

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW ON MONDAY 4th DECEMBER 2017,
COMMENCING 2PM**

PRESENT:

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

APOLOGIES:

COUNCILLORS O. O'BRIEN AND M. O'CONNOR.

IN ATTENDANCE:

**MR. F. CURRAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MR. S. QUIRKE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. J. LANE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. T. MURPHY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. D. O'BRIEN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. GEANEY, A/DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. B. GLEESON, HEAD OF FINANCE
MS. B. KILKENNY, SENIOR ENGINEER
MR. M. FLYNN, SENIOR ENGINEER
MR. A. DEMPSEY, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
MS. L. GALLAGHER, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR
MR. D. MARNANE, A/SENIOR ENGINEER
MS. J. CARROLL, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MS. C. FLOOD, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MR. D. PORTER, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
MS. R. WOOD, STAFF OFFICER**

Votes of Sympathy: Elected Members passed a vote of sympathy to the families of the late Ms. Essie Corcoran, Mr. Liam Temple, Ms. Ailish Green and Mr. John Doyle. A minutes silence was observed for the deceased.

Realtime captioning of Council meetings: In response to a query from Cllr. B. Thornhill as to the absence of realtime captioning of Council Meetings, L. Gallagher explained that this service had ceased in the Council Chamber in December, 2016 and that it had been necessary when procuring the stenography service thereafter to have regard to the national procurement framework agreement in place. It was found too costly to provide a full realtime captioning service in addition to stenography, however if the members wished the matter could be discussed again by the protocol committee.

Suspension of Standing Orders

1. Cllr. G. McLoughlin sought a Suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the proposal by Irish Rail to close the main access station building in Greystones and proposed plans to lease the premises for retail.
2. Cllr. J. Behan sought a Suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the contents of an email he and other elected members had received in relation to the non payment of minor works grant to schools throughout the county which he said is causing enormous financial stress for a number of small schools in particular.

It was agreed to discuss these issues at 4.30 p.m.

ITEM NO 1

To consider the disposal of 0.974 acres or thereabouts of land in the townland of Dunlavin Lower, Dunlavin, Co Wicklow to Dunlavin Walkways Ltd., Dunlavin.

It was proposed by Cllr. E. Timmins, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake to dispose of 0.974 acres or thereabouts of land in the townland of Dunlavin Lower, Dunlavin, Co Wicklow to Dunlavin Walkways Ltd., Dunlavin in accordance with statutory notice circulated.

Cllr. T. Cullen sought clarification on whether this land was land that was previously designated for social housing and expressed concern that the walkway could impinge on the privacy of future houses in the area. He asked for the up to date position in relation to the proposal for social housing on the adjoining land and suggested that the matter be deferred until January. The Cathaoirleach advised that he would like to see the matter dealt with today and that Cllr. Cullen would be provided with the answers to the questions he raised.

On returning to the matter Mr. Joe Lane, DOS confirmed that social housing at Dunlavin, for the present is not included on the agreed priority list. He asked for it to be borne in mind the large demand for social housing in other high demand areas such as Bray Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow. Currently there is circa 32 persons on the housing list for the Dunlavin area, and at this point in time a 56 house scheme, referred to by Cllr. Cullen is not required, he said.

The Chief Executive explained that any new scheme would entail a new design which can take the walkway into account at that time. He recommended that the Council proceed with the disposal as the grant approved by the Department, which was 2016 funding, needs to be drawn down by the Group. At the conclusion of the discussion on the proposal of Cllr. E. Timmins, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake it was agreed to dispose of 0.974 acres or thereabouts of land in the townland of Dunlavin Lower, Dunlavin, Co Wicklow to Dunlavin Walkways Ltd., Dunlavin in accordance with statutory notice circulated. Issues in relation to privacy can be dealt with at scheme design.

ITEM NO 2

To consider the disposal of 1.56ha or thereabouts of land in the townland of Ballybeg, Rathnew, Co Wicklow to Cluid Housing Association.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. G. Dunne and agreed to dispose of 1.56ha or thereabouts of land in the townland of Ballybeg, Rathnew, Co Wicklow to Cluid Housing Association in accordance with statutory notice circulated.

ITEM NO. 3

To consider the disposal of 1.825 acres (0.7388ha) or thereabouts of land in the townland of Inchnappa, Ashford, Co Wicklow to Mr. John Fitzpatrick, Inchnappa, Ashford, Co Wicklow.

It was proposed by Cllr. G. Dunne, seconded by Cllr. P. Kennedy and agreed to dispose of 1.825 acres (0.7388ha) or thereabouts of land in the townland of Inchnappa, Ashford, Co Wicklow to Mr. John Fitzpatrick, Inchnappa, Ashford, Co Wicklow in accordance with statutory notice circulated.

ITEM NO 4.

To consider the disposal of 1,439.44m² (0.3557 acres) or thereabouts of land in the townland of Ballagh, Aughrim, Co Wicklow to Mr. Sean O'Neill, Ballymorris, Aughrim, Co Wicklow.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. P. Doran and agreed to dispose of 1,439.44m² (0.557 acres) or thereabouts of land in the townland of Ballagh, Aughrim, Co Wicklow to Mr. Sean O'Neill, Ballymorris, Aughrim, Co Wicklow in accordance with statutory notice circulated.

ITEM NO 5

To consider and adopt the Draft Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan, 2018-2020.

The Elected Members were circulated with the Draft Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan, 2018-2020 on the 29th November, 2017.

Ms. J. Carroll, Senior Executive Officer, Housing and Corporate Estate, gave the following presentation to the Elected Members covering the following areas:-

- Legislative background
- Current national policy
- Current context
- What constitutes homelessness
- Mid East region management group
- Mid East Joint Homelessness Consultative forum
- Funding
- Services in County Wicklow – Prevention, Settlement, Outreach
- Analysis across the region
- Key contributing factors to homelessness in the mid east region
- Priority themes
- Emerging trends
- Data collection, performance indicators
- Consultation undertaken in preparation of the mid east region homelessness action plan

At the conclusion of the presentation and following a brief discussion on the plan it was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake and agreed to adopt the draft Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan, 2018 to 2020.

ITEM NO 6

To consider the Chief Executive's Management Report November, 2017.

Elected Members were circulated with the Chief Executive's Management Report November, 2017 on 29th November, 2017. The Cathaoirleach described the document as current and informative which gives a great insight into what is happening in the County. He suggested going forward it would be good to see monthly and year on year comparisons and trends. Cllr. V. Blake referred to the recent success of Blessington being awarded most Enterprising Town in the 3,000 to 7,000 population category in the Bank of Ireland Enterprising Town awards. He congratulated the Blessington community team and the staff of Wicklow County Council involved. He also congratulated Greystones on its merit award in their population category.

ITEM NO 7

To receive presentation from Ms. Laura English, Disability Federation of Ireland: WLAAG (Wicklow Local Access Action Group).

Mr. M. Nicholson, DOS, introduced Ms. Laura English to the meeting advising that the Council has a contract with the Disability Federation of Ireland, the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland. He advised that Ms. English worked with Wicklow County Council on a two-day week basis for almost a year and has carried out great work in promoting disability. He also advised that the presentation would deal with Notice of motion number 3 as listed on the agenda.

Ms. Laura English, Disability Federation of Ireland gave the following presentation to the Elected Members covering the following areas:-

- Breaking the Mould: Local Authority funded Community Work with People with Disabilities.
- Strategic Context of our Work.
- DIF Community Team
- Congregated Settings
- New Directions
- NDIS
- Transforming Lives (Working Group 3)
- UN CRPD
- Progressing Services (0-18)
- DFI Strategy – priority 1
- Men's Sheds
- Family Resource Centres
- Sports Partnership

- Local Authority
- PPN
- Partnership LCDC SICAP
- ETB's
- Ireland is the last country in Europe to ratify
- Community: Under Resourced
- Promotion and Relationship Building
- Awareness Training
- Increasing understanding of disability across the community – local authority staff, ETB, tutprs, TY students, Gardai etc
- Access to Services
- #Wicklow4all
- SICAP
- Wicklow Local Sports Partnership
- Accessible Tourism
- Public Campaigns – Make Way Day
- Building Alliances

Whats Next?

- Continue to build the capacity of representative groups – ensure they become embedded in local structures and consistently inform the work being done
- Develop strategy which combines UNCRPD, NDIS, LECF and includes consultation with people with disabilities in Wicklow
- Strengthen existing structures and policies to enhance their effectiveness (eg Accessible tourism plan)
- Continue to foster collaborative and interagency working to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Explore possibility of introducing “Gold Star” initiative previously developed in Cashel, Co Tipperary
- Evaluate and continue to promote initiative being taken by Wicklow to respond to changes in policy and imminent ratification of UN CRPD

The elected members collectively thanked Ms. Laura English for the presentation and paid tribute to her and the Disability Federation of Ireland for the valuable work carried out in this area. Following a discussion on the matter the following motion was then proposed by Cllr. V. Blake, seconded by Cllr. T. Fortune and agreed:

“That the Chief Executive Officer will within two months report to the Council, for their consideration, setting out: (1) the current situation in relation to matters which the Council has direct responsibility for, (2) an estimation of the areas and the extent of unmet need relating to same, (3) the areas where engagement of this Council with other public bodies would improved participation for people with disabilities and the names of those public bodies, (4) the measures taken and planned by this Council to ensure the participation and engagement by people with disabilities and their representatives in local decision making structures and mechanisms, with a view to budgeting and planning for 2018 and beyond for the Council to advance implementation of the UN CRPD”.

Time extension: On the proposal of the Cathaoirleach it was agreed to extend the meeting by to 5.30 pm.

ITEM NO 12

To note the Wicklow County Council Annual Report, 2016

L. Gallagher advised that the Wicklow County Council Annual Report, 2016 had been circulated to the elected members in CD format which was noted by the members.

ITEM NO 8

To receive update: County Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy.

Ms. R. Wood, Community Cultural and Social Develop gave a presentation updating the elected members on Themes 1 – 9 of the Age Friendly Strategy, 2017 to 2022 in respect of the Actions contained therein viz:-

Theme 1:	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
Theme 2:	Transportation
Theme 3:	Housing
Theme 4:	Social Participation
Theme 5:	Respect and Social Inclusion
Theme 6:	Civic Participation and Employment
Theme 7:	Communication and information
Theme 8:	Community Support and Health Services
Theme 9:	Safety and Security

Elected members collectively commended the work being carried out by CCSD within the Strategy.

ITEM NO 9

To receive presentation: Wicklow County Council Severe Weather and Emergence Management Winter 2017-2018.

The elected members were circulated with Be Winter Ready Brochures on

1. Flooding Practical Advice for severe weather
2. You Your Farm and the Winter – Practical advice for severe weather
3. Advice for Older People – You your health and the winter

Mr. M. Geaney, DOS, Water and Environmental Services and Mr. A. Dempsey, Chief Fire Officer presented to the members as follows:-

Severe Weather and Emergency Management – Winter 2017/2018

- Available for download at Wicklow.ie
- Distributed through Libraries and Public Participation Groups (PPNs)
- Some Hard Copies available at Public Counters Co Buildings

Flooding

- A Framework for Emergency Management – Multi Agency Protocol – Multi Agency Response to Flood Emergencies 2016. The responses from WCC will be:
 - Assessment
 - Response from Municipal Districts and Housing
 - Fire Services
 - Civil Defence as requested by Wicklow County Council
 - There are separate functions/responses for:-
 - Gardai
 - H.S.E.
 - Irish Coast Guard
 - Defence Forces
 - O.P.W.
 - Irish Water
 - Department of Social Protection
 - Others – e.g. Red Cross, Mountain Rescue, Community Leaders, etc

All responses will be co-ordinated under the Framework for Emergency Management.

Flood Plans

- Flood Plans are completed for all the Municipal Districts
- How will all this work. How will somebody needing help get it ?

Out of Hours

- Wicklow County Council operate an Out of Hours telephone number to enable contact to be made with Wicklow County Council after hours. This service is provided by a Service Provider and will co-ordinate the response needed from WCC.
- 01 2916117 - This number will be should be used for all contact after 5pm and Weekends
- Please do not ring the Civil Defence directly

Sandbags

- Locations will be provided throughout the County where the public can collect sandbags. These locations will be in the Municipal Districts in areas that are prone to flooding. The Council has 7000 sandbags available for it own use as required.

Safety Protocols

- Working in Floods
- Search & Rescue
- Working in snow
- Extreme & Difficult Weather Conditions

Should a severe weather event occur:

- ❖ County Buildings will be opened
- ❖ Local Co-Ordination Centre will be opened
- ❖ Crisis Management Team will meet in County Buildings
- ❖ On-site Co-Ordination Group will assemble on site.
- ❖ Local Co-Ordination Group will meet as necessary in County Buildings

Winter Service Plan 2017 -2018

- Plan operational from 16th October 2017 to 30th April 2018
- Wicklow County Council uses the Road DSS Manager system to assist in predicting appropriate response to weather events involving ice/snow.
- The Road DSS system comprises a software package and weather stations located at various locations along the road network.
- Met Eireann provide forecasts as to likely weather conditions.
- Wicklow County Council Duty Engineers monitor the forecasts provided on the Road DSS system each day for the duration of the winter service period.
- A decision is made by the Duty Engineer as to whether or not to grit based on the forecast provided. Some or all of the following routes are treated according to the forecast weather conditions.

The following hierarchy of treatment routes apply;

- Priority 1 N81
- Priority 2 All other roads shown on the Winter Service Route Map
- Priority 3 Other routes as required and subject to the availability of resources.

Salt

- Salt is provided by TII through a central salt management system. Salt is stored in various depots located around the county.

Salt/grit Stockpiles

- In addition to gritting carried out by Wicklow County Council personnel, salt/grit stockpiles are provided at various locations around the county. These are available for localised treatment of bends, hills etc.

Wicklow County Council is the Local Authority Lead Agency for Severe Weather Events.

Examples of Risks:

- Prolonged severe weather

- High winds with heavy snow
- High impact, sudden onset rain
- Severe storms
- Flooding

Preplanning

Framework for Major Emergency Management Plans

- Major Emergency Plan
- Severe Weather Plan
- Flood Plan

Regular meetings with neighbouring Local Authorities and Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) and other support organisations

National Co-Ordination

- Organisations such as Met Eireann are expanding their services providing Local Authorities and the public with more detailed information.
- This is facilitating a more focussed and timely response from all agencies.
- National Co-ordination is providing important information e.g. ESB, Irish Water, Defence Forces
- Department of Education set the tone and response to Ophelia

Local Co-Ordination

- Over the weekend in advance of Storm Ophelia local authority staff monitored the situation and made preparations including phone calls to the Principal Response Agencies
- Monday 16th October, Local Co-ordination Group met in Wicklow throughout the day planning, preparing, co-operating.
- Key staff were brought in and were available throughout the day.

Local structures:

Severe Weather Assessment Team:

- Monitor weather warnings
- Monitor and assess at district level

Crisis Management Team: Senior staff WCC

Local Co-ordination Group: Local staff, PRAs and others

At the conclusion of the presentation the staff of Wicklow County Council were commended for the communication channels that were in place during Storm Ophelia advising that the feedback received from the general public was very positive in this regard

ITEM NO 10

To receive update: Housing Inspections (Rental).

Mr. J. Lane, DOS Housing and Corporate Estate gave the following update to the Elected Members in response to questions submitted at the previous meeting:-

Introduction and Context

Private rented inspections are undertaken by the Housing inspectorate, amongst other functions and as such we have limited inspection resources.

We prioritise inspections based on

- Houses in RAS
- Houses in HAP

- Complaints either by tenants/other occupants or where units that were being inspected as part of assessment of a housing applicant gave cause for concern.
- In addition with limited inspection/technical resources at times , for limited periods inspection resources may have had to be directed to other services i. e DPGs.

(This prioritisation does not appear to be uncommon – NOAC report 10th October 2016.

Resources have been significantly strengthened in 2017 due to the recruitment of an engineer under HAP.

HAP requires that all units be inspected within 8 months of taking them into the scheme. So for all the units taken into the new schemes since the scheme started in December 2018 we have conformed with the eight month requirement.

Specific questions submitted

How many private houses are registered in Wicklow: Last PRTB database circulated indicated approximately 7500. Noac drew attention to reliability of data indicating that some local authorities have expressed a view to NOAC that not all landlords are fully compliant with the requirement to register their tenancies with the RTB and that the actual number of tenancies is likely to be greater.

Out of that how many inspections in 2017 were

Hap 70; Ras 72; EHOS 189; Private rented 40

HAP & RAS therefore made up a large % of our inspections in 2017 (and previous years)

This again would not appear to be uncommon. NOAC report 10 found that “the bulk of inspections are either reactive or inspections required under the RAS and HAP schemes and would now account for a large proportion of overall inspections.

Does Wicklow have any annual target they try to achieve (If so what % did they hit for 2016 &2017 ?

All HAP and RAS. ; 100% RAS, HAP ongoing, 8 months to inspect, we are within timeframe.

Regarding the others. Due to resources we currently do not have a target figure of the number of inspections in the year. We hope with increased resources to be in a position to set target number of inspections for 2018 and subsequent years.

This will also be led by one of the recommendations of the NOAC report that, based on the generally high non-compliance rate and given the absence of inspection targets in some cases, local authorities should introduce a risk based approval to target a portion of the stock on a proactive and cost effective basis.

How many inspectors do we currently have for Wicklow and how many would we need to meet the demand of inspections? 2 part-time. Sufficient to meet HAP and RAS and small % of private.

How many houses that have been inspected had a follow up inspection if they had failed and if recommendations were not done was action taken? In 2015/2016 &2017 all Ras (renewal after 4 years and new and Hap units (after 8 months)would have been inspected.

In variably we try and work in partnership with the suppliers to maintain tenancies and the availability of the unit to social housing.- RAS: in most cases landlords confirm in writing that works are done, often with photographs .

HAP: only inspecting since August, a small number of follow up inspections

In addition and as detailed previously as part of assessment for housing needs EHOS conducted inspections on properties housing applicants were in private rented accommodation. In addition where we received complaint, we conducted inspections . In those cases we corresponded with landlords informing them of their responsibilities but did not progress to take legal action.

Since Quarter 3 2017 targeted inspections has commenced Q3 of 2017. Notices/ letters being served at present.

How many of the houses inspected passed? Majority of houses had issues, mostly minor and dealt with by correspondence.

How much funding does Wicklow receive from the PRTB and is it all ring fenced for inspections? Payments are capped at €100 per inspection. Follow up inspections which achieve compliance receive an additional payment of €50. Funding is provided in arrears, in one tranche based on statistical return.

At the conclusion of the presentation the DOS responded to the questions raised around the following areas:-

- Reference made to a parliamentary question raised in the Dail in relation to the level of funding from PRTB to Wicklow County Council in each of the years 2010 to 2016 and to date in 2017 which was read to the meeting and that according to the response received from the Department no monies had been paid to Wicklow County Council for 2015 and 2016.
- Concerns regarding the safety of dwellings that have been converted to multiple occupancy units, and who that concern can be reported to.
- Concern that landlords are using the inspection results to end tenancies and commence other tenancies with higher rents.

ITEM NO 11

To receive presentation: Official visit to Hainan International Tourism Island Event – November, 2017.

Ms. Christine Flood, SEO, Enterprise and Corporate Services circulated a report to the elected members in respect of the official visit to Hainan International Tourism Island Event in November, 2017 and played a video highlighting the work undertaken by the Group. The Cathaoirleach spoke about the visit and explained the areas of interest and Ms. C. Flood highlighted the emerging opportunities arising out of the visit being:-

- Tourism contacts and an understanding of the Chinese Tourism Market an opportunity to take advantage of the direct flights to Dublin and to London.
- Film Industry – a wide range of options including co-productions, film and cultural exchanges.
- Education in the areas of English language and tourism, hospitality and event management.
- Food and drink is another area where there is an unfulfilled demand from China.

Next Steps

- To prepare a strategy to identify specific objectives and to set measurable timelines and targets. Immediate plans to include participation in the Light Bridge EU China Tourism project
- The launch of the Mandarin version of the Wicklow Brochure, to coincide with the Chinese New Year in February/March
- An examination of opportunities for the film industry
- Targeting the tourism market based on contacts established.

Cllr. P. Vance advised that the trip was extremely successful in terms of the contacts made at the very highest level and paid tribute to the Cathaoirleach as the leader of the delegation and his representation of County Wicklow. He commended all of the staff on the Wicklow County Council

side and the Chinese community in County Wicklow who had put a tremendous amount of effort into organisation the trip.

Cllr. B. Thornhill made reference to the book *Doing Business in China* and highlighted it as a book worth reading he also suggested that the Council Professor L. Wang from the Confucius Institute of Ireland from UCD to speak to Wicklow County Council.

Suspension of Standing Orders 1. Cllr. G. McLoughlin sought a Suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the proposal by Irish Rail to close the main access station building in Greystones and plans to lease the premises for retail.

During a discussion on the matter the importance of the train station to the residents of North Wicklow and beyond was stressed and the planned access and egress to the station without covering would not be able to facilitate the huge number of commuters who would be left without no waiting room during the winter months. It was also considered that the train station is an iconic building situated in the heart of the town of Greystones and the proposal of Irish Rail is not to be supported. At the conclusion of the discussion the elected members asked that the Council write to Irish Rail to advise of the members views and concerns in this matter to ask that the proposal not go ahead. It was also agreed to notify the 5 TDs of County Wicklow in this matter and to land their support to the members.

Suspension of Standing Orders 2. Cllr. J. Behan sought a Suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the contents of an email he and other elected members had received in relation to the non payment of minor works grant to schools throughout the county which is causing enormous financial stress for a number of small schools in particular. Following a discussion on the matter it was agreed that The Council would write to the Minister for Education and Skills and request that the minor works grants be paid without delay.

The Cathaoirleach wished the elected members and staff of Wicklow County Council a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

**CLLR. EDWARD TIMMINS
CATHOIRLEACH
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

Date _____