

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW ON MONDAY 11th
MAY 2015, COMMENCING 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

COUNCILLOR C. FOX, CATHAOIRLEACH, COUNCILLORS T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, J. BRADY, P. CASEY, T. CULLEN, S. CULLEN, P. DORAN, P. FITZGERALD, T. FORTUNE, P. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, N. LAWLESS, S. MATTHEWS, M. MCDONALD, G. MCLOUGHLIN, M. MURPHY, D. NOLAN, O. O'BRIEN, G. O'NEILL, J. RUTTLE, J. SNELL, B. THORNHILL, E. TIMMINS, P. VANCE, G. WALSH, J. WHITMORE AND I. WINTERS.

APOLOGIES:

Cllr. D. MITCHELL AND J. RYAN.

IN ATTENDANCE:

**MR. B. DOYLE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MR. D. O'BRIEN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. S. QUIRKE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. T. MURPHY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. GEANEY, A/DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MS. L. GALLAGHER, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR
MS. C. FLOOD, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MS. M. MALONE, A/SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MS. B. KILKENNY, SENIOR ENGINEER
MR. F. KEOGH, SENIOR ENGINEER**

Suspension of Standing Orders

Cllr. T. Fortune advised that he had submitted two suspensions of standing orders. He read the following motion to the Council:-

" Conscious of the fact that planning has an important role to play in promoting and facilitating active and healthy living patterns for local communities, Greystones Municipal District Council resolves to insert an amendment into the current Greystones-Delgany- Kilcoole local area plan to exclude any new food outlets which offer foods that are high in fat ,salt or sugar from being built or from operating within 500 metres of the gates or site boundary of schools, parks or playgrounds."

Suspension of Standing orders – Number (1): 'To discuss the planning approval to allow a fast food outlet to be built beside three schools at Blacklion Greystones', which he said he was happy to withdraw and have referred to the Planning SPC and to be allow have a representative from the Greystones Municipal District attend the meeting

Suspension of Standing orders – Number (2): 'To discuss attachment orders by Dail Eireann and its impact on Wicklow County Council tenants.'

It was agreed that the planning SPC would discuss suspension of standing order number 1 and the meeting would be open to any elected member of Wicklow County Council to attend. It was also agreed to discuss suspension of standing orders number 2 at 16:45.

ITEM NO. 1

To consider the disposal of freehold interest in the property known as 15 Scott Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow to Catherine Owens

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Vance, seconded by Cllr. S. Matthews and agreed to dispose of freehold interest in the property known as 15 Scott Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow to Catherine Owens

ITEM NO. 2

To consider report in accordance with Section 179 (3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001(as amended), in respect of the construction of a playground and recreation area and associated site works in the townland of Merrymeeting, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow

Members were circulated with report of Michael Nicholson, DOS, Community Cultural and Social Development. It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. P. Casey, and following a roll call the proposal was carried by a margin of 25 votes for and 7 not present viz:-

FOR: CLLRS. T. ANNESLEY, V. BLAKE, J. BRADY, P. CASEY, S. CULLEN, P. DORAN, P. FITZGERALD, T. FORTUNE, C. FOX, P. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, N. LAWLESS, S. MATTHEWS, M. MCDONALD, G. MCLOUGHLIN, M. MURPHY, D. NOLAN, G. O'NEILL, J. SNELL, B. THORNHILL, E. TIMMINS, P. VANCE, G. WALSH, J. WHITMORE AND I. WINTERS. (25)

NOT PRESENT: CLLRS. J. BEHAN, S. BOURKE, T. CULLEN, D. MITCHELL, O. O'BRIEN, J. RUTTLE AND J. RYAN. (7)

ITEM NO. 3

Homelessness, County Wicklow: To receive presentation

Ms. B. Kilkenny, Senior Engineer, made a presentation covering the following areas:

- Policy background
- Housing expenditure
- Capital Construction and Acquisition
- RAS, Long Term Social Leasing
- Part V, CAS, CALF
- Housing need
- Social Housing Strategy 2020
- Pillar 1: Supply
- Pillar 2: Housing Support
- Pillar 3: Reform Policy
- Housing Strategy 2020 and Wicklow County Council
- Pillar 1: Supply
- Pillar 2: Support
- Pillar 1 and Pillar 2
- Capital Construction
- Challenges ahead

Ms. M. Malone, A/Senior Executive Officer, made a presentation covering the following areas:

- A County Perspective
- Current service provision from a Local Authority perspective
- Funding
- Section 10 Homelessness Funding to HAS in 2013
- Section 10 Homelessness Funding to HAS in 2012
- Funding and Regional Structures
- Expenditure at County Level
- Current Situation

- Facilities available in the County – Sonas Housing, Wicklow town
- Additionality of the Sonas project
- Kilmantin Hill Facility, Wicklow town
- Reconfiguration at a County level
- Direct Provision
- Preventative Measures
- Units coming on stream – Bray
- Units coming on stream in 2015 – Wicklow town

Following the presentation, elected members made the following contributions/expressed the following views which were responded to.

- Cllr. J. Brady proposed that a letter be sent to Minister Alan Kelly requesting that any staff vacancy required to be filled in the housing department to ensure swift progression of housing schemes currently at planning stage are approved.. This was seconded by Cllr. N. Lawless and agreed.
- Cllr. J. Brady proposed that a letter be sent to the Minister for Social Protection as follows:- *“Wicklow County Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection to increase the rent supplement rates in County Wicklow to help deal with the Housing crisis which is leading to homelessness. Furthermore, we call on the Government to examine the possibility of introducing rent controls”*. This was seconded by Cllr. J. Snell and agreed. It was also agreed that both these letters be circulated to the five TDs for County Wicklow.
- Reference made to water supply in Dunlavin and that a water supply is required prior to provision of housing
- The issue of homelessness requires a national approach and social housing is an investment in society’s future
- View expressed that the Council is facing the greatest housing crisis the country has ever experienced. Reference made to the difficulty with the provision of a sewerage facility in Arklow and that the housing budgets have been slashed in recent years.
- Staff of the housing department commended for the work they carry out
- Developers who fail to pay development levies should be excluded from the procurement of contractors process.
- Call for the Council to strictly enforce Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to acquire social housing.

ITEM NO. 5

To receive presentation from An Comhairle na nÓg

The Cathaoirleach welcomed An Comhairle na NÓg to the Chamber and invited the representatives present to make their presentation. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Who are we?
- Our work
- What is Comhairle na nÓg?
- The connection
- National showcase
- National executive
- Our biggest piece of work to date
- What next?
- This Summer! Promoting Positive Mental Health in Wicklow
- The value of the survey

The Cathaoirleach and members thanked An Comhairle na nÓg for attending the meeting and for their informative presentation. Elected members invited the group to continue communicating with the Council and wished them well for the future.

ITEM NO. 4

Monthly Management Reports:

- (a) To note Monthly Management Report of Wicklow County Council for March 2015**
- (b) To note Monthly Management Report of Wicklow County Council for April 2015**

Ms. L. Gallagher advised that the March report had been deferred from the April meeting and both reports had been circulated to the elected members. She advised that all reports had been prepared in accordance with Circular letter LG18/2014 dated 2nd July, 2014 and included the following information:

- Local Community Development Committee update
- Local Enterprise Office Wicklow – Monthly Management Report for Wicklow County Council.

Mr. B. Doyle advised the LEO is a new arm of local government in the area of Enterprise and during 2014 there was a net increase of 106 jobs within companies supported through the LEO and that this was a welcome sign and an indication of the progress being made and that the local authority can influence enterprise growth moving forward. He advised that the various reports detailing where targets are being met will be returned to the agenda for consideration.

Circulation of the reports was noted.

ITEM NO. 6

To confirm appointment of Cllrs. D. Mitchell and G. Walsh to act as directors on the board of the Special Purpose Vehicle Company for Greystones Harbour, as recommended by the Greystones MD Committee

Elected members were circulated with report of Mr. S. Quirke, DOS, on the 7th May 2015.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Vance, seconded by Cllr. G. McLoughlin and agreed to confirm the appointment of Cllrs. D. Mitchell and G. Walsh to act as directors on the board of the Special Purpose Vehicle Company for Greystones Harbour, as recommended by the Greystones MD Committee.

ITEM NO. 7

Correspondence

1. The minutes of protocol meeting held on 2nd March and 13th April were proposed by Cllr. J. Ruttle, seconded by Cllr. N. Lawless and agreed.
2. Elected members noted the invitation issued to the Chinese Ambassador had been accepted and will be attending the 8th of June Council meeting.
3. Elected members noted that the Annual Meeting of Wicklow County Council will be held on Monday 15th June, with an Ordinary meeting taking place on 8th June.
4. The members have been circulated with correspondence received since the last meeting.

ITEM NO. 8

Notices of Motion

3. **Notice of motion in the names of the Wicklow Municipal District Members: Cllrs S. Cullen, P. Casey, P. Kavanagh, D. Nolan, J. Snell and I. Winters (24.02.2015) (deferred from meeting of the 2nd March, 2015, 3rd April 2015 and 27th April 2015)**

“That this Council, recognising the need for safety for children at play in the housing estates in which they live, calls on the Minister for Transport to pass the Road Traffic Amendment Bill 2015 commonly known as Jake's Law, in memory of Jake Brennan, in order to introduce a new mandatory speed limit of 20km specifically for housing estates. The council further commits to writing the Minister on this issue and circulating this letter to all other local authorities in the state for their consideration.”

Response:

New Guidelines for setting and managing speed limits in Ireland were issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in March 2015. These guidelines recommend the introduction of a special speed limit of 30kph in housing estates. The Roads and Transportation directorate now intend to recommend a special speed limit of 30kph in all housing estates that are in charge, as part of an overall review of speed limits in the county which is currently underway. Public consultation will take place as part of the process to amend the bye-laws. With regard to the Road Traffic Amendment Bill 2015, it should be noted that the Guidelines referred to above recommend a special speed limit of 30kph, rather than 20kph.

This was noted by the elected members.

4. Notice of motion in the names of the Wicklow Municipal District Members: Cllrs. S. Cullen, P. Casey, P. Kavanagh, D. Nolan, J. Snell and I. Winters (24.02.2015) (deferred from meeting of the 2nd March, 2015, 3rd April 2015 and 27th April 2015)

“That Wicklow County Council reviews the roadside hedge-cutting policy as a matter of urgency to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.”

Response:

Under the Wildlife Acts, hedge cutting is forbidden between March 1st and August 31st. In early September each year, Wicklow County Council publishes a notice in the local paper reminding landowners of their responsibilities with regard to hedges and trees on their land. Reminders are also sent out to individual landowners in some cases, and this is followed up with a formal notice under the Roads Act where necessary. The Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht is currently carrying out a review of the legislative controls in the Wildlife Acts.

Cllr. S. Cullen advised that there appears to be a problem with cutting back roadside hedges by land owners and he would like to see the Council's policy of following up on non compliance increased.

Following some discussion, it was agreed that the SPC would look at this issue with regard to national policy.

6. Notice of motion in the names of the Arklow Municipal District Members; Cllrs. P. Fitzgerald, P. Kennedy, T. Annesley, S. Bourke, M. Murphy and M. McDonald (9th March, 2015) (deferred from meeting of the 3rd April 2015 and 27th April 2015)

‘That a submission be made to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to have AMD included in Wicklow County Council’s social housing building programme’

Response:

A scheme at Emoclew has been submitted as part of the request from the Department for 2015-2017 projects. The Department of the Environment has requested further information on the 10 units proposed and it is expected to be included in the upcoming allocation.

Cllr P. Fitzgerald advised that the scheme had been first announced in 2007 and expressed disappointment that it had not progressed.

9. Notice of motion in the names of the Greystones Municipal District members: Cllrs. J. Whitmore, T. Fortune, D. Mitchell, G. McLoughlin, G. Walsh and N. Lawless (29th April 2015)

'We call upon Wicklow County Council to provide a dog park for the Greystones area, which will be the first dog park for Wicklow County Council'

Elected members advised of a presentation made by a lobbying group for Greystones and there was a large number of dog owners in the County. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed at SPC level, particularly with regard to how successful dog parks are run in other local authorities.

1. Notice of Motion in the name of Cllrs. J. Brady, M. McDonald, N. Lawless, J. Snell, O. O'Brien and G. O'Neill (12.01.2015)(deferred from meeting of the 2nd March, 2015, 3rd April 2015 and 27th April 2015)

"Wicklow County Council welcomes the changes to the film tax credit scheme (section 481) which will help grow substantially Ireland's film and TV production industry. However the desired growth is hindered by the lack of sufficient studio space and facilities to enable these benefits to materialise. Furthermore this Council calls on the government to establish a €15m infrastructure fund to support the audio-visual sector which has the potential to create 5,000 new high-skill jobs and to almost double the studio space in Ireland with a minimum of 100,000 sq ft in additional studio space (which is currently 111,000 sq ft) to compete with other territories such as the UK."

Response:

Wicklow County Council has long recognised the importance of the film industry to the county. The Wicklow Film Commission was established in 1992 to promote the film industry in County Wicklow and provides a one stop shop for companies wishing to film here. Because of the long established film industry in the county, Wicklow has a unique talent pool and an international reputation for excellence. The success of the film tax credit scheme has generated a demand for additional studio space, this presents an opportunity for County Wicklow to build on its track record as a world renowned centre of excellence in film.

One of the key priority areas identified by the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank is the film industry in County Wicklow:

Objective 4: (2) To promote a Film Industry Cluster: Put in place practical supports to develop leading edge film studio capacity.

Similarly Action 152 under the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs relates to the need to increase investment in film and TV infrastructure.

Wicklow County Council has made a submission to the Expert Group set up to consider the issue of studio infrastructure under the Action Plan for Jobs. The Council will continue to engage with the relevant government departments and agencies in this regard.

Following some discussion on the matter, the following proposals were made:

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Casey that a letter be sent to the Department seeking County Wicklow to be designated as a film cluster. This was seconded by Cllr. P. Vance and agreed. It was agreed to circulate this to all County Wicklow TDs.

It was also agreed to invite the CEO of Ardmore Studios to a future meeting of Wicklow County Council.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Cllr. T. Fortune requested a suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the recent attachment order, which he said tied in with the earlier presentation from Housing. He expressed his concern about tenant's rights, Data Protection issues, the pressure that Rent Allowance limits are putting on tenants, etc.

The Cathaoirleach advised that an issue like this would warrant some discussion and advised that it would be included on the agenda for next month's meeting.

The Chief Executive advised that there were two elements involved with the attachment order – the Department of Justice & Equality and the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government. He explained that no details had been received by Wicklow County Council on the matter, other than the general press release from the media.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

**CLLR. CHRISTOPHER FOX
CATHAOIRLEACH
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MS. LORRAINE GALLAGHER
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**