through each stages over 18 19 the coming months with a view to lodging a planning 20 application towards the end of the year. Thank you 14:40 21 very much.

22 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, Frank. Cllr. Pat Kennedy. 23 **CLLR. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Frank. Thank you for the 24 presentation. There's huge interest in this. I'm a councillor from Rathdrum. There's huge interest in 25 14:40 26 this whole development and the redevelopment of Avondale Forest Park in Rathdrum. As you know, it was 27 28 built in 1777 so there's over 500 acres, I think, in 29 the whole forest park.

I think this will put, not only Rathdrum, but the East Coast on the map. As you know, recently we constructed a footpath of 1.5 kilometres almost from the town of Rathdrum all the way to the gates of Avondale so as the children and the community can walk safely to Rathdrum. 14:41 We have a school population of over 900 students in Rathdrum who use Avondale regularly.

Avondale is hugely, hugely important, not just to the
people of Rathdrum, but we kind of tend to think we own 14:41
Avondale because it's on our doorstep but it's
belonging to all of the people of Ireland, but
especially the people on the East Coast.

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15 I wish you well. I welcome this development and the 14:41 16 sooner we better we get it up and running and I wish 17 you the very best of luck in your endeavours to bring 18 it to where it needs to be. Thank you.

20Just one other thing, Frank. During the consultation14:4121that I would ask that you include the people of22Rathdrum in and keep them briefed and updated on23progress. Thanks, Frank.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. Cllr. Miriam Murphy.
CLLR. MURPHY: Yeah, I'd just like to welcome this development. Just as Cllr. Kennedy has said, he kind of stole my words there - which he often does - but it's a great day here today in Wicklow Chamber to see such two huge developments being part of Wicklow.

1 We're steeped in history and we're steeped in tourism and we need more of it.

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I just would like to propose that you consult with 4 people with disabilities in County Wicklow. 5 We have 14:42 6 County Wicklow Local Access Group here belonging to the County Council here and we would like to see full 7 8 inclusion and I know you're probably well aware of it, but a programme called "changing rooms", not just 9 wheelchair accessible toilets but changing rooms where 10 14:42 11 there's full facility with hoist equipment and 12 whatever. So we can consult with that. Again, just as Cllr. Kennedy has said, you know it's part of Arklow 13 14 Municipal District and the town of Rathdrum is, you 15 know, a lot of quietness there at the moment probably 14:43 but consultation is a big thing for us in Arklow 16 17 Municipal and we look forward to working with you. Thank you. Cllr. John Ryan. 18 CATHAOIRLEACH: 19 **CLLR. RYAN:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I remember in 2014 when I was Cathaoirleach, along with Minister 20 14:43 21 Andrew Doyle and Brian Doyle meeting the CEO of Coillte 22 and talking about the potential of this project and I have to say Coillte have been fantastic in terms of how 23 they've embraced it and they were going through just 24 some of the history of it, but also talking about the 25 14:43 26 tree planting down there in that seemingly every 27 species of tree in the world is actually in Avondale, 28 and talking about the way you could actually really 29 create something special there. Obviously a tree

1 museum is one thing but the idea of treetop walkways 2 and the whole idea of actually being able to even sleep 3 in the trees. So, you know, they also, then, sent us up to Boyle in County Roscommon the Lough Key Forest 4 5 Park, just to see some of the things that they've done 14:44 6 up there and you get really excited about the potential 7 that this actual project has. At that time it looked 8 like as if it was going to be kind of difficult to 9 bring all the players together to get the funding in placed so I'm absolutely thrilled to hear that Fáilte 10 14:44 11 Ireland have actually decided to fund this in totality. 12 So I hope that means it's going to really go as far as it can possibly go in terms of the creative nature that 13 14 we can create something here that would be absolutely 15 stunning. 14:44

I'm just wondering what ideas or what organisations have you talked to in terms of, you know, like Boyle have the Boda Borg and all these other kind of things that will make it a destination for families. So I'd 14:45 just be really interested in any ideas that you have in that regard. Thank you.

23 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thanks. Cllr. Tommy Cullen.

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CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: I think it should be remembered,
Chairman, that it was a member of this Council who 14:45
saved Avondale House back in 1948, he was a serving
member of this Council, Jim Everett, the late Jim
Everett. When he became Minister for Forestry he
actually got funding for Avondale House and saved it

1 from rack and ruin and done an official opening, I 2 think it was around 1950 and made it a forestry park. 3 Then in 1987 it was his successor, who was also a member of this Council, Liam Kavanagh, who gave half a 4 million pounds that time and they continued to expand 5 14:46 6 it. So it was actually two members of this Council who 7 saved, only for them Avondale House wouldn't be here, 8 or that 500 acres of land.

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I think it's a very historical house and that can't be 10 14:46 11 got away from and it's important that it is preserved 12 in the historical context, but I think when you're talking about these houses, I watched this programme on 13 14 RTÉ, I think it's called "Big Houses" and wining and 15 dining in the big houses and I feel a bit nauseated 14:46 when I watch them because at the time when all these 16 17 big dinners were being put on for all these gentry in these houses there was people starving in this country 18 19 and they didn't have all these big kitchens and all 20 these cooks and grannies, and whatever, and I think we 14:46 21 shouldn't forget that and we should put that in a 22 historical context. Because I was talking to Brendan 23 here, this year is 170 years' anniversary of 1847 and 24 the Famine where in that year over 10,000 people died of starvation in County Wicklow with the Famine. 25 And 14:47 maybe, Chairman, during your time now as Chairman you 26 27 might in some way commemorate that 170 anniversary 28 because in Baltinglass, which was the workhouse, and 29 Rathdrum which was also the workhouse, in 1847 there

was 8,000 people in one day in each of those places
 receiving gruel and they were dying about 300 a day in
 Rathdrum and in Baltinglass.

5 So I think when this big house is being commemorated 14:47 6 from the political context, not necessarily its origin 7 as a big house, which I would find offensive given the 8 poverty in the country and the discrimination in the country at the time, I think we should make sure it's 9 put in its proper historical context. For each one big 14:47 10 11 house there was 10,000 families living in damp with 12 cabins with bits of bracken as roofs and that was the counterpart. I think that historical context should be 13 14 -- Chairman, maybe I would ask that sometime in this 15 year of the 170th anniversary of the Famine in 1847, 14:48 which was the worst year in Wicklow, where over 10,000 16 17 people lost their lives, that we would give some kind of recognition to those people as well. Thank you, 18 19 Chairman.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. walsh.

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21 CLLR. WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks, Frank, 22 for the presentation. I must say, it's most 23 encouraging to see the work that's been done on this project to date. Certainly it's such an exciting 24 project for Rathdrum and of course for Wicklow in 25 14:48 26 particular. You seem to have all your ducks in a row. 27 You have Alan Hill there for tourism development; you 28 have TellTale; we have Turtle Bunbury, another renowned 29 historian; and you have work done on the interpretation

14:48

1 framework. So it's all coming to fruition and it's 2 great to see that you'll be ready to apply for planning 3 by year end. And with the Ireland's Ancient East initiative, you know, it's a perfect fit for that. So, 4 5 again, well done and the best of luck with the projet 14:49 6 the future. 7 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Kavanagh. 8 **CLLR. KAVANAGH:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'm a verv regular visitor to Avondale. I absolutely love the 9 I think it's a little jewel, I think it's a 10 place. 14:49 11 little oasis and it never ceases to amaze me how few 12 visitors it gets in actual fact compared to, say, the likes of other houses and places of historical 13 14 interest. 15 14:49 16 I'm delighted to see that it's going to be developed. 17 I think the benefits it will bring, to not only Rathdrum and the greater Rathdrum area but to Wicklow 18 19 in general because it's very strategically placed, it's 20 only ten miles from wicklow Town and probably less on 14:49 21 the Arklow side. So I think it's going to have 22 wonderful potential and I'm really thrilled. 23 24 The only thing I would add is that sometimes an interpretative centre can be overdone to the point of 25 14:50 I've seen it happen over at 26 losing its actual charm. 27 the Cliffs of Moher, which used to be a wonderful 28 experience and now it's just a very clinical 29 experience. So while I hope that the house itself and

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1 the interpretative centre is great for tourists and 2 visitors and children and students and everything, I 3 hope that there's an area around the perimeter of the estate that will be kept for those of us who are kind 4 5 of like naturants, natural environment, a kind of place 14:50 6 where people will still go just to experience, you 7 know, what it's like to walk in forests and surrounded 8 bv trees. It is has great health benefits, not only 9 physical but mental health. I know that a mental health group launched a very important project up there 14:50 10 11 a couple of years ago. It's a real, it's a place that 12 just draws everybody. It's great for the human spirit.

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14 So I hope that we can just, you know, bear in mind, to 15 try and maintain the integrity of the place as well as 14:51 trying to develop it. And also, just -- is there any 16 17 timeframe by which it's hoped to be completed so that, you know, we may be benefiting from the economic 18 19 benefits that can come from it? Thank you very much. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Thornhill. 20 14:51 21 **CLLR. THORNHILL:** Cathaoirleach, go raibh maith agat. 22 Just a short few words. I would just like to concur 23 with everyone in relation to this masterplan in Avondale House. Just, I would just like to mention 24 just I would just -- I would just like to go back to 25 14:51 the fact in relation to the Famine, 170 years ago. 26 27 Well I come from Skibbereen in West Cork, which was an 28 area which was really affected by the Famine 170 years 29 and I think that it would be a great idea as well to

1 second, if it was a proposal by Cllr. Cullen that we 2 should commemorate that event. I think it is great. 3 our history, we should remember it and that these events shouldn't be forgotten. Go raibh míle maith 4 agat, a Cathaoirleach. 5 14:52 6 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Frank, if you'd like to come back maybe 7 on Cllr. Kavanagh's guestion? 8 **MR. COONEY:** Okay, just a quick summary of some notes. In terms of including the people of Rathdrum. There is 9 a detailed consultation plan being developed and it has 14:52 10 11 been written up by Alan Hill and that has already 12 started and that will continue throughout the whole In relation to ideas that are likely to come 13 process. 14 out of this, we're at a very early stage in the project 15 and as the interpretation framework and visitor 14:53 experience plan evolves we will keep you informed of 16 17 all the ideas that are emerging. 18 19 In relation to forestry, Avondale is the home of Irish 20 forestry going back to the Great Tree Experiment in 14:53

21 1904 and the Famine. We're very much aware of the
22 significance of that and its relationship to Wicklow
23 and Avondale.

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In relation to a timeframe for completion, we must go through this process. It's part of what we agreed to do as part of the tender. As each stage is completed we then get approval to move on to the next stage.
Planning permission application is planned for the end

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1 of the year, thereafter we don't have a timeframe. 2 Thank you. I hope I've answered everyone's comments 3 and questions. 4 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okay. Thank you, members. Thank you 5 very much, Frank. 14:54 6 MS. GALLAGHER: Thank you very much. 7 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Item 5 on the agenda: To consider 8 report: Legal fees for the year ended 31st December 9 2016 (copy attached). I would just say, members have been 10 MS. GALLAGHER: 14:54 11 circulated with the detailed report detailing each 12 section's legal expenses for the 12-month period ending 2016. 13 14 15 "Provision for the payment of legal expenses accounted 14:54 16 for in the Revenue account. Capital expenditure in 17 areas such as housing and roads are generally grouped between the Department of Housing, Planning Community 18 19 and Local Government. 20 14:54 21 In cases where the local authority has been successful 22 in court, every effort is made to collect outstanding 23 legal fees due. 24 25 where cases are lost, legal fees arising sent to our 14:55 legal cost accountants to review." 26 27 28 Members will note that there is a significant amount of 29 detail in the report and if there any specific queries

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in relation to any particular directorate, the Director
 of Services will be more than happy to discuss same.
 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. O'Connor.

CLLR. O'CONNOR: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. 4 I note what you're saying there about the Director of Services but 5 14:55 6 I wonder, in advance of that, if we could be provided with a full breakdown of the legal fees incurred by the 7 8 Council in its attempt to evict John Brady, please, just to give them a heads up, they'll all be looking 9 10 for that, the exact breakdown isn't in the report. 14:55 11 Thanks.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Behan.

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CLLR. BEHAN: well, Chairman, just looking through the 13 14 figures there, it appears to me that the Council, at 15 this point in time, this could be just a rough estimate 14:56 but I've added up the figures that we were given, that 16 17 the Council has spent almost half a million euros in legal fees in battles against either present or past 18 19 members of this authority, specifically Cllr. Cullen, 20 former Cllr. Nevin, former Cllr. de Burca and former 14:56 21 Councillor, now Deputy John Brady.

Now in the case of one the case was settled; in the case of another the case was lost; and I think at the very least we're entitled to a greater degree of explanation as to how we, as a local authority, could end up in a situation spending almost half a million euros of taxpayers' money in battles against public representatives or former public representatives.

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So I accept that that kind of detail is not available today. I certainly think it is detail that we should all have. And a comment from the Chief Executive as to why, in particular, the case against former Councillor now Deputy Brady was taken and why the case was settled 14:57 in relation to former Cllr. de Burca.

8 Secondly, there is a sum of €150,000 mentioned in the case of Silver Wedge -v- Bray Town Council. Could I 9 ask for, again, some further detail on what that 10 14:57 11 particular fee is in relation to and who or what Silver 12 wedge is please? Thank you. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Could I ask then maybe the finance 13 section if they could revert to you outside the forum 14 15 of this meeting on the detail you're looking for in 14:58 16 relation to the last request. Thank you.

I would just like to pass a couple of comments myself 18 19 on it. First of all, I'd like to ask that the Council, before they incur legal feels, that they agree legal 20 14:58 21 fees upfront insofar as possible. You know if we don't 22 agree the fees upfront, you know, we are in danger of giving professionals a blank cheque and I would just 23 24 ask that we be very careful about what we're getting 25 ourselves into before we engage and we get constant 14:58 26 updates on what costs are going to be in relation to 27 all cases.

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Secondly, from our internal matters that we, you know,

I appreciate this report has a lot of lines in it and 1 2 it's very detailed and it's very welcome but could I 3 ask that we split it out into first of all revenue and capital; and secondly, could we split it out in 4 relation to what fees we can recoup. Like fees in 5 14:59 6 relation to housing, roads, maybe land acquisitions. А 7 lot of those fees we can recoup. I'd like to see a 8 spreadsheet of which of those fees out of that. whatever, couple of hundred lines we can actually 9 10 recoup and which are outstanding? Which is back to 14:59 11 what I was saying a couple of weeks ago, when I started 12 here as Chairman, just to make sure that question is not being done, but I would just like to see it, that 13 14 all the fees that we incur that are recoupable, that we 15 get a report on which of those have been recouped and 14:59 16 which are outstanding and still not recouped. Just 17 like, I suppose like a debtor's report really. Thank you. Okay. No other comments then? Thank you. 18 19 **CLLR. O'NEILL:** Can I just ask, is there any monies 20 owed to the Council from elected public 15:00 21 representatives? 22 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** I'm not aware to the answer to that 23 question. 24 **CLLR. O'NEILL:** There's no money whatsoever owed? 25 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** I'm not aware. I don't know the 15:00 26 I'm sure the Finance Department can inform us. answer. 27 CLLR. O'NEILL: Sorry? 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm sure the Finance Department can 29 let us know and let you know the answer to that

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1 question.

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3 I'll move on then. Item 6: To consider the Draft County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2017-2022. A copy was 4 5 Deirdre Burns will now give a presentation sent out. 15:00 on this. 6 7 MS. BURNS: So you all have a copy of the Okay. 8 Heritage Plan sent out. What I'm going to do is really 9 go through, it might be helpful to go through the context of the plan, how it came about. The structure 10 15:01 11 and the background. A little bit about the 12 implementation of the plan and how it will be implemented and then a bit about the plan itself and 13 14 then the next steps in this process. What you have 15 before you is the proposed draft plan that we would be 15:01 16 hoping would be adopted as a draft plan today. 17 So the context for this is the National Heritage Plan. 18 19 The National Heritage Plan was produced in 2002 and 20 that sets out the requirement, or the recommendation 15:02 21 that all local authorities produce a County Heritage 22 Plan, the idea being the enhance to role of local 23 authorities in the management and protection of 24 heritage. 25 15:02 26 This is the third Heritage Plan for Wicklow. we had 27 two other plans; the first one was in 2004 and then the 28 one up to now has been the 2009 Heritage Plan. 29

1 The other context of this is in the Wicklow County 2 Development Plan. It sets the statutory policy 3 framework for the protection of heritage and I suppose the Heritage Plan provides that all the baseline 4 5 information for ensuring good practice that is 15:03 6 implemented via our policy documents. Also, of course, 7 of relevance is the Wicklow Economic Community Plan, 8 which really is about ensuring better quality for life and socioeconomic development. So the Heritage Plan 9 10 has that objective knitted in to it through some of the 15:03 11 actions.

Also, of course, is the Culture 2025 which is the 13 14 Government's Policy Document for heritage for culture 15 in Ireland and that is really about ensuring that 15:03 there's collaboration between all aspects, 16 17 multidisciplinary aspects of heritage and again it enhances the role of local authorities in this regard. 18 19 And Creative Ireland you'll be hearing about later on, 20 again that's the vehicle for the implementation of the 15:03 Culture 2025. 21

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Also, as well, just of relevance just to mention there
for the Heritage Plan, it is really going to assist the
implementation of other of our other documents which we 15:04
use, for example, the Wicklow Biodiversity Plan, the
New Initiative, which is the Local Authorities Water
and Communities Office; and then, of course, the
National Plan, which is the All Ireland Pollinator

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Plan. So all of these are referenced within our
 Heritage Plan.

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Just a note on the implementation of the plan. 4 The 5 plan is implemented by the Wicklow Heritage Forum and 15:04 that's a multidisciplinary representative body 6 consisting of 19 members. It's on one of the 7 8 appendixes in the plan there. Wicklow County Council's represented, the elected members are represented from 9 each Municipal District and also a range of 10 15:04 11 stakeholders, the individuals and representatives of 12 statutory and non-statutory groups with a heritage 13 interest in County Wicklow.

So the Heritage Forum meets four times in a year and is 15:04 responsible for drawing up a work plan which basically is the implementation vehicle and I facilitate that process to the Heritage Office.

20 For the funding for the Heritage Plan, the Heritage 15:05 21 Council have set up a specific fund for County Heritage 22 Plans so once a Heritage Plan is adopted the Heritage Council consider this as a strategic five-year funding 23 24 The Heritage Plan typically has a fund of plan. between 25- and 30,000 gets allocated by Wicklow County 15:05 25 26 Council and that's matched by the Heritage Council. 27 Also, of course, we always look to leverage additional 28 funding and through the last two heritage plans that 29 has included in EU funding, funding which people like

Geological Survey of Ireland, and funding with the likes of UCD and some of our ecological programmes, leader funding, Inland Fisheries and of Course Bird Watch Ireland. So we do a lot of collaborations with those kind of bodies.

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7 So the plan, as I say, you've seen it there. It has 8 five key objectives and under each of those objectives there's a series of actions. I won't go into in too 9 10 much detail but I'll just go through some. I suppose 15:06 11 the first action there is all about raising awareness 12 and enthusiasm for heritage in Wicklow and that includes, I suppose, that's an activity we have been 13 14 very much involved in in the last two heritage plans so 15 things like having events, using a website content, 15:06 publications, promotional activities, all that kind of 16 17 stuff.

19 Objective 2 is about increasing the understanding of 20 the value of heritage and that's really about adding 15:06 21 added value to some of our existing initiatives by 22 adding heritage to them. So that would involve 23 including heritage interpretation for some of our trails and greenways, about developing heritage-themed 24 25 trails, and about looking at things like our access to 15:07 26 our monuments and how that can be improved and about 27 developing facilities for our heritage collections. 28

Objective 3 there is about promoting the conservation

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1 and management of wicklow's heritage and that's all 2 about promoting best practice. So really about 3 developing conservation plans for sensitive landscapes in Wicklow; developing best practice for things like 4 5 historic graveyards, liaising with OPW National 15:07 6 Monuments; encouraging the implementation of the 7 Historic Towns Initiative by the Heritage Council in 8 towns and villages in Wicklow. So all that kind of green infrastructure and about implementing the 9 objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan as well 10 15:07 11 and our objectives in the local authority for that. 12 So objective 3 is all about that kind of area.

14 Objective 4 is about facilitating partnership and 15 active participation in heritage. And that's really 15:08 16 things like we have a number of partnerships going now, 17 we'll say things like with UCD with the Glendalough Heritage Forum with some of the adopted monument 18 19 groups, with citizen sign initiatives. Those kind of 20 things. 15:08

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22 Then objective 5 is about recording heritage and disseminating that information. That's really about 23 24 recording -- we've specific actions in there about making our heritage publications more accessible and 25 15:08 26 ensuring that they're in print. So we've produced 27 quite a lot of publications and reports and documents 28 over the years so it's about making them accessible on 29 the website, continuing to do that, and making sure

1 that they're in print, about carrying out oral history and doing more oral history recording, doing a geology publication and then other heritage recording products that we've been doing.

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6 That just really, the final slide just gives you a bit 7 of the timeline about what's been involved. I suppose 8 the Heritage Forum was set up back in 2015. From that. in the space of last year we've been doing public 9 consultation where we had consultation, we had 31 10 15:09 11 different submissions received. We've been working 12 through those in the Heritage Forum throughout last year up to this year. This plan has been presented to 13 14 the Planning SPC and has been brought before you today 15 based on that. We are now on the stage that if it's 15:09 adopted as a draft today it will go out to public 16 17 consultation and it's proposed that we will have meetings, at least one meeting in each of the Municipal 18 19 Districts and that we'll have a consultation period now 20 till the end of September and then we'll bring it back 15:09 21 to the full Chamber again before the end of the year 22 for adoption. Thank you. 23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Deirdre. Cllr. Stephen

24 Matthews.

25 CLLR. MATTHEWS: Thanks, Chairman. Deirdre, I want to 15:10 26 thank you and the Heritage Forum Team for putting this 27 document together and preserving and looking after our 28 natural environment and our biodiversity and our 29 heritage built environment. Some of the most important

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things and one of the areas within the Council that we
 still have control over.

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I'm particularly interested in the All Ireland 4 5 Pollinator Plan, which you've included in that. 15:10 6 Anybody involved in farming or growing or agri-foods, 7 or anything will be aware of the problems that we're 8 having in that area. So I'm glad to see that included in it and I hope we can take some steps through works 9 10 we do, through the local engineers, to make 15:10 11 improvements for that part of the plan.

But I think it's very good and I'd like to propose, 13 14 Chairman, that we adopt this and put it out to public 15 consultation. Thank you, Deirdre. 15:10 16 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Tommy Cullen. 17 I want to, first of all, CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: congratulate Deirdre on the very hard work she does and 18 19 we very limited resources, it must be said, but she has 20 created a working blueprint on heritage in Wicklow 15:11 21 which is very important. I think it's a tribute to 22 Wicklow County Council that we did appoint a heritage 23 officer in the first place. But I do think the 24 Heritage Office needs more resources. I think the onus now is on each elected representative, if this goes out 15:11 25 26 for draft, to bring issues of local heritage and their 27 own local knowledge to the attention for inclusion in 28 Because we all have information going back this plan. 29 for generations that perhaps is not too familiar and

1 it's quite important that we do that. I think 2 particularly now, the significance of the historical 3 heritage of wicklow has been completely underestimated by National Government down through the years because 4 5 we now look at the huge investments in Mayo for the 15:12 6 Coillte fields over there and now it turns out that 7 they're 4,000 years younger than they were and yet 8 they've got millions of pounds in State funding.

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Chairman, you raised the issue here, at our last 10 15:12 11 meeting, about Baltinglass being the hill fort capital 12 of Ireland, which I agree with, and there has been studies done that in fact West Wicklow is probably the 13 14 oldest settled Celtic heritage in all of Ireland and it 15 is completely being under-investigated and 15:12 16 underresourced in that investigation and can open up 17 huge tourist attractions for the area. I think in fairness to the West Wicklow, West and South Wicklow 18 19 and Baltinglass area, we have taken steps to produce 20 that heritage document. I think we should all now try 15:13 21 and, as Deirdre said, meet with Deirdre and bring to 22 her issues, issues relating to areas of West Wicklow. 23

I will congratulate her and will second her proposal to
put it out on public display and we'll take it from 15:13
there, Chairman. Thank you.
CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Anyone else? Okay. Thank
you, Deirdre.

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Item 7: To consider the Burial Ground Policy Review
 2017 (report attached). I would like to welcome
 Helena Dennehy.

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MS. DENNEHY: Good afternoon members. A report has
been circulated to all members in relation to proposed 15:14
policy in the burial grounds around the County. Just a
bit of background information for members.

In total Wicklow County Council look after 46 9 graveyards countywide. There is different policies and 15:14 10 11 procedures happening in all of those graveyards. About 12 12 or 14 months ago I came before the members and suggested that a policy be put in place countywide. 13 14 From that a Sub-Committee was formed which represented 15 all Municipal Districts so there was a representative 15:14 16 on that Committee which fed back to the MDs.

From that, the policies were put before the 18 19 Sub-Committee, changes were made and recommendations 20 then were processed through the Water and Environment, 15:15 21 Transportation and Roads SPC. So before you today you 22 have 12 suggested policies going forward. They have 23 been recommended by the Sub-Committee and also recommended by the SPC for your approval today. 24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okay, members. Cllr. Murphy. 25 15:15 26 **CLLR. MURPHY:** Yeah, this has been, I suppose, a very 27 sentimental subject for all the Municipal Districts as 28 has been expressed over a few months. As we have said 29 in Arklow Municipal District over many meetings of such

1 issue, that each area has a different culture. I know 2 it's probably very hard to bring some things in line 3 but just one thing last night as I was studying over it last night, there was two things that I just wanted to 4 5 question and maybe query in the sense of plastic 15:16 6 wreaths. I just find strange that we, as Councillors, 7 can dictate to people what they put on the grave. Τ 8 just find that that very insensitive. And also, I know in Arklow and our other municipals, Councillors here 9 behind me has had many, many phone calls, in the last 10 15:16 11 year particularly, about the lack of maintenance in 12 Arklow Graveyard due, I suppose, to the lack of schemes 13 being, you know, non-existent anymore.

15 And even only last Friday I got one from a very upset 15:16 person who has said like she goes up, she cleans her 16 17 family grave but around her there's other graves that have no people attending and like she's sitting there, 18 19 you know, pulling their weeds or whatever. But, I know 20 it's not easy, it's not an easy subject for all our 15:17 21 Municipal Districts but I just think we, as County 22 Council, have to have some responsibility in maintaining the graveyards, and especially for people 23 24 who are buried there and have no families.

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I am questioning the plastic wreaths. I certainly do
not want to dictate what people put on their graves.
Absolutely not.

29 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. McDonald.

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1 **CLLR. McDONALD:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just have 2 a couple of questions on the different policies. Can I 3 start with the locals only policy. We discussed it at the SPC meeting last week and I think by and large the 4 8 kilometres, it was agreed that it is, you know, it 5 15:17 6 would be enough -- you couldn't undertake the 8 7 kilometres for the locals only point. There was a 8 couple of incidents where people in different 9 graveyards around, they're very rural areas in County Wicklow would be a bit more than 8 kilometres from any 10 15:18 11 graveyard and Helena did say that we would take those 12 circumstances into consideration. If we were to adopt this policy I'd like to see that put, that specific 13 14 detail put into the policy that it would be looked at 15 and could be looked at because I know places up around 15:18 the very south of the County and probably over in the 16 17 west, you could be talking 9 or 10 kilometres from a graveyard for people so where do they get buried? 18 19 There might not be a graveyard 8 kilometres close to 20 them. 15:18 21

The second one was around the costings of the graves.
There are three, I think it was three specific
graveyards where VAT is paid on the graveyards. I know
they're new developments. Could we just get maybe a 15:18
bit of an explanation around the whole VAT and why it
is paid and why it's not paid.

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I would just echo what Cllr. Murphy said. The lawned

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1 graveyards, it's very controversial. It's going to be 2 hard to implement it in a lot of places but I think the 3 biggest issue, definitely in the Arklow Graveyard anyway, I don't know too much about the rest of them. 4 is the maintenance issue. If we're going to have 5 15:19 6 lawned graveyards we need to have the staff to maintain 7 them, which we don't seem to have at the moment. Are 8 there any plans to employ more caretakers or more 9 schemes or more staff to keep the lawned graveyards in 10 the condition that obviously people would like to see 15:19 11 them in?

13 If I could just get clarification on some of those 14 issues, please.

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15 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Doran. 15:19 16 **CLLR. DORAN:** Thank you. I think I missed one meeting 17 of that Committee and I didn't see, at any of the meetings that I was at, that it was unanimous to go 18 19 ahead with all the items that is on our list here 20 today. And I'm sorry but I will not and cannot vote 15:20 for this recommendation. 21

I cannot see why we can't leave our graveyards the same as they have been for the last hundreds of years and why we can't -- with the lawned graveyard grave, I haven't a problem with the lawn but I have a problem with the headstones. Headstones, we were, they were always known as headstones now we have them as footstones and I just cannot agree with that. That's

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1 not going to happen and it shouldn't happen.

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3 Even if you take it to the churches, they were all supposed to be buried facing east and facing the sun 4 and are we going to interfere in that as well, 5 15:21 6 interfere in the church? Are we going to change that? 7 I cannot support what we're talking about here today. 8 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okav. Cllr. Tommv Cullen. **CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN:** Chairman, I'd like to agree with 9 Cllr. Doran. I've looked at this policy and it's like 10 15:21 11 the Curate's egg: It's good in parts. But there's 12 a -- if you look at number, for instance, new extensions, well, first instance, we know in 13 14 Baltinglass Graveyard there'll probably be a new 15 extension and this policy would apply as well, it will 15:21 apply to a lot of graveyards where there's going to be 16 17 extensions that they would now be restricted to a lawn-type graveyard. Down the road that's going to 18 cause a lot of difficulties for a lot of people. 19 Ι think there's a fundamental problem with this is that, 20 15:22 21 I will just give you an example of Rathbran Graveyard 22 where people have been buried for two or three centuries and they've all been buried with the 23 headstone at the head in the traditional Judea 24 christian way of burial. And now under this policy 25 15:22 26 there's a number of families not are not being 27 permitted now to put the headstone at the head. They 28 have been told that they have to put the headstone at the feet and people are saying no, we want to put the 29

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1 headstone where families always put the headstone, and 2 that is at the head. And that's why, as Cllr. Doran said correctly, they're called "headstones". I have a 3 view, Chairman, that the vast overwhelming majority of 4 5 people want to leave the burial, it's a very sacred 15:22 6 thing to bury your dead, it's a very sacred and 7 honourable thing to bury your dead and bury your dead 8 with christian values that have been there since over 2,000 years. I don't think we, or I certainly don't 9 feel that I, as a Councillor, or anyone else has the 10 15:23 11 right to overturn, that no County Council in this 12 country for over 130 years has ever attempted to do that and I don't think we should be going down that 13 14 road interfering. There's one thing always said, you 15 don't interfere with the dead. 15:23

17 Now, I wouldn't like anyone saying to me that you can't bury your family members only have a headstone at the 18 19 foot. That's not the way it's done. And I think 20 people should be allowed. I think it's number 12 15:23 21 there, I think there should be an amendment put into it 22 that where families wish that they are allowed to put the headstone at the head in the traditional manner and 23 24 that is at the head, headstone at the head of the 25 coffin, which is the normal way to do it. 15:24

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And also, Chairman, this thing about any new extensions
to graveyards. And the way graveyards are filling up
now, virtually every graveyard in Wicklow could be

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1affected by this in the next decade, that you would say2to people: 'Well any new parts of the graveyard that's3going to be opened up or extended now will have to go4through a lawn-type thing. That's going to cause5consternation.

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15:24

7 It's a big step and, Chairman, I would propose that, 8 certainly an amendment there to it that where the families wish to have the traditional christian burial 9 10 with the headstone at the head of the coffin, of the 15:24 grave that they should be allowed to do so. 11 12 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. O'Brien? **CLLR. O'BRIEN:** Chairman, which policy number is that? 13 14 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: I think it's 12. It could be put 15 in there at number 12, location of headstones. 15:25 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** 12 is location of headstones. 16 17 Cllr. O'Brien.

CLLR. O'BRIEN: It's very sad to go into graveyards and 18 19 see graves that were once magnificently attended to no longer being attended to, or falling into disrepair 20 15:25 21 because the family have passed away. I would see that 22 as an urgent problem that needs sorting out in the Council, that we should be actually doing something 23 about that. That there should be some policy there 24 that where graves are not lawned graves, that they were 15:25 25 once being tended to, sometimes you see headstones 26 27 falling down, you see the whole thing has collapsed in 28 and I've seen it year after year and there's is nothing 29 being done. I wonder is there anything that we, as a

1 Council, could do about that?

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3 Secondly, the idea of lawned graveyards. A lawn is not something of daisies and dandelions stuff like that and 4 5 just cut the grass. That's an another serious problem. 15:25 6 If you're actually going to lawned graveyards you need 7 to have a proper lawn. A lawn is grass, and grass only 8 and needs a lot of tending and needs proper putting down and proper care. I think we're after here is 9 giving dignity to people when they're buried, giving 10 15:25 11 them the best that we can and I would like to see that if there are lawns that they're proper lawns. 12 Thank 13 you.

14 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. O'Connor.

15 **CLLR. O'CONNOR:** Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I agree with 15:26 much of what the other Councillors have said here today 16 17 on the different areas and there are many issues with this plan that I have difficulties with. However, on a 18 19 particular point, very recently Enda Kenny announced 20 that the Traveller Community were to be recognised 15:26 21 formally as an ethnic group in the State. Now, I don't 22 believe this plan recognises the specific traditions of the Traveller Community in the realm of burial rights 23 and the way they carry out their burials. 24 I think there are major difficulties with this plan and one of 25 15:26 26 them is that it has not recognised the particular way 27 that traveller families bury their loved ones and i think that is something that has to be incorporated 28 29 into it. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

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1 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Ruttle.

2 CLLR. RUTTLE: Just on this issue. Now I'm not a 3 member of the Committee so I don't know. Is this based on where the headstone is or is it the way people are 4 5 buried, which way around they're buried? Because as 15:27 6 Cllr. Cullen and I think Cllr. Doran pointed out, it is traditional in the christian tradition to bury, on the 7 8 day of resurrection you'll face the rising sun, and the only exception would be all clergy are buried the other 9 10 way so they face the congregation. Is that what you're 15:27 11 saying, you're going to start it the other way round? I want clarification on that because I'm not a member 12 of the Committee. Are you rejigging the whole 13 14 orientation of the coffin regarding the head and feet, 15 or are you talking about the headstone and where it is? 15:27 Because if you're changing the orientation you're 16 17 getting into big stuff there, you know. It's approximately 2,000 years of tradition going forward, 18 19 you know, and certainly I know clergy are the only 20 people, because they're meant to face the congregation 15:28 21 on the day of resurrection. So maybe we'll get 22 clarification on that. 23 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Behan. CLLR. BEHAN: Thanks, Chairman. When this topic 24 25 initially came up probably about two years ago, I did 15:28 make the point that it's one of the most sensitive 26 27 areas that I think we will ever have to deal with is

And certainly I would have had serious criticism about

how we respect the memory of those who have passed on.

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1 measures that were taken in relation to Springfield 2 Cemetery a number of years ago with regard to people 3 who did not leave their graves fully, if you like, just with a lawn in front of them and they did put memorials 4 on them and there was a proposal that all of those 5 15:28 6 items were going to be forcibly removed by the Council 7 if the people didn't remove them themselves. It caused 8 a huge amount of upset and stress for many of those 9 families. I have to say one aspect of this plan that I welcome is that it has been agreed that that will 10 15:29 11 cease, in other words that there will be no effort 12 made, in Springfield Cemetery, to remove forcibly, or any other way, memorials that have been placed by loved 13 14 ones for people who are buried there. So I welcome 15 that. 15:29

17 I also welcome the fact that we made a decision in principle, or sorry, not we because I was only just on 18 19 the advisory committee, the SPC are making a 20 recommendation to this meeting that we would develop 15:29 21 urn walls, columbarium walls, as they're officially 22 called, in each of the five Municipal Districts to 23 allow people to, I suppose, put the urn of their remains, their ashes, remains of their loved ones in a 24 25 sacred part of the graveyard but not in a grave, which 15:30 from a financial point of view would be a lot easier 26 27 for people and also, because many people now are 28 choosing to be cremated.

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1 Another part of this proposal is that we get ahead and 2 develop those and that the Bray Municipal District would be the first area where this would be done 3 because Bray Municipal District have provided funding 4 5 under their Capital Levies Programme for this to be 15:30 6 done. And that is supposed to be done this year, 2017. 7 I haven't seen any sign of any plan or drawing or 8 anything for it yet, but I sincerely hope that it is going to happen in 2017. 9

15:30

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11 I also want to pay tribute to Helena Dennehy because Helena has been given an impossible task - there's no 12 doubt about it - in trying to bring policies that are 13 14 longstanding, maybe legacies from the burial board days 15 where different decisions and different policies were 15:31 16 adopted in different graveyards and burial grounds. In 17 fairness to her, she has tried to take each step logically and sequentially and tried to achieve 18 19 agreement on every item. It's quite obvious that here 20 there isn't agreement on some aspects yet, but I think 15:31 21 her method of working is the right one. Where if we 22 can establish that there's agreement on, let's say, 23 one, two, three, or four, whatever the number is, that 24 we proceed with them and then we look at the other 25 areas. I definitely agree with everything that has 15:31 26 been said by other Councillors representing 27 particularly the older graveyards, that we should not 28 do anything that would upset a tradition that has been 29 there for countless generations.

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And on that basis, Cathaoirleach, I think we should go very, very slowly and carefully, after all we're only here for a short time ourselves representing the people in the different areas and we shouldn't do anything that would cause great upset to people in the future 15:32 for many years to come.

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8 One other aspect that I think is important to draw the attention of the members, and particularly the members 9 of the Municipal Districts, in case they haven't seen 10 15:32 11 this, in particular, we had to discuss in the Bray 12 Municipal District Area the whole question of Cork Abbey, Woodbrook Glen and Old Conna. Technically 13 14 they're in the Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Area but there 15 would be quite a few people with Bray connections 15:32 16 living in those areas. So one of the proposals we had 17 put, or has been put to the members is that those particular three parts of just the outskirts of Bray 18 19 are integrally part of North Bray would also have the 20 right to apply for a burial space in Springfield in 15:32 21 Bray.

The last point I'd make is that the pricing mechanism is done in such a way as not to encourage, let's say, a lot of people coming into Bray because the sale of spaces is so much more expensive in the Dublin area. So there's kind of a balance that has to be struck as to how that is done.

1 But, Cathaoirleach, I think I'd welcome aspects of it 2 but I do think the most important thing is that we take 3 our time and we do it so that we have as near as possible to full agreement on whatever is decided. 4 Thank you, Cathaoirleach. 5 15:33 Thank you. Cllr. O'Neill. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: 7 CLLR. O'NEILL: I too, like Cllr. Behan, I know Helena 8 has a difficult job with this issue. I was in Rathbran at the weekend at the Blessing of the Graves there 9 Sunday, you know, people are paying €800 for a grave 10 15:33 11 plus I think about €300 for a space for a headstone and 12 it's a christian tradition to be, it is not only the headstone as such, it's to be buried with your feet 13 14 facing the sun. And throughout every graveyard in the 15 country, for thousands of years, people have been 15:34 buried with their feet facing the rising sun and that's 16 17 the way the people of Stratford want it and people are saying to me that they's are not going to put a 18 19 headstone in that being the case. But I looked at the 20 graves in Stratford the weekend and I think there's an 15:34 21 easy solution to it. I think there's plenty of space 22 I think there's about 12 foot of a stretch from there. one pavement to the other so it would mean that the 23 headstone could be erected at the head and the person 24 could be buried with the feet facing the rising sun. 25 15:34 So, again, now, I didn't have any update reports on the 26 27 rest of the County, but I think it's the general policy of the department to kind of eliminate smaller 28 29 graveyards. Again now in rural Wicklow, rural Ireland,

1 you know, that's not really acceptable. People want to 2 be buried near their home. They don't want to be 3 brought to the nearest biggest town. I've argued for the case of the Leitrim Graveyard in the Glen of Imaal. 4 5 The graveyard is full as it is but there's a huge area 15:35 6 there surrounding that for further development, I 7 really believe. Also, in Blessington Graveyard, if 8 there's a line of trees to be removed, and if that's done there's space for another one hundred plots. 9 Ι think it's very important that we look at it from the 10 15:35 11 point of view that local people, whether it be Glen 12 ard, the Glen, Stratford, people want to have their loved ones buried nearby and I think that's what we 13 14 have to consider.

I would agree with Cllr. Doran there too that in rural 16 17 Ireland, rural Wicklow people want to be, they want They'll pay dear enough, they'll pay 18 their own plot. 19 heavy enough. It's going to cost over a grand for a 20 single plot in Rathbran. So I don't think a lawned 15:36 21 cemetery is absolutely essential. People would like to 22 get the graves and like to tend to graves and look 23 after their graves.

15:35

24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Blake.

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CLLR. BLAKE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I, too, would 15:36
like to compliment the Committee and Helena for the
work they have done as regards this. It's been a very
contentious issue for a number of years and I'd concur
with the members in relation to thanking them for the

1 work they have done.

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3 There's one issue that I had always contention with and that was, and I think Cllr. Behan has alluded to it 4 there as well, and that is where the borders come into 5 15:36 6 it, particularly with, well he has in Dublin but we are Kildare and Carlow as well where parishes crisscross 7 8 and we had a problem there that people from outside the County were actually looking to be buried in graveyards 9 in the County and I think the 8 kilometres does address 15:36 10 11 that issue and I'd welcome that in that regard.

The one thing think I do have issue with, and that is 13 in relation to Knockananna. I know we've had problems 14 15 there in the past and there's very limited space for 15:37 any additional graves in it, but to put in a comment in 16 17 it that Wicklow County Council will not be considering an extension at this location, I think we should 18 19 actually withdraw that out of it, particularly in 20 regards to the fact that Knockananna is the only 15:37 21 village in Wicklow that is actually the CLÁR area and 22 we have been getting additional funding on that programme over the last couple of years that has helped 23 out Knockananna as a village and I think there's an 24 opportunity there for us that we could apply, as a 25 15:37 26 local authority, for funding to carry out some work 27 there, maybe into the future, and it might be of no 28 significant cost to the Council whatsoever. So rather 29 than actually putting in that we will not be involved

1 in any additional extensions of Knockananna Graveyard I 2 think we should actually leave it out of it and 3 hopefully you might be able to get funding from additional quarters into the future. Thanks very much. 4 Chairman. 5 15:37 6 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thanks. Cllr. Kennedy. 7 **CLLR. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And, Helena, 8 that's for bringing this document to us. It's a very sensitive issue. It's an issue, I think, that faces 9 everybody. But I suppose I have looked at a lot of the 15:38 10 11 rural graveyards, especially in South Wicklow and I think probably the 8 kilometres does cover most of 12 them, with the exception of Greenan Graveyard. As you 13 14 know, Greenan Graveyard is in the Glenmalure Valley. 15 It's a glacier valley. It's a long valley. And there 15:38 are a number of houses at the end of that valley and if 16 17 this rule was to come into being, those houses would have to be, people in those houses would have to be 18 19 buried in Leitrim Graveyard in the Glen of Imaal, which is 40 kilometres away. 20 15:38 21 22 Now I know it's probably a unique situation but I will 23 be proposing an amendment to this document in a few minutes but I have to make sure that the rural people 24 25 are buried in the gravevard that they're associated 15:38 So I'll leave if for a moment until we start 26 with. 27 coming to the proposed amendments and I will be 28 proposing an amendment Cathaoirleach, to that in a few

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Thank you.

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minutes.

1 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Seamus Cullen. 2 **CLLR. SHAY CULLEN:** Again, I would just like to 3 compliment Helena on the work she's done on this. Tt's obviously, as members have said, it's a very sensitive 4 5 issue, the whole area around graveyards and families. 15:39 6 But I suppose my concern is the distance, having to 7 live within 8 kilometres of the graveyard. I'm nervous 8 and concerned about putting distances and I would ask the question: If there was no distances would it make 9 a huge difference with families wanting to be buried in 15:39 10 their graveyard of choice? Now I know there is some 11 12 graveyards with limited space but I'm primarily looking at the Wicklow Municipal Districts where I don't think 13 14 space is a major issue and I do have an issue with the 15 8 kilometres. 15:40

17 I know one particular family, and I'm just using it as an example, where they would have been originally from 18 19 Wicklow and their family would have moved to 20 Newtownmountkennedy and that, in my opinion, prohibits 15:40 21 the members of that family being buried in 22 Newtownmountkennedy. As far as I'm aware, they would have to be buried in Wicklow or Rathnew Graveyard. 23 SO 24 I do have issues with the distance. I know it's very 25 hard to get a situation that suits everybody. But I do 15:40 26 go back and ask the question again: If there was no 27 distance would it make any difference, particularly in 28 the Wicklow Municipal Districts? Thank you. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Jennifer Whitmore. 29

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1 **CLLR. WHITMORE:** Thanks very much, Chair. I think as 2 my colleagues have spoken in depth about it, this is a 3 very sensitive issue and it's also a very personal one and each family, you know, will have their own 4 5 traditions and I welcome the fact that the urn wall has 15:41 been proposed for each of the districts because I think 6 it just provides families with an additional option 7 8 that isn't available at the moment.

I was just wondering whether any consideration had been 15:41 10 11 given to also providing a natural burial ground because 12 I think this is something that some families might, you know it's obviously not an traditional burial ground 13 14 but it would provide additional options to people, 15 people who may not be as religious as others and I 15:41 16 think it's something that as a Council we should be 17 looking into.

18 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you.

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19 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Chairman, what's a natural burial? There's one in Wexford. Essentially 20 CLLR. WHITMORE: 15:41 21 you get buried in the ground and you could have a tree 22 planted on you so that the purpose is that the burial ground reverts back to woodland or a meadow and it's 23 24 somewhere you can be buried and you can be remembered but you wouldn't have any specific headstones and 25 15:42 26 there'd be no specific mention of you per se but that 27 you are in there and your family can visit you there. 28 It's very successful in Wexford. So it's just an 29 additional option for people who may not be of a

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particular religious faith but they would, obviously,
 want to be somewhere where they can be remembered in a
 nice location.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Last but not least, Cllr. Fitzgerald.
5 CLLR. FITZGERALD: Yeah, just as a member of the 15:42
6 Sub-Committee and the SPC, I just want to commend
7 Helena for the work she's done and it's a very emotive
8 issue.

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Just can I clarify with regard to getting buried facing 15:42 10 11 the sun. My parents are both buried in Arklow 12 Graveyard, so are my other relatives. They don't face the sun in Arklow. They face north. Most graves and 13 14 that graveyard was opened back in the sixties or 15 seventies and we now have reverted, because of a lack 15:43 16 of space, to a lawned cemetery and it's not very easy 17 to speak about it, but the head is at the headstone. The headstones back on to each other so it's a lawned 18 19 cemetery. So there was some opposition to it and 20 people, there was a difficulty there with kerbing and 15:43 21 maybe at times people thought that was going to be 22 removed. But as Cllr. Behan said, there was agreement 23 in Springfield, I think you said, Cllr. Behan, and the same thing in Arklow, that that won't be removed. 24 It's a very emotive issue. 25 15:43

How can you operate a lawned cemetery, I'm not sure, if all the bodies are facing towards the east? I'm not sure how that will operate. I don't know the

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1particular cemetery in Rathbran, is that the name of2it? Rathbran. I don't know the cemetery but I do know3a lot in South Wicklow and I do know in my home town of4Arklow, most of the burials are north facing, except at5the walls who would face west and east.

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7 So it's not a common policy to be buried facing the 8 It's not a christian -- you're saying it's sun. christian, we mustn't be very good in Arklow! But the 9 bodies are faced in Arklow, north, isn't that right, 10 15:44 11 Mary, in the cemetery? At the walls, right, so I don't 12 know that and I go to other cemeteries outside of Arklow. to rural areas in Wexford and I don't think 13 14 that's a policy. So in saying that, people are entitled to their ideas. I was very unhappy when the 15 15:44 lawned cemetery went in in Arklow. As I, say about 60 16 to 70% of people didn't put down surround, others did 17 and that's the way it is, but there will be no change 18 19 in that policy when that graveyard is finished which is about nine years' time. But it's up to the members to 20 15:45 21 agree. I think there's 12 policies there and I think 22 obviously there's an agreement on a lot of them but, as 23 I say, it's a very emotive issue. It's not one I like 24 talking about, to be quite honest about it, but, look 25 it, I have no difficulty with lawned cemetery if they 15:45 are operated right. But I do take the views on board 26 27 here of Cllr. O'Brien, they need to be maintained. I 28 mean sometimes you see the lawned cemetery and you'd 29 get a crop of hay off them. So that's the way it is.

1 I mean, my view on it is quite simple: If the members 2 agree that the bodies should be buried in a certain way 3 so be it.

CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: I think the point to make, about 4 having the headstone at the head not about which way -- 15:46 5 6 having the headstone at the head, which is the traditional way of burial, irrespective of which 7 8 direction but have a headstone at the head. I think that's guite a minor amendment actually. I think it's 9 important to families because families now -- we have 10 15:46 11 instances of families who are now not putting up a 12 headstone and they're waiting for the outcome of this meeting because they feel so strongly about it that 13 14 they want to bury their family in the normal christian 15 way and I don't think that's a huge ask in that. 15:46 16 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** We'll let Helen into come in and then 17 we can see what comments people want to come back with. Just some of the easier points first. 18 MS. DENNEHY: 19 Just a few Councillors brought up in relation to 20 maintenance. Item number 11 is dealing with 15:46 21 maintenance and the proposal is that at budget time in 22 September or October, so budget 2018, that each MD would look at an increased budget for maintenance 23 24 within their relevant Municipal District.

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26 Cllr. Murphy, as regards plastic wreaths, I haven't had 27 any information or knowledge in relation to what that 28 might be and I will talk to you separately in relation 29 to it.

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1 The locals only policy. I suppose just to confirm in 2 relation to that. The idea behind the locals only 3 policy is that when spaces are running low within a graveyard this locals only policy would kick in. 4 SO 5 what we're trying to say is, in those rural, small 15:47 6 graveyards where you have maybe less than 20 spaces you 7 might then reserve it for locals only. So that's where 8 your 8 kilometres is going kick in at that stage. Now 9 there is a two-tier pricing system at the moment so the two-tier pricing system relates to if you are local 10 15:47 11 within that 8 kilometres it would be one price and 12 outside 8 kilometres would be a different price. The main idea about the locals only would be that it would 13 14 kick in when you have low space left within a 15 graveyard.

17 The idea of traditional christian burial. Again, just to point out in relation to that. In Wicklow County 18 19 Council, as I mentioned, we have 46 graveyards; 34 of 20 those active burials. Within those 34, 14 graveyards 15:48 21 operate a type of lawned cemetery type cemetery. So in 22 those 14 graveyards headstones are back-to-back. 23 Headstones remain back-to-back in those 14 and in all 24 of those 14. this one issue in Rathbran is the first 25 time it has ever come up. So Just to clarify that. 15:48 26

27 Natural burial ground. Cllr. Whitmore, again that's something that hasn't been considered but we'll look 28 29 into it for future graveyards.

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15:48

Again, Cllr. Cullen, just in relation to a possible
 Wicklow family now living in Newtown, again that
 wouldn't come into play unless there was a shortage of
 space in the adjoining cemeteries.

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Cllr. Blake, just in relation to Knockananna, what I've 6 7 included in Knockananna at number 8 is that we, as 8 Wicklow County Council, have looked into an extension 9 at Knockananna previously. We cannot source land in Knockananna, it is church land, but if the church wish 10 15:49 11 to develop a graveyard we could work with them. 12 CLLR. BLAKE: Could I just ask you to exclude the wording that "Wicklow County Council will not consider 13 an extension at this location." Could I just ask you 14 15 to leave that out, that will facilitate you. 15:49 MS. DENNEHY: Again, it's not Wicklow County Council 16 17 who will be developing a graveyard in Knockananna, it would be the church. We can work with them but it 18 19 won't be us developing it. 20 **CLLR. BLAKE:** I think I said to you as well it's the 15:50 21 CLÁR area, it's the only village in Wicklow that's in 22 the CLÁR area, we might be able to apply for funding 23 there but it will have to come through Wicklow County I'm just asking you to leave that wording 24 Council. 25 out. 15:50 26 Cllr. O'Neill, you mentioned Leitrim MS. DENNEHY: 27 Graveyard and that further development should be

extend Leitrim Graveyard about two to three years ago

applied in Leitrim Graveyard. Again, we sought to

and were turned down by the Department of Environment,
 as in relation to the heritage and previous, move away
 from existing burial grounds.

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5 The urn wall. Cllr. Behan, the urn wall, yes, five urn 15:50 walls are agreed. 6 The first one, the revised plans in 7 relation to Springfield are currently being drawn up. 8 It was discussed by Bray Town Council members a couple of years ago, three or four years ago. Plans are in 9 10 place so it's just a revision and a tweak of those 15:51 11 plans that are currently place.

Arklow has been confirmed for the Arklow Municipal District.

16 Rathnew Cemetery has been confirmed for the Wicklow 17 Municipal District and I am still awaiting from the 18 elected members, a nominated graveyard for Greystones 19 MD and Baltinglass MD.

20CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. McDonald said about the VAT15:5121issue, why is there VAT in a graveyard.

22 **MS. DENNEHY:** Yes, costings in relation to that. SO 23 where you develop lands, the cost of the VAT is payable on the development of those lands and, therefore, there 24 is a set period - and again I just have to confirm this 15:51 25 26 with Finance - but there's a set period that the VAT is 27 then chargeable in relation to that land. Seven years, 28 I'm thinking seven years that you have to charge it but 29 I'll confirm the year. So where you've developed, you

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Gwen Malone Stenography Services Ltd.

15:51

1 have to charge VAT on that development.

2 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Could I say in relation to that, that I 3 think everyone should be charged equally, so in the event where there's VAT that they get a lower price. 4 MS. DENNEHY: Again, it's because we were in a position 15:52 5 6 that we were able to recoup the VAT on the cost, you 7 then have to charge the VAT. 8 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** I understand that. but I still think everyone should be treated equally in terms of the 9 price of a grave. 10 15:52 11 **MS. DENNEHY:** Okay. That VAT applicable applies to 12 three developments which is Rathbran, Castlemacadam, and Manor Kilbride. 13 CLLR. McDONALD: They're new developments. 14 **MS. DENNEHY:** They're new developments. 15 15:52 16 **CLLR. McDONALD:** Any new development that comes on 17 board are going to be charged VAT? I think I've covered everything. 18 **MS. DENNEHY:** Yeah. 19 I don't know if I have. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Vance wants to come in. 20 15:52 21 CLLR. VANCE: Yeah, just a point of information, 22 Chairman. It says here in policy item 5 that the 23 Council continue to operate lawned cemeteries as it is. No change, no change to existing guidelines. 24 But did I 25 hear that situation in Springfield in Bray is going to 15:52 26 be left as it is with numerous surrounds? Like given 27 that 90%, I think, of people in Springfield are 28 compliant with lawned cemetery, there's probably 10% or 29 even less than 10% in regard to having surrounds and

1 various things like that over the years that they put 2 in, despite the fact that it's always been regarded a 3 lawned cemetery. Is that policy changed or who is recommending or who changed that policy if it is going 4 to be a change? Could you answer me that because I'm 5 15:53 6 not aware of that because there was controversial a 7 number of years ago in regard to that and 8 Cllr. O'Connor is concerned about the ethnic groups that come in. I'm just concerned that if that is the 9 policy then, or if that is the recommendation of the 10 15:53 11 Committee that these graves be left the way they are, 12 what is going to happen to new people that come in there and who demand the same type of structures on 13 their graves as what exists at the time? How are they 14 15 going to be treated? Are they going to be treated in 15:54 exactly the same way, or if an ethnic group come in and 16 17 decide that they should be treated different than everybody else in the graveyard, because the graveyard, 18 19 to my knowledge anyway, is not a segregated graveyard. 20 It doesn't matter who they are, from whatever ethnic 15:54 21 group they are, they get a grave and I think they're 22 buried the same as everybody else. I'm just concerned 23 about, like, the differences that are being offered to some people than an ordinary people who just want a 24 grave in a lawned cemetery, that they're treated 25 15:54 equally to other people who seem to be getting 26 27 whatever, to go against the rules of a particular 28 cemetery, get rewarded by allowing the surrounds to be 29 kept there and where other people who have abided by

1 the law see this particular thing happening and is it 2 going to continue? Could I have answers to them please? Please? 3 Cllr. O'Brien. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: **CLLR. O'BRIEN:** I asked the question about graves 5 15:55 6 falling into disrepair and I would propose that a plan, irrespective of whether they're church-owned or 7 8 council-owned, I would propose that a plan be put in 9 place to sort this problem out immediately. It's very 10 upsetting to go in and see the graves in such a state, 15:55 11 you know. I propose that a plan be put in place to 12 sort this out immediately. **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Murphy. 13 CLLR. MURPHY: Yeah, I just want to go back to Helena 14 15 but my issue about the plastic, artificial wreaths. 15:55 It's here in the form where, address a person who gave 16 17 instructions for erection of the monument. And just on the last line it says: 18 19 "The use of trees, shrubs, plants, vases, artificial 20 15:55 wreaths and other obstructions on the surface of the 21 22 grave area is strictly prohibited and Wicklow County 23 Council reserve the right to remove any such items without notice." 24 25 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Helena, do you want to come 15:56 26 back? 27 MS. DENNEHY: Again, Cllr. Murphy, just in relation to 28 the plastic wreaths, that's in a lawned type cemetery 29 that no items will be permitted on the lawn area of the

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1 cemetery.

2 CLLR. MURPHY: I still would object to that, we do not 3 dictate to what people put on their lawn and we certainly do not have the right to remove it. 4 5 **MS. DENNEHY:** Cllr. O'Brien, in relation to headstones 15:56 6 in graveyards, I suppose, as a local authority we're 7 struggling to keep up with maintenance in graveyards, I 8 don't see us maintaining headstones. That would be a family issue. 9 Cllr. Vance's point? 10 CATHAOIRLEACH: 15:56 11 MS. DENNEHY: Cllr. Vance, just in relation to number 12 5. This is lawned cemeteries. Okay. What was agreed by the Sub-Committee was that where an existing 13 cemetery is considered lawned-type cemetery, it would 14 15 continue to be a lawned cemetery but that we would not 15:57 16 be in a position to go back and remove illegal 17 surrounds, et cetera, that have already been erected. That going forward we would hope and we would notify 18

19 members of the public if it is continues to be a lawned 20 cemetery and would ask people to obey by those rules. ^{15:57} 21 CLLR. VANCE: You haven't answered my question. What 22 if somebody else decides or wants to put in a very 23 similar operation now?

MS. DENNEHY: Well, again we would be saying going
 forward that there is no surrounds permitted in those 15:57
 lawned-type cemeteries.

27 CLLR. VANCE: I'm just saying, say, what is going to
28 happen if somebody else comes in and demands the same
29 service that other people have had? How is that going

1 to be handled? I think it's a legitimate question. Or 2 like what Cllr. O'Connor raised the subject, ethnic 3 groups that feel that they can do this, you know what I mean, and get away with it, there's other people 4 watching it that are compliant, 90%, at least 90% in 5 15:58 6 Springfield, including my own parents' grave, is a 7 lawned cemetery and I accept that. That's part and 8 parcel of it and I think myself I support that because I think it is easier to keep and maintain and various 9 10 things like that. Looks much better. But I'm just 15:58 11 concerned about, there's a lot, this is going to come 12 back to bite you. I certainly couldn't vote for that. You know what I mean? Like you can't have a situation 13 where there are groups of people allowed to do 14 15 something and other groups aren't and people are 15:58 complying with what the cemetery is and other people 16 17 aren't. I mean, you just can't do things like that. Unless, unless we have strict -- I mean I can handle 18 19 the fact that there's graves there that they exist and 20 that are there but I mean the problem is when somebody 15:59 21 else comes in. I'm flagging this now, if somebody else 22 comes in and I can tell you there are people that will 23 come in and will do exactly the same thing and how are we going to handle that situation? 24 25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Before I call in any --15:59 26 CLLR. VANCE: This is a cop out. 27 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Before I call in any more members I 28 have five lights lighting up at the moment. I'd just 29 ask members to consider, I don't think we're going to

reach agreement here today, no chance. So I'll ask
 members to consider bringing it back once again to the
 SPC but I'll let the five speakers speak and see what
 comes out. Cllr. Cullen.

CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Chairman, I actually agree with 5 15:59 Cllr. Vance there that there should be a certain 6 7 uniformity in graves, whatever the policy is in a 8 particular grave. I don't think people should be able 9 to do what they want in a graveyard. I think there should be -- Chairman, I'm hearing what you're saying. 10 16:00 11 I think, Chairman, this report should perhaps go back 12 to the Municipals District and maybe the Municipals District should be asked to give a report for 13 14 graveyards in their own municipality area and what 15 policies they want to adopt because I think it's 16:00 probably fair, and I fully support what Cllr. Blake is 16 17 about Knockananna. I've relatives of my own buried in in Knockananna Graveyard and I think perhaps there's 18 19 issues that deals with West and South Wicklow which 20 aren't necessarily the same as in Bray or Greystones. 16:00 21 So I think, Chairman, if perhaps it went back to the 22 Municipal Districts for the Municipal Districts to 23 maybe propose amendments for their particular area and let the other four municipal authorities come back with 24 a similar proposal, because I think when it goes down 25 16:01 to the grass root levels at Municipal District, they're 26 27 far more informative of the municipalities than the SPC 28 If that's any help to you, Chairman? would. 29 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Kennedy.
1 CLLR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Helena, you 2 didn't answer my question that I did ask you in 3 relation to the families at the end of the valley in Glenmalure. You did, when somebody mentioned Leitrim 4 5 If those families have to go to Leitrim Gravevard. 16:01 6 Graveyard, which is 40-odd kilometres away. You just said a few minutes ago that Leitrim Graveyard was 7 8 turned down for an extension. I don't know. Chairman. 9 this is a question for you. Are you taking amendments 10 to this document today or not? Because if you are 16:01 11 taking amendments I want to put an amendment to it 12 because there is no way that I'm going to sit here and represent the people of my area that have to now go 40 13 14 miles or 40 kilometres away to a graveyard where 15 they've no burial space in. It's not going to happen. 16:02 16 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** I don't propose to start taking 17 amendments today. Thank you, Chairman. 18 CLLR. KENNEDY: 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. O'Brien. 20 **CLLR. O'BRIEN:** I'm just disappointed with the response 16:02 21 to my proposal that we will put a plan in place for the 22 upkeep of graves that have fallen into disrepair. We 23 can put a plan in place for derelict buildings, no problem, you know, and we can put staff that and do 24 that. This is a very, very serious issue. I was in a 25 16:02 26 graveyard yesterday and you'll get very upset when you 27 see the families passed away and the graves in

year. I'm saying it's a serious policy that needs to

disrepair and that has been the case for year after

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1 be addressed immediately and there's no good saying 2 it's not part of our set up. All I'm asking is to put 3 a plan in place. Whatever it entails, the fact that we meet with authorities or the church, or whatever, and 4 5 get this problem sorted out immediately for the dignity 16:02 6 of those families that have passed away. 7 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Behan. 8 **CLLR. BEHAN:** Cathaoirleach, I think you're wise not to be trying to force a decision here today, 9 10 Cathaoirleach. As I said, when I initially spoke, and 16:03 11 I want to again pay tribute to Helena because you can 12 see she has an absolute grasp of the detail, but when it comes to making policy decisions she can't make a 13 14 policy decision but it's quite obvious that we're going 15 to find it very difficult to make it as well. 16:03

17 Cllr. Vance, you know, has spoken on the issue of Springfield. Cllr. Vance knows, as well as I do and as 18 19 well as other people do, that that policy that he's 20 talking about, was not implemented by Bray Urban 16:03 21 District Council or Bray Town Council from the time the 22 burial ground was opened. And if he is proposing that those elements of memorials and so on are removed from 23 those people's graves, I completely and utterly 24 25 disagree with that on the very same basis that other 16:03 people have talked about having respect for traditions 26 27 and their memories of loved ones in other parts of the 28 I completely and utterly oppose that, if County. 29 that's what he's proposing. Now I know he's only asked

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questions so far, but if he's proposing that somebody goes in and removes all those memorials, well then let him say it and let him propose it and let's have a vote on that.

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I would prefer, Cathaoirleach, if we, moving forward, 6 in relation to Springfield and I understand it's 7 8 localised and people outside of the Bray Municipal District might not necessarily be concerned about it, 9 that we look at the situation as it is at the moment 10 16:04 11 and we accept what has happened. One idea that we were 12 beginning to discuss at that Sub-Committee, and I'm not on the SPC, I'm only on the Sub-Committee, was that we 13 might, in some way, see about Springfield Cemetery 14 15 being divided in some way into, let's say, a future 16:04 lawned cemetery or that the other part of the cemetery 16 17 that's already occupied could be either lawn or memorial, whatever people want it. But that if people 18 19 opted for the other part, well then they'd know that 20 there will be no memorials and they're accepting that 16:05 21 that's where they're going. Now, I accept 22 Cllr. Vance's point, lots, the majority of people have 23 already got the lawned cemetery and they have the headstones appropriate for that. But this is why it's 24 so difficult. We're dealing with people's own 25 16:05 traditions, their own families, their own bereavements, 26 27 their own sadness. The number of people and 28 Springfield - and I'm quite sure it's the same all over 29 the County - where close relatives are going to visit

1 loved ones' graves every day for maybe years after the 2 person has died. We cannot and we should not interfere with those people's feelings, unless we're absolutely 3 sure we're doing the right thing. And it's quite 4 obvious, at the moment, we're not sure we're doing the 5 16:05 6 right thing in a lot of these decisions and I certainly 7 support your proposal that we don't make decisions on 8 this today.

9 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Ruttle.

10CLLR. RUTTLE: What Cllr. Behan was saying, if you make
16:0611a decision today it would be very difficult. I think12Cllr. Cullen's proposal that we go back to the SPC,

13 have it on the agenda for this month.

14 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** The municipal authorities?

15 CLLR. RUTTLE: The municipal authorities meeting, yeah, 16:06 16 go right back to that, have it on agenda for the next 17 meeting and sort it out locally because there are 18 different traditions, different customs and we know 19 more about the areas than anyone else. Thank you. So 20 I second that proposal.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Vance wants to come back in. 22 CLLR. VANCE: Just finally on this. Chairman, I'm not 23 insensitive to people, is particularly in Springfield which I know a fair bit about and I'm not sure that 24 they have been up there from the time that Springfield 25 16:06 26 went in there. It's only in one section actually that 27 there's quite a bit of these surrounds, not in the other section. I'm not insensitive to that. And I'm 28 29 not insensitive to the fact that as a compromise in

that regard to the units that are in up there as well. 1 2 The problem I have is to have consistency, consistency 3 the with future burials and various things like that and what you do in the lawned cemetery. That's the 4 difficulty in treating people differently. You know 5 16:07 6 what I mean? If it's a lawned cemetery it's a lawned 7 cemetery, people are treated exactly the same and vice 8 versa; if it's a free for all it's a free for all then. It's very difficult to have one rule for one section 9 and one rule for another and it's very difficult to 10 16:07 11 implement that. It's a problem that Helena up there, 12 or the Committee has and I can understand it's a particularly difficult problem. But if something is 13 14 not agreed it will come back to bite them and that's 15 the problem that I have in that regard to this. 16:07 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Kennedy, did you want to come in? 16 17 **CLLR. KENNEDY:** Cathaoirleach, just one last thing. Just coming back to the Municipal Districts, which I 18 think it should. I think there should be rural 19 representation on that Sub-Committee, as well as urban 20 16:08 21 representation for the rural graveyards. Thank you. 22 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Okay. Lastly, Cllr. O'Neill. 23 **CLLR. O'NEILL:** Could I just very briefly, 24 Cathaoirleach. Going back to Leitrim Graveyard. Ι don't think it's really good for the Department of 25 16:08 Heritage, or whatever, to just say "no". I'd like a 26 27 report of that. I've to go out and meet people from 28 the area, from the Glen and explain to them, you know, 29 why they can't bury their loved ones in Leitrim

I mean I'd like to know what the Department 1 Graveyard. 2 of Heritage, what their -- they allowed a graveyard 3 here in the first place. I know they can be a bit finicky if they find an auld stone or a bicycle wheel, 4 or something like that, and say you can't do this, that 16:08 5 6 and the other. So I'd like to be able to get a copy of 7 that report for the people of th Glen of Imaal to be 8 able to explain exactly what the problem is with the 9 department.

10 Members, we have a proposal to put it CATHAOIRLEACH: 16:08 11 back to the Municipal Districts. I think that makes 12 sense on the grounds that each area of the County, especially the rural areas, has different priorities 13 14 and different views of this thing and a different 15 culture than, you know, different parts of the County, 16:09 urban. rural et cetera and everywhere has its own 16 17 peculiarities. So I propose it goes back -- I support the proposal that it goes back to the Municipal 18 19 Districts.

20 CLLR. DORAN: Chairman, I propose we put it back until 16:09 21 September. We need a bit of time. This is not simple 22 and unless we stick to the tradition that was there and the headstones and the people being buried facing the 23 east that they're seeing, it's in all the churches that 24 I know of, maybe Arklow is different they're always a 25 16:09 26 bit don't know one end from the other down there! That's not the way I look at it. 27

28CATHAOIRLEACH:Cllr. Doran, just to be clear, you want29it to go back to the Municipal Districts in September,

1 is it?

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2 **CLLR. DORAN:** In September, yeah.

3 **CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN:** No, he's talking about here.

CLLR. DORAN: To bring it back to the full Council in September.

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The Municipal Districts will just have 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: 7 one meeting between now and September to I think we'll 8 maybe hold off on that decision until September and 9 we'll bring it back to the next Municipal District 10 meeting which is this month. Is that agreed? 16:10 11 **CLLR. VANCE:** Could I just say, bring it back at an 12 appropriate time, give it a bit of time to try and sort 13 it out.

14CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Bring the 12 proposals back to15the Municipal Districts and if they want to make16:1016amendments let them do so. Thank you.16:10

17 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Maybe, Chairman, maybe we should 18 maybe look at doing it in a module form that we would 19 have five modules as attachments to it so that in other 20 words, the module from our area is a standalone module 16:11 21 from, because our electoral area graveyard is 22 completely different to Bray and vice versa and maybe

23 we should do it, maybe have five modules for five24 municipal authorities.

- 25 CATHAOIRLEACH: You could have give different policies 16:11
 26 then.
- 27 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Yeah.
- 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Consider that. Thanks, members.
 29 Next item: To receive a presentation: Creative

Ireland from Ms. Jenny Sherwin, Arts Officer, Wicklow
 County Council.

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MS. SHERWIN: Good afternoon everyone. I know you are
really busy but today is my last chance to present this
to you before I exit stage left for a few months in 16:12
about four weeks' time.

8 I will just give you a kick overview because I know you're pushed for time. So Creative Ireland is just 9 10 something we've been asked to present to you because 16:12 11 it's a new all governmental initiative that has been 12 established both from national cultural institutions, from the departments, right down to the local 13 14 authorities and more than half of the way that the 15 Government want to work on this programme is through 16:13 16 local authorities.

So basically what we have to do for them in 2017 is 18 19 create a plan for funding we have received. We have 20 been given it because in 2016 the commemorations were 16:13 21 so successful that the Taoiseach decided that he wanted 22 a new programme with Heather Humphreys to respond to 23 the public outpouring of public cultural events that 24 happened. So what they want to do is have a really 25 high level ambition programme which reaches into the 16:13 26 very rural and local, right up to the international. 27 So they have -- all their policies are based around 28 wellbeing. I've just got this to show you. If this is 29 the longer one I'll skip it.

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1 I have two videos. I'll skip one and just show you 2 Some people are skeptical that Government changes one. 3 were -- that if -- that basically funding will be withdrawn and it will go up as another one of these 4 5 great big things. It is the single most important, 16:14 6 since the foundation of the Art Council in Ireland, 7 it's the single most important piece of policy and 8 statutory, tieing all governmental departments together around culture and culture includes -- this is a long 9 -- this won't get me out of jail on time, I will just 10 16:14 11 change it to the other one.

So it's very significant. So it is allowing us to
work, build a submission here, the Arts Office. So as
I said just in case people think, that as Taoiseach 16:14
Enda Kenny has gone out and we have Leo Varadkar now,
it has gone away, just to give you a quick, short video
on Leo Varadkar's thoughts on it.

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20 Basically you can see him saying that he endorses it; 16:15 21 he is very involved with it. He wants to continue, 22 much like the plan, he has endorsed Heather Humphreys. 23 And you'll see that he has changed the Department to 24 specifically the Cultural Department. That was for a 25 reason. That was because they're planning to make huge 16:15 investment, a multi million euro investment in this, 26 27 which is new. He plans to double the spending of 28 cultural departments for next year, starting from next 29 year.

So why are we talking to you? They've asked us, as local authorities, to deliver on some of their work. They've divided what they want to do into five different pillars so we've been charged with pillar 2.

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6 One is about the child. How are children and young 7 people catered for in terms of culture? Second is 8 around creativity and communities. The third is around 9 investment and putting in infrastructure. The fourth 10 is around Ireland as a centre of excellence in media 16:16 11 production and the fifth is around global reputation.

Our principal one to deliver on is on number 2. 13 So we 14 have to create an action plan for a five-year period on 15 strategy for a five-year around how you will roll out 16:16 16 and utilise this additional funding. It is designed to 17 not duplicate or replicate what we've been doing It is really designed that we have additional 18 already. 19 funding to create additional strategic programmes that 20 we wouldn't have had capacity otherwise to do. It is a 16:16 21 lot more work but it is a very exciting prospect for us 22 in the Cultural Department of local authorities.

The ones we are really interested in 1 around the child; 2 around then community and because we have such 16:16 a media focus in Wicklow we will be looking at that pillar.

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So they've asked us, in summary, to create that

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1 strategy over the course of a few months. It is all 2 very quick because they need it in before the financial 3 year is over. They're committing around 100,000 to us next year. They've given us 64,000 for this year. It 4 5 does come with the money, it's not one of these things 16:17 6 where (inaudible) and there's nothing else. We will 7 see other infrastructural funding coming down through 8 it and funding for communities in other ways as well 9 directly from Government to support other measures. 10 16:17 11 So it's very a welcome thing and we hope to bring back 12 a draft strategy by the end of the year. They're asking for us to have it done by December so the 13 14 consultation will be framed now over the summer and we 15 will go out and bring back drafts in September and go 16:17 out with a draft after that to yourself. Okay. 16 Does 17 anyone have any questions? **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you very much, Jenny. 18 19 Cllr. McLoughlin. 20 Hi, Jenny. I have to say thanks a CLLR. MCLOUGHLIN: 16:18 21 million for all the work you've done on this because I 22 know really you should be given a year or so. You 23 should have been given a good year to actually put together something and you've only had a few months and 24 25 I know that you've been working very well, and 16:18 26 particularly when you're heading off and leaving us at 27 the height of it all. I just want to say on behalf of 28 the LCDC, certainly, thank you for all the work you did 29 and particularly the work you did on the previous

1 programmes because if we hadn't done such a great job 2 on them we might be worried whether it was possible to 3 do this, but I know with all of the work that has been done with the Committees on the previous Creative 4 Ireland Programmes - it wasn't called Creative Ireland 5 16:18 6 - 1916 Commemorative programmes that we will do a great 7 job in Wicklow and I know with you in the helm we 8 certainly had a lot to be proud of and a lot to be proud in the future. So thank you for all of that. 9 10 MS. SHERWIN: Thank you. 16:18 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor, and thank you, 12 Short and sweet. Cllr. Thornhill. Jenny, again. Sorry, Cathaoirleach, I just wanted 13 CLLR. THORNHILL: [Irish spoken] 14 to say a few words. I would just like 15 to say in relation to this document, one thing that I 16:19 would, and also would like to say thanks to Jenny, you 16 17 know, for bringing this before the Council. I think it is very important, I mean culture and creativity in 18 19 relation to the Arts is a very important thing in 20 relation to the country because, as we all know, the 16:19 21 country is getting multi-cultured. We have cultures 22 from all different countries. We have Chinese and, as we will know in a few weeks' time ourselves, and the 23 But one thing I would just like to put to 24 Irish. Jennifer in relation to the Irish language and I'm 25 16:19 26 delighted to see some translation here in relation to 27 the English being translated into Irish. What emphasis 28 will be put on the Irish language because, as we know 29 in Wicklow and especially in Bray, we have a lot of

gaelscoils and I think one thing that has been evident, and you mentioned the word about media, I mean if you look at TG4 and, you know, the influence of TG4 on the media and, you know, the way an awful lot of these journalists have done very well out of the Irish language, I think it's something that we should put emphasis on and it shouldn't just be dismissed.

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9 I would just like to hear Jennifer's thoughts on the 10 matter. Go raibh míle maith agat. 16:20

11 MS. SHERWIN: All the documents will be translated into 12 So all of the main activation plan and the Irish. strategic document will be available in Irish as well. 13 14 We will also, like, when we're working with the child 15 and the young person obviously we know that there's 16:20 almost 90 primary schools in the County now and some of 16 17 them are gaelscoileanna at the primary level and then the senior level and we will be catering for, you know, 18 19 those schools as well to integrate as they would in 20 their Irish language capacity. You know, so does that 16:21 21 help?

22 **CLLR. THORNHILL:** Yeah, I've no problem with the 23 translation. I wouldn't mind that it's only just that, in relation to the whole programme, you know, like that 24 25 Irish is just, you know, treated as a subject. The 16:21 translation part of it I'm not overly bothered about it 26 27 because there's so much here, whatever about reading it 28 in English, reading it in Irish, I'm just thinking 29 about the language and the perception about the

1 language and that we should be made appreciate about 2 our language and our culture. Go raibh maith agat. 3 CLLR. MCLOUGHLIN: Thanks, Jenny. Next item, Lorraine. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Item 9. The members have been 5 MS. GALLAGHER: 16:22 6 circulated with a letter from the Nottingham St. Patrick's Day Committee and this has gone through 7 8 Protocol Committee, but basically it's an invitation from the Nottingham St. Patrick's Day Festival 9 Committee that Wicklow County Council have been chosen 10 16:22 11 as the lead county, for one year only, and that's in 12 the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2019. So the Protocol Committee have recommended it. So if I could have a 13 14 proposer? If the members are agreed to participate, as 15 I say, in the parade for one year only, a proposer and 16:22 a seconder. Thank you very much Cllr. Cullen and 16 17 Cllr. O'Connor. CLLR. O'CONNOR: Thanks very much, Cathaoirleach. 18 19 Absolutely, I'm happy to support this very kind 20 invitation from Nottingham and despite, I should point 16:22 21 out, the appalling behaviour of the Sheriff of 22 Nottingham towards those freedom fighters in Robinhood 23 and His Merry Men! But it is a very good initiative 24 and I'm delighted that we've received it. 25 16:22 26 I would suggest, however, that if any Councillor is 27 going they might pay their own way to Nottingham as a sign of good faith to the people in the County. 28 29 Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

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1 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Murphy.

2 **CLLR. MURPHY:** Yeah, I, too, took an interest in the 3 letter doing my homework last night on a Sunday night, and I went on the website and it was actually so 4 5 interesting about the whole project, the whole 16:23 6 festival. So I just e-mailed them to say, you know, I 7 was part of Wicklow County Council and I was very 8 impressed with their website, or whatever, and I got a 9 lovely e-mail back this morning and I also got another e-mail from a woman who just, I'll just read it, she's 10 16:23 11 part of the story telling in Nottingham and she 12 certainly would like to research some Irish literature to do in the festival for the children. So I thought 13 14 it was very nice. 15 MS. GALLAGHER: Thank you, Councillor. 16:23 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Okay. Next item, number 17 10: To consider the Monthly Management Report. Thank you very much. Members have been 18 MS. GALLAGHER: 19 circulated with the Monthly Management Report for June 20 2017 so it's just basically for noting. 16:24 21 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Whitmore would like to speak. 22 CLLR. WHITMORE: Thanks very much, Chair. Yeah, I saw 23 that on the agenda and I just saw the note that Tom had put on it saying that it was as a result of a circular 24

and he gave the details of the circular. So I went in 16:24
and had a look at the circular that relates to this
Management Report and the circular is actually quite
extensive. It covers a lot of stuff. So essentially
this Management Report that we get each month, it's

intended, and this is quoted from the circular:

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"It is intended to assist the elected members discharge their governance responsibilities and to oversee the executive in the delivery of the policies that the elected members have decided on, and also so have oversight of the Chief Executive discharge of his or her executive functions."

It is sets out the performance of the Chief Executive's 16:25 10 11 executive functions during the preceding calendar 12 month, including implementation of policy or other matters required by the Council in the exercise of its 13 14 reserve functions and the provision of services by the 15 Council. And it actually goes in and details all the 16:25 16 things that you could include in this monthly report 17 and there is a lot. Like essentially any of the activities that are undertaken by the Council can be 18 19 reported on in this monthly report. And I actually went to one of the Dublin Councils and asked them what 20 16:25 21 they receive in their monthly report and it's 32-page 22 document that goes into each of the activities that are to be performed by the Council and gives an update on 23 24 It talks about the number of HAP applications them. the number of tenancies. Like it gives -- it's a very, 16:25 25 26 very informative report and it covers every aspect of 27 the role and function of the Chief Executive and the Council. 28

1 I think at the moment what we receive is essentially 2 the bear minimum. We receive the Leo and we see, I 3 can't even remember what the other one is, the LCDC. So it's absolute minimum that has been identified in 4 5 the guidelines from local government. I think it's a 16:26 6 missed opportunity. It would be much better for us as Councillors if we had this information, I think to have 7 8 it on the record each month. It would give us an opportunity to ask questions about each of the 9 10 different activities and things that are happening. 16:26 11 But it's also, like an awful lot of stuff happens 12 within the Council and the officials, you know, do an awful lot of work and there's a lot of good news and 13 14 good stories coming out of it and I think it would also 15 give an opportunity for us to be kept abreast of all 16:26 16 those things that are happening.

So I would ask that the actual circular that has come 18 19 out from the Department would the guidelines, that 20 that's reviewed and that each month we are provided 16:26 21 with a management update that goes through all the 22 different functions and provides us with all the information that we need, rather than, I think at the 23 moment we're sort of getting a tick the box exercise 24 25 because we get a couple of documents. So I'm not sure 16:27 26 if this is something that would need to go to the 27 protocol development but I'm happen I have Fingal --28 MS. GALLAGHER: The CPG. 29 The CPG? CLLR. WHITMORE:

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1 **MS. GALLAGHER:** It would be, yeah. That's what they're 2 going to recommend.

3 CLLR. WHITMORE: Okay. I have the Fingal County
4 Council one and it's really interesting. I'm happy to
5 forward that on as an example of what we could actually 16:27
6 get each month and I think that would certainly be
7 worthwhile doing.

8 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** I'd like to thank you for your contribution, Cllr. Whitmore. I would agree fully with 9 you that the report should be more extensive and more 10 16:27 11 relative and not just something that we note, some that 12 we actually discuss. Whether it goes to 32 pages or 13 not I'm not so sure, maybe something a little bit shorter. But it ties in -- I had set out two weeks ago 14 15 that I'd like to see updates on all our grants and our 16:27 grants drawdowns and our funding drawdowns, stuff like 16 17 So there's various things that we could think that. of. So I'd suggest you go back to the CPG, but each 18 19 director then comes up with some kind of, to use that 20 dreadful phrase, key performance indicators, or 16:28 21 whatever, but just some kind of measure and update of 22 what's actually going on. I certainly think it would be welcome and make it more relevant to us having a say 23 24 in how the Council runs. Cllr. Blake. **CLLR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Cathaoirleach. 25 I wouldn't 16:28 26 look forward to having to read 34 pages of 27 documentation on what the Council has done, but it probably is an indication of the amount of work and 28 29 certainly Cllr. Whitmore is perfectly right, I think

1 there's is a lot of good stories out there and I think 2 we need tell then as well in that regard. One of the 3 good stories, if I might just say, that the LCDC, we have a report from the LCDC here and maybe if 4 Michael Nicholson had been here, I certainly would be 5 16:28 6 interested in wanting to know what the update in terms 7 of the programme that has been taken place out there 8 and where we are with either programme in terms of 9 developing the programme. It might have been helpful 10 if he had been available here today to go through that 16:29 11 with us.

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I certainly do welcome what's in front of us. 13 Τ 14 compliment the engineer in the Baltinglass area for 15 having achieved funding under the CLÁR Programme for 16:29 both Knockananna and Rathcoyle for a sum total of over 16 17 €33,000. So I certainly welcome that in that regard. As I said, maybe Michael Nicholson, maybe at the next 18 19 meeting that he can give us an update with regard to 20 where the Leader Programme is because it's a very 16:29 21 important aspect of the development and the fact that 22 the wicklow County Council are now the lead developer 23 of that particular programme. I think might be helpful 24 if we had an update for the next meeting on it. Thank 25 you, Chairman. 16:29 26 Thank you. Thank you, members, for CATHAOIRLEACH: 27 that item. I'd like us to go on to item number 11 so

28 the Suspension of Standing Orders is going to have to 29 be put back for a few minutes until item number 11 is

dealt with. And we have a question as well at 4:50 and
 have two items of Standing Orders at, well 4:30 is now
 going to be 4:40.

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5 Item number 11: To consider measures the Council can 16:30 6 bring forward to improve the safety of cyclists. This 7 was a request by Cllr. Shay Cullen to have this item 8 discussed, in light of recent events. Cllr. Cullen. CLLR. SHAY CULLEN: Thanks, Chairman. First of all, 9 10 thank you for putting it on the agenda. I suppose, you 16:30 know, this is a serious issue that has been in the 11 12 media in the last number of weeks. I suppose the statistics speak for themselves. Ten cyclists have 13 lost their lives in the first six months of this year, 14 15 compared with four in the full year of 2016, which is a 16:30 shocking statistic. I suppose there is a real safety 16 17 issue for cyclists on the roads of County Wicklow. Ι believe, you know, this Council needs to be and should 18 19 be proactive to ensure the safety for both cyclists and 20 motorists. As we're very much aware, and I think 16:31 21 Wicklow is one of the counties that has the biggest 22 issue with cyclists in our county and I suppose a lot 23 of that stems from, you know, Wicklow is a very popular 24 destination for cyclists due to our landscape and 25 obviously our proximity to Dublin and its population. 16:31 26

The concerns over safety are certainly multiplied over the weekends and this is really because you get groups of cyclists who visit Wicklow and unfortunately what is

1 happening on our rural roads - and I'll use the road 2 between Kilmacanogue and Glendalough, which is a real 3 big tourist attraction, as everybody is aware. And you get groups of cyclists on these roads and you get a 4 5 build up of traffic behind the cyclists and 16:32 6 unfortunately what is happening, which is causing a lot 7 of danger, some motorists take risks, overtaking maybe 8 on corners, or narrow area of the road because they get 9 frustrated. And they get frustrated because, you know, cyclists can only go at a certain speed. 10 16:32

A lot of cyclists, in my opinion, they don't take the
opportunity to pull in. They don't take the
opportunity to maybe let the traffic pass them.
There's certainly huge frustration amongst motorists. 16:32
Sometimes I think cyclists don't understand the safety
issues on rural roads and how dangerous it is.

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19 I suppose another issue I would see is, you know, 20 certain cyclists, they wear black in colour cycling 16:33 21 I believe all cyclists should have high viz gear. 22 I believe that there should be front and clothing. rear lights on all bicycles. And unfortunately we 23 24 don't have identification for cyclists. It's not a case where, like a motorist, they have a number plate 25 16:33 26 and if they do something to risk another person you can 27 see their licence plate. That's obviously not the case 28 with cyclists.

1 I don't want people in this Council or elsewhere to 2 think this is an attack on cyclists. This is purely 3 down to a safety concern. In actual fact cyclists, you know, they provide revenue to our county; they use our 4 shops, cafés, and so on, particularly at the weekends 5 16:33 and that shouldn't be lost in the debate, but at the 6 7 end of the day the safety is paramount for both the 8 cyclist and the motorist. Unfortunately, as we've heard earlier, Cllr. Winters even suggested there was a 9 native of Wicklow lost their life only last week on the 16:34 10 11 road where they were cycling their bike and were hit by 12 a motorist. It's an issue that we can't ignore. In my opinion it's something that's getting worse on a 13 14 monthly basis. we're in the middle of the summer 15 months now where cycling is obviously a huge sport and 16:34 16 pastime.

I suppose I just want to finish, Chairman, by making a 18 19 proposal that this Council launches a road safety 20 awareness campaign for cyclists and motorists to be 16:34 21 aware of because we have to be proactive to try and 22 deal with the issues that are here and get motorists and cyclists to take more care on the road. Thank you. 23 24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, Councillor, for raising that issue. Any other speakers? 25 16:35 26 MS. GALLAGHER: There is a report that's been submitted 27 by the Director of Services Roads just in relation to this matter. 28

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"The issue of road safety for cyclists has come into
 focus in recent times due to the increase in the
 numbers of serious incidents.

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5 Many cyclists use busy roads every day without any 16:35 problem. Key factors in safe cycling include cyclist 6 behaviour, driver behaviour, physical cycling 7 8 infrastructure. Campaigns are regularly undertaken by organisations such as the Road Safety Authority to 9 improve the behaviour of both cyclists and drivers. 10 16:35 11 Wicklow County Council supports any initiative that 12 raises the awareness of safety issues and improved safe practices. 13

15Wicklow County Council is also involved in the16:3516provision of visible infrastructure for cycling17activities comprising shared road surfaces and18dedicated separating cycle tracks. The majority of19roads are shared between drivers and cyclists without20any specific engineering intervention.

22The minimum width required for a dedicated cycle lane23is 1.5 metres. This is one direction only. Given that24the minimum roadway for two-way traffic is 5.5 metres,25the minimum overall road width required for the26provision of a dedicated cycle lane is 8.5 metres.

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28 Most roads in County Wicklow are not wide enough to 29 provide dedicated cycle lanes to a proper standard.

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1 Wicklow County Council has provided 28 kilometres of 2 dedicated cycle track, road markings, and signs as part 3 of efforts to improve cyclists' behaviour." **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Could I ask that that be circulated to 4 5 all members. Cllr. O'Neill. 16:36 6 **CLLR. O'NEILL:** Yeah, I want to agree generally with 7 what Cllr. Cullen is saying there. Again, on rural 8 roads and I'm talking about my own area, of Lacken, Ballyknocken, around the lakes or whatever, you know, 9 you're asked to provide 1.5 metres of cycle track, 10 16:36 11 that's nearly the width of the road in our part of the If you look at the -- I honest to God think 12 country. that cyclists have a responsibility as well and I can 13 see no harm in the likes of signage in parts of Wicklow 14 15 there, you know, welcoming cyclists to wicklow, but 16:37 also point out that maybe single file would be safer. 16 17 I often see three and four abreast on roads around Ballyknocken and Lacken or whatever. Sure it's 18 19 impossible and people are trying to get to the mart or 20 people are trying to the school or churches, or 16:37 21 whatever. I think they have a big responsibility as 22 well. But it is a serious issue, you know, when you 23 have people actually maybe dying on the roads through accidents. They have to be responsible. It's crazy 24 and it's frustrating for people who are trying to get 25 16:37 from A to B and you come up behind three or four 26 27 cyclists and they're all yapping away talking about 28 this, that and the other, having a great day out, holding up the whole show. I think they have a 29

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responsible as well. And I'm serious about that, maybe
 there could be signage, you know, for their own safety
 that they ride in single file.

4 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you.

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CLLR. MATTHEWS: Could I just make one quick point on 16:38 that.

7 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Thornhill.

8 CLLR. THORNHILL: May I say, first of all to Cllr. Cullen, thanks very much for bringing this to 9 light. You know, I would just like to say on this 10 16:38 11 subject there's two tracks to it, right. I think at 12 the end of the day that people that are cyclists and people are using the roads, I mean the thing about, 13 14 it's all about education, about cooperation and 15 consideration. I mean, I'll give an example and as 16:38 Cllr. O'Neill said. there's no doubt about it that 16 17 cyclists have an awful lot to answer for as well as people who are using the road. Because I have seen, 18 19 over the years, in my time working as a Garda Síochána, 20 cyclists, you know, cycling without lights and maybe 16:39 21 not using their high viz jackets cycling, going through 22 traffic lights. There's an awful lot of onus on But having said that like, the 23 cyclists as well. public as well and pedestrians, but the point I would 24 like to make, which is a very ironic point, would be, 25 16:39 26 say, for example, above in Bray now, for example, we 27 have cycle lanes and on one particular road above there 28 on the Church Road, and I know there's a shortage of 29 parking spaces and everything for people going to

school and whatever, right, that on the cycle lane,
 it's completely blocked up during school times when
 children are being collected by cars. So it just goes
 to show you that there's a lack of consideration by
 people towards cyclists.

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7 Then on the other hand then you have cyclists who 8 sometimes I see cycling on footpaths. The whole thing is all about consideration and education and I think 9 the time has come when we should be all getting 10 16:40 11 together and educate each other because at the end of 12 the day it's is a serious subject, especially when you see what happened only a few weeks ago, that teacher 13 14 above there in Dundrum getting killed. At the end of 15 the day, it's too important a subject and I think it's 16:40 16 something that we should place large emphasis on, 17 because when people lose their lives as a result it's something that we should pay attention to. Go raibh 18 19 míle maith agat.

20 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Matthews.

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21 CLLR. MATTHEWS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. The cycling 22 infrastructure gets about a half of a percent of the 23 total of investment in transport infrastructure, transport investment in the country so I talk 24 Cllr. Cullen for raising the issue but really what we 25 16:40 26 need to do is go back to Cllr. Cullen's party and ask 27 them to increase the investment. Now about 5% of 28 journeys in Dublin at the moment are being made by 29 bicycle but we have only about half a percent of

investment in that infrastructure. So it would reduce
traffic, it would reduce congestion. It has a lot of
pluses and a lot of benefits to it so I would think
that we should go back to the Minister and say:
Allocate for cycling rather than us trying to do it out 16:41
of very few funds that we have here in Wicklow. Thank
you, Chairman.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, members. I'm now bringing forward the Notices of Motion. There's one and then 9 Cllr. Blake. Suspension of Standing Orders, sorry. 10 16:41 11 **CLLR. BLAKE:** Thank you for giving us the opportunity 12 to discuss this item of what Bank of Ireland are doing, particularly to rural areas. I don't look for a 13 14 Suspension of Standing Orders too often but today I 15 think it was necessary to do it to highlight what's 16:42 16 actually happening with their services, cashier 17 services that Bank of Ireland changing.

19 Bank of Ireland have probably about 250 branches throughout Ireland. They're talking about closing the 20 16:42 cashier service in about 60 of them nationwide and 21 22 they're also talking about reducing the service in about 40 branches nationwide. This is nationwide. 23 Ι 24 have heard about incidents up in Donegal, Cork, Sligo 25 where there has been a backlash against the proposal as 16:42 well. 26

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28 With regards to County Wicklow, they're talking about29 closing the cashier service completely in Tinahely,

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1Carnew and Rathdrum. They're also talking about2reducing the services to a morning service only, I3believe, in Arklow, Greystones and the Baltinglass4branches. So this will have a significant effect,5particularly in rural areas. My understanding is the6only two branches in Wicklow that will continue to have7a full service is the Bray and Wicklow branches.

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We did bring it to the attention of the Joint Policing 9 Meeting this morning as well in relation to what effect 16:43 10 11 it may have on rural people, in particular the older 12 people. We discussed it this morning briefly at the 13 Joint Policing Meeting. It is a concern out there, 14 particularly in the rural areas. People who, in the 15 past, we've encouraged them to not hoard cash in the 16:44 16 houses, but this may have the effect, particularly in 17 the rural areas as well.

19 So I did, a short proposal that I have put forward here today and I made a copy of it there and it's just that 20 16:44 21 the elected members of Wicklow County Council request 22 the management of Bank of Ireland to reconsider its decision to remove the cashier service from rural 23 24 branches nationwide as of 2nd August 2017. Thanks, 25 members. 16:44 26 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Behan. 27 CLLR. BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, I'll certainly second that

28and Cllr. Blake has spoken very well about the effect29that's going to have, that decision on rural Ireland

1 and particularly in our County.

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3 But when you say that they're even withdrawing the 4 services from people in the Greystones area, which is 5 considered one of the higher population areas, it's 16:45 6 quite obvious that the Bank of Ireland are no longer interested in ordinary personal customers or small 7 8 business people. I think they've decided to opt to deal with people who are the millionaires, 9 multimillionaires, big business and they've forgotten 10 16:45 11 the people who actually contributed their own hard-earned money to saving that bank's skin a number 12 of years ago when, by reckless lending and reckless 13 14 borrowing they actually almost bankrupted this country, 15 along with their colleagues in other banks. 16:45

17 Apart from just calling on the bank to reconsider - and I've no problem seconding Cllr. Blake's decision - I 18 19 think we should also express our complete dismay and anger about this decision to the five TDs representing 20 16:45 I don't know if this matter has 21 us in Dáil Éireann. 22 been discussed in the Dáil yet? I know the TDs handed 23 in a letter to the Bank of Ireland. But the people of 24 this country still own a sizable share in this bank and it's amazing to me that the Government and the Minister 16:46 25 26 for Finance, representing the taxpayer, just hold his 27 hands up and more or less just doesn't want to know about this. 28

1I think we should, as well as Cllr. Blake's proposal to2write to the bank, we should write to the five TDs and3ask them to raise it in the Dáil.

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5 Finally, I would also congratulate the local people in 16:46 6 Tinahely, who got together to alert everybody to this 7 decision and the fact that they were also trying to 8 reach out to other communities, not only in Wicklow but 9 around the country, to come together to object to this 10 high-handed and arrogant decision by Bank of Ireland. 16:46 11 Thank you.

12 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Do we have agreement on Cllr. Behan's 13 proposal? Plus Cllr. Blake's proposal to write to the 14 five TDs. Agreed. Cllr. Kavanagh.

CLLR. KAVANAGH: well, it was agreed. 15 I was just going 16:47 to just add to that, it seems to be the start of the 16 17 slippery slope to closing down branches nationwide and it's fine if people have facilities for online banking 18 19 and stuff like that but not every person, especially 20 elderly people, avail of online banking. They still 16:47 21 want to be able to go in, they want to be able to 22 withdraw money and whatever. Anyway, it has been 23 passed so that's great. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think it is another blow to rural
 Ireland. And rural broadband we don't have so great 16:47
 either so you can't even do the online banking.

Okay, thanks, members. Cllr. O'Connor had a, it's not
really a full discussion, I think, but you just wanted

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to make a reference to the issue of Bray Wanderers'
 vicarious financial position.

3 CLLR. O'CONNOR: I'm extremely concerned, I suppose people have read the news reports over the last couple 4 5 of days about what's going on with Bray Wanderers. 16:48 6 According to media reports the club are in such financial difficulty that they'll be unable to pay 7 8 players' wages. There are also reports that the team will be selling their senior players - they've already 9 started down that road - and playing instead possibly 10 16:48 11 with the under 19s and promoting them up to play the 12 senior squad.

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14 I wanted to mention this today because I think it's a 15 very important issue for the whole county, particularly 16:48 16 for North Wicklow and I think there's going to have to 17 be some interaction between the Council and the club. I've spoken to some of the officials about it and it 18 19 might be a matter that would be better left to 20 Municipal District tomorrow. But I wanted to put on 16:48 21 record my concern about the issue. Thanks. 22 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Any comments? 23 **CLLR. BEHAN:** I just want a clarification from 24 Is Cllr. O'Connor proposing, when he Cllr. O'Connor. says interaction with the Council officials, that the 25 16:49 Council officials should do some deal with the owners 26 27 of Bray Wanderers with regard to the Carlisle Grounds? 28 Because I don't understand why the officials of the 29 Council would have to be getting involved with Bray

1 Wanderers. Perhaps he might clarify that. 2 CLLR. O'CONNOR: I would be happy to do so, 3 Cllr. Behan. Thanks very much for the question. NO. I'm not. Not remotely suggesting anything like that. 4 5 I'm talking about possibly a meeting be arranged 16:49 6 between some of the Councillors, probably from Bray, 7 and the club, to see exactly what's going on and to see 8 if there's any way that they could be helped out of their situation. Am I suggesting anything in 9 particular? Absolutely not. I'm certainly not 10 16:49 11 suggesting what you think I am. Thanks. CLLR. BEHAN: I didn't think you were. I asked a 12 13 question. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. McLoughlin. 15 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: Very briefly. I do actually sort of 16:49 agree insofar as this is a major issue for Bray and it 16 17 would be very sad to see the club go. Although I cannot, for the life of me, see how it has anything to 18 19 do with the Wicklow County Council. It's a private 20 club and, you know, we can't be seen to be supporting 16:50 21 one club as opposed to another. But I do think it 22 serious and I think if, I'm not sure what the Municipal 23 District of Bray can do about it, but if they can do 24 anything, to act as some sort of mediator between all sides on it I think it should. I think it's very sad 25 16:50 26 for Bray to see it going, but I don't think it is an 27 issue for Wicklow County Council itself. I don't think 28 it has any part to play in the club. Thank you. 29 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Vance.

1 **CLLR. VANCE:** Chairman, thank you. Wicklow County 2 Council own the Carlisle Grounds and it's the most, 3 probably valuable piece of real estate when you consider the location of it in the country, if you talk 4 5 about real estate. But we all know that the lease on 16:50 6 Bray Wanderers is a sporting lease. I don't know how 7 many times I've said this and I said it on the radio 8 this morning, it cannot be tampered with, in any shape 9 or form, without the agreement of Wicklow County 10 Council in regard to that. 16:51

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12 I think it's sad of the situation of what it is. From what I can I gather is, there was no communication with 13 14 any members of the Council in Bray or officials in 15 But the Chairman of Bray Wanderers did 16:51 regard to that. indicate, a number of months ago, that they were 16 17 putting in considerable money to try and get into Europe, but he did indicate that there was a dire 18 19 financial problem, and certainly it wasn't adding up 20 the type of income and the outgoings that were going 16:51 21 there and there was going to be a problem there if it 22 continued the way it did.

So the Council members would have been aware about it but they wouldn't have probably been aware of the dire straits that obviously has been -- I think it could have been handled better. I don't think issuing a statement at half-time in a very important match on Friday night was the ideal way to do it. I don't think

the morale of the players, now even if someone came in and kept Bray going until the end of the year, would be great either, knowing how it was handled. I think it could have been handled a lot better.

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6 Like Cllr. McLoughlin was saying there and Cllr. Behan 7 were saying, and I think we all agree, the role from 8 the Council perspective is that our ownership of the ground in regard to providing financial income to the 9 club is not, in my mind, feasible and shouldn't be even 16:52 10 contemplated at this stage. But it is desirable. from 11 12 our point of view, that obviously if any other way we could help fine but we have not been consulted, to my 13 14 knowledge, whether that's Councillors or officials in 15 any shape or form in that regard to the statement that 16:52 was made in regard to Friday night. 16 Thank you. 17 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Cllr. Matthews. Thanks, Chairman. 18 CLLR. MATTHEWS: Just to clarify. 19 There has been interaction between Bray Wanderers and 20 Bray Town Council, Bray Municipal District. Thev 16:53 21 produced a five-year strategy document back in October 22 or November last year full of aspirations, full of 23 ideas of what they were going to do. The suggestion I got from it was that they wanted us to develop the 24 Carlisle Grounds and bankroll their club to move to 25 16:53 26 somewhere else.

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After that we invited them into a Bray Municipal District meeting where the Chairman came in and

1 contradicted a lot of what was said in the document. 2 They then went on to hold a public meeting in the Royal 3 where they invited the Councillors to go down. They said they didn't want to talk about the Carlisle 4 5 Grounds at that meeting but they went on to talk about 16:53 6 the Carlisle Grounds at that meeting. They did outline great ambitions for the club and I have to commend them 7 8 for that. They were very ambitious and they did sign a lot of players and they seemed to have a great 9 background team and we all expected great things out of 16:53 10 11 the team this way. And then for halfway through a 12 match to issue a statement like that, there's something 13 very odd going on at Bray Wanderers. Something very, 14 very odd altogether.

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16 However, it is owned by Wicklow. It is a sporting 17 lease that's on the. Land so if Bray Wanderers decide that they want to go somewhere else, or they want to 18 19 carry out their footballing somewhere else, that would 20 be unfortunate for the town but we would retain the 16:54 21 ground as a sporting destination. Now there's many 22 sporting groups within the town that are only dying to get their hands on somewhere. There's a couple of 23 24 boxing clubs looking for a ground Ardmore Rovers are 25 short on space. Shamrock Boys came into us in Bray 16:54 26 Municipal District before, they were looking for a site for a skateboard park. We've a lot of stuff we could 27 28 use the land for so I don't have any fear over Bray 29 Wanderers saying that they want to leave, but we will

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retain the land for sporting use for the town. That
 would be my position on it. Thank you, Chairman.
 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Fitzgerald.

4 CLLR. FITZGERALD: Just as a person who follows sport and knows maybe a bit about it. It's very difficult to 16:54 5 6 see where the situation is, the figures produced today, 7 where the outgoings of Bray Wanderers are in a six 8 figure sum and the income they're taking in, there was 9 more on two buses coming back from Croke Park yesterday 10 than what was at the last match in Bray Wanderers, the 16:55 11 Carlisle Grounds. I have been contacted, people in 12 Arklow have an involvement there, for whatever reason, they contacted me on some issues there. 13 I've no reason 14 to get involved in anything, to be quite honest about 15 it, but when you see the figures that were produced on 16:55 the papers today, Bray Wanderers had great results 16 17 there in the first part of this season; they were up in the top three or four, were beating teams and all of a 18 19 sudden things started to go into decline. Many members 20 of Arklow Town Soccer Club have played with Bray 16:55 21 Wanderers and contributed. One of the most outstanding 22 players ever came from, well he mightn't have came, he 23 lived in Arklow, Billy McKay, that's right, and he scored 7 goals for Bray Wanderers one day in Sligo. 24 In one match and Cllr. McElheron represented at his 25 16:55 funeral in England. But the fact is, Bray Wanderers 26 27 have a huge problem. If you're not getting income in 28 you can't pay it out.

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1 As you said, Cllr. Vance, it was a bad time to announce 2 at the half-time in a match the difficulties and that 3 there was only one week's wages left for the players. So they're encouraging players to get transfers. 4 So as far as things stand at the moment, it looks like Bray 5 16:56 6 Wanderers are finished in the present situation. 7 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you. Next item. 8 MS. GALLAGHER: Okay. Finally we have an urgent question submitted by Cllr. Jennifer Whitmore to ask 9 the Council to outline the actions it is taking in 10 16:56 11 relation to fire safety, in light of the recent 12 disaster at Grenfell Tower, in particular to provide details of the last time a full fire safety audit was 13 14 carried out in local authority housing stock, and 15 whether there are plans to conduct another one in the 16:56 16 near future? 17 The response from the Director of Housing is: 18 19 "The issues in relation to Grenfell Tower in the main 20 16:56 21 relate to multistory buildings and Wicklow County 22 Council has very few social housing units in buildings 23 of this type. 24 Wicklow County Council is currently undertaking an 25 16:56 audit of the units required under Circular 042017. 26 27 This requires that local authorities review units in 28 multistory buildings to ensure that they can meet their 29 statutory obligations with reference to fire safety

1 with an emphasis on life safety.

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The circular indicated that the review should concentrate specifically on common areas with a primary focus om ensuring that all early warning systems, including fire alarm and detection systems, emergency lighting and means of escape and emergency escapes are in place and fully functional.

10This review will be returned and completed by 19th16:5711July.

The circular specifically indicates that dwelling 13 14 houses and duplexes are not included in this review. 15 Wicklow County Council currently rents in excess of 16:57 16 4,3000 housing units and do have the resources to 17 undertake a fire safety audit on all units and I am not aware of when the last full audit was carried out of 18 19 all stock. However, in 2011 a smoke alarm/fire blanket 20 programme was in place. There is currently a programme 16:57 21 of carbon monoxide monitors being installed. Houses 22 are constructed to the fire standards that prevail at the time of construction. 23

- As houses are relet they are brought to current 16:58
 standards where feasible."
 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. whitmore.
- 28 CLLR. WHITMORE: Thanks very much. The reason this --
- 29 I heard a report on *Morning Ireland* this morning and it

1 just sort of brought it to mind, but actually following 2 the disaster, you know, it was such an awful tragedy 3 and really now is the time for us to review our processes and make sure that we are, I suppose, as on 4 5 top of things as we possibly can be when it comes to 16:58 6 this. And it just sort of struck me that I haven't been aware of any audit of our local authority housing. 7 8 I understand that it would be a major undertaking but maybe spot checks, things like that that, that actually 9 10 that's something that we should be looking at. 16:58

The response there to my question talks about the 12 specific circular from the Department, but I think the 13 onus is on us to be proactive and not just contain 14 15 ourselves to what the Minister is requiring of us but 16:59 actually be proactive and to look at our housing stock. 16 17 And if it is a case that, you know, it is just a number of spot checks or perhaps particular estates that we 18 19 should be looking at, I think we should be actually 20 taking this opportunity now to do that and review our 16:59 21 stock in that instance. I think the time is right for 22 us to do it and it's something that I think we should 23 be putting forward.

24 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Vance.

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CLLR. VANCE: Chairman, the easiest thing in the world 16:59
to do is to get a letter from the Department saying
carry out a fire audit on, whether they're local
authority houses or houses within a particular area, or
units within that particular area. But then they don't

1give us the staff to carry them out. We all know this2is a staff problem. So effectively if the Government,3whichever Government then wants to carry out these4types of surveys they have to provide the finance for5us to employ the proper people to have a look at it.

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7 I'd agree, this is well brought up, I have to 8 compliment the Councillor for bringing it up. But the fact of the matter is that this will not happen unless 9 we get proper funding for increasing staff to look at 10 17:00 11 It is an issue, as we all know in Wicklow, it is it. 12 an issue, particularly in Wicklow because of the few deaths that we had. In the last 20 years we've had a 13 significant amount of people die and there's been an 14 15 awful lot of distress caused to people in regard to 17:00 16 fire safety and stuff like that. So I do think it's a 17 very important issue but that it's an issue that the Government, if they think it's so important, let the 18 19 Government provide the type of income that's necessary 20 for us to go ahead and employ the proper people to 17:00 21 carry out these surveys. 22 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** On that point, Cllr. Vance, that's 23 actually in the letter. Lorraine is going to clarify 24 that, just that sentence, the lack of resources.

25 **MS. GALLAGHER:** Yes. It says here:

17:01

- 27 "The circular specifically indicates that dwelling
 28 houses and duplexes are not included in this review.
 29 Wicklow County Council currently rents in excess of
 - 112

1 4,300 housing units and do have the resources." 2 3 The report says "and do have the resources" but I would say that "not" is just left out of that by accident. 4 т just want to clarify that. 5 17:01 6 7 "And do not have the resources to undertake a fire 8 safetv audit." 9 Is that the circular? Is that the 10 CLLR. WHITMORE: 17:01 11 Department saying that we don't have the resources? 12 MS. GALLAGHER: No, Wicklow County Council. 13 "Wicklow County Council currently has in excess of 14 15 4,300 housing units and wouldn't have the resources to 17:01 16 carry out fire safety on all of the units." 17 **CLLR. WHITMORE:** Well then I'll take on board what Cllr. Vance is saying and perhaps we need to write to 18 19 the Minister to say that actually we would like to 20 undertake this. Perhaps there's certain aspects of it 17:01 21 that we can do within our own resources, but if we do 22 want to expand and do a thorough review I would suggest 23 that we write to the Minister and say that actually we 24 have concerns **CLLR. VANCE:** I would second that. 25 17:01 26 **CLLR. WHITMORE:** And that we would seek the funding in 27 order to conduct a proper and full audit of our housing 28 stock. 29 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Is that agreed, members?

CLLR. MCLOUGHLIN: Absolutely, yeah. That's what I was
 going to suggest.

3 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Murphy.

CLLR. MURPHY: Yeah, this is such an important area 4 5 and, again, I was sat here for the last three years 17:02 6 going on and I've always said that we are not looking 7 after our own stock in any shape or form, and still we, 8 when purchasing houses, we are buying the highest in 9 standards of houses but we do not have our tenants in high standards of houses and again go back to funding 10 17:02 11 and lack of staff and I think it's something that we 12 seriously need to look at in the future. 13 **CATHAOIRLEACH:** Thank you, Cllr. Murphy. That ends our 14 meeting. I would like to wish all our members a happy 15 summer. 17:02 16 **MS. GALLAGHER:** For those who are lucky to be off. 17

THE MEETING WAS THEN CONCLUDED

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