

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW ON MONDAY 12th
JANUARY 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, D. MITCHELL, M. MURPHY, D. NOLAN, O. O'BRIEN, G. O'NEILL, J. RUTTLE, J. RYAN, J. SNELL, E. TIMMINS, P. VANCE, G. WALSH, J. WHITMORE AND I. WINTERS.

APOLOGIES: CLLR. B. THORNHILL

IN ATTENDANCE:

**MR. E. SHEEHY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MR. B. DOYLE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. S. QUIRKE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. T. MURPHY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. J. LANE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MS. L. LYNCH, HEAD OF FINANCE
MR. L. FITZPATRICK, HEAD OF IS
MS. L. GALLAGHER, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR
MS. C. FLOOD, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MS. S. WALSH, A/SENIOR PLANNER
MR. D. MARNANE, A/SENIOR ENGINEER
MR. M. GEANEY, SENIOR ENGINEER
MS. B. KILKENNY, SENIOR ENGINEER
MS. T. O'BRIEN, A/SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MS. S. DALY, HEAD OF ENTERPRISE**

Votes of sympathy

Elected members passed a vote of sympathy to the families of the late Mr. Mark Caffrey, Mr. Paddy Hooper, Mr. Ned Purcell, Mrs. Evelyn Clancy, Mr. Gerry Doran, Mr. Ken Lambe and Mr. David Pegman. A minutes silence was observed for the deceased.

Cllr. S. Bourke requested that a letter of sympathy be sent to the French Ambassador to Ireland following the tragic events at Charlie Hebdo, Paris the previous week. This was agreed.

Request for Suspension of Standing Orders:

Dublin Bus – 145 Service into Kilmacanogue: Cllr. T. Fortune raised the matter of the Dublin Bus 145 Service into Kilmacanogue and asked if it could be discussed at the beginning of the meeting it as he would not be present for suspension of standing orders as he had to attend another meeting. The Cathaoirleach advised that this could be discussed at 5pm if the elected members were in agreement.

Health Service: Cllr. J. Brady requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss the crisis which he said exists within the health service. This was seconded by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald and agreed to discuss the matter at 4.45 pm.

ITEM NO. 1

To consider disposal of the Council's interest and equity in 0.1024 hectares, or thereabouts, of land in the townland of Kilmurry South, Delgany, Co. Wicklow to Connolly Finance and Leasing Ltd., T/A Paddy Connolly 4 X 4, Killala Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

It was proposed by Cllr. C. Fox, seconded by Cllr. P. Vance and agreed to dispose of the Council's interest and equity in 0.1024 hectares, or thereabouts, of land in the townland of Kilmurry South, Delgany, Co. Wicklow to Connolly Finance and Leasing Ltd., T/A Paddy Connolly 4 X 4, Killala Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

ITEM NO. 2

To receive presentation on the draft County Wicklow Economic Think Tank Action Plan (CWETT Plan)

The Draft CWETT Plan was circulated to the elected members. Cllr. J. Ryan, Chair of the Steering Group, outlined his role in the preparation of the Plan. He advised that he had been requested by the previous Cathaoirleach, then Cllr. Jimmy O Shaughnessy, around the time MSD, Rathdrum, had announced plans for closure to set up the CWETT on the lines of the very successful Bray Economic Think Tank.

He introduced the members of the steering group involved in the process, the chairs of the working groups and thanked the business community who contributed to the groups. He advised that the purpose of the presentation was to present the strategic priorities for economic development in County Wicklow contained within the plan and that if the elected members adopted the plan the actions proposed therein would be prioritised, costed and resources allocated. He also advised that the Plan would feed forward to the Local Community Development Plan Process.

He advised that the Plan was a county wide plan, which was produced as a result of an extensive and interactive process of consultation and collaboration between the business community and the local authority and the feed back given by the elected members at the workshop held in the Glenview Hotel had also been incorporated into the Plan.

He introduced the facilitator of the CWETT, Ms. Niamh Cooney, NC Consultants and the Chairs of the working groups as follows:-

- Large Business and Mobile Investment: Mr. Declan O Neill
- Retail and Business Services: Mr. Kilian McGreal
- Agri, Food and Maritime Services: Mr. Dick Lenehan
- Tourism, Entertainment and Creative Industries: Mr. John Hannigan

Ms. Niamh Cooney made a presentation covering the following areas:-

- Ø Objective of the CWETT Process
- Ø The Process itself
- Ø The Outputs: The Big Idea and Strategic Objectives
- Ø The detailed Process
- Ø Findings

Mr. John Hannigan, Chair of the Tourism, Entertainment and Creative Industries gave a presentation covering the following strategic objectives:-

- Ø The Big idea
- Ø Rebrand Co. Wicklow
- Ø Establishment of the Wicklow Brand Taskforce
- Ø Redevelop and launch www.wicklow.ie as a portal
- Ø Engage Younger generations

Mr. Kilian McGreal, Chair of the Retail and Business Services made a presentation covering the following strategic objectives:-

- Ø Wicklow open for Business
- Ø Infrastructural requirements of businesses
- Ø Establishment of specific locations as gateway hubs for development
- Ø Ensure the County is attractive to both businesses and their employees
- Ø Improve working relations between the local authorities and the business community
- Ø High Quality Affordable and Dependable Broadband Service
- Ø Development of a marketing plan aligned with '*The Big Idea*'
- Ø A Retail and marketing plan for County Wicklow
- Ø Pay parking strategy
- Ø Countywide strategy for tourist and business signage
- Ø Reinvigoration of Town images

Mr. John Hannigan, Chair of the Tourism, Entertainment and Creative Industries gave a presentation covering the following strategic objectives of maximising the value of Wicklow's status as 'The Garden County'.

- Ø Development of a marketing plan
- Ø The offering of outdoor activities
- Ø Promotion of niche tourism opportunities to tour operators
- Ø Promotion and development of Greenway projects
- Ø Capitalising on the immediate economic opportunity in the film industry
- Ø Establishment of a film industry business development group
- Ø Promotion of a film industry cluster

Mr. Dick Lenehan, Chair of the Agri, Food and Maritime Services gave a presentation covering the following strategic objectives:-

- Ø Sustain and where possible grow traditional sectors
- Ø Food
- Ø Food sector Forum
- Ø Development of a food brand
- Ø The Maritime Sector
- Ø Development of a business group to capitalise on the maritime infrastructure in County Wicklow
- Ø Be alert to new economic opportunities
- Ø The opportunity of offshore wind farms
- Ø Establishment of an expert group to evaluate the opportunity and a wind energy task force
- Ø Off shore wind farm as a strategic investment project

The Cathaoirleach thanked all of the speakers for their presentations and acknowledged the work of the steering group in the process chaired by Cllr. J. Ryan. Elected members made the following contributions:-

- Local authorities are in competition with one another for employment opportunities. County Wicklow needs to be competitive with its commercial rates and impediments should now be placed in the way of business development
- Water Charges for businesses are either the highest or second highest in the country
- Rural broadband is an issue, it is important for towns to compete for business and to have broadband.
- View expressed that County Wicklow had not fared well from inward investment and query as to what the Council can do to encourage companies to set up in County Wicklow via the IDA.

- The CWETT viewed as a document very easy to read, understandable and the work ideas contained therein are very encouraging. View expressed that the Council should be enthusiastic and proactive in the process.
- The LCDC process mentioned and the incorporation of the policies into the LEP. Also can the Council apply to LEADER to fund some of the objectives, particularly the food, agriculture and fishing aspects of the strategic objectives.
- View expressed that a marine element is missing having regard to the fact that Wicklow is a coastal county and that marine tourism should receive more coverage.
- Brand development viewed as crucial in the process
- Business development liaison officer supported
- IDA visited County Wicklow once in 2013 and four times in 2014. County Wicklow cannot wait for the IDA and must sell the County nationally and internationally as well.
- A stimulus plan is required to invigorate the retail industry.
- The concept of the Blue way is commendable and should be explored
- Development of a brand for County Wicklow is vitally important and that it portrays a vision that the Council can believe in and deliver on.
- It is important to create a portal to direct business to one website to find out every there is about business and economic development in County Wicklow. .
- Tourism in County Wicklow suffers because of its proximity to Dublin and it is one of the greatest challenges. It is critically important that Wicklow look at the niche tourism markets where people need to stay in County Wicklow to carry out that activity. Wicklow should be the outdoor recreation capital of Ireland.
- Youth viewed as a vital link to business development
- Noted that some of the issues mentioned require input at national level and some require input at local level. Crucial that the Council lobbies the government at national level to increase investment in public transport and increase subvention in public transport companies. No mention in the recent government strategy on public transport of South Dublin and North Wicklow.
- View expressed that the Council needs to identify a location within the County to direct FDI in conjunction with the IDA so that long-term employment can be established.
- View expressed that the Council should seriously consider taking over Blessington Lakes for the creation of tourism initiatives.

The Chief Executive expressed his thanks to everyone involved in the CWETT Plan advising that it was a very important report, coming at a time when the national economy had turned around. He advised that there were very good ideas contained within the Plan, which will feed into the Local Economic and Community Development Plan and the Corporate Plan. He advised that funding had been provided at the Budget meeting and there were a number of areas that require very little funding which could make a big impact. He assured the elected members of the commitment of the executive to work with businesses in County Wicklow in the future to make County Wicklow an attractive place to do business.

Mr. T. Murphy, DOS, also thanked everyone involved in the process and advised the elected members of the next steps involved in the process which, if the plan is adopted, are the prioritisation of the strategic objectives, the costing and resource allocation, the timeline and metrics and to feed forward to the Local Economic Plan process. He advised that the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC will play a key role in the prioritisation of the strategic objectives.

The adoption of the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank plan was proposed by Cllr. P. Casey, seconded by Cllr. G. McLoughlin and agreed by all.

8) Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. P. Kennedy and Cllr. P. Fitzgerald (received 11.12.2014)

The Cathaoirleach advised that with the elected members' agreement he would like to consider item number 8 as it was relevant to the discussions. This was agreed.

'That Wicklow County Council seeks an update from agencies charged with delivering jobs on measures being taken to replace the jobs which will be lost when Merck, Sharp and Dohme ceases operations next year at the plant in Rathdrum. The information sought should include progress on selling the site.'

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Kennedy, seconded by Cllr. J. Snell and agreed to formally invite representatives of MSD to attend a meeting to provide an update to the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Behan, seconded by Cllr. S. Matthews and agreed to invite the IDA to also attend a meeting.

Following a short discussion on the matter it was agreed that the IDA would be invited to attend a later meeting than that to be attended by MSD.

ITEM NO. 5

To consider request from PPN to add additional membership to Housing and Corporate Estate SPC representing the social inclusion sector

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake and agreed to extend membership of the Housing and Corporate Estate SPC to include an additional seat to be filled by the Social Inclusion Sector.

ITEM NO. 3

Update on Wicklow County Campus

The Cathaoirleach advised that he had been requested by a number of elected members for a update on Wicklow County Campus.

Mr. T. Murphy, DOS, gave a presentation covering the following areas:

- Campus and Context
- Background
- Wicklow County Campus – Zoning
- Wicklow County Campus
- Life Long Learning Courses 2014/15
- Aims of Vision Document
- Cost/job potential
- Progress to date
- Next steps
- Video of the campus

In response to a query raised in relation to the provision of full time day course at the campus Mr. T. Murphy advised in relation to the policy changes around third level institutes. He advised in relation to the lifelong learning course at the campus and that the President of IT Carlow is pleased with the number of students accessing the college courses and that the numbers are above average.

Some queries were raised by the members regarding the provision of full-time courses on the campus and the potential for the growth of both the campus and development on the surrounding lands.

ITEM NO. 6

To consider time scheduling arrangements for Irish Water clinic to be held on Monday 2nd February 2015

The Cathaoirleach advised that Irish Water had indicated that they were not in a position to attend a Council meeting but were running clinics with elected members in all local authorities and that they would be present at County Buildings on Monday 2nd February between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. He advised that the protocol committee had suggested that the municipal districts meet in groups.

Ms. L. Gallagher advised that Irish Water normally operated a 3 hour session, but they were prepared to provide a 4 hour session to the Wicklow councillors.

Extension of time:

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Behan, seconded by Cllr. I. Winters and agreed to extend the meeting until 17.15.

Following a discussion on the matter the following times were agreed for Irish Water to meet with the elected members of each municipal district.

- 1) 10.00 – 10.45 Greystones MD
- 2) 10.45 – 11.30 Arklow MD
- 3) 11.30 – 12.15 Bray MD
- 4) 12.15 – 13.00 Baltinglass MD
- 5) 13.00 – 13.45 Wicklow MD

Cllr. J. Whitmore expressed frustration that a notice of motion submitted by her would be deferred a second time for another month and the elected council should look at how the meetings operate. She suggested that stricter speaking times be implemented.

Elected members made the following contributions:-

- Support expressed in relation to the points raised.
- Too many long winded contributions from around the chamber
- Notice of motions relate to actionable items
- Suspension of standing orders, while viewed as important, little chance of having a real input into.
- Suspension of standing orders viewed as being used as a by passing mechanism for notice of motions.

It was agreed to take Cllr. Whitmore's Notice of Motion and then proceed with the suspension of standing orders.

2) Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. J. Whitmore (received 03.11.2014) (deferred from previous meeting)

'That the Council implement a text messaging service to enable contact be made with both commercial and residential persons in the event of an emergency situation'

Cllr. J. Whitmore advised that the Council should communicate more effectively with its commercial and residential constituents and that residents should be kept up to date with what is happening in their area in relation to matters which have a direct impact on their business, such as water cut off etc. Cllr. Whitmore proposed the setting up of a text messaging service whereby people could be informed of an issue, this could be done easily and would build relationship with commercial customers. This was seconded by Cllr. J. Snell.

Response:

The Council uses a number of forms of communication channels including social media such as face book, the website and has a large twitter following of some 1,200 followers and there is substantial re tweeting of important notices. Local radio is also used as a vehicle for communication as well as newspaper notice. The Council is favourably disposed to extending communications mechanisms and will report back to the Council in two months.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Health Service

Cllr. J. Brady advised that there was a crisis in the health service and mentioned the closure of A & E facilities and wards in various hospitals. He proposed that the Council write to the HSE and ask for an immediate reopening of St. Brigid's ward in St. Columcille's Hospital Loughlinstown and also that the Council be provided with a full report on the status of Wicklow Hospital. He also requested that a senior representative from the HSE be invited to attend a Council meeting of Wicklow County Council to advise the elected members of the overall strategy for the County. This was seconded by Cllr. N. Lawless and agreed.

ITEM NO.7

Correspondence

Reporting of political donations by elected member

Ms. L. Gallagher advised that the members had been circulated with correspondence from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, dated 7th January, 2015, Circular Letter F1/15 regarding the 31st of January, 2015 deadline for the reporting of political donations by elected members and the requirement to include information on expenditure and certain donations at the 2014 elections in the local authority annual report for 2014. This was noted by the members.

Public Liability Insurance for elected members.

L. Gallagher advised the members that a Public Liability insurance scheme was offered at a cost of €63 should they wish to avail of it details of which had been circulated.

Confirmation of Minutes of protocol meeting of the 8th of December, 2014

It was proposed by Cllr. C. Fox, seconded by Cllr. N. Lawless and agreed to confirm the minutes of the Protocol meeting dated 8th December 2014.

Question from Cllr. P. Fitzgerald

Question

Arklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council have expended considerable funds in advancing the proposed wastewater treatment plant for the town. Currently there are four cases in the High and Supreme courts. Given that Irish Water may not proceed with the Seabank site following their consultation process I am requesting information on what plans are being prepared to fund the costs associated with these cases. Will Irish water be requested to fund the costs and is there statutory obligation on them to do so. Will the DOECLG provide financial assistance and last but most importantly will Wicklow County Council have to fund the costs which will be quite substantial"

Response:

Irish Water has commenced a process of review and consultation with regard to provision of a new wastewater treatment plan in Arklow. Preliminary work has identified a number of sites being considered for the process. The Seabank site is listed for this purpose. This work is ongoing. Arklow wastewater treatment plant was included in the Departments Water Services Investment Plan (WSIP). As an active scheme, financial assistance has been forthcoming from the

Department. The court cases are an integral part of the planning process for the scheme. The Council expects that Irish Water will be responsible for any of the costs arising from same. The Council has not received any correspondence from Irish Water with regard to the court cases”

Cllr. Fitzgerald referred to money which had been paid by the objectors and who will repay this money?

The Chief Executive advised that this money would go towards the cost of the case and that Irish Water or the Department will fund the balance. There should be no cost to Wicklow County Council in any cases that are lost and costs have been awarded against the objector and this money should be collectable. If there is still a deficit then it should be made up by Irish Water or the Department.

In a response to a question as to whether a response had been received from the Minister following the passing of a motion for the abolishment of water charges the Chief Executive advised that this was a matter for central government and that all motions are conveyed as requested.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed _____
Cllr. C. Fox Cathaoirleach

Signed _____
L. Gallagher,
Senior Executive Officer/Meetings Administrator