

# WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



**Wicklow County Council**  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

## **Transcript of the County Council Meeting Held on 1 February 2016 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow**



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6  
7 Monday, 1st February, 2016. Wicklow County Council Ordinary Meeting.

8  
9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon members, you are all very welcome to our February  
10 meeting. Just apologies from the CEO, Bryan Doyle, who is sick today. And also from  
11 Councillor Brendan Thornhill. And I think we have one simple think, do we?

12 MS GALLAGHER: Yes Cathaoirleach. I would like to pass a vote of sympathy on behalf of  
13 Pat Cunningham, employee of Bray Municipal District.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Grainne, is this to do with sympathies?

15 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: No, it's not.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

17 Cllr WALSH: Condolences to the family of Jim Lynch who passed away in Bray over the  
18 weekend, he was one of the founder members of the Bray Cuala historical society and an active  
19 member in the Delgany horticultural society, so condolences to Jim's wife Noreen and family.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Nolan.

21 Cllr NOLAN: Sympathies to the family of the late Michael, Mick, Crinion, who was a key  
22 member of Newtown GAA club for many years and was a key member of the 1964 and 1965  
23 teams when he was on the committee and he passed away over the last week and it's just  
24 sympathies to him and his family at this sad time.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, let's stand.

26  
27 (A minute's silence)

28  
29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, just I know there is a number of things short-listed at the recent  
30 LAMA awards, so unfortunately they didn't win, but the local sports club of the year was the  
31 Wicklow swimming club. The best public building was the Arklow library and municipal  
32 offices, and the best community based initiative was the Ballybeg brick-by-brick campaign and  
33 the best business working with the community was Mystic Celt restaurant, so congratulations to  
34 them. And today is actually the last day that we will have Susan Nichols with us, Susan has got

1 a promotion and will be going to Bray library. Congratulations with that, and thanks for being  
2 with us. How long have you been with us here in the Council here.

3 MS NICHOLS: 8 years.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: It flies by. There is a number of people looking for suspension of  
5 standing orders, so Cllr McLoughlin.

6 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I request a suspension of standing orders to discuss the planned location  
7 of the new Educate Together secondary school, Bray, being located in the Bray Institute of  
8 Further Education without any consultation with the Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board  
9 or the Bray Institute. Further more, an application has gone into Wicklow County Council for  
10 change of use of block E in the civic centre in Bray from office to education use, again without  
11 any consultation with the stakeholders to facilitate this plan.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, do you have a seconder for that?

13 Cllr MITCHELL: I'll second that.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Okay, fine, Cllr Murphy.

15 Cllr MURPHY: Also standing orders to discuss the Arklow library opening, it seems to be  
16 going further and further away and I think we need to up the game.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, now I have been informed that it's officially going to be opened on  
18 the 1st of April, which is a very dodgy day to open anything.

19 Cllr MURPHY: It's a very dodgy day and we had a meeting last week but reading between the  
20 lines, we were kind of said but it could be further than that, so we need to discuss it.

21 Cllr BOURKE: I'll second that.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed then, we can ask for a comment on that. Cllr Brady?

23 Cllr BRADY: I am seeking two suspension of standing orders Cathaoirleach, the first one is just  
24 to discuss the new recycling tax that it seems Alan Kelly, the Minister for the Environment has  
25 brought in, which I think is mooted to be coming into force in July. It will see a tax being  
26 imposed on people to recycle their household waste and I also want to discuss the potential  
27 implications and repercussions on our own recycling centres here within the county, which we  
28 know are free of charge to the public at this stage. So I am seeking a suspension of standing  
29 orders to discuss that new tax that's going to be imposed on hard hit householders.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you have a seconder for that?

31 Cllr LAWLESS: I'll second it.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Agreed. Okay.

33 Cllr BRADY: The second suspension of standing orders I want to propose Cathaoirleach is just  
34 in relation to the sentencing last week of former Council employee Frank O'Toole who was

1 sentenced in relation to corruption and I just want to ask a couple of specific questions there  
2 around the nature of that particular case, and the potential for other cases that may or may not be  
3 being dealt with by the Council. I just want to ask as to whether an audit has been carried out on  
4 all planning files to see as to whether all planning fees, development levies, etcetera, have been  
5 paid up and fully compliant. So just to put a couple of specific questions...

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you have a seconder for that?

7 Cllr McDONALD: I'll...

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?

9 Cllr VANCE: No, I wouldn't agree with that, I think this is something that could be ongoing in  
10 the courts, I don't think it's appropriate for a suspension of standing orders to be discussed in this  
11 in any shape or form. In any shape or form. It's absolutely not the appropriate forum  
12 whatsoever and I would ask members to support that. I think this is very dangerous now to say  
13 the least.

14  
15 The other Notice of Motion I don't have a problem with, but I do have a major problem with this  
16 one now.

17 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach, can I just in response to that Cathaoirleach, just in response, I am  
18 not asking...

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Hang on, Cllr Winters.

20 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I'm with Cllr Vance, I hope that there will be additional  
21 court or legal proceedings going from this conviction last week, and I think we might end up  
22 being told that we had muddied the waters in terms of fairness or trials or future things. It's not  
23 that I want to ban it forever, but I want to give it a bit of time to allow maybe the events to take  
24 its course, give the guards a couple of months and if nothing has happened at that stage then I  
25 would be happy to discuss it, but not at the moment. I think we should just let it settle and see  
26 what's the next step in this - legal step on this occasion.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Councillor Tommy Cullen.

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, there was extraordinary events that took place as Cllr Brady  
29 did say, but what's the situation with regards to any outstanding planning fees or levies? This  
30 Council has the solicitor involved, Mr Pat O'Toole, has he been fully planning compliant and  
31 paid all his levies...

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's getting into the issue, the question is whether or not...

33 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Sorry, I am just asking...

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: The question is whether we should actually discuss this.

1 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I am discussing the suspension of standing orders which I am entitled  
2 to.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not letting you go into it. If the Council members agree to discuss  
4 this as a suspension of standing orders at the end, we can discuss it in total and I'll let you say  
5 what you want to say, but right now the decision we are going to have to make is whether or not  
6 it would be wise and prudent to actually have that discussion on the basis that this could be open  
7 to appeal and there could be other cases linked to this that might be coming before the courts.  
8 That's the decision that has been made by this Council.

9 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman if you just let me finish, I am taking on board what Cllr  
10 Vance and Cllr Winters is a individual, and Cllr Brady. But I am asking a specific question  
11 about a person - a developer, Mr Pat O'Toole, has he been paid all his planning levies...

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't think you can do that.

13 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Why would you have a problem, Cllr Winters, in me asking that  
14 question. Has he paid - there was a development this man was involved with...

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are getting into a debate with this, that's not what this is about, this is  
16 about whether or not we should discuss this or not. I don't think that's fair.

17 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I am asking a question. Have these levies been paid?

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: So, Cllr Brady, do you want to get back in?

19 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach, I am not going to mention any of the particulars around that case  
20 of Frank O'Toole, I am asking a very specific question as to whether this Council is aware of any  
21 other potential cases of a similar nature.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that just a question that you want answered?

23 Cllr BRADY: I am looking for an answer.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: You know what I mean, we don't need a suspension of standing orders to  
25 deal with that.

26 Cllr BRADY: Not necessarily, but if other members want to broaden it out, I am asking...

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can go for a vote on this if you want.

28 Cllr BRADY: I am asking for a specific answer yes or no, are there any other potential cases  
29 coming at us here with...

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are happy with a written answer to that as to whether...

31 Cllr BRADY: If you just let me ask this. Can I just ask the question? Thank you. As to  
32 whether a full audit has been carried out on all planning cases there to ensure there are no other  
33 potential cases similar to this, where development levies had not been paid over and the file  
34 effectively had been signed off. As a public representative, I think it's crucial that we know that.

1 So specific answers to specific questions.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Vance again.

3 Cllr VANCE: Chairman with due respect, that's not a suspension of standing orders, that's a  
4 Notice of Motion.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's a written question, I am happy to take that and ask for -- Cllr Brady  
6 could you specifically write down that question so we can get the answer to it. It's not a  
7 suspension of standing orders. It's not. Bear with me on this if you could. Could you just write  
8 down the question and then drop it up and we will give you a written response, no problem.

9 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach, I want a written response here read out to the public at this  
10 meeting, not emailed in three or four weeks after the event. I am asking those specific questions  
11 in a public forum here today, and I would like a public response in this public forum here today  
12 before we...

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will see what we can do.

14 Cllr BRADY: Sorry Cathaoirleach, I am not looking for this to be pushed back...

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: I know what you are asking for, is that okay?

16 Cllr BRADY: If the answers aren't forthcoming, I'll push for a suspension of standing orders.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number one on the agenda -- sorry.

18 Cllr BRADY: Are you saying you will...

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will take the suspensions - as there is three suspensions, we will take  
20 them at twenty minutes to five, is that fair?

21 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Can we get an answer to Cllr Brady's question read out then?

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have to see what the question is first and then get back. Once we can,  
23 we will. Item number one to confirm and sign the minutes of the budget meeting held on  
24 Monday the 23rd of November 2015. Can I have a proposer, Cllr Snell and seconded by Cllr  
25 Bourke. Item number two, to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow  
26 County Council held on Monday the 7th of December. Proposed by Cllr Blake, and seconded by  
27 Cllr Casey. Item number three to confirm and sign the minutes of a Special Meeting Wicklow  
28 County Council held on Saturday the 19th of December, proposed and seconded. Thank you.  
29 Item number four to consider the disposal of land at Seaview Avenue, Arklow, County Wicklow  
30 to South East Cycling Club for a period of 25 years from the 1st of March. Can I have a  
31 proposer -- you want to propose that Cllr Fitzgerald?

32 Cllr FITZGERALD: I want to thank the officials of Wicklow for their co-operation, they've  
33 been looking for the ground for a long, long time and I am delighted to propose the disposal by  
34 way over a period of 25 years.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can we have a seconder?

2 Cllr MURPHY: I'll second it.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Thank you. Item number five, to consider the disposal of  
4 the freehold interest as shown on the map County Wicklow being of 106 St Peter's Place,  
5 Arklow, in the townland of Sheephouse, to Maria Byrne 106 St Peter's Place. Again proposed  
6 by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Bourke. Is that agreed? Thank you. Item number 6 to  
7 consider the disposal of - proposed, that's very quick, Cllr Fox and seconded by Cllr Matthews.  
8 Okay fine.

9

10 Now item number seven is to receive a deputation from the following two groups, Save The  
11 Murrough interest group and Friends of the Murrough group, after which we will have a  
12 presentation from our own Declan Murnane. Firstly can I ask the Friends of the Murrough  
13 group, Ned Cussens, the chair of that group.

14 MR CUSSENS: Good afternoon everybody, I am Ned Cussens, Chairman of the Friends of the  
15 Murrough, I would like to thank the Cathaoirleach and the elected members of Wicklow County  
16 Council for their invitation to speak at today's sitting of the Council. Any visitor to Wicklow  
17 Town on ascending to the scenic view car park will always marvel at the view and the  
18 spectacular setting of our town, which is unique in many ways. Truly this is the garden of  
19 Ireland, but how have we valued our heritage? The long curve of the bay with its adjacent  
20 hinterland situated between sea and lakes is known as the Murrough. And it extends as far as  
21 Kilcoole. It was lately described by Wicklow Town's people as the Phoenix Park of Wicklow.

22

23 The Murrough is a linear park, which has been used by walkers, joggers, cyclists, swimmers,  
24 boaters and on shore anglers for generations past.

25

26 It's a recreational area of which any town might well be proud of and which has the potential to  
27 serve as a great attraction for tourists and nature lovers. Nature has bestowed on us this beautiful  
28 parkland, but it appears that we have placed very little value on it. I am here today, because of  
29 the shocking loss of the amenity over the Christmas period, Storm Frank decimated the shingle  
30 beach and it became obvious to the towns people that the lack of a coherent plan for the coastal  
31 protection would lead to the loss of our only parkland.

32

33 Over 200 people attended a public meeting demanding action to save the Murrough. I know  
34 many of the elected members here today also attended. I am calling upon you, the members of

1 the Council, to make urgent representations to Minister Harris, the Minister directly responsible  
2 to the OPW to allocate funds for coastal protection along the Murrough. In addition we ask you  
3 to make it is a priority to seek European funding to safeguard and develop the Murrough in a  
4 sustainable manner. We at Friends of the Murrough have called for a management plan for the  
5 area for many years. You can see our submission for a special amenity area order in 2008. We  
6 have repeatedly drawn attention to the effects of our ocean. Whether south of the town where  
7 access to the spectacular Cliff Walk has been closed off since the summer of 2014, or north of  
8 the town where the monkey pole has been moved inland a number of years ago due to the loss of  
9 the path. We have commissioned many reports and have both an expertise and passion to protect  
10 and enhance the value of this amenity for all. I would like to address the recent temporary  
11 emergency works carried out by Irish Rail, necessary to save the railway line.

12  
13 The RPS coastal protection study of 2007 outlined solutions to the problem of erosion.  
14 Unfortunately recommendations made back then were not properly implemented. This resulted  
15 in many years of increasing erosion with continuous loss of the beach and the path. Then Storm  
16 Frank hit on December 28th last year. Irish Rail's emergency works replicated previous sticking  
17 plaster solutions -- without a transition zone, erosion is pushed further northwards. Not only is it  
18 no solution, but it won't be long and indeed there is already visible, the rocks from the new  
19 revenant by CIE are slipping down to the beach. The waves are coming closer to the railway  
20 line again. They're roughly 10, 15 metres from the railway line. As you can see from the slide  
21 shows, they're going there, the remedial works have not been effective and without a transition  
22 zone, the erosion is continuing to worsen.

23  
24 Shane Beacom who was born and reared in the Murrough is a highly experienced marine  
25 engineer currently working in America. He has been in communication with our group and his  
26 recommendations and critique of current work can be viewed on our website. Access to the  
27 Murrough is vital. Our health and our well-being as well as for the economic development of  
28 the community. We ask Wicklow County Council to consider access issues during further  
29 coastal protection works, which undoubtedly will need to be done sooner rather than later. It is  
30 obvious heavy machinery will be required and it will not be quick. Temporary access to the  
31 Murrough via either the waste treatment plant or extending the river walk are two options we  
32 have identified. Friends of the Murrough support the County Development Plan aimed at an  
33 integral coastal plan management approach, ensuring the protection of manmade and natural  
34 resources of the coastal zone. But it must be a coherent management plan and one that



1 encompasses all stakeholders. Friends of the Murrough are registered with the newly constituted  
2 public participation network and welcome the move to accommodate community interests in the  
3 planning process. We feel this is an opportunity to show democracy in action.

4  
5 While the environmental representatives sit on the transport, water and environmental Strategic  
6 Policy Committee, it's important to have a local input into planning decisions in the case of the  
7 Murrough. The Friends of the Murrough feel we could bring much expertise and knowledge to  
8 the table. For example, the Economic Think Tank maritime group advises on the objectives and  
9 actions of the draft local economic and community plan. The Friends of the Murrough had an  
10 input into this group, we feel the interests of local people would be better represented. The  
11 amenity value of the area would get a fair hearing, rather than just to focus on the business  
12 aspect of the development, which has led us to nearly losing the Murrough altogether. We also  
13 support many of the aims of the local economic and community plan and we feel working  
14 together could benefit the community socially and financially.

15  
16 Collaboration should underlie the implementation of this plan. For example, Goal 86, to  
17 capitalise on Wicklow's unique attributes and proximity to Dublin. Excellent quality of life,  
18 human capital, tourism, landscape, marine agriculture and forestry resources. One of the  
19 objectives, 8.1, action 17, states development of a coastal walk from Bray to Wicklow, and our  
20 group has pushed for this for many years, and indeed believe our work has contributed to this  
21 objective in three ways.

22  
23 The first by ensuring that at least one right of way along the coast was registered in the last  
24 County Development Plan.

25  
26 Secondly, by working with the now defunct Urban District Council to identify a solution to a  
27 disputed access on the loop Cliff Walk, south of Wicklow Town and thirdly by commissioning  
28 reports from the National Trails Office about the feasibility of loop walks in the local area.

29  
30 Aims to develop a blue way trail are also welcome. Objectives to realise the potential benefits of  
31 our maritime assets are too narrowly focused on the financial benefits, again missing a true  
32 benefit of these assets. Blue ways can positively influence our economic groups and  
33 opportunities but it can give a sense of community, provide opportunities for recreation, and  
34 enhance our ability to experience many of the community's interesting places in new ways. We

1 have seen the success of the Wild Atlantic Way and the Great Western Greenway in Mayo,  
2 Ireland's Ancient East initiative is the relevant tourism enterprise in the Wicklow area.  
3 Essentially what we are in danger of losing is part of our culture. These ancient walks are our  
4 national heritage. The Murrough and the Cliff Walk fit perfectly into this idea behind Ireland's  
5 Ancient East. They form the most easterly point of the republic where the Cliff Walk boasts  
6 many historical associations from a Norman castle to a cafe used during the stone age, where  
7 flints were shaped. Also the remains of a penal church, and Old Lime Kiln, Brideswell and  
8 lighthouse which dates back to the late 1700s. These are all part of our local heritage and the  
9 people of Wicklow deserve at least to have access to them. Is it too much to expect that our  
10 natural and historic heritage be restored for the visitors, ourselves and children and grandchildren  
11 to enjoy? Thank you for your attention.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Ned. And now we welcome from Save the Murrough interest  
13 group, Carolann Murphy.

14 MS MURPHY: I have to stand up, I don't really like sitting down for talking. It's okay. Okay,  
15 the Save the Murrough is probably more a concept than an organisation, and it was formed over  
16 a cup of coffee, and on the 30th of December, having viewed the absolute devastation that was  
17 caused - probably happening over a long time, but exacerbated by the various storms that led up  
18 to that, and we, myself and Mary and Majella who are sort of if you like the faces of Save the  
19 Murrough, but we are here representing the public, and I can't stress that enough and I'll come  
20 back to it in a moment.

21  
22 We went down and looked and we were looking at where we would normally have walked and  
23 there were people down there looking at it as if it was a major crash on the N11 or one I saw  
24 years ago on the - it was in England outside London and people were standing looking at that in  
25 bunches talking about it and saying this just can't have happened, they were shocked. But the  
26 shock, as in any situation when you lose something, has turned to anger, and believe me I am not  
27 happy to have to come and tell all of you Councillors and public representatives of the members  
28 of staff of Wicklow County Council that it is palpable. You can actually -- if I could bottle it, it  
29 would turn into an explosive because every time we go to the shop, every time we go downtown,  
30 when Majella and myself even put the posters up to try and access the people who aren't on  
31 Facebook in order that they'd come to a public meeting where people would have their say, we  
32 were stopped all the way long by people, are you the people who are setting up the meeting?  
33 When we went into the shops, they said we will put that up, but we want to have our say. We  
34 have set up a page, Majella has set it up and in no time at all, there is a huge number of people

1 on that, people have accessed the page through all over - now everybody in Australia and  
2 America, all over the country, we even had responses from people in China who used to live  
3 here or have relatives who live here now what has happened. We say to you strongly what are  
4 you going to do, what is the county engineer, what is the County Manager when he is stamping  
5 the Manager's orders or whatever, I worked here so I know a little bit about that, everything has  
6 to be done through the system, but right up to, the Murrough is crumbling. Go down today or  
7 tomorrow and you will see there is more and more of it gone, we cannot stress that enough.  
8

9 So Iarnrod Éireann came in in an emergency situation, were informed we understand by the  
10 public, not by the Wicklow County Council, who as it happened were on their holidays, they  
11 can't help that, but somebody sent them an email and they came down hot foot on the 1st of  
12 January, which is a holiday and had to do something urgently, put down rocks and then at the  
13 side and then come down.  
14

15 Now nothing has happened since then. The only thing that's happened is we asked for public  
16 access and they came down and the Council came down, we saw the guys, when we were  
17 filming by the way for Sky TV, they were there putting a little bit of pathway down, a few  
18 pebbles down. That's gone now. Go down and look at it. How many of you have been down  
19 there. It's puddles now. So we really want to stress the need for a short-term emergency urgent  
20 plan now to save, to try and repair the damage that's done, but we also are asking for a long-term  
21 plan. The Murrough, and we researched this, extends from the harbour in Wicklow right up to  
22 Kilcoole, 15 and a half kilometres. And one kilometre in parts to take in Broadlough, which is a  
23 world famous area of wildlife, heritage and is protected by the way under EU regulation in case  
24 you don't know that, and if you - all you have to do is Google parks and wildlife service, which  
25 is under the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and it doesn't take much to -  
26 clicking to find that the Murrough is a protected area under two SPA and SAC which are  
27 protected areas and it actually is outlined in that. And it's not - there is nothing fuzzy or anything  
28 about that.  
29

30 We rang them, and I can tell you the person, but I won't tell you his name, he is a senior person  
31 in there and said that we need to go back to the Council, if we are representing the public and tell  
32 them this is an area. All the other suggested things like the SAO, they're on the "maybe can be  
33 applied for", but as it stands and some people will say to us, why are you worrying about the  
34 wildlife, it's the amenity area where we run and cycle and do all of those fantastic things; but the

1 walking area, the railway station, and then the protected areas, that's the Murrough, it's the whole  
2 lot. So here's the thing: We were asked here today to talk about the concerns of the public and  
3 thank you for asking us by the way, we are very happy to come along, well not, well we are  
4 happy enough to speak but we just want action now, we are not -- but the reason we are talking  
5 about wildlife is there was a suggestion made actually from the panel that night in front of 200 -  
6 over 200 people that there might be plans to put - I don't know where they were pointing to,  
7 marinas and taking things off - helping out Dublin Port. Manmade things that would absolutely  
8 destroy the area, and we are not, the public are not going to be satisfied with a little piece of  
9 Murrough. No, we want the whole Murrough, and we are going to fight you all the way. All the  
10 way if it means going to An Bord Pleanala, and now we have informed them in the Department  
11 of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht, or through the Wildlife Service that this is possibly going to  
12 happen, and we have been informed that any applications you put in for any manmade things to  
13 make money, and whatever you want to do, line your pockets, that has to go, the environmental  
14 impact of any such plan has to go through them.

15  
16 So I am sorry, I hope that is not the elephant in the room that you didn't want to hear today, but  
17 it's what we have been asked to bring the public concern and we are asking the elected members  
18 of the - you know the Councillors, and we are also asking big time that we all get together now,  
19 the members of staff here who have a responsibility to protect and preserve our natural amenity  
20 which includes - all of the whole area, and the Councillors and not when the vote comes in,  
21 please get together on it, it's not - we are not interested in your party divides. We have no  
22 interest in your party divides and no parties. We just want a concerted effort between us all.  
23 There is - apparently European funding for coastal erosion that is separate from the floods. I'm  
24 not talking about taking money out of people's pockets, out of the government's pocket. There is  
25 coastal erosion funding at European level and we have met with two very good MEPs through  
26 members of the Council here and both of them, they didn't promise us anything, other than they  
27 will go back to the European Commission and ask on our behalf.

28  
29 So I would like to thank you for listening to me. I am sorry that it's - maybe not what you  
30 wanted to hear, but that's what we have to say. And I feel I have a responsibility to pass that on  
31 to you, that people are very, very, very unhappy and we are here for the long haul and the people  
32 of the town here are - and its surrounds are here for the long haul. Thank you.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Carolann and Declan, do you want to give us your thoughts?

34 MR MURNANE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, really to just give an update on where we are at since

1 the last meeting with the works down there. We have received a preliminary design from  
2 consultants to continue the rock protection works, and I'll show some slides of those in a few  
3 moments. We have also applied to the OPW for increased funding to fund those works. We  
4 have gone ahead and sought tenders even though it's not finalised, just because of the urgency of  
5 the works down there, we have sought tenders for the supply of rock armour and made inquiries  
6 about possible sources of concrete units, that's one of the alternatives being proposed at the  
7 moment. As was mentioned already, there has been further damage over the last week, and we  
8 have been in discussions with Irish Rail and there is a meeting arranged with them later this  
9 week to discuss it in more detail.

10  
11 The - that's one of the proposals that we have from the consultants. The section in blue there is  
12 the - is actually made up of concrete, pre-cast concrete and the advantage that they're saying to  
13 us of that is it takes up a lot less of the beach. I have another slide that will show the alternative  
14 with just rock armour. So if we use concrete units, it will be much shorter because they can go  
15 in at a steeper slope. It's also possible and we don't know for certain yet, it's possible we may be  
16 able to source them more quickly, so it may mean getting the work done more quickly. The  
17 green at the end there is the transition area and they're also proposing to do that as a ramp to  
18 provide access to the beach at that end as well. And the extent that have is roughly just beyond  
19 the works that Irish Rail have done, so it extends it to protect that area. But obviously it doesn't  
20 deal with the area north of that, which is being eroded quite severely as well. I'll talk a bit more  
21 about that in a minute. That's the alternative. It's probably not as clear, but if we just use rock  
22 armour, the rock armour would go out almost to the low water mark. So there would be no  
23 beach left on that section. So that's the advantage of the concrete units even though they do have  
24 disadvantages as well. That's what the concrete units would look like. This is only being  
25 suggested at the moment. There is no decision made on anything, and we are trying to see  
26 what's available and where they'd be available from. But they'd look similar to that. That's the  
27 recent damage that was referred to earlier. The one on the left is the area just beyond where the  
28 Irish Rail protection works finished, so as you can see there the storms over the last week have  
29 encroached on to that as well, so it's been further eroded. The one on the right is part of the  
30 rocks that Irish Rail put in over the New Year's weekend, and that rock was higher than the  
31 footpath, so you can see that has been lowered now, because - and Irish Rail said themselves  
32 when they were putting it in, it was only very short-term measures, it wasn't designed, and the  
33 rock is a bit small. So it's - that's the effect of it. They're the short-term measures that are  
34 proposed and as I say we have applied for funding for all those.

1  
2 In the long-term, what we feel we need to do is to review and update the 2007 Coastal Protection  
3 Study and that was referred to earlier by one of the groups. It was done by consultants. And the  
4 proposals in that really for the main length of the Murrough was to do nothing, and allow it to  
5 erode naturally, but obviously given the erosion over the last year, that's we feel no longer an  
6 option. I think we need to look at the other alternatives, what can be done to protect it. But it is  
7 a fairly high cost. Probably the best option would seem to be the offshore rock protection units.  
8 But they are very expensive. I mean we are looking at tens of millions. To do one kilometre, we  
9 reckon would cost - and that was on 2007 figures, about 12 million euro. So it is considerable  
10 money. That will also then require permission, a Part 8 environmental impact statement, and a  
11 foreshore licence, so that's all going to take time as well as sourcing the funding.

12  
13 The offshore breakwaters that I mentioned would look something like that, and they were  
14 suggested in the 2007 report, but they were more or less ruled out at that stage because of cost,  
15 but I think if we can source funding for this, they would be the best option, because they give the  
16 protection to the coast, but they also restore the beach and you can get access to the beach  
17 because you don't have to have the rock armour on the beach itself. So they would certainly  
18 seem to be the best option. Thank you very much.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. And does anybody want to come in or make  
20 comments on those plans? Cllr Winters.

21 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I would like to thank both the Friends of the Murrough  
22 and the Save the Murrough group. And assure them that we all do appreciate the seriousness of  
23 the situation, the need for immediate action, and even immediate action means that nothing other  
24 than a short-term solution can going to happen quickly, that it's actually going to take  
25 considerable amount of time, one to secure the funding and two to get the foreshore licence and  
26 all of the other things. But I don't think anybody in this Chamber sees it as a party political  
27 thing. I think all of the Councillors and all of the political parties and none see it as an amenity  
28 that has to be preserved as best we can. I would like to assure you that certainly I have seen  
29 nobody making it a - an issue or they can and we won't. Everybody is speaking from the same  
30 hymn sheet, everybody wants the Murrough protected. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

32 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks Chair. Just a quick question for Declan, when we are talking about  
33 short-term, how long would those short-term measures apply for? And has there been any  
34 modelling of the impact of those short-term measures, because when you have erosion and you

1 put in measures like that, you are essentially potentially moving that erosion further up along the  
2 shore and whether that has actually been modelled?

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell?

4 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach and again thanks to the two speakers from Friends of the  
5 Murrough and Save the Murrough.

6  
7 Indeed I was at the public meeting that was held jointly by both organisations in the Grand Hotel  
8 a number of weeks ago. I would also like to thank Declan for giving us a review on what's  
9 happening from the Council's perspective, but still, just like what Cllr Whitmore has said, there  
10 is no sort of date on it in regards to when works are starting, or how long works will take, and I  
11 do know the goal posts have moved to a certain degree in regards to Irish Rail have carried out  
12 works which have been described as using a sticky plaster and I know people were concerned at  
13 the time when they seen them doing the works, obviously it was a relief that something was  
14 happening, but you know, people could see the type of rock armour they were using; there was  
15 no membrane or the like being put in underneath the rocks to give them extra protection, and the  
16 result is that there is erosion down there now right at the northern end of where the emergency  
17 rocks were placed.

18  
19 We, as a Municipal District, have discussed at length and there was 130,000, another 5,000 put  
20 in from Municipal District and them works were to start at the end of January. As we know  
21 now, we are into February, everything had to be reviewed on the basis that the emergency works  
22 were carried out and I just want to know where we stand in regards to the works. When will  
23 they start? How long will it take? The impact that they'll have, on a health and safety grounds, I  
24 assume - we were led to believe that the Murrough would be closed off to pedestrian access, it  
25 would be unacceptable that it would go on and on and on for months on end. I agree with  
26 Declan in regards the preferred option looking at your plans and your maps would be the  
27 concrete, I think that gives you some resemblance of a beach, would be excellent. But  
28 unfortunately we are only moving the problem further up the Murrough and without actually a  
29 lot of funding, I raised it as far back as last July at municipal level, that it's EU funding we need.  
30 There has been promises made from the OPW and the Minister said there will be funding  
31 available if we go and seek it. But we know from past experience that that funding wasn't  
32 available to this Council when they went looking for it in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and so on. So  
33 130,000 and 135,000 in total now is but a drop in the ocean to try and solve this problem. I  
34 appreciate that you have made a further application for further funding, but I would impress on

1 you the urgency in regards to time escape. You know yourself, you are someone who uses the  
2 Murrough, more than probably most of the people in this chambers and you know the urgency in  
3 regards of - but without money and without substantial money, all we are doing is putting a  
4 sticky plaster on a major problem. It is the jewel in the crown up there, thanks Cathaoirleach.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr Nolan.

6 Cllr NOLAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach, and thanks to both groups the Friends of the Murrough  
7 and Save the Murrough and to Declan for his report. Just to echo what other speakers have been  
8 said, this has been discussed at length at Municipal District level for a very, very long time. It  
9 was put on the long finger too much I think. And now we have the Murrough's eroding and  
10 falling into the sea and immediate action needs to be taken. The strong aggressive action needs  
11 to be taken to the OPW and to the EU to get funding to try and restore the Murrough to its  
12 former beauty and its former glory. And I think this needs to be very, very aggressively pursued  
13 by all members here, by the engineers, by the Council, to make sure that this fund something  
14 gained, whether it's in the tens of millions or not, I think it's - it has to be done. It absolutely has  
15 to be done before there is no Murrough left and before the railway line ends up in the Irish Sea.  
16 And I would also appreciate if a report on the status of the ongoing works would be made  
17 available to all the members. Thank you.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Shay Cullen.

19 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I just want to echo what has been said. First of all,  
20 well done to Ned and Carolann on their presentation. Well done. I suppose first of all a large  
21 number of public representatives attended the public meeting held in early January, and you  
22 know there was a huge turn-out from the people of Wicklow Town and there was certainly a  
23 sense of anger about what has happened and I suppose what was let happen over a long period of  
24 time.

25  
26 When I spoke to Carolann and Ned, like, as I said to them, this hasn't just happened since  
27 Christmas with the storms. The erosion is just ongoing and unfortunately has accelerated. But if  
28 people didn't realise before the public meeting what the Murrough means to the people of  
29 Wicklow Town, they certainly realised after the meeting. Tourism in this county is a primary  
30 source of income for a lot of businesses, and certainly the Murrough, and I would include the  
31 Cliff walk, needs to be harnessed; needs to be kept alive for tourism within our county. And I  
32 am certainly adding in the Cliff Walk because I think it's one of the most fantastic walks we  
33 have, not only in Wicklow, but in the country, and again I think it's important that that's kept on  
34 the agenda and kept alive. With regards to the work, the ongoing work on the Murrough, I know



1 Declan has given us an outline of what is proposed. I suppose it's good to see the increased  
2 funding being looked for from the OPW. I would be obviously annoyed with Irish Rail's interest  
3 in the Murrough area over the past number of years. I know they've been asked on several  
4 occasions over the years to get involved in trying to protect the Murrough area, and really it was  
5 only when the pressure come on to them that they - over the 1st of January, that they were  
6 willing to do anything to - because obviously of the rail track coming under pressure, and  
7 unfortunately, if they had been willing to do something maybe in the last few years, we wouldn't  
8 be where we are now.

9  
10 So, as I say, look, I suppose the reality is the people of Wicklow Town are getting more and  
11 more frustrated with the lack of work that is not happening, so we need to - as Declan said we  
12 need to get moving on this as quickly as possible. I think time is of the essence. Obviously over  
13 the last week alone, we can see where further erosion has taken place. And I welcome work to  
14 be started as quickly as possible. Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Sylvester Bourke.

16 Cllr BOURKE: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I was very shocked when I viewed this over  
17 Christmas, to see the extent of the damage, and it's re-enforced there from the recent photograph  
18 that you have taken. It brings it freshly back to mind. I wouldn't like to think that we would  
19 forget completely about other areas of the county though in our quest to solve the one here in the  
20 Murrough, which I believe we should be doing all we possibly can to do. But Brittas Bay was  
21 badly affected as well for anyone that's walked on the beach there and there is ongoing risks to  
22 Arklow's coastal protection scheme as well where parts of it are being overtopped. We have  
23 looking for extra funding over the last 20 years down there to put grinds in, it's been a long wait  
24 and we haven't heard back as to whether we are going to get grinds installed to rejuvenate our  
25 beach because we don't have a beach, we just have the rock armour. That would be an aim and  
26 objective for the Arklow community that we would get our beach back as well. I do fully  
27 support the campaign to preserve the Murrough and I was considering there, we have a member  
28 of the Council who is the Cathaoirleach of the EU's regional assembly here in the East and the  
29 Dublin region, Cllr Vance, perhaps he might be able to put pressure on to secure extra funding  
30 for the Council at large, the county at large, coastal protection fund I think should be established.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Cathaoirleach.

32 Cllr FORTUNE: I attended the public meeting down in Wicklow and I thank the presenters for  
33 your presentation here today and to Declan.

1 On the night down there, a lot of people spoke, a lot of people made an awful lot of sense but we  
2 need to be very careful about all this and there was a very important made in your presentation  
3 that the Murrough runs from Wicklow right up to Kilcoole, so any actions that are taken in that  
4 scenario, who knows what effect it's having and when I say who knows, we do need to know,  
5 and we can't just be guessing and kind of thing about it. We need to learn also from the  
6 experience of the development in Greystones in the harbour where the north beach is eroding at a  
7 much faster rate than what it should and that's the information I have from talking to people who  
8 I think know what they're talking about. So we need to learn from that because that's an issue,  
9 but I think we have to look at the Murrough in its totality. Obviously there is a serious issue and  
10 a certain pinch point on it, but I think it needs to be looked at in its totality in the interest of  
11 saving it, in the interest of the facility it is, in the interests of tourism and in the interests of  
12 everything. Really we can come into the Chamber and do all the stuff we are doing. I think this  
13 is a European problem and I think we need to set up the proper grouping and everyone come  
14 together and not play party politics with it, it shouldn't be played like that. And we need to get  
15 MEPs involved and we need to find out precisely quickly what funding is available, make a  
16 special case out of it, put that special case together and go to Europe and get the funding. If we  
17 don't do that, it's going to keep eroding, you are going to keep having the problems and going  
18 down sticking a few rocks here and there, and that was essential, because I heard, I spoke to the  
19 guy in Irish Rail and unless they did what they did the whole rail line was likely to go, so they  
20 did that.

21  
22 Obviously talking is important but I think we need to start now putting an action plan together, a  
23 real action plan together, and go and talk to where the funding is available. If the funding - if we  
24 are getting that there is no funding available, we need to come back and talk about that and see  
25 what the next step is after that. If not it's only going to become a talking shop. Everyone is  
26 interested in it right now because we have a general election in three weeks time, so everyone  
27 will be at it, so we need to take advantage of that in the short-term and we need to make sure  
28 when the election is over that it doesn't become parked like a report on a shelf and gathering  
29 dust, that this thing is really sorted.

30  
31 As I say, I agree the most important thing I heard you say was that the Murrough is - stretches all  
32 the way up the east coast and there is obviously things going on that are beyond my  
33 comprehension and probably most people's comprehension that needs to be looked at in the  
34 bigger picture. But I do think the way to do this is to put a proper study together, go to Europe.

1 We have enough MEPs that should be supporting us, and go and get the funding and get it  
2 sorted.

3 Cllr CASEY: I would like to thank the three groups for their presentations today, Ned, Carolann  
4 and Declan, and I think everybody is aware of the importance of the Murrough as a national  
5 amenity and for the people of Wicklow, but the economic potential it has as a tourism aspect  
6 down into the future and it was raised at the last Municipal District meeting that we should look  
7 at what amendments need to be made now, immediate, that will get the application into the  
8 Department, as we have the Minister sitting in the OPW there at the moment and we probably  
9 have a better chance of getting the immediate funds now if we can get it in.

10  
11 Ned did mention also the LECP, the Local Economic and Community Plan, and in relation to the  
12 marine strategy for the county, but recently the action plan for jobs was announced there only - I  
13 think it was the week before the public meeting in relation to the Murrough. And I did ring  
14 Malcolm Spencer in relation to that plan because it is highlighted in - some page, 67 or 71 in  
15 there, the long-term vision that they have for Wicklow Harbour, which does include a break  
16 water further out, but equally includes port activity further out. And you are right there Ned.  
17 We need to communicate. They need to communicate with you if that's the way they're going,  
18 so everybody has an active role in the decision-making moving forward. From my conversation  
19 with Malcolm, I think he was quite happy with the initial concept of what's proposed out there,  
20 because it could actually in turn return the beach back to the Murrough if that was to happen.  
21 But you are right, we need to consult with you at all stages during that process, whoever will be  
22 moving that proposed long-term vision ahead and it is a long-term vision I suppose. But the  
23 immediate thing I think is we have Minister Harris there who is supportive of the Murrough, I  
24 think we need to get whatever application we need in ASAP probably before tomorrow, Declan  
25 if you can manage to do that before he calls the election, until we try and get the funding out of  
26 him to address the immediate problem while we are looking at the long-term future of the  
27 Murrough.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

29 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, yes certainly as what everybody else has said that  
30 this has happened very, very quickly and something urgent needs to be done to hold it there and  
31 protect the rail line as well. The storms also have caused serious coastal erosion in other parts  
32 which have been mentioned, and in particular the one which concerns me greatly is in the south  
33 end of Bray Head, there are large clay cliffs which have been eroding very rapidly recently and  
34 at the north side of Greystones. And I have been asking for ten years that somebody would do a

1 study of these cliffs, because I believe that if the surface water was drained adequately from that,  
2 it would greatly reduce the rate of erosion and unfortunately this has been ignored for the last ten  
3 years, and no study has been done. Sooner or later, it's going to have to be tackled, otherwise it  
4 will get to the rail line and it would seem much more sensible to tackle it. I would like to see a  
5 study and have said so for the last ten years to do this, but no funding has been granted for it  
6 unfortunately.

7  
8 So there is a very serious erosion all along the coast, and I think we need to deal with it  
9 seriously, and get some expertise to work out what should be done in these cases, thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

11 Cllr WALSH: On a similar point to Cllr Cullen there, the effect on tourism, Ned mentioned  
12 there in his presentation the effect on the access to the cliff walks and developing blue way trails,  
13 and he mentioned the Wild Atlantic Way. We have an impact on ancient walks here and which  
14 are part of our culture and heritage and there is an impact on the access to the remains of the  
15 penal church and lighthouse and other tourism attractions, so we have the Ireland Ancient East  
16 project being rolled out by Fáilte Ireland and we are part of that and this amenity needs to be  
17 restored as a matter of urgency to take advantage from a tourism perspective as well as a local  
18 recreation, and Irish Rail is another part of that, but whatever we need to do to obtain this  
19 funding needs to be done, thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

21 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, firstly can I congratulate the two groups there represented  
22 quite ably by Carolann and Ned, Save the Murrough and Friends of the Murrough. And  
23 commend them for highlighting not just this, but the continued work there, particularly Friends  
24 of the Murrough who have been actively engaged in maintaining and working within the  
25 Murrough area for many, many years, and some of the pictures there that were shown on the  
26 slides show graphically the level of work, the level of commitment, the level of volunteerism  
27 that goes in there in maintaining it on everybody's behalf here in the Chamber, but more  
28 importantly on behalf of the wider public in the Wicklow Town area. But also it's bigger than  
29 that, because obviously it has specific protections there. It has a special protection area, and  
30 special area of conservation, so they're doing it not just on behalf of the people of Wicklow  
31 Town here, but indeed for the entire country's benefit, because they're this area is widely  
32 recognised as having huge importance, and I attended the public meeting in the Grand and again  
33 I commend everyone for organising that. And I think one member of the public stood up at that  
34 public meeting and he summed it up quite graphically, he said this is Wicklow Town's Phoenix

1 Park. This is our Phoenix Park. We don't have anything else here within the Wicklow Town  
2 area. And this is what we take pride in. It's our area of amenity. And he said if this is lost, he  
3 says it will come back to the Council here to replace it. To build or provide another public park  
4 within the Wicklow Town area, and that will come at huge, huge costs to provide. So he  
5 summed it up, he said the money needs to go in now to save money in the future. So he summed  
6 it up quite graphic and to hear some of the words and hear that - to try blame Iarnrod Éireann for  
7 not taking responsibility in putting in place protections, or to say that we now need to - I forget  
8 the word, oh yeah, it's been put on the long finger for far too long, I think is disrespectful for the  
9 staff here within the Council who have worked tirelessly in compiling application after  
10 application to go into the Department and at our last meeting, I asked for specific details on those  
11 applications that as Cllr Snell had said, had gone in since 2010, right up until quite recently.

12  
13 So just - we didn't get that information, so maybe Declan might elaborate on that, so that clearly  
14 shows that it hasn't been put on the long finger.

15  
16 It's up to the State to put in place the protections that are needed here, because of its, I suppose  
17 environmental benefits. Also there is a huge responsibilities and I know I have been in touch, as  
18 has one of my colleagues there, we have been in touch with the National Parks and Wildlife  
19 Service, they have a huge responsibility on this as well to ensure that it is protected into the  
20 future. And just - I don't know whether Declan might be able to elaborate just on the planned I  
21 suppose short-term works that are due to commence fairly shortly, just looking at the image that  
22 was shown there, obviously a huge area of the Murrough has been lost due to the recent storms  
23 and unfortunately, even more has been lost since Iarnrod Éireann carried out the works. And I  
24 think it would be disappointing if that area wasn't going to be reclaimed, because it's a huge area  
25 that has been lost. So I am not sure that the pictures that had been shown seemed to indicate that  
26 we have kind of resigned to the fact that the sea has taken this now, and I know there is talk there  
27 that we will try a natural replenishment of the beach areas, but whether Declan can elaborate as  
28 the short-term work, as to whether there is any proposals there?

29  
30 Another thing there that needs to be looked at and again I commend the two groups, yeah, I  
31 commend their work there in terms of highlighting the need to protect there this within our own  
32 Development Plan and that's a process that we are undertaking here at the moment. And I think  
33 there needs to be specific work gone in from this end, I know they have put in submission after  
34 submission, but we also have to ensure that it is protected into the future. And just on the

1 funding end, and this is of vital importance, because I have had it back from, sorry  
2 Cathaoirleach...

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are taking up other people's time.

4 Cllr BRADY: If you stopped interrupting me, I might be able to finish. I seem to be the only  
5 person you are interrupting. Can I finish the point then.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't want you turning around and saying something like that. If you  
7 don't mind, I think I'll go ahead.

8 Cllr BRADY: Can I finish the point Cathaoirleach?

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: No.

10 Cllr BRADY: It has been said that the potential funding could come from Leader, which has a  
11 specific emphasis on rural coastal communities. Now it can be, and this is where the  
12 Government and all levy fees come in for a better deal for coastal erosion...

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Come on. Come on. I have turned your microphone off, but it doesn't  
14 seem to make any difference. Cllr Behan, can you please talk.

15 Cllr BEHAN: Thanks Chairman and I think you are doing your best to Chair where there is  
16 obviously a very important discussion particularly for the people of Wicklow Town, and I would  
17 like to thank the representatives of the two organisations who, as they made it clear, are speaking  
18 for many people, members of the public, not only in the town of public but in the county. When  
19 I proposed that you be invited to this meeting, I did so for the very reason that many of the  
20 Councillors from other parts of the county may not be as aware as you are and as the local  
21 representatives are of the importance of the Murrough to local people. I attended the meeting as  
22 a number of other people do, but I attended really because I am a candidate in the election and I  
23 wanted to hear what was being said I suppose. But for all of the people of the county, this is an  
24 issue, it's a resource for the county and it's important that at a forum like this we get the  
25 opportunity to hear directly from local people as to what their fears or concerns for the future  
26 are. Obviously to express their anger at what's happened. And you did that very eloquently and  
27 fairly here today.

28  
29 Could I just ask a couple of specific questions Cathaoirleach, because one question that was  
30 asked was the elephant in the room. What are the plans by this Council maybe in conjunction  
31 with other agencies for developments at the port that might in some way impinge on the future of  
32 the Murrough? It was asked, but it hasn't been addressed yet and I think it probably has to be  
33 addressed now at this - on this occasion.

34

1 Secondly, is it possible to invite CIE to attend a meeting of this Council to understand and get  
2 from them what their particular perspective on this and their plans for the future? There have  
3 been rumours that work that might have to be done in the future might actually cut Wicklow  
4 Town off from a rail service completely or that there might be some other alternative modes of  
5 transport might be introduced because of works that are being done in the short or long-term. I  
6 don't know if that's true, but I would welcome guidance officials might have on that matter. But  
7 I think it's important that we hear from CIE on this matter, because it's important to hear their  
8 plans and views in the future.

9  
10 Finally I think Declan indicated that an application has gone into the OPW for further funding.  
11 Could he specify exactly how much we have looked for on this occasion? Because Minister  
12 Harris made it very, very clear at the public meeting that all we had to do was ask, and we shall  
13 receive. The money was there, and it could be spent. So I would like to hear loud and clear now  
14 from the officials here today, what have we asked for, because the Minister already has said we  
15 will get what we ask for. And I think we will all want to hold him to that.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Vance, now I knocked off your microphone so if you hit  
17 it again.

18 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. I won't be too long. Just as far as I am concerned I am not  
19 as au fait as a lot of public reps in the particular area, but I am very much au fait with the Bray  
20 experience in regards to coastal protection and various things like that and my first, my attitude  
21 to the first thing we need to do is on the Murrough, and I certainly support all the efforts made to  
22 carry out the necessary coastal protection works on that, but I do think that there needs to be  
23 immediate emergency works on it to secure what's already threatened there. I think that needs to  
24 be done immediately.

25  
26 I also think that an awful lot has happened from the time the last study was done in 2007, that  
27 there needs to be a total update on that, and a new report in regard to what is happening in regard  
28 to the sea and the coastal - what's happening in the coastal area as well, from 2007. Because  
29 there probably is like a difference in sea patterns and the wave patterns and various things like  
30 that. And I just wonder has there any work been done at any type of levels from 2007, and I  
31 think that's something that absolutely has to be done, because I know from my experience in  
32 Bray that there was computer simulations and all that, I think Bray had to go to England to get it  
33 done. There was the authority in England were one of the foremost in coastal protection in the  
34 world. And they done a computer simulation model that effectively then recommended two or

1 three options that the Local Authority had and the OPW had in regard to protection of the  
2 seafront in Bray. And could I just say I think members all support, obviously the preservation of  
3 the Murrough, but my experience on it is that when the OPW came with the schemes to protect  
4 Bray that there was also various difference of opinion in what was its best particular scheme.  
5 The scheme that was accepted at that particular stage was a beach replenishment scheme and the  
6 grinds going out into the sea. And this was specifically for Bray seafront, that's why I think it's  
7 essential that if - that a study is carried out in the Murrough, because obviously the scheme for  
8 the Murrough may not be the same, maybe totally different and things have moved on even since  
9 then as well and may be totally different to what we are talking about in regard to protection, so I  
10 think it's absolutely vital that you have that study carried out, but I think in the meantime that's  
11 going to take time, and in the meantime, I think you need to carry out emergency -- or you may  
12 need to carry out emergency measures to protect what's there in the short-term, while we are  
13 waiting for this study to happen.

14  
15 And certainly in regard to European funding and various things like that, Cllr Bourke did say  
16 that I am Chairman of the East Midlands Regional Assembly, and certainly anything that I can  
17 do in that capacity to further move it along in regard to European funding, or access to European  
18 funding, I would only be too delighted to take that up with them.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

20 Cllr MATTHEWS: I'll be very brief Chairman. It's clear from the number of speakers and the  
21 public meetings that very many people care about the Murrough, and I know everybody in this  
22 room does, and not just for the people of Wicklow Town but for the entire county of Wicklow  
23 and for our tourism. So I think we are going to do whatever we can within our powers to protect  
24 the Murrough and I'll certainly be supporting whatever measures we decide to take. Something  
25 we have to take into account though is that coastal erosion is a natural occurrence and it happens  
26 year after year, after year and no matter what we do, we are always going to be literally fighting  
27 the tide there. It's often erosion that creates these areas of natural beauty and creates the  
28 situation where you have the ecology that warrants these nature designations. So it's important  
29 just to note that. But one thing that we definitely have to our advantage in this situation that a lot  
30 of places that have suffered coastal erosion don't, is that we have a rail line running through it. I  
31 don't think anybody is going to let the rail line fall into the sea. That railway is so critical and  
32 important not just to Wicklow, but to the whole east coast of Ireland, so that is to our advantage.  
33 I would hope that whatever engineered solution goes in recognises that it's an area of outstanding  
34 natural beauty, and it does have recreation and amenity value and that's why it's so dear to



1 people. Apart from the commercial nature of the railway going through it. So whatever  
2 hardening solutions are going to go in, I hope that we can have an input into the - that they  
3 aesthetically look as well and be complementary to the area and you often see coastal defence  
4 that goes in and it's very ugly looking. Obviously we want to protect the area and the rail line,  
5 but I hope we can have some input into maintaining its beauty while we all care about it so  
6 much.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: And finally Cllr Cullen.

8 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: First and foremost, I would like to thank Cllr Behan and Cllr Brady for  
9 proposing that we would have this meeting here today to examine this and discuss this and pay  
10 tribute to the two Councillors for doing that. The other thing Chairman is a - the Murrough is  
11 paralleled to a similar sea shore along the Welsh coast, and as I said at the last meeting we  
12 discussed this, tens of thousands of tonnes of rocks were taken from this area back in the early  
13 90s and transferred through Rosslare to construct coastal erosion protections in Wales. So I  
14 think that this Council should perhaps send a delegation to Wales to examine and get some ideas  
15 of how the Welsh dealt with a similar problem. I have seen this protection works in Wales,  
16 using Wicklow stone, and to me it looked, it has been very successful. So I don't think we  
17 should try and recreate the wheel, if the wheel is already there, if there is a blueprint across the  
18 water in Wales, I think this Council should go on a trip, a day trip or whatever and have an  
19 examination of that and see how we can replicate that work here in Wicklow.

20  
21 I want to pay particular tribute to our late colleague Councillor Pat Kavanagh, the late Councillor  
22 Pat Kavanagh who was such a Trojan champion of the Murrough for many decades here in  
23 Wicklow and always brought to the forum of the urban Council and this Council and I think we  
24 should give some recognition to Cllr Kavanagh's efforts by maybe erecting a bench on the  
25 Murrough walk to commemorate Cllr Kavanagh's efforts, that's the very least we could do for  
26 her memory. While I would like to congratulate the people of the Murrough for keeping this to  
27 the fore and as I said I would like to pay tribute to Cllr Behan and Cllr Brady who brought this  
28 issue on to the agenda here of the Council today. Thank you Chairman.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Declan?

30 MR MURNANE: Just the timescale, the - obviously the design isn't finalised yet, but we have  
31 as I said, started trying to source rock and the concrete units in anticipation of the final design,  
32 because of the urgency of this, so there won't be any delay. Depending on the final design that  
33 we get, and the funding, certainly we will be hoping to start works within the next few weeks. I  
34 think it's essential. And the works will probably take a couple of months to do. Unfortunately

1 because of the level of damage, it probably will be necessary now for safety reasons to close the  
2 walk while the work is being done. We had hoped to keep a space open, but I don't think that  
3 will be possible now. But certainly there won't be any delay in getting the works done.

4  
5 Cllr Behan asked about the funding, we have applied, the scheme that we are applying under is  
6 the coastal protection works, the maximum under that scheme is 500,000, so that's what we have  
7 applied for. And we will have to wait and see. The funding is 90% then, we have to provide  
8 10% ourselves. So that's - we have applied for the maximum.

9  
10 And Cllr Vance asked about the studies on the modelling that had been carried out, that was  
11 done on the design we got last year, there was some computer modelling carried out on the  
12 Murrough and they've also resurveyed it and they're going to do - as soon as we get a calm day,  
13 they're going to do a survey of the shoreline as well, the underwater shoreline to see how that's  
14 changed over the last few years, so there is constant modelling being done so the design isn't  
15 being done blindly, they are basing it on full modelling. Okay.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much Declan. I do think that's a nice idea actually that  
17 Cllr Cullen put forward to maybe erect a seat in memory of Cllr Kavanagh on the Murrough,  
18 maybe we could look at that. It might be interesting to - the Municipal District might actually  
19 come forward with some proposals in that regard. Okay, great.

20  
21 And yeah, I think the art of this is collaboration, and working together on this, so thanks a  
22 million to both groups coming in and hopefully we will keep the communication lines open  
23 because whatever solution we come up with, it has to be one that everybody is happy with.

24 SPEAKER: Can I make one more point. Just a quick point, Declan mentioned about tendering  
25 for more rocks, the rock armour is what's causing the problem, exacerbated it at a much faster  
26 rate. Any more rocks going in there would just push the problem further up. We need to look at  
27 alternative suggestions and solutions at the moment. No more rocks.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, let's have a look at that and take it off line. Great, thank you again,  
29 cheers, take care.

30  
31 Okay members, I just want to acknowledge the petition, thank you very much for passing that  
32 on. Okay, we are on to item number eight, so if I could ask Michael Nicholson to join us, this is  
33 the rural development programme, the Leader, 2014-20, the public authority funding guarantee.  
34 So maybe you could explain to us what this is all about Michael.

1 Director NICHOLSON: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I sent a note to each member just explaining  
2 what exactly we were being asked to do. This is in relation to our Leader funding which we  
3 have been allocated. 6.3 million for the next five years, roughly over a million a year. And we  
4 will be claiming that per quarter, so it's roughly equates to about 200,000 for each quarter, once  
5 the scheme kicks off. What the Department have asked us to do is if we want that money in  
6 advance which we do, we have to sign a guarantee that we use the money properly, and if we  
7 don't, we have to pay it back. It's protection of EU money, and protection of Government  
8 money. If we don't sign the guarantee, we can only claim the money back in arrears and we  
9 prefer to get it in advance. So it's reserved function to sign the guarantee, so what I'll ask the  
10 members is for a resolution that we can sign this guarantee, put it in place so we can draw the  
11 money down in advance, as to opposed to in arrears. That's it Cathaoirleach.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Casey.

13 Cllr CASEY: I'll have no problem in proposing this, I think it's very important that we get an  
14 understanding of what's happening here. I would have been part of the old Leader programme  
15 and in the last Leader programme, County Wicklow partnership did suffer of payment in arrears  
16 which equally delayed payments back to community organisations, which had received funding.  
17 So I think it's critical that we sign this today, that we get our money in advance, and that we take  
18 on the guarantee to ensure that we have the money on hand in here to pay community groups and  
19 are not dragged through another layer of bureaucracy.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Bourke.

21 Cllr BOURKE: I am happy to second that Cathaoirleach.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

23 Cllr BLAKE: I was going to second it, I would like to compliment both the Council staff and  
24 the County Wicklow Partnership staff as well for the wonderful work they've done and the  
25 co-operation that they have undertaken over the last 18 months or so to ensure this has run  
26 smoothly and from listening to other groups around the country as well, certainly Wicklow has  
27 to the forefront and have achieved their aims of ensuring this will be up and running sooner  
28 rather than later, thanks Chairman.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed members? Thank you. Item number nine, update on the  
30 housing construction projects. Welcome Joe.

31 DIRECTOR LANE: Okay, this is just a very quick run through the current housing programme  
32 provision, it was what you agreed last year. As members will remember, last July we revised the  
33 housing priorities. We had a new list of priorities going to the Department. We based it on  
34 housing need. And the delivery of projects. And then we spoke to, we went to the Department

1 and we had a priority as agreed here, and then we went to the Department and they're the ones,  
2 don't worry about it because they're coming at it very quickly, I'll go through them individually.  
3 On top of that and through a number of programmes to -- the Department have at this stage  
4 given us funding for those projects. And there is a whole lot of others in behind that also.  
5

6 The progress so far, Murphy's land, we went with something like 26, 28, because of the price of  
7 land, the Department have asked us to bring it up to 42 units. That's currently on public display  
8 under part 28. It would have been Part 8. The closing date is February 10th and we should be  
9 back in March 2016, next month, for that.  
10

11 The next one is Brewery Straight. There is 20 units there. Again that's on current display, again  
12 closing date is 10th February. That is part of a contract, forms part of the framework for  
13 architects. We have sent that out to architects as part of the procurement for them. They have to  
14 bring this to the Council meeting, it's part of a contract. So that could be four weeks behind, so I  
15 expect to have that at the April meeting. Again we will be here, but they'll be presenting that.  
16

17 Another one we were able to move forward in priorities, because the priorities is based on  
18 common sense and trying to move stuff on as quickly as possible, so when we got an opportunity  
19 we were able to look at the Emaclew project in Arklow. Now people familiar with Arklow and  
20 the difficulties there, but there was a Part 8 given by Arklow Town Council for 64 units. We  
21 have spoken to the Arklow Municipal Area and what we propose is take part of the old design  
22 and build what we can in the short-term and break that into phases with the Department. We  
23 have that sent up at the moment with the Department. What we aim to do is pick up the  
24 architects once we have applied them and get them to move on the next phase of that. That is  
25 subject, or may be subject to the new circular 2016 fast tracking, and I'll have a quick word with  
26 that in a couple of minutes.  
27

28 The other schemes are, this is just a quick overlay, some the other schemes. We thought -- we  
29 hoped that we would be able to get a small scheme into Blessington. There is three major  
30 schemes in Blessington earmarked, that's Mountainview, Scouts Glen and then the Burgage. We  
31 were hoping that they're all subject to sewerage and there is a sewerage difficulty in Blessington,  
32 we were hoping to get in a smaller scheme six, and we spent time producing the first phase  
33 feasibility study of that. We were unsuccessful when we applied to Irish Water, so we have held  
34 back in Blessington because of other priorities and we can't be delayed. The Department

1 indicated a few of the ones that are on that priority, one to 12, that we should consider in  
2 collaboration with AHBs, so that suggested rather than doing a full social housing unit in  
3 Carriguna Bray, that we would talk to an approved housing body and we will get to those once  
4 we have cleared off Murphy's land and get the architects going on a number of projects.  
5

6 Also Whitehall, Baltinglass, they suggested that might be better considered than with the  
7 approved housing bodies. We also have the Central Garage site in Bray and Kilbride Lodge, are  
8 identified sites that we think would be ideal for our approved housing body rather than direct  
9 provision by the housing authority. Some of the others that we have above with the Department  
10 when we discussed last July and we have had negotiations or discussion with them are  
11 Ballinahinch Ashford, Farrankelly, Three Trouts, and Sheep House in Arklow. They're ones that  
12 are at various stages with the Department and there is queries we need to go back with and we  
13 will be talking to them in the next couple of weeks in that regard.  
14

15 Recently there was a PPP announcement. These are major schemes, bigger than 50, that are  
16 being dealt with in a very big PPP by the State, where the State will be issuing big tracts of land,  
17 giving them to a PPP and allowing them for social housing. Our first client was Convent Land  
18 and that was a successful application. We also have Lott Lane in Kilcoole, that may be  
19 considered under this, we have to look for a master plan for the area and therefore that could be a  
20 PPP, it could be a PPP and social housing or it could be an approved housing body. We will be  
21 again talking to the Department on that. The difficulty with that one is that the PPP only works,  
22 the State run PPP only works on 50 units or more and that might be problematic there, so we are  
23 really looking at that at the moment.  
24

25 The approved housing bodies, people are familiar with last year's project, Glenbrook in  
26 Newtown, 32 units, there is people in place in there at those. Last year, we worked, we went  
27 through a process regarding Ballybeg in Rathnew, and Cluid will be our partner again in  
28 Ballybeg. Because they're providing in partnership with us, we will work through a Part 8  
29 process. We reckon there are a couple of design difficulties there, we reckon that Part 8 is  
30 imminent and should be on public display over the next couple of weeks and we aim, or they aim  
31 in conjunction with us to have that at the main meeting. There are a few others under discussion  
32 but they're not coming to fruition yet.  
33

34 The approved housing bodies, like I said, they're out there also talking to developers, regarding

1 sites that haven't been started, planning permissions and all that. They're also talking regarding  
2 some of the bigger part 5s. And they're an essential part of this project. We are planning an all  
3 party meeting with them to see, bring them all in and just see how we are all going in that and to  
4 make sure none of us are competing with each other.

5  
6 Like I said, one of the difficulties in Lott Lane, Kilbride Lodge not as much and the Central  
7 Garage is, that we are still, the Local Authority is still holding properties at heavy cost and  
8 whether they'll be able to be some of that into their market value, other than that there are  
9 difficulties regarding holding costs for some length. In the short-term our 2016 priorities are  
10 Murphy's land go to tender, Brewery Bends go to tender, Emaclew go to tender and in the  
11 short-term we want to talk to the Department, as well as progressing some of the other schemes,  
12 about smaller schemes. These are smaller in-fill sites, we have identified a number sites that we  
13 want to just look, if we go ahead and prioritise these, these are a couple of houses for four units  
14 and six units in estates or in land we have, that may not have long holding costs, if we go ahead  
15 and spend time on this, is it possible to move it on quicker than that?

16  
17 The meeting with the Department is clarification, extra meetings, a recent circular came down  
18 regarding speeding up the process and it breaks down the stages we had to get approval so far,  
19 too much simplification. The problem with it is the costing. We only get one snatch of costing  
20 and if at any stage we have extras, we will not be able to claim it, so the question there is what  
21 do we put in at the start, and if we get it wrong, there will always be extras, this is an expenditure  
22 on the Local Authority we have to be quite careful of that, so we intend to bring that up together  
23 with the small schemes. We will be quite keen to go ahead with it, but I don't want incurring  
24 even some of the smaller schemes, I don't want to be incurring liability for the Local Authority,  
25 because they've made it quite clear, the cost once put down is black and white afterwards. And  
26 anyone who knows anything about houses knows it's not quite that simple.

27  
28 Going back to the housing strategy 2020, and you remember the blues and the mauve I suppose  
29 is the right colour, salmon maybe. The current expenditure is an important part, that's saying the  
30 traditional Local Authority house will only form part of the solution going forward and RAS and  
31 social leasing are an essential part. So when we are talking about the overall programme, you  
32 have got the - okay, I haven't got the social housing, you have also got purchases, the part 5s are  
33 beginning to come back and us providing houses much quicker back into stock in the form of  
34 voids are an essential part, and I'll come back to that in the form of numbers. Going back to the

1 salmon figure there, RAS, and HAP, it will be the tail-end of 2016, I think, and social leasing in  
2 particular, are an essential part of the overall programme.

3  
4 Number for last year, 2015, purchases 25 units, that's Newtown, 32 units, re-lets, bringing stuff  
5 that weren't available especially from the urban back into stock and getting them up to 2015  
6 standard formed an essential part last year and RAS, private houses where people have - they're  
7 the extra units we provided last year.

8  
9 So I think I'll be back again in April regarding the - or April, May, back next month with the  
10 Murphy's land, and we will be back in April, May, whenever the capital programme 3 that will  
11 give a better overview.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Fantastic, great, thanks a lot. Cllr O'Neill.

13 Cllr O'NEILL: Thank you Chairman. Thanks for your report there. I notice you have some sort  
14 of hope in parts of the county, but it's noticeable there that there is six miserable units that we  
15 tried to build in West Wicklow were blocked by Irish Water, and six in Blessington, where  
16 they're up to 300 people on the waiting list, it's a total scandal that we can't move while our  
17 masters Irish Water control the whole lot. They claim that the sewage is at capacity, but that's  
18 not good enough. How long are we - I would ask for the eight or nine Fine Gael Councillors in  
19 here today to go back to their masters in Dublin and ask for a little bit of sincerity there, there is  
20 offers every week, there is talk every week here that there is X amount of money being allocated  
21 to County Councils for social housing. But they can allocate as much as they like for West  
22 Wicklow, but if the sewage is at capacity, if we don't have sewage that we can't link up, it's only  
23 a waste of time. So maybe something could be done, instead of grinning here at the moment you  
24 know, that something could be done on that. And I would also appeal to the same eight or nine  
25 or whatever Councillors here from Fine Gael to stop the evictions. We have a housing crisis, yet  
26 we have in Naas court last week, last month and in Bray court, we had 60 evictions by this  
27 present government, because of being in ownership of AIB, and the other two, EBS and Irish  
28 Permanent. The people are being thrown out of the few houses we have.

29  
30 So I would appeal for all this - it's a serious issue that in Blessington alone, there are two estates  
31 there, there is two developments there on hold, which would be up to 500 houses. They can't  
32 link up to the sewage either. There will be 10% of those for social housing. It's a serious issue  
33 that that part of Wicklow has been forgotten about and neglected.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

1 Cllr BOURKE: One of the sites being mentioned there, the Three Trouts site in Greystones, I  
2 am wondering despite all the record rainfall we had in January, how badly did it flood, because it  
3 was a flood plain, as we were told a number of years ago by some the members, I want to clarify  
4 how badly did it flood in December?

5 Cllr FITZGERALD: I want to welcome the announcement by Joe there and particularly to the  
6 Arklow Municipal District with hopefully 13 or 14 houses for - at the rear end, Emaclew, the  
7 Sheep House one, Joe, you had me confused on, but I'll talk to you later about it. If I was to go  
8 on the housing list now in Arklow, which is part of Wicklow County Council obviously, today  
9 and take 14 houses as being optimistic on a build, we would be 42 years on the housing list  
10 before I would get a house. We can take - Alan Kelly is a great man, a great man to announce  
11 things, 13,000 houses last year, but he didn't say they were a rehash of the previous year; he  
12 didn't say a lot of them were on the RAS, some of them are housing assistance payments.  
13 They're fine, they effectively help people. But Cllr O'Neill was talking about West Wicklow.  
14 You might come down to Arklow and you will see how bad it is Councillor. The efforts that  
15 have been made. We had one social house through lack of funding in 2013. One social house  
16 built in this county. And I have to commend the efforts in the last period of time. The  
17 Government have given some funding, but they think it's the be all and the end all. Our  
18 homeless officer is busy. There are people this morning, I was in the Municipal District office  
19 when a couple came in presenting themselves homeless. I am on the homeless forum in Arklow  
20 and I get a full feeling for what's happening.

21  
22 On another issue, the lack of housing is now causing problems in attracting industries to the  
23 Arklow area because the first question you ask a person - a person asked me recently, how many  
24 houses have you got spare? I could tell them very quickly, we have three on daft.ie. We have no  
25 houses spare. Most of them are being rented -- or sold privately or rented privately. We have  
26 people on - there is some co-operation from the Department, but I can tell you there is a lot of  
27 people worrying. There is a lot of people don't know where they're going to be next month. I  
28 take on board what Cllr O'Neill is saying, that's rampant in the Arklow Municipal District. We  
29 are talking about 20 or 22 houses in the Brewery Bends in Rathdrum. I assume some of them  
30 will be allocated to people down in Arklow who have Rathdrum down as a second choice. If  
31 you take 14 - that was extremely optimistic as the numbers that will be built, because of the  
32 sewage plant not online now until at least 2020 because of objections, which we will have the  
33 Irish Water situation, we have a planning application in at the moment for 14 private houses, I  
34 don't know how that's going to work out. But the facts are, if I put my name on the housing list



1 today in Arklow and I build the 14, divide it into 420, it's 30 years. RAS won't sort out the  
2 problem. The Minister thinks it will sort out the problem. Housing Assistance Payments might  
3 sort out the problem. But the fact is it's dire and it's getting worse. 14, it's great to hear it. You  
4 would want to be building 140 a year to sort out the problem we have. I have never in my life  
5 seen such a problem, so many people worried, and I don't think the Government really have an  
6 idea how bad the problem is. I seen Alan Kelly going down Nenagh yesterday with his arm up  
7 to somebody who he probably got a house for. He wouldn't be getting hands up if he came to  
8 Arklow, he would be getting something else with two fingers, and that's the way it is.

9 Effectively I have to commend you Joe, that announcement of whatever the figure is has been  
10 received very positively by people who are on the housing list, but we certainly need a lot more  
11 announcements, but I know it's curtailed by the fact Irish Water said no twice in Blessington.  
12 They'll certainly say no in Arklow with no sewage treatment plant and we have nowhere to go,  
13 that's it. So either as some people said to me recently, I sleep rough or I don't sleep at all.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

15 Cllr RUTTLE: Certainly the outline, what we have seen from Joe is fairly stark. The problem  
16 throughout the county either, inadequate provision or inability to provide through lack of  
17 infrastructure. The situation in West Wicklow is particularly stark with the water situation in  
18 Dunlavin or lack of it, and the sewage situation at Blessington. I think we have to take on board  
19 the fact that there is a huge social cost to this. If this kind of thing goes on, you will need a  
20 whole generation of people who are completely disenchanted and feel completely let down  
21 because throughout the worst times in this State, be it the 30s, 50s or 70s, we were always in a  
22 position to build social housing to provide for people who need it, we have to get back to that.

23  
24 In our case over to the West, we also need the infrastructure to allow that, even if we had the  
25 provision of the money or the allocation, we couldn't get it because of the water at one town and  
26 the sewage issue at the other. That only brings us back to one thing, A we have to persist with  
27 the maximum pressure and speed to get those two infrastructural issues sorted out, or B we must,  
28 with whatever money is available, buy some houses in the system that are available to at least  
29 provide a home for some people. At the moment we are not really in the market at all, vis-à-vis  
30 the number of people who are on lists, who require housing, we are not really at the races and  
31 that's a dreadful situation and we have to do everything we can to alleviate that and to put  
32 pressure on to do it with the powers that be. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

34 Cllr MURPHY: I suppose I had a glimmer of hope when the Director of Housing said Arklow.

1 But it does bring you back down a peg or two when in fact, as Cllr Fitzgerald had said, we can't  
2 give hope to people. You know, we just can't give hope. It's just so sad. But also two things I  
3 just want to point out, I mean we have got people who are on our - with the County Council list  
4 and are not in arrears and who have had their houses up to standard for many years, but we don't  
5 seem to be maintaining our own housing stock at all, which, like anyone's house, you have to do  
6 a little bit every now and again to keep it in a standard. But I mean, we are not putting any  
7 money back into our own stock, even though we expect when we go out to purchase or to rent  
8 that we buy or represent the highest standard of housing. But we forget that we owned houses  
9 and we forget that we are not putting money into maintaining our own stock. And also in all the  
10 reports, which always seems to be left out and it really, really, really annoys me is that we never  
11 include people with disabilities on the list. We don't know who is waiting, families with  
12 disability or anything else. And I think this needs to be, you know, a separate breakdown from  
13 the norm of people on list. It's not the norm. These people are - have a different requirement.  
14 They're in a different bracket. And I would like to see that on the list. Who has got housing for  
15 people with disabilities or families over the last ten years? What is the list? What is the waiting  
16 list? What is the requirements? What priority is being given and it is actually the other 30  
17 Councillors sitting here responsibility to remember those people in their area who are on our list  
18 and who need people to shout for them? And this day and age is gone that we are left behind.  
19 We are not going to be left behind any more in any way, in any way, shape.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Pat Kennedy.

21 Cllr KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach. While I welcome the fact that there are included 14  
22 houses and the 20 houses in Rathdrum, I am disappointed to hear that it's going to be delayed by  
23 a month. I certainly don't want to come back here in April and discover it's put back by another  
24 month. I don't want to hear that. Because there is people out there looking for a roof over their  
25 head. And I thank the Director for both him and his staff for the work and efforts they're  
26 making, but there are other villages and towns out there that need housing. Aughrim is being  
27 held to ransom by Irish Water. As is Avoca. As Cllr O'Neill said other areas in the West. So I  
28 think Irish Water need to come to this county and into this Council and explain what their  
29 long-term future or what their long-term plan is for other villages and towns right across the  
30 county. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Brady.

32 Cllr BRADY: Hopefully if the elections go well, there will be no future for Irish Water, so we  
33 needn't worry about them. Just a couple of points there, someone referred to the homeless  
34 officer being busy in County Buildings. I think busy is an understatement. I think not just the

1 homeless officer, but all housing staff here in the County Buildings are stretched to breaking  
2 point, and I can't commend them enough for the work that they're doing. So busy is an  
3 understatement.

4  
5 I think people are talking about us, a housing crisis here. Now unfortunately the people that  
6 need to realise there is a housing crisis haven't actually realised there is a housing crisis, and  
7 indeed I am talking about the Government. They should declare this as a housing emergency,  
8 and deal with it accordingly. Because unfortunately, I think Cllr Fitzgerald referred to the  
9 situation in Arklow where it will take 34 years or something like that. I think I stated last year,  
10 taking Wicklow as a whole, it would take 70 years to address the housing need of the county at  
11 this particular rate. 70 years. And that's banking on no-one else applying to go on the housing  
12 list. And certainly that isn't sustainable. So what needs to change is the policy regarding  
13 housing, because it's a flawed policy, and to hear Joe state that unfortunately, in my view and my  
14 party's view, an essential part of the housing strategy is still the private sector. Relying on the  
15 private sector to provide social housing needs, and we are talking about RAS and rent  
16 supplement and indeed we are talking about the Housing Assistance Payment when it eventually  
17 comes to this county. And that's going to compound the problem of homelessness when it does  
18 come. It's going to exacerbate the housing crisis here within the county because that has huge  
19 ramifications here once it does come into effect.

20  
21 Unfortunately the Government, they had an ideal opportunity, there was a bill brought before  
22 them where they could have put in place a rent cap, because that's what's happening here in the  
23 private sector, that this Government and their predecessors, Fianna Fáil, who actually brought in  
24 this policy of relying on the private sector to fill the housing need, unless there is a rent cap  
25 there, to cap the rent, we are going to be dealing with situations where private landlords who can  
26 get higher rents in the open market, they're going to be evicting people, putting people out on the  
27 side of the road and indeed I am working with one case and I am sure many other members here  
28 around the table are working with cases. One woman and her family, who have faced  
29 homelessness three times, three times in the last two years. So where is this certainty for people  
30 like that under this Government? There is no certainty whatsoever. How can anyone raise a  
31 family in those circumstances, that from one end of the week to the next you don't know whether  
32 you are going to be thrown out of the house because the landlord thinks and knows that he can  
33 get more on the open market? What we need is a proper strategy here put in place by the  
34 Government, and part of that as I said is the rent cap. But the only solution and everyone knows

1 it here is to build more houses. Building the few houses that we are doing whilst it's welcome,  
2 no-one is saying it isn't, we need that to be upped. That can only be upped by the Government.  
3 And unfortunately without them declaring it as a housing emergency, they're only paying lip  
4 service to the whole issue and I think we need a lot more than that, and the people who are  
5 facing homelessness, the people who are on the housing list for ten, 12 and more years, they  
6 need more certainty than that, they need a roof over their head. Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

8 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I would indicate five years ago I brought this problem  
9 up and said that we were going to have a problem down the road. Actually it didn't gain any  
10 traction around this Chamber and a lot of the people that are crying now about social housing  
11 didn't have much to say at that particular stage until it became a topic, but it was very obvious at  
12 that particular stage, it was very obvious at that particular stage that what was going to happen if  
13 you had people coming on the housing list all the time and you are not building any particular  
14 houses, then there was going to be a problem coming down the road. And effectively in the last  
15 five years, there have been 34 houses built in the whole of County Wicklow. The whole of  
16 County Wicklow. 34 houses. There have been three houses that I am aware of built in Bray.  
17 The biggest area. And the biggest local area with people on the housing list. There is over 1,000  
18 people on the Bray housing list, but that's not the real figure. The real figure then if you add  
19 RAS schemes and rent supplements schemes in, you are close enough to 1,500 to 1,800 people  
20 on the housing list in Bray. And that's not also taking into consideration the amount of children  
21 that have moved back in with their parents and grandparents and various things like this. So I  
22 mean, this is something that I mean people don't even realise, some people don't even realise the  
23 scale of the problems in housing that's out there at this minute and time, at this moment and time.

24  
25 In Bray for instance, like the Council have enough land for 85 units, and we have got the go  
26 ahead for 42, which will cater for about 4% of the current housing list. Even though it's very,  
27 very welcome and there is obviously going to be those 42 people are going to be very happy  
28 about getting those units and they're very welcome, but they're only a drop in the ocean in regard  
29 to this. But the Council have land for 85 units, but the amazing thing about it is that nobody  
30 ever -- people talk here about social housing and everything else like this. I haven't heard in all  
31 the contributions, I didn't hear one person saying anything about affordable housing. And the  
32 fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is there has been no affordable housing built in  
33 Wicklow whatsoever and I know plenty of people who are on the housing list and plenty of  
34 people who are not on the housing list who actually would be delighted with an affordable house

1 in the county. And nothing has happened and there has been no encouragement from this  
2 Council or from Government particularly to encourage affordable housing. Because I think this  
3 is the way to go as far as I am concerned, because there is an awful lot of people out there who  
4 actually can afford to pay for their own houses. And an awful lot of them are paying exorbitant  
5 rents as we speak, as well in regard to this. I think, like there has to be a policy in regard to this  
6 Council in regard to social housing, but there has to be a policy in regard to affordable housing  
7 and making the necessary arrangements for that.

8  
9 I have a girl in Bray came to me the other day and she was delighted that she had sourced a RAS  
10 house. And wondering then would - what the Council would give her towards the RAS house?  
11 And this was a former Council house in the town. And I asked what type of money had she  
12 agreed to pay for this and I was told 1,500 euro. 1,500 euro for a former Council house in Bray.  
13 That's the going rate. And this girl was absolutely delighted to be able to say that she sourced it.  
14 And even at that, that is - like it's very unusual even to be able to get a RAS house in Bray. And  
15 that was the type of money we are talking about. And that's the type of pressure that's being put  
16 on ordinary people, a lot of them who want to provide their own houses, a lot of them who don't  
17 want to be in their parents' houses or their grandparents' houses as well. They want to go out and  
18 make a life of their own, but they're getting no encouragement whatsoever in regard to this and  
19 whereas I welcome what's coming before us now, it is only an absolute drop in the ocean,  
20 because there has to be a major, major build programme in this country, and particularly in the  
21 urban areas, because that's the urban areas is where it's needed. Thank you very much.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Shay Cullen.

23 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thank you, just one question for Joe: We purchased 25 units in 2015. I  
24 suppose I want to know are we actively buying properties at the moment and how many do we  
25 expect to purchase in 2016, or what budget do we have to do so? Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.

27 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. I am conscious of what Cllr O'Neill and Cllr Kennedy and  
28 Ruttle and Fitzgerald have said about, you know that some areas of the county now appear to be  
29 a no-go zone for development. But as Cllr Vance has stated, you know, the longest wait is in the  
30 north east, Bray and Greystones. And as he also correctly stated, it's the tip of the iceberg. It is  
31 welcome, but it is a drop in the ocean. I mean as the Government comes to the end of its tenure,  
32 it got some things right, but it got the social housing policy absolutely disastrously wrong. I  
33 mean to base the whole social house policy on the private rented market was flawed from the  
34 very beginning, and the chickens are coming home to roost now I am afraid.

1  
2 The problem is that people who are waiting for a social house don't have the alternative rented  
3 accommodation, because the whole rented market is choked. We see people who can't get  
4 mortgages, that are in a position to buy houses and are renting, can't get mortgages, even though  
5 the mortgage at this stage is no higher than the rent they're paying. Because they can't get the  
6 20% down payment on the mortgage.

7  
8 But just one question, the Tenant Purchase Scheme is open now after a long hibernation period.  
9 Is there any uptake on the Tenant Purchase Scheme, because obviously the purchasing of houses  
10 is a quick fix, it's a quick solution, but I know you are not buying houses under a certain energy  
11 rating or up to a certain standard. If there is an uptake in the tenant purchase, can that money be  
12 ring-fenced for purchasing houses? Have the Department estimated a figure that they'll give  
13 towards purchasing houses, because if there are areas like Blessington and Arklow where we  
14 can't develop houses because of the infrastructural problems, the only solution is to buy houses.  
15 So maybe you could just clarify that Joe, thanks.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Snell.

17 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I would like to thank the Director, Joe Lane and his staff  
18 for everything that they're doing in housing. And I note that there is an election and there was a  
19 lot of negativity and at the same time we all know that there is a huge crisis out there. There  
20 certainly is a huge crisis. But the housing staff can only work with what they have, and what's  
21 made available to them. And I would like to welcome the 42 houses in Bray. There is an awful  
22 lot of families, as other speakers have said, who are waiting for social housing. We know that  
23 there is sort of, there is games being played out at a higher level, when 20 houses was sanctioned  
24 through the Department for Dunlavin, and then we subsequently discovered that Irish Water do  
25 not have the means, which we highlighted before they ever chose Dunlavin and as Cllr O'Neill  
26 and others have said in regards to Blessington, the six units that would have been earmarked to  
27 start quite quickly in the Blessington area, Irish Water have scuppered the start of them.

28  
29 The Arklow Councillors have been on for a long, long time. Their hands have been tied there for  
30 20 years. So again while it is only 14 units, it's better than none. 25 units was purchased in the  
31 last 12 months, and I suppose Joe, if you had got more money, you could have purchased more  
32 houses, to answer Cllr Cullen's question, that the Local Authority can only spend what they get.  
33 So they got enough to buy 25 units, and they were spread out all over the county. There is at this  
34 moment and time less than a dozen vacant houses in the whole of County Wicklow. In regards

1 to re-lets. I would like to thank Breege Kilkenny and her staff, when I was first elected here in  
2 2009, we had vacant units for well over a year, in some cases two years, and that's a thing of the  
3 past thankfully. There is a number of units in particular in a housing estate in Bray, which are  
4 being used for decanting purposes where funding has been sought to do up them units. Again I  
5 know there was one Councillor speaking earlier about we need to put more money into doing up  
6 our own properties, but at the budget meeting here, the same Councillor voted against extra  
7 money going into the budget towards our own housing stock. So there is a number of people  
8 speaking out of both sides of their mouths.

9  
10 In regards to the PPPs and the 70 units in Wicklow Town and in particular the Lott Lane in  
11 Kilcoole and I know Cllr Fortune will be very aware of Kilcoole, and again it's an area which  
12 there is an awful lot of demand, the Greystones/Kilcoole area. You know, there isn't just a  
13 demand in the north of the county, there is a demand everywhere. The over reliance on private  
14 rented sector, other people have spoke about it. There is almost 700 families and individuals on  
15 the RAS scheme.

16  
17 The Government in their wisdom, anyone that went on the last -- after RAS after January 2012  
18 were taken off the housing list, so therefore they don't appear as part of the overall people on the  
19 housing list. When the HAP payment scheme comes in again, people will be removed from the  
20 housing list, and it's only massaging the figures, the true figures. And I believe that there is an  
21 awful lot of slum landlords in the private rented sector getting away with murder. And Cllr  
22 Vance spoke about 1,500 euro for rented accommodation in the Bray area. And that's starting to  
23 filter down right through the whole county. We all know that the maximum rent supplement  
24 certainly in east Wicklow is €625 of which the tenant receives 490. You cannot get a three  
25 bedroom property in East Wicklow for less than 11, 1,200 euro. So people are being put to the  
26 pin of their collar through the private rented sector. It's something that we can't solve here. It's  
27 national policy. It's something that the new Government, whoever they may be, may address  
28 urgently because we are playing catch up. In regards to the lack of social houses that's being  
29 built.

30  
31 So therefore while it is only a drop in the ocean in regards of what's been announced here today,  
32 it's to be welcomed. There is families out there who believe it or not will be very happy if they  
33 could get a key to a door of any of these units that Joe's elaborated on here today. I thank him  
34 and his staff for their ongoing efforts. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Cllr Snell. I echo what you say in terms of the amount of work  
2 that's been completed by the housing staff in very difficult circumstances. And I think it can be  
3 easy to turn around and say nothing has been done for many, many years. And that it's only a  
4 drop in the ocean when you see 32 people going into houses in Newtown. It's so important for  
5 those individuals and their families and the fact that we are going to be bringing on 42 units in  
6 Bray there, 42 families that will be housed with a house of their own. I think we can sometimes  
7 and I don't think Joe does himself credit with his presentation, I think he is so honest and fair, he  
8 presents all the things, but I think there is an awful lot of great work being done and he should be  
9 blowing the trumpet for the people in the Housing Department who are making these things  
10 happen and doing great work on our behalf and long may that continue.

11  
12 Joe just one question, how many people are in emergency accommodation in Wicklow presently,  
13 thanks?

14 DIRECTOR LANE: A few things, there is one family unit at the moment in emergency  
15 accommodation. The couple of issues that were raised, disability, if you wait for next month for  
16 the Part 8 I am sure you will be quite happy with that. It's a start anyhow. Regard purchases, we  
17 go to BRC, nothing less than that. When we are buying a unit, we have to balance between the  
18 monies available and the need in the area, price, location, how accessible the units are and  
19 exactly who needs what, so a three-bedroom somewhere when somebody needs a two-bedroom  
20 cause problems.

21  
22 Tenant Purchase Scheme, there is a new Tenant Purchase Scheme in, we will bring it to the SPC,  
23 there are a number of issues with it, but it will be discussed with the SPC and we will be back  
24 regarding it, we have to look at exclusions in that regard rather than just sending all the  
25 properties out. It's totally different than previous schemes.

26  
27 Okay, after that, like I said we will be back on again with the first of those Murphy's land  
28 hopefully at next month's meeting.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Joe. Okay, Pat.

30 Cllr KENNEDY: If I could just come back on one thing, I think Irish Water have a role to play,  
31 I think Joe and his staff are doing great work, but Irish Water have a role to play in this county.  
32 And they're holding - there are many communities and towns and villages held up right across  
33 the county, because we don't know what's happening. I have outlined this on a number of  
34 occasions. Irish Water came down to the Municipal Districts and they were to be back within a



1 month to give them an update. That's over a year ago. That's not good enough. There are many  
2 developers who want to build in many towns and villages and they can't because there is no  
3 sewage infrastructure. What I propose is that we ask representatives from Irish Water to come  
4 down to this Chamber and give an update of what their future plans are for the towns and  
5 villages around this county.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay very quickly.

7 Cllr VANCE: Briefly Chairman, I meant to ask it: What is the situation in regard to Brighton  
8 Terrace, the homeless house there that we have, that, like I believe that was a guarantee was  
9 given that that would be closed at Christmas. I just want to know what the up-to-date position  
10 on that?

11 Cllr NOLAN: Just very quickly for Director Lane, when will be the Tenant Purchase Scheme be  
12 up and running, when would it be available?

13 DIRECTOR LANE: Later this year we will have to look at exclusions, the scheme has to be  
14 tidied up a bit and we will be talking to the SPC.

15  
16 Brighton Terrace, there was - it's an emergency short-term solution, or facility. However, it has  
17 gone on longer. It isn't good practice, the idea was at the time and under a class application, was  
18 that it would be split up, one of the approved housing bodies would come in, buy a number of  
19 smaller units, standard housing and would support housing - we would remove the inhabitants  
20 from the position and support them out in the community in blocks of three or four. That was  
21 number three. We got number one and number two in an approved housing body, including, I  
22 mean our number one was Newtown and that was 32 units, so we are not in a position at the  
23 moment to progress that. We will probably have a new call again for class for 2016, but at the  
24 moment, we don't have any units of that to break those into anything other than the emergency  
25 solution we have there at the moment.

26 Cllr VANCE: Just could I say we told the people there that this would be closed in December, at  
27 Christmas. Now I have had a number of people who are residents in there and I can tell you  
28 now, I am seriously concerned at some of the things that's going on there - seriously concerned.  
29 And I am not going to elaborate on it any further at this meeting, but just to say that and I want  
30 to put it on record, that we gave a guarantee that that would be closed at Christmas, and I can tell  
31 you with what I have heard, it should have been closed at Christmas. And that's all I am saying  
32 on the matter now. This is a matter of urgency, as far as I am concerned.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

34 Cllr BRADY: Just on Brighton Terrace, can I agree with Cllr Vance there. I know Joe had said

1 he had hoped to try move to close it prior to Christmas last, and he is saying now the funding  
2 wasn't secured for it. But just to echo what Cllr Vance is saying there, not just the residents in  
3 the locality, I am more concerned about the conditions as well that the tenants in there are living  
4 in, and they've all been aired at many, many Council meetings in Bray and I am sure they will  
5 again tomorrow night at our Municipal District meeting. The conditions are substandard,  
6 substandard, and we are paying huge, huge money to house these people who have a housing  
7 need. And I think it's good money going into a premises that isn't fit for purpose. And this was  
8 stated well over a year ago, 18 months ago, all of these concerns were raised, identified, both in  
9 terms of the local residents living around it, but more importantly the guys that have to live in  
10 the conditions. And I think we need to act on this as an emergency and I know Joe's hands are  
11 tied, but we need - can I ask that maybe this Chamber here, this Council writes to the  
12 Department with a sense of urgency, looking for emergency funding to advance this particular  
13 situation? Because it's not sustainable. So can I propose we write to the Department asking for  
14 emergency funding to progress this?

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, do you want to come back there. Are your hands tied?

16 DIRECTOR LANE: Well we are looking and we have identified a number of units in the Bray  
17 area, which are four-bedroom which would help the approved housing body break it into smaller  
18 units, the only thing is it's quite difficult to buy four-bedroom units in Bray, I think we might  
19 have progressed one, the other three there were issues with it and we continue to look for  
20 four-bedroomed units, but the approved housing body even in the absence of the approval had  
21 been looking. This can only be done under a CAS programme because of the pay back period.  
22 There will be a call for them again this year around the same time, April last year, and in the  
23 meanwhile, we will try to source units for them, but it is quite a difficult solution - sorry, quite a  
24 difficult problem there as people are well aware of it.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: If you could put all your efforts into it, because it is on both sides for the  
26 residents and for the people living close by, it's far from ideal. Thank you Joe, and your staff  
27 too. Very quickly Gerry.

28 Cllr WALSH: Are we going to send a request for Irish Water to attend here?

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Already I am trying to get them to attend the meeting to give us an update  
30 on Vartry and the plans they have there, so that request has already gone in. Okay, thank you,  
31 item number ten, to consider the draft library Development Plan 2016 to 2020. Michael, you are  
32 back on if you want to hit your button there.

33 Director NICHOLSON: Thank you Cathaoirleach. We are obliged to have a Library  
34 Development Plan. This is our fourth plan since 1997 and under the Local Government Act

1 1994, section 33, it's a reserved function of the Council to adopt the Library Development Plan.  
2 So you all got a copy of the plan, and I know you have all read it as carefully as I have. I am just  
3 going to pick out some highlights from the plan just to bring to your attention.

4  
5 The annual library book fund which had peaked at 400,000 in 2008 has been dropping, but the  
6 good news is that thanks to yourselves, you increased that to 250,000 for 2016. So the hope  
7 would be that you could find it in your hearts to increase that every year and get it back up to  
8 400,000 over the next few years.

9  
10 Items borrowed, still running about half a million items per year from our library service. And  
11 we have about 30,000 registered members, which again is holding steady. It shows that the  
12 library is continuing to be a major part of people's life in this county. There is no sign of it, of  
13 those numbers dropping off. The public service staff embargo appears to be lifting and we have  
14 been able to fill a few vacancies. And we are filling them that little bit quicker now because of  
15 the embargo being relaxed somewhat.

16  
17 In relation to our development programme, we have had substantial revamps of Greystones and  
18 Dunlavin libraries and we have just finished the new library and Municipal District offices in  
19 Arklow. And that will be open, I have some details on that later, but that's opening in the spring.  
20 In fact Chairman, I'll be dealing with the suspension of standing orders question about Arklow  
21 library as well at the end of my presentation.

22  
23 We did consult with the public on the Library Development Plan, and we fed in all the  
24 comments into our programme. As part of that Library Development Plan, and public  
25 consultation, we did ask people how satisfied they were with the library service and we got a  
26 very good rating. I have it there on, included in the programme. Generally speaking the public  
27 are highly complimentary of the library service that we provide in the county.

28  
29 Just a few other points, we have some Development Plans going forward. Our next priority is a  
30 new library for Wicklow Town. And we hope to bring you some good news on that early in the  
31 New Year, we are working on something there. And we have received funding from the  
32 Department, so we hope to have good news very shortly in that regard. We need a new library  
33 facility in Rathdrum, and Aughrim. And we need a quality library building for Bray, so they're  
34 our next three priorities.

1  
2 As regards to the library management system, some of you may be aware of this, this is a  
3 national system being rolled out across all libraries. It's being piloted by the four Dublin local  
4 authorities, and Wicklow will be in the next phase of this library management system roll out.  
5 And that will mean that we will have stock from all 300 libraries in the country can be viewed  
6 and requested by the public, so it will be like one big database for every book in every library  
7 throughout the country, once it's streamlined the service. It will mean effectively if you go into  
8 your local library and you want a book that isn't available in that library or county, but if it's  
9 available anywhere in the country, that book can be delivered to the local branch and picked up  
10 by yourself. It's going to streamline the whole service. There is also going to be Wi-Fi available  
11 in every library. And that's being well used as well.

12  
13 So that Chairman is just the highlights from the plan. I appreciate if the members could adopt it  
14 and just while I have the floor, just in relation to some updates, in relation to our library service,  
15 we hope to have full opening hours restored in Blessington and Bray by the summer. In relation  
16 to Greystones, we hope to re-open the additional hours by the end of this month. Ballywaltrim  
17 re-opening this Saturday and every Saturday from here on in. And we hope to resume the local  
18 studies in Ballywaltrim next week. In relation to Arklow, we have agreed on the official opening  
19 of the Arklow library and Municipal District on the 1st of April with a view to opening it to the  
20 public on the 4th of April. That's the absolute outside. I would actually hope to open the library  
21 in March, but it will definitely open on the 4th of April if it hasn't opened before there. Myself  
22 and the Council have said we staff it ourselves on Monday the 4th, if it's not open before then. If  
23 there is any questions, I can deal with them.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy, maybe I'll bring you in on that one.

25 Cllr MURPHY: I am just so excited, I can't speak. My God, I have a sore throat! I'll actually  
26 promise to bring up chocolate and buns if you actually -- but no, look at, it's great day to hear  
27 good news, and I have to say it's a fantastic facility. We have had a tour and whatever, and you  
28 know, the Main Street in Arklow is a very sad place at the moment. Unfortunately, you know,  
29 for lots of reasons. And I think this is going to bring back a little bit of light and a little bit of  
30 hope and hopefully it will bring other things on to the main street. It just shows what persistence  
31 and what commitment it has come to the table from local councillors and also to the fantastic  
32 staff in the library service to Michael and to Brendan and all other people behind the scenes.  
33 And I really meant it is going to be a great day and I am very proud to be part of that, of the  
34 whole system. I just need to ask one or two questions. Will the staff have specific training for

1 people with disabilities? Will there be specific programmes for children and adults with special  
2 needs? And it's another great thing to hear of the rural libraries getting a boost, because we  
3 forget about our country cousins if you want, what we used to say years ago, and there is a lot of  
4 elderly who can't get into the big towns and whatever, and they go to the little village once a  
5 week or whatever, and they too have to have a voice and they too have to have the proper  
6 facilities and it's great to hear that.

7  
8 Also wondering about the loop system, is there a loop system in Arklow and in the new  
9 premises? I am sure there is, but I am just not quite certain on that. And the IT, that it's disability  
10 approved as well in the sense of the reading and the three As, I don't really understand that, but I  
11 can come back to you on that. And I have to say I am very, very happy to hear this today, which  
12 makes a change.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: That means we don't have to have our suspension of standing orders.

14 Cllr MURPHY: No, you can delete that, but I'll be back if that doesn't happen.

15 Cllr BEHAN: I want to congratulate Michael Nicholson and his staff, particularly Brendan  
16 Martin who I think is over there at the Council section of the Chamber at the moment. And all  
17 of the staff of the library service for the magnificent work they do on our behalf for the citizens  
18 of this county. And by going back over the years, and we have had a couple of recessions and  
19 the time I have certainly been a member of this Council, the library service has always been one  
20 element of our service that's always gained great public recognition and praise and that's down  
21 particularly to the dedication of the staff members in all of the libraries in the county. And it's  
22 great to see it reflected again as you said yourself Director in that survey that was done of library  
23 members where there is consistently high ratings again for the staff and for other aspects of the  
24 service. So I would just take the opportunity to congratulate everybody concerned for a job well  
25 done.

26  
27 Now one or two questions if I could: The library management system that's been mentioned  
28 which is a great idea, definitely, that people will have access to any book that's available in any  
29 library in the country, but some local authorities I think charge for membership of their local  
30 library. We don't and we have had that as a point of principle for many years. I just want an  
31 assurance that by entering into this scheme, that we are not in some way going to be obliged at  
32 some stage down the line to start charging for what is now probably the last remaining free  
33 service offered by this county. And I think it would be important that we get an assurance on  
34 that.

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And secondly, again I welcome the increased opening hours, and I would like to see them further increased as time goes on, so that this magnificent facility is available on as many occasions as possible during the week. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

Cllr RUTTLE: Yes Cathaoirleach, thank you very much for your presentation Michael. It's great to see the library service moving forward and indeed it's a great showcase for the County Council, and it's not really all about books and reading books or borrowing books either. The library has become a place where people meet, it's a venue and it has a social aspect as Miriam said for retirement people, it's hugely important. The Arklow library, I have had a tour of it, it's a fantastic facility with great space and light and I think not just for itself, but Miriam would say as well, it will auger well for the town, a new beginning, a new break and I look forward to the opening of that.

I am delighted as well to see coming on stream the extra staffing which will allow for the restoration of hours. And also the increase in the book fund to the members who voted for the budget in the Autumn, for that extra money that went in and the effect that will have on the library service is very, very positive and productive. Sometimes on occasion in the past, I often felt people didn't connect us with it exactly, they weren't dead sure, but I think that's become more definitely connected and certainly it's a great service.

Wicklow, Rathdrum, I think Aughrim is the next priority down the way, but it's a good service and I wish to also compliment Brendan Martin on his great work as county librarian and the way he conducts his business and the efforts he makes, he is a very great professional and very effective. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

Cllr FITZGERALD: I am not going to go over old ground, but it's a very exciting time for Arklow and the environs, and it's been a long time coming. I was glad, I thought Michael was playing a joke there when he announced April the 1st as the opening day, but he is serious about it. My granddaughter told me recently I was a useless Councillor because I told her it was opening last September and it's opening in April. But there is great excitement among young and the not so young, because the library is sort of placed near the church in Arklow and there is a lot of elderly people would like to use the library service, and it would be remiss of me not to thank the Director, Michael Nicholson and staff, for the impetus they gave to the project. I have

1 to say, I have to mention Brendan Martin because I rang him on three or four Saturday nights  
2 when the alarm was going off, got you down to Arklow, when the alarm was going off at night  
3 time. It's a very exciting time, it's a fantastic building, it will be surely widely used. I think we  
4 won't have any difficulty filling it up during the day or in the evening time.

5  
6 I take on board Cllr Behan's, about not charging for the facilities, and I really look forward on  
7 the 1st of April to having the facility, or 4th April I think it's opening to the public, it will give an  
8 added impetus to the main street, because I notice the figures for the Gorey library, the visits  
9 over the year, it's a figure of 117,000 visits. That could be the one person going ten times, but  
10 the fact is it's over 2,200 people per day visits, which is a colossal - sorry per week, it's a colossal  
11 figure and I have no doubt we will meet that with the population in Arklow. So well done to  
12 everyone, it's a good day for Arklow, all we need is the primary care centre to go across the road  
13 now, hopefully that will be announced shortly and it will be a good day for the main street in  
14 Arklow.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

16 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again I would like to join with previous speakers in  
17 thanking the Director Michael Nicholson, and indeed Brendan Martin as well, in regards their  
18 efforts. Arklow has been mentioned for many years, and it's great to see it finally coming to  
19 fruition. I look forward to the announcement when we eventually get it on the Wicklow Town  
20 development, and I am sure like all the rest of the Area Councillors, we will be probably up  
21 banging Michael's door to try and get the inside track on what's happening. But I would make a  
22 point that the library service, it's an important infrastructure and resource to a lot of communities  
23 and you have mentioned a number of other places where you have a strategic plan to aim  
24 towards, but it's been decimated through the lack of resources, funding for many years. And also  
25 in regards to staff, and I see that we are down 30%. That's really tying the hands of the people  
26 trying to run that service. And indeed we have all been at the receiving end of negative  
27 publicity, particularly from historians who do a lot of research in the Ballywaltrim area and that,  
28 and particularly this year which is an historic year, and you know, it hasn't gone down well. So I  
29 would just - I welcome the openings, I welcome the plans you have coming downstream. But I  
30 fear that will we have the resources and manpower to run all of these centres? And as I say,  
31 unfortunately it's the only negative on a day which is to be welcomed, all the positive news that  
32 we are getting. Whereas I say, you say that Ballywaltrim will be opening on Saturday, its  
33 normal hours again, and that's great news, and maybe if Brendan could get it out to the regulars  
34 who use Ballywaltrim regularly, it would be great news. Other than that, I just want to thank

1 you for your input.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Just before I go on to the other members, would it be  
3 possible to have a 15-minute time extension, I am just - these Notice of Motions have been  
4 sitting here for a long time, I would love to clear them off today, would that be possible with  
5 members, happy enough to do that? Great, thanks. Cllr Cullen.

6 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I just want to compliment the library service in Wicklow, and  
7 particularly my own area of Baltinglass and Dunlavin and the Blessington areas, and I think  
8 libraries are very important for students in particular, and retired people. And it is an accessible  
9 format for people to get information and education. And I think historically, the library service  
10 has been instrumental in transforming education in this country. And certainly I remember when  
11 I was a boy, it was one of the means I had of education, and getting access to affordable  
12 knowledge. I think that was very important. It provides a very important public service, and  
13 long may it continue, and I want to compliment all the library staff throughout the county for the  
14 dedicated work they put into it. Thank you Chairman.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

16 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, thank you as well, I would like to compliment the library service, and I  
17 am obviously delighted that it's getting back up to full swing in regarding providing the services  
18 for the community out there. It's one service that has received great praise throughout the years  
19 from the community out there. And it's also one of the services that despite the fact that difficult  
20 decisions had been made over budget times over various issues that the library service was  
21 protected very much so by the majority of members of this Council. And certainly what we are  
22 seeing now is the result of recent decisions taken by the majority members of this Council in  
23 regard to supporting the library service. I think most people agree it's a tremendous service, it's  
24 well received by the public, and it's something that we would like to continue as well, and  
25 certainly it's something that we have never charged for. I don't think there is any reason for to do  
26 it as well, as long as the members, the majority of the members of the Council continue to  
27 support it as it is. Thank you.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Mary McDonald.

29 Cllr McDONALD: I am not going to go too long but I want to echo everything everybody has  
30 said and all the positive reactions especially in Arklow. I want to take the opportunity to put on  
31 record the donation from the Polish community in Arklow through work with Cllr Bourke of the  
32 €5,000 worth of books I think the diverse communities that we live in now, I think it's essential  
33 that we make these, our new libraries and even existing libraries accessible to everybody, to all  
34 communities. And like I said, I would like to put on record that we absolutely appreciate the



1 donation from the Polish community in the Arklow, through the Polish embassy for their  
2 donation to the new library.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

4 Cllr WALSH: To thank Michael for his presentation of that good news. Restoration of the  
5 opening hours in Greystones and the re-opening of the local studies section in Ballywaltrim is  
6 particularly welcome. You may remember when those cutbacks were announced last year, it  
7 caused considerable disquiet in the communities. We would have been at the receiving end of a  
8 lot of calls and emails, etcetera, so it's good to be able to report back to say now these services  
9 are being restored. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. So I'll just add my voice of congratulations, I am  
11 not going to say anything about Brendan Martin because he won't be able to leave the building,  
12 his head will be so big. In fact I think he has left the building. Are you hiding there? Well done  
13 for the work you have done, and the libraries are so important, and sometimes people don't relate  
14 Wicklow County Council and the library service and we have probably a bit of a branding job to  
15 do there, they're not all about books there, nowadays they're Wi-Fi enabled zones and about  
16 knowledge, and I met somebody recently and he was down on his luck and he told me about the  
17 only place he can get a loan is from the library, from that point of view. But I think it is fantastic  
18 that I was sitting here in the years where we were cutting the book fund and cutting library hours  
19 and it was depressing and people were talking about the impact it had on people and now to be  
20 reversing those and extending the opening hours and the amount of libraries, I think it's just  
21 fantastic. So congratulations and well done. You need this formally proposed and adopted.

22 Director NICHOLSON: Just a couple of the questions. Before calling for a resolution. There  
23 will be a separate Polish section of books in the Arklow library to reflect the donation from the  
24 Polish Embassy and in fact a representative from the Polish Embassy will be present at the  
25 opening on the 1st of April.

26  
27 In relation to Cllr Murphy's questions, we will work with Cllr Murphy and her vast knowledge of  
28 disability area to ensure that all necessary technologies is available for those with disabilities.  
29 And also any training required will be provided, including the loop system. So we look forward  
30 to working with you on that.

31  
32 And regard to the charges, it's ironic, we don't charge under the library management system,  
33 there can be no charge. So those that do charge won't be charging, so they'll be in line with us. I  
34 would like to ask for a formal resolution.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

2 Cllr RUTTLE: As Chairman of the SPC, I have great pleasure in formally proposing the library  
3 plan.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: And seconded by Christopher Fox. Thank you very much Michael, we  
5 move on, next item on the agenda is the lands at Blessington, to consider the Notice of Motion  
6 number five and I think everybody has received a report on this, so it was in the name of  
7 Councillor Gerry O'Neill. Gerry if you want to come in on that. Just hit your button.

8 Cllr O'NEILL: Thanks a million. It's very straightforward what my motion means here, is that  
9 there is, of the 32 acres which was bought maybe eleven year ago for 11 million euro, I pass by  
10 here daily and all I see in these fields is sheep. While at the other end of the town, two miles  
11 outside the town, the local football club, the AFC, the soccer club, they have land at Cross  
12 Chopper, which about two miles outside the town, completely in-appropriate and that's licensed  
13 land by the way, there is no rent on that. So the other land they use is some land behind the  
14 college in the town. There are 400 members and I believe there could be a lot more than 400  
15 members if they had proper facilities. So I have been talking to the club for a long time now and  
16 there was a public meeting actually last week, and it was about 100 people attended it, including  
17 three Councillors from the Municipal District. And three of those, three of the six completely  
18 supported the motion. Where we are talking about a simple swap of land. There has been a  
19 review, as such, last October at Municipal District, and it's a fairly straightforward swap of land  
20 from one area to another. It's an area that the football club could actually start playing football  
21 there in the morning. And I would hope that we get the full support of the Councillors here  
22 today in moving this on. It's a real serious matter.

23  
24 For years, for all my lifetime I have been involved in recreation and boxing and Gaelic football,  
25 whatever, I really believe that we have to, we have to do what we can to keep kids off the street  
26 and keep kids out of trouble. It's not good enough to make things hard for people and then be  
27 critical. We were at a police board meeting earlier on here this morning, 10 o'clock, I would like  
28 to see less young kids in trouble, the drugs issue, whatever it may be. So I would really  
29 passionately ask the Councillors here today to support this motion. I know it says a review of  
30 the locations of zoning and there is no problem with the Council on that, there is no need to - as  
31 stated in the review, there is no need to - it's not a zoning issue. It's only strictly, it's only purely  
32 a movement of the eight acres from one area to another. And it's well laid out there in the  
33 drawings that the Councillors have got. So I want to propose that motion now please.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, do you have a seconder?

1 Cllr RUTTLE: Yes, Cathaoirleach, the motion we have here is that "Wicklow move the location  
2 of the ...(Reading)... as outlined the club is in great need of somewhere to pursue their sport." At  
3 the moment they have huge numbers, but no permanent home and their headquarters for the  
4 main team is too far away. Where they play at Blessington Community College is under huge  
5 threat. I am Chairman of the Board of Management for the college and we are going ahead to  
6 build a larger school there which will take up the ground. And it will not be available to them  
7 and they are facing in the not too distant future a crisis, so I would second the motion that  
8 Wicklow County Council review the locations of the zoning of the land at action area three to  
9 facilitate playing fields for Blessington AFC.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Just hold on one second Gerry. Cllr Cullen.

11 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman this has been brought up on numerous occasions before the  
12 Area Committee, and it was suggested that agreement couldn't be reached and it was referred to  
13 the Council. Now I have no problem with a review, but I would have a problem if that review  
14 led to the removal of lands in Blessington that are currently designated to build Council houses  
15 on. I think in West Wicklow and the Blessington area, we have nearly 1,000 families on the  
16 waiting list for housing. And I want to make absolutely certain that I'll not be supporting any  
17 review that would remove lands that are presently zoned to build social and affordable Council  
18 houses on for and I don't agree with that. And I just - I have no problem with the motion as it is a  
19 simple review. But all the reports we have got from the Council say that we cannot, should not  
20 build -- we should not remove the zoning for to build social housing. At the moment, the  
21 Government has gave three billion euro to build social houses. And every county in Ireland, we  
22 have 5,000, nearly 6,000 families on the housing waiting list in this county. And I don't want to  
23 be sending out the wrong signals that we are not interested in social housing. I am not  
24 suggesting this is what's being proposed. It is just a review is being proposed, but I want to  
25 make it clear that we have a huge Council housing waiting list in Blessington, all through west  
26 and south Wicklow and rest of the county and I want to make my position quite clear, whereas I  
27 have no objection to a review, if that review decides that we are removing the zoning on Council  
28 lands that we have currently zoned to build social and affordable houses, every day of the week  
29 we turn on the radio and television and politicians are jumping up and down about the housing  
30 crisis. What happens with the three billion when the Department of the Environment comes and  
31 says how many houses do you want to build in Blessington? And we will say we can't tell you  
32 because it's under review. And if this, if there is any changing in the zoning, as we were told  
33 here by the officials of the Council in the report we got several months ago, it could put people  
34 staying on the waiting list for several years longer.

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As I said, I am not saying that's the purpose of this, I am just marking people's cards that that's my position.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Doran.

Cllr DORAN: I didn't, I just want to say that I am of the very same mind as Cllr Cullen. He doesn't - you just keep muttering there away to yourself, but I'll have my say when you are finished! I want to say this, I have no problem with a review. We are talking about land here that cost 11 million. As the price of agriculture land is about 10,000 an acre at the minute, and if you put it down at 20,000, you could buy ten acres somewhere in the area for 200,000 and we are talking about using 11 million pounds worth of land and messing around with it. They were granted, the community, I don't think it was the soccer club, the community was granted four or five acres up there and it's there for the last four or five years and nobody done anything about it. So I can't understand - every little village and crossroads in the County Wicklow that I know of anyway has built their own pitches and have got their own money and have got their own set-up. I love to see young people out in the field playing. That's what we want to do, and that's what we should be doing for our young people. But we come along here now and we are talking about - and myself and Cllr O'Neill had this out before. I don't want to see any disturbance in any of that land to stop houses being built. If we got money tomorrow morning when this has changed, we have no site. Now where are we going? Now it's not so long ago since Cllr O'Neill said it above in Blessington at a meeting, he said that there was people sleeping in cars in Blessington. Now where are they gone?

Cllr O'NEILL: What's that got to do with what I am talking about?

Cllr DORAN: It's got a lot to do with it.

Cllr O'NEILL: That's codology.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Through the Chair please, Cllr Doran, are you through?

Cllr O'NEILL: Codology.

Cllr DORAN: We all don't work like you.

Cllr O'NEILL: Just be serious for once.

Cllr DORAN: I am never serious? What you are talking about?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell.

Cllr O'NEILL: You know I have done more since I have been elected for the homeless and housing...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

Cllr DORAN: That's all in your head.

1 Cllr O'NEILL: Oh will you go away!

2 Cllr SNELL: Just in regards of being Chairman of the Housing SPC, I can assure every member  
3 here that there is not the chance of one house being affected in the swapping of the lands here.  
4 This is a eleven acres in total. The community lands of 1.9 acres, the extension to the existing  
5 graveyard and the car park facilities won't be hindered in any shape or form. The 8.8 acres for  
6 the residential development, and the 8.2 acres of active open space is what we are talking about.  
7 The buffer zone in regards to the 90 to 100 metres from the lake shore will remain in situ. There  
8 is no-one talking about tampering with any of that. If some of the previous speakers had been  
9 here for the housing report, which was down as number nine on the items, they would have  
10 heard quite clearly that Irish Water wouldn't allow six houses to be built in Blessington, where  
11 an application was made by this Local Authority, and were refused on the grounds that the  
12 infrastructure is not in there. Currently the football club have a maximum of 24 months, is if  
13 you listen to Cllr Ruttle, on the current land that they occupy. That's a maximum and it could be  
14 even less. They have 330 children participating in their games. And they need another home.  
15 Their current home is unacceptable in regards to safety, pedestrian access, getting them out to  
16 the grounds and back into the town safely, and indeed there has been fatalities on that stretch of  
17 road. This is a quite simple request that Cllr O'Neill has been chasing up with his colleagues,  
18 Jim Ruttle and Edward Timmins, to try and get this across the line in regards to a simple request.  
19 Anyone that has any knowledge of developing lands for football pitches will know that it's quite  
20 expensive to get a straight flat piece of land, could cost anything up to 140,000, again you put in  
21 the proper draining and the required drains that's needed for a soccer pitch, let alone a GAA  
22 pitch, which is more expensive. The land that was in the action area that was designated for  
23 community purposes will cost an awful lot of money for any community, voluntary organisation  
24 such as Blessington AFC to develop. And in my opinion, it would be beyond the realms of a  
25 group like them to get the funding to put in the necessary pitches that's available to them.

26  
27 We all know that residential housing and indeed in Blessington there was a mistake made where  
28 housing, residential housing under the watch of some Councillors, was put in on a flood plain in  
29 Blessington, in Glending. The houses can be built in a more challenging part of action area 3,  
30 such as where the football pitches are. To probably starve off any potential of flood plains that  
31 we have in the past. So I would urge people to support this motion. I think it's not - and I don't  
32 see why there is a resistance, to have a review of this overall plan. Everyone knows that the club  
33 needs it. And the community of West Wicklow, larger than just a football club. There will be  
34 other groups I am sure that would avail of it as well and for people to come in here and start

1 scaremongering, if they stayed in the meeting for the whole of the duration of the meeting, they'd  
2 know that six houses have been refused by Irish Water. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

4 Cllr MATTHEWS: Chairman, could I ask as part of the review, if it does go ahead, that  
5 Wicklow would cost the development to two pitches at this site. It was obviously thought to be a  
6 suitable location and I understand the planning implications of moving the land around. I think  
7 members of the club would be satisfied if it was - the pitches were located at this position, but  
8 the question I don't seem to be able to get an answer to is how much will it cost to develop it? I  
9 know in the planner's report it was suggested it could be costed by Wicklow, so I would like to  
10 have that included in the review. Thanks.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.

12 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. Look I look forward to the review because coming from the  
13 other side of Wicklow from Blessington, I don't know the lay of the land. I have read the report  
14 and my understanding was that the land currently designated towards the community, or the  
15 sports field wasn't suitable for development. So therefore it wouldn't be a land swap so to speak,  
16 it would be moving the sports field on to land that would have otherwise been developed. So we  
17 are potentially removing land for development. But I am not going to prejudge the review. One  
18 would hope - Cllr Snell has indicated that six houses are not permitted in Blessington. One  
19 would hope that that will not always be the case, and that at some stage we will have the  
20 infrastructure to develop social houses in Blessington. So I have an open mind on it, but at the  
21 same time, there is merit in what Cllr Cullen and what Cllr Doran have said; that we are the  
22 custodians of public land, the taxpayer has paid 11 million for this. We are always - it's always  
23 thrown at Councillors that taxpayers' money is wasted at Council level. That's regularly thrown  
24 at us. We are the custodians of this land. So we have to have all the information to hand before  
25 we can make a decision on it. So I would welcome the review Chairman. And I have an open  
26 mind, I am not committed one way or the other.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Fitzgerald.

28 Cllr FITZGERALD: Yeah, like a lot of Councillors here I have been involved in sport for many  
29 years, maybe too many years and I am well aware of the work that's done by communities,  
30 people who give their time freely, and I note this motion here and I have no issue with  
31 supporting the motion as it is there. Just I see from the report from Wicklow County Council  
32 that there was interaction with Blessington Football Club on the 13th of February 2013, and a  
33 business plan was to be presented. I do think from this that no plan has been presented yet.

34 Cllr O'NEILL: You are wrong.

1 Cllr FITZGERALD: I am just saying here there wasn't. The sports partnership facilitators have  
2 also been working with them and this plan is awaited is in the report they got here. That's - that's  
3 a response. So that's not the point anyway, the point is I support the motion, we have to wait and  
4 see - I am only telling you Gerry, that's what's written there. I didn't see that, but the fact is I  
5 fully support the motion. It's another day's work when we get the report back. I do know in my  
6 own town of Arklow, we are looking for land but we can't get land zoned, there is some clubs  
7 there haven't got sufficient pitches. We have land zoned residential, but from the number of  
8 emails we got which had a common shred throughout them, same words maybe, there is huge  
9 interest in the Blessington area and that's a fact. There is nothing healthier than having facilities  
10 for sport, but I also take on board what Cllr Doran and Cllr Cullen have said, that we will have to  
11 just wait and see, but I fully support the motion Cllr O'Neill.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Great, thanks for that. Cllr Vance.

13 Cllr VANCE: Chairman just in regards to this, I fully support the motion there for to have a  
14 review of it. I think I am not au fait with the particular area, certainly - I am certainly up-to-date  
15 on the needs of every supporting club and generally speaking I have always supported them, and  
16 supported funding for them as well. So I mean really from what I have read about this, and what  
17 I know about it as well, I think a review is the ideal situation to bring people who wouldn't be as  
18 familiar with it, as local people over there, bring us up to scratch and all the different  
19 permutations that need to be teased out in particularly this. It's not just a simple thing of  
20 swapping land and various things like that. So I look forward to that and certainly I am prepared  
21 to make a decision when I have all the relevant information before me, so I certainly support the  
22 motion in regard for a review.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, and just very quickly Councillor Tommy Cullen.

24 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman just for Cllr Snell's information, I was the only Councillor  
25 here who voted against the building houses on the flood plain at Glending, just for the record.  
26 The other thing Chairman, I am not against the review, I have no problem with the review. But I  
27 want to mark everyone's cards, my position is that this land was zoned in 2013 for social houses  
28 for to put roofs over people's heads and that's going to continue to be my policy. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Two more lights went on, but we are right into the time for the suspended  
30 - Edward Timmins.

31 Cllr TIMMINS: Briefly, I would like to put on record that I do support this review. I think it's  
32 needed. There is a lot of, how would you say, unclear information out there in the public  
33 domain. I think in fairness to the public and in fairness to the soccer club, they need full  
34 information and I think our review will satisfy that and I fully support the review, thank you.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady, one of yours is the suspension, so if you could just...

2 Cllr BRADY: Just to say I fully support Blessington AFC and it's unfortunate that more of the  
3 members of the Council didn't get over and listen to the needs of the club at their public meeting  
4 the other night. I was particularly disappointed to see so few of the local Councillors turn up to  
5 it and yet they're in here throwing in red herrings...

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: To be fairness to the local Councillors, I think the notice to that meeting  
7 was very short and Cllr Brady not everybody is 100% available to go to meetings, so I...

8 Cllr BRADY: People, look, I mean I am entitled to my views, I think people need to make the  
9 effort.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Neill would you just like to complete...

11 Cllr BRADY: Could I just speak without interruption. For the whole duration of the meeting  
12 here and just for your information, everyone was being timed here, and I was the only Councillor  
13 you interrupted...

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Excuse me, I have got a clock up here, it's there for absolutely everybody,  
15 you are the only one that went into the orange and that's why. You get more than a fair share of  
16 time at this Council and please don't go on Facebook saying that I have actually tried to be  
17 against you or put you...

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just be very honest.

19 Cllr BRADY: Can I just say, look...

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, Gerry, do you want to complete...

21 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach, your censorship is just appalling! (LAUGHTER)

22 Cllr O'NEILL: Cathaoirleach...

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't think I am the only one.

24 Cllr BRADY: I don't find it funny Cathaoirleach.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't think I am the only one.

26 Cllr O'NEILL: Could I briefly say there I hope this, if the review is a review that's going to  
27 move on quickly. If I thought there was to be a loss of one house in the area, one home, I  
28 wouldn't be supporting this, I wouldn't be pushing this on. And I really believe that I hope that  
29 it's going to be, it will come to a head fairly quick, and that there will be less - there is a lot of  
30 red herrings and a lot of codology, and this at a meeting in Blessington six months ago. It was  
31 put to me that there is more than Blessington soccer club in the town and more than Blessington  
32 soccer club that would be interested in this ground. And I ask Cllr Cullen straight out and his  
33 sidekick here, Cllr Doran...

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, no.



1 Cllr O'NEILL: What were they talking about. Cllr Cullen informed me that Blessington boxing  
2 club were interested in it. Now Blessington boxing club, I am the secretary and coach of  
3 Blessington boxing club for the last 35 year and we never - I want to put this on record, we never  
4 made any request for eight acres of land at Avonree. What I am talking about here if people  
5 have an input or want to put an input into all of this, it's genuine and sincere, instead of codology  
6 and playing to the gallery.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is everybody happy that we go with the review, sorry did I get it proposed  
8 and seconded, did I, great, okay. Suspension of standing orders, Grainne, Cllr McLoughlin,  
9 sorry.

10 Cllr BRADY: What time are you taking that written question?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: After the two suspension of standing orders. You will get a copy -- I'll  
12 read it out for you, absolutely, no problem at all.

13 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Cathaoirleach, thank you, to start with, I am bringing this up as a member  
14 of the KWETB and that's how I actually got to know about this situation and I am coming to you  
15 and I am looking for your support. And following a recent meeting of the Board of the Bray  
16 Institute of Further Education on Thursday 21st of January, it has come to our attention that  
17 discussions have been taking place between the CE, Sean Ashe of the County Wicklow  
18 Education Training Board and the Department of Education skills and the executive of the  
19 Educate Together to locate a new Educate Together secondary school in the campus of Bray.  
20 However, these talks have actually been taking place without the prior knowledge of not only the  
21 KWETB but also the board of BIFE and the new board of the secondary school in Bray. You  
22 have the three main players who know nothing about this except Sean Ashe and whoever else he  
23 has talked to, be it in the Department of Education or senior members of the Educate Together.  
24 As and from September, 40% of the classroom space already allocated to BIFE will be taken out  
25 and allocated to the new Educate secondary school for Bray. The school will lose other vital  
26 social measures that are necessary in a modern further Educate Together campus. Although the  
27 school will be called the North Wicklow Educate Together, it will not accommodate the pupils  
28 of the Bray school project, this Bray school in Bray, the Wicklow Educate Together, the  
29 Greystones Educate Together primary schools also, as they are not in the catchment area. The  
30 catchment area is Shankill, it is Ballybrack, Shankill, Kilternan, and north Bray. So we have a  
31 situation that you are putting together a new secondary school in Bray, taking out part of the  
32 BIFE campus, moving it to that 40% to block E in the civic centre, and all of this is being done  
33 without even the knowledge of the Councillors in Bray. I cannot believe that there would be a  
34 proposal to change the zoning of an office space in Bray, particularly one in the centre of Bray,

1 when you are trying to revive the whole of Bray, to make it into education without any of the  
2 main players and I consider the people around this table some of the main players in Bray and  
3 Wicklow. Nobody has been told anything about it. There has been - the board of BIFE called  
4 on Mr Ashe to come to a meeting during the week. I am not sure whether he declined to do so,  
5 but he didn't come to a meeting. A letter was sent on Friday evening to the board that wasn't  
6 even signed by Mr Ashe, so I presume it did come from him. Again not disclosing any of the  
7 decisions that have been made, why they have been made, what were the plans and as a result, I  
8 am asking you today to put in an objection to this planning application for the change of use of  
9 zone E in the civic building. You can't have an application for a change of use without all the  
10 players understanding and accepting this is for the best of Bray. Maybe it is, maybe it's not, but  
11 the thing is from good governance and good governance says that a CEO goes to his board and  
12 explains the plans, the future plans that will affect not only the children of Bray but more  
13 importantly the future of BIFE, which has over 1,000 full-time students and 1,000 part-time  
14 students. It's one of the success stories of the third level education in Wicklow.

15  
16 We hear all about the campus, Wicklow Campus which actually has a sign on the front door that  
17 it's the Carlow campus. This is further education for Bray. I would like to see the actual BIFE  
18 campus expanding more, not that you will be taking part of it for a secondary school. I would  
19 urge my fellow Councillors to put in, and my proposal is that Wicklow County Council  
20 Councillors put in an objection to this planned zoning until such time as you have got full  
21 knowledge of all the facts concerned and what exactly has been proposed in BIFE and for the  
22 Educate Together, I had a phone call from a member of the Board of Educate Together, the new  
23 board of the school last Friday evening and they still had not been informed as to exactly what  
24 was happening. If they don't know, BIFE don't know, the KWETB board don't know and the  
25 Councillors don't know, how could we accept that this proposal should go ahead. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: So that's a proposal and do you have a seconder for that?

27 Cllr WINTERS: I'll second it.

28 Cllr MITCHELL: I'll second it.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Mitchell.

30 Cllr MITCHELL: I would like to second it for all the reasons Grainne has outlined. It seems  
31 extraordinary that the people on the board of these institutions and the parents and the lobby  
32 groups have not been spoken to at all about this. What's even more extraordinary is that the  
33 school is actually located outside its catchment area, and we are told recently in the Dáil that  
34 there was, and in reports that there is a big issue about schools and all the cars and the chaos they

1 cause with people driving around the place. And it's extraordinary to locate the school outside  
2 its catchment area. This school should have a catchment area of Bray which I think has the Bray  
3 School Project is probably one of the oldest Educate Together institutions, Greystones which is a  
4 large one and Wicklow Town. That should be the catchment area for this school. Not the areas  
5 north of there.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

7 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I would just like to support what both Cllr McLoughlin  
8 and Cllr Mitchell have said. And to say that what I find extraordinary is who applied for this  
9 planning permission? Like if the school who are going to be running it don't know that that's  
10 where they're going to be running it, who actually applied for the planning permission or how  
11 was that done? And under whose authority? And how do we object to it, or what is the file  
12 number or how do we do this? Thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I ask for short contributions, we are running out of time. Cllr Vance.

14 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman, just there is major concern in the town in regard to this.  
15 There is major concern with the staff who didn't even know about it and also there is a history on  
16 this. I was involved in the VEC from 1985, and it had always been the plan of the VEC at that  
17 stage with their diminishing numbers that this would ease away and go into a two and a half  
18 level adult education centre and over the years, outside of the major cities in the country, it's  
19 been the most successful adult education area for numbers in the whole country. Very, very  
20 successful. And I find it very difficult, you know it's very bad policy for a start for people to  
21 come in, put in an application for change of zoning in a building in Bray without talking to the  
22 people who are actually working there and talking to the people who are being educated there as  
23 well. I find it very strange all together. And I just want to ask in regard to that the question in  
24 regard to zoning, maybe I would ask the Director there in regard to this, in the zoning on this  
25 particular application, would this be a municipal authority, would we be voting on this, or is  
26 there a vote on it, and if there is a vote on it, is it a straight vote in regard to changing of zoning  
27 and would it be done by the municipal authorities or by the Wicklow County Council here in  
28 regard to this. But I am seriously concerned about this. I think it's an extremely bad move and  
29 it's not going to help certainly the majority of secondary school kids in Bray that may want to  
30 use this facility either.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

32 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thanks Chairman, the first I heard about this was when Cllr McLoughlin  
33 passed around this letter, so I would like to thank her for bringing it to our attention. I know  
34 there is a lot of parents in Bray and the surrounding area who have expressed concern about

1 where is the Educate Together school going to go and they've been told it will be up and running  
2 from 2016. Now what I believe they're looking at here is temporary accommodation, and then  
3 they were to secure a site. That's the word I have been given on it, but I don't want to delay what  
4 is necessary there in Bray and I would be cautious about entering into a blanket objection to this  
5 without actually seeing the planning application and without getting the information from both  
6 sides. So I don't want us to jump reactionary straight into this. There is a planning process if  
7 there is one which goes on for a couple of weeks, I think there will be time for us to be presented  
8 with information on it before we jump into objecting on it.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH. Cllr Ruttle.

10 Cllr RUTTLE: This is the first I heard of this too and I am Vice-chair of the KWETB and I'll  
11 take up the matter with the chief executive this week. Okay, thank you.

12 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Just very briefly, I want to put on the record they absolutely support the  
13 concept of a second level secondary school for Educate Together. I think it's badly needed, it's  
14 just the way this has been done is wrong.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, a quick clarification.

16 MS GALLAGHER: You want to send a letter, you are proposing sending a letter to Wicklow  
17 County Council objecting to the change of use of block E, and that the Council write to the  
18 Minister for Education also opposing this plan, that's what you are asking to do? That's fine, just  
19 to be clear.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I ask before we go on, can I ask you...

21 Cllr VANCE: Could I just ask the Director could he indicate to me, is it a zoning issue, is it a  
22 straight vote and if it is a straight vote by members, is it the members down here or the  
23 Municipal District? In regard to this application.

24 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: You are presupposing it's a material contravention.

25 Cllr VANCE: I am just asking what's - of course it's an existing application, I am sure you are  
26 not going to tell me which way it is, but just a matter for my information.

27 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Material contravention means three quarters.

28 Cllr VANCE: I know that, I wonder what it was, was it a variation of the plan or material  
29 contravention of the plan, they're two different...

30 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Or it might be neither, it might be actually, it might comply with the  
31 plan.

32 Cllr VANCE: That's the point. For my information, that's what I wanted to know.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

34 Cllr MATTHEWS: Is that a letter from the Councillors or the Council executive that's been

1 proposed?

2 MS GALLAGHER: Councillors.

3 Cllr MATTHEWS: I make my own objections, I would like my name left off that letter until I  
4 have time to consider what's going on in here. If there is a planning application going in, there is  
5 plenty of time for me to put in and join the other Councillors on that, okay. I don't want --

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: I get it, I get it.

7 Cllr RUTTLE: I...

8 Cllr MATTHEWS: I appreciate Cllr McLoughlin bringing this to our attention, but I want all  
9 sides of the story before I am going to put in an objection.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

11 Cllr WHITMORE: Can I just ask when the planning is due on it, what's the last date for  
12 objections, I haven't seen the planning, I would be concerned but I haven't seen the planning  
13 application, so I am not really sure. Like this is as much information as I have on it. And  
14 whether - you know, what length of period is there, and is there a possibility perhaps to get Sean  
15 Ashe in to talk to the Council or have some discussions to find out exactly what the plans are for  
16 that?

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

18 Cllr LAWLESS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I am actually a member of the KWETB as well, same as  
19 Cllr Whitmore and I wasn't aware of this either until Cllr McLoughlin actually mentioned it to  
20 me last Tuesday. I would be kind of in the same line as Cllr Matthews. I don't know much  
21 about it. I would like to hear the side from the KWETB. I would like more information on the  
22 planning. I am very concerned that this is happening under our noses without our knowledge,  
23 considering that we are sitting on the board. So as much as I do support Grainne what you are  
24 saying, I can't support the proposal as it stands at the moment, because I think there is lack of  
25 information. I think maybe we do need to get Sean Ashe in here and have a discussion as to  
26 what's going on. It's education. It's children's education. And it's very important that the right  
27 decisions are made with the correct information and all the right information.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

29 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, I compliment Cllr McLoughlin for bringing it to our attention, but  
30 it's absolutely incredible that the members of the KWETB, including the Vice-Chairman on such  
31 a major project haven't even been consulted or given any information at all. That's a disgrace.  
32 And certainly I know if I was a member of that, I would be looking for an emergency meeting...

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: I was about to say that.

34 Cllr BEHAN: And ask your questions at that body first because that's where he is accountable. I

1 don't think he is accountable to this body, but he is certainly accountable to you. I would suggest  
2 that's what should happen first and then come back to this body then to see what you might  
3 propose at that stage.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah, that would be my view too Grainne.

5 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: And in fairness, I would say that the people from the, from BIFE should  
6 be allowed a voice as well, because if you are just listening to Sean Ashe, you are only getting  
7 one side. I think it's important you get both. You are going to be in for a shock when you see  
8 what is applied for because all it is, is the plan of what's in it plus some car parking spaces,  
9 nothing as to what they're planning to do is in the plan or in the application. All it is, is change  
10 of use and nothing else. And that's what makes it even worse.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so just in terms of you made the proposal and it was seconded, but  
12 hearing what the members have said, and particularly Cllr Behan's intervention, would you  
13 consider actually calling a Special Meeting of KWETB?

14 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I can't call it, I am not a member.

15 Cllr WHITMORE: Cllr Lawless is.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Would that suffice for you, it doesn't look like there is unanimous  
17 support.

18 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I would ask every Councillor would look at it and put in an objection at  
19 the moment until they're all happy with what's planned. I have put in an objection so...

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you okay with that though?

21 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I would like to see that the Council would support what I am trying to do  
22 here.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: The people feel they don't have enough information to deal with that.

24 Cllr MITCHELL: Could I suggest we write to the KWETB or whatever it is expressing our  
25 dissatisfaction.

26 Cllr FORTUNE: The Vice-Chairman of the KWETB is here.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: He doesn't know. The question that was asked by Cllr Brady, could I ask  
28 for the response please.

29 MS GALLAGHER: Right, the question following the sentencing of former Council official  
30 Frank O'Toole on charges of corruption, has a full audit been carried out to ensure that all  
31 financial contributions in relation to planning applications have been paid in accordance with the  
32 legislation and are there any other cases of a similar nature to the Frank O'Toole case or financial  
33 irregularities in the Council being investigated or that the Council is aware of? The answer is,  
34 "this is continual ongoing work to collect outstanding development contributions from initial

1 invoicing to the service of legal notices and right up to High Court action to ensure all monies  
2 due to Wicklow County Council are pursued and paid. There are no other cases of a similar  
3 nature or any other financial irregularities being investigated, or that Wicklow County Council is  
4 aware of."

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

6 Cllr BRADY: There is no other cases of a similar nature.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's exactly what's said.

8 Cllr BRADY: If the acting CEO, that's...

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Absolutely, that's what's been written down there. Could I just go, before  
10 we go for the other suspension.

11 Cllr BRADY: Can that response be circulated?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: No problem. Item number 15, it's a taking in charge, it will take two  
13 seconds, to consider the taking in charge of the following estates, Graham Court...

14 Cllr BRADY: There was also another suspension.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: I know that, this is just two legal kind of things which very quickly, so  
16 Graham's Court, Wicklow Town, could I have a proposer, proposed by Cllr Snell and seconded  
17 by Irene Winters. And Carrigmore extension Kilcoole, proposed by Derek Mitchell and  
18 seconded by Gerry O'Neill. And correspondence, sorry Gerry Walsh, apologies.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: You look very alike! In terms of correspondence, there is just something  
20 that has to be read out.

21 MS GALLAGHER: Just to say that terms of compromise in relation to the court case, Deirdre  
22 De Burca versus Wicklow County Council and chairperson of Wicklow County Council has  
23 been notified to Wicklow County Council, and one of the items is, one of the terms of the  
24 compromise is that at the next available scheduled public meeting of Wicklow County Council  
25 following the said -- the date of the said ruling being the February meeting and not later than the  
26 30th of March 2016, that this would be brought to the attention of the elected members.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, now so...

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Can I have a question on that.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

30 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman...

31 Cllr BRADY: In fairness now I have a suspension of standing orders, you dealt with one of our  
32 own party colleague's suspension of standing orders. I have a suspension of standing orders that  
33 was agreed by everybody here, I think it's really, really unfair.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are giving the impression that I am not fair in terms of how I run the

1 meeting and you are saying there that I am giving preferential treatment -- you are making it  
2 sound like as if I am giving preferential treatment to my own party members and I take umbrage  
3 at that, because that's not the case. One has to come before the other and the first one was  
4 proposed the first.

5 Cllr BRADY: Why can't you take one after the other?

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: The other suspension was a question which I have got the answer to. And  
7 delivered that to you and it's on that item that Cllr Cullen wants to come in. So...

8 Cllr BRADY: You are a joke. A disgrace as a Cathaoirleach.

9 MS GALLAGHER: Cathaoirleach, I just have to read this out, because...

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Super.

11 MS GALLAGHER: Can I read this out because we are obliged to read this out that the parties  
12 here to have -- "the parties here to have agreed to withdraw their appeals and notice to vary and  
13 compromise within appeals on the following terms, the order of ... granted in the High Court  
14 stands affirmed and the order for remittal is vacated on consent ... that the terms of the  
15 acknowledgment set out above are read in open court on above of the respondents at a sitting to  
16 rule ... and at the next available scheduled public meeting of Wicklow County Council following  
17 the date of the said ruling being the February meeting and not later than the 30th of March 2016,  
18 the order for costs in favour of the applicant against the respondent in respect of the High Court  
19 costs stand affirmed." (Quoted).

20 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, have you any idea of what those costs are, and do they  
21 obviously include the costs of several years of appeal to the Supreme Court, as that particular  
22 case, as you read, was a very important find in regards to ethical behaviour in this Council, and it  
23 was -- it was a decision made by the former manager Mr Edward Sheehy and the former  
24 Councillor here, Councillor John Byrne and the High Court overturned their decision, but it was  
25 also -- can we get a breakdown in writing of the costs that has now been incurred in relation to  
26 that case?

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Can they be circulated to the members?

29 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Cathaoirleach, I can give you approximate costs. The costs were  
30 awarded in the High Court on a party by party basis, which is not the full costs. And they  
31 haven't been agreed yet. They have to be agreed or in failing agreement be done by the Taxing  
32 Master of the High Court. But the law agent feels that the costs to the High Court will come out  
33 at around 50,000, and the costs for Wicklow County Council in total have come to around  
34 52,000.



1 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: And what about the Supreme Court costs?

2 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: That's including the Supreme Court costs and in the Supreme Court then  
3 4,000 was given as a contribution towards the costs of the other party in the Supreme Court.

4 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: And just what's happening now with -- is that ethical complaint now  
5 being re-examined?

6 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: I can't actually answer that, I wasn't briefed on that, I'll find out for you  
7 and let you know. I have a feeling because he is no longer an elected member and it was  
8 actually mentioned in it that it's going to lapse, but I'll find out for you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, members if the rumours are right, obviously there will be an  
10 election called shortly and for many of you this could potentially be your last meeting of  
11 Wicklow County Council, so I may I just wish you the very best in the election. Fair play to you  
12 all who are going to stand, for putting your name before the people, I think it takes a lot of guts  
13 to do that, and if you do manage to be successful and go to the Dáil, we will absolutely miss you  
14 hugely. And just to say we will be after you for what you have been calling on the TDs to do for  
15 ages, we will be after you to do and deliver on your promises, okay, thank you very much  
16 members and the best of luck. Protocol now.

17

18 Meeting concluded at 5.20pm

19

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