

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT

WICKLOW COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW TOWN ON

MONDAY, 29th APRIL 2019 AT 2:00 P.M.

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NON-VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD AT WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, APRIL 29TH 2019:

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, can I have your attention please. Certainly on behalf of all of the members I would like to welcome everyone here to the chamber today. Particularly the climate change people and also the relations of the members that are retiring, I think, they all arrived today to make sure we are going to do this and don't change our mind. Anyway, the first item on the agenda is votes of sympathy. In regard to, I propose a vote of sympathy for Triona Irving, who is a member of the Municipal authorities in Bray on the death of her brother last week. Sorry, Councillor Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: The Kinsella family, on the death of her mother, Eileen Kinsella.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: On the death of Peter Byrne, who died in a tragic accident last week.

>>: I like to propose a vote of vote for a local man, I would also like to express my condolences for the deaths and slaughter in Sri Lanka, where two Catholic churches were blown out and one Protestant church blown out with more than 200 deaths.

CLLR RUTTLE: I would like to propose a vote of sympathy to the sister-in-law of my predecessor, Jimmy Miley.

ADMINISTRATOR: For Violet Williams, she was a member of Wicklow County Tourism for a long number of years. Our former colleague, Sean Byrne, a retired plumber who served in the Arklow office. Book of Condolences on the death of

Lyra McKee and the Sri Lanka attacks have also been opened and are online.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor BEHAN.

CLLR BEHAN: Just to propose a sympathy to John O'Brien who was a guitarist in Bagatelle originally from Bray. So Bagatelle was a group that were very much associated with Bray and south county Dublin.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: I want to propose a vote of sympathy to the family of Lyra McKee.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think we stand, peace. Sorry, Miriam Murphy, did you want to come in then?

CLLR MURPHY: I wanted to acknowledge the Special Olympics, I was represented and I think they did astonishing work and I think they should be acknowledged and I know I spoke to you, but I just wanted to highlight it that the medals they brought home to Wicklow was way beyond expectation and their ability, not their disability needs to be acknowledged.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think there is a recommendation from the protocol committee that that will be acknowledged by the next Council. In regard to the agenda could I have confirmed the ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council on the 1st of April proposed and seconded.

>>: Proposed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: And Nicola Lawless and seconded. Now, I am going to do the disposals first and if there is agreement, that because of the considerable amount of people here, the climate change, which the presentation on climate change which is number 13 on the agenda, with people's permission here I intend to move that up after we do the disposals here and to take that with the Notice of Motion from the

Greystones Municipal District as well. I am going to take those together if there is agreement. I don't want to have a lot of people around for a long time. If that is agreed? Agreed. Okay, I will do the disposals first and item number 2.

ADMINISTRATOR: So to consider the 5 plots of land and land situated to west side of Mill Road, can I have a proposer?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I want to propose the disposal of the fee simple and it will result in a great opportunity in Arklow so it gives me great pleasure to propose it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder for that? Is that agreed? Agreed, okay. Item number 3.

ADMINISTRATOR: So consider disposal of portion of land in 0047 hectares comprised in folios WW12328 and WW2803F and WW4484 to Rathnew to Rathnew, First Floor Block 1, as per notice previously circulated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell.

CLLR SNELL: I would like to propose this. It's going to deliver 88 family homes through an approved housing body for the people on the housing list.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Could I have a seconder for that. Secunder, Councillor.

ADMINISTRATOR: So consider disposal of part of the interest on WW5279BF to Rossa Murray and Deirdre Murray as per notice previously circulated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Both 4 and 5 are together. This was a typo in the last, where we approved it and we got the numbers mixed up, so it's just to regularise it from the legal perspective. I want to propose this, will I have a seconder?

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Seconded Councillor O'Brien. Number 5 as well.

ADMINISTRATOR: Proposed by councillor Vance agreed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: 6.

ADMINISTRATOR: So consider the disposal of properties known as 41 Seafield to Ms Karen Murphy, the legal notice.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Proposed, seconded John Snell. That agreed again. Grand, okay. We are on to item number 13. We received a presentation on the draft climate adaptation. We are also taking a proposal on the Municipal district in Greystones as well. Director of planning, Sean Quirke.

SEAN QUIRKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and members, happy to introduce the item on the Climate Adaptation Strategy, which appropriately has been moved up the agenda and it's moved up the agenda everywhere nationally and internationally and that has to be a good thing for us all. Our Climate Adaptation Strategy has been prepared in conjunction with the climate adaptation regional office, the CARO. There are 17 local authorities working with the CARO to produce their own Climate Adaptation Strategies. There are commonalities between, obviously between the local authorities, because we won't solve the crisis on our own, it has to be co-ordinated and a national effort. So there are particular items which are obviously local to Wicklow and Jim Callery, who will introduce the strategy to you will go through these. It's not just a strategy, there are action, included in it as well, there are 61 actions for Wicklow County Council to address, some of those are budgeted, some are not budgeted. So it will be a challenge for us from a financial point of view also. This strategy has been considered already by the SPC and, who recommended that it be brought forward to the full council for placing

on public display and for submissions from the public, so that, we hope to do that in the next week or so, subject to your approval and we must have the Climate Adaptation Strategy adopted by the 30th of September. So the timeframe has been quite tight for us. So it will be the new council that will formally adopt the strategy, but hopefully, subject to your approval today it will be this council that resolves to put it on public display. So I will ask Jim to maybe go through the strategy now, thank, Jim.

JIM CALLERY: Okay, thank you for having me here today to do the presentation on the Climate Adaptation Strategy. It is about how we are going to adapt our process, policies and procedures here in Wicklow County Council to protect ourselves from some of the harm and some of the risk we know is coming down our way with climate change. How do we plan our activities to make sure that we are more resilient? That is the whole focus of this strategy and we are how we are going to build stronger more resilient county that can deal with the challenge that is coming our way.

So, adaptation, it is about how we are adapting, how we avoid the harm and exploit as well, potential opportunities that may come from climate change. There is often a lot of focus on what the negative impacts are and we do know there is more likely to be more negative impact from climate change than any positive. There may be some positive benefits and opportunities that we can work as well. So the plan can look at both and identify actions that can help us to see the harm and the opportunities coming our way in the coming decades.

Just to start off with, what is climate adaptation? When it comes to climate action we talk about adapting to climate change, but also mitigating or preventing climate change, the two distinct areas that we need to focus on and need to work on. So the mitigation is about how we prevent climate change, how we reduce our carbon emissions, how we reduce our consumption and reduce the level of change incurring in our climate. Adaptation is about how we learn to live with what is coming our way. So we are dividing it into two distinct areas, mitigation and adaptation and the focus of this strategy is very much on adaptation.

There are certain measures which will help us in both ways which can both mitigate and help us adapt, so for example, something like tree planting can be used to attenuate the risk of flood and be absorbing the carbon emissions so. There is some crossover in terms of climate action and this strategy will be largely focussed on adaptation.

So, just to give some examples, of the two types of measures. An example mitigation would be to install solar panels to generate renewable electricity and reduce carbon emissions and that is a project that has been considered as you will be aware, by Wicklow County Council, to install photovoltaic panels in the car park to allow us to reduce our energy consumption in the county buildings. An example of adaptation is looking forward to projections and change in our climate. We may be able to reduce the frequency of gritting as the temperatures increase and we get warmer temperatures. We know with climate change it does bring risk, one is more intense weather events we need to be planning for events like Storm Emma which occurred last year in March 2018, which was quite a challenge for

all of the services of Wicklow County Council and for every community across the county.

So, we need to prepare for events like that and that is what the adaptation is about, how we change our practices to make sure that we are reducing the risk and harms going forward. Just before we get into the further adaptation strategy, I just want to show you a little diagram, a map of the globe, it's looking at temperatures between 1880 and 2017 and it shows how our temperature has been changing over time, so we are going to run this, I hope it will work for me, and it will show how temperatures have changed over time, deviating from the mean temperatures and you see before it gets started there, there is a range of colours, but it's mostly light blue and light yellow and that means that there will be very little deviation from the median temperature back in 1880. You will see there is a blue patch up the top, so that is a cold spell that occurred that year. There is a red and bright orange patch in west Africa, over towards Senegal, they had a particularly hot year back in 1880 and that is something that occurs naturally. We always get natural variation in our climate. We are always going to see that, but what we are interested in here is the human induced change in climate that is happening. I hope this, when we play it will demonstrate that our planet is changing and the planet is heating up over time.

So, it runs between 1880 and 2017 and watch how the colour changes away from the light blues and light yellows in stronger colours showing clearer, stronger deviation away from the mean temperatures and in particular pay attention to what is happening in the northern latitudes up near the North Pole. You should see interesting developments there.

So you can see temperatures are changing over time, not much variation to start off with. Has that stopped or frozen? I think it's freezing up on me here. That is not going to work. What it would have shown if I had been able to get it work is that you would have seen stronger red colours appearing the closer we got to 2017, the more the temperature was deviating away from the norm and particularly it was deviated in a very positive way with higher temperatures occurring, particularly in the northern latitudes over the poles, we saw very strong warming trends occurring over the last century.

With relation to Ireland what has been happening with our climate, we all know we have a climate and one year we might get a summer like last year and another year a wash out. That is part of the normal variation, but we do have a variable climate in Ireland, but there have been trends observed in changing climate and when we talk about changing climate we are talking about what is happening over decades which don't compare one year to the last year, we don't say this year was a warm year so that proves that climate change is happening. We are looking at the long-term trends over decades to see how things are changing and what has been observed looking at the climate data for Ireland over the last four decades, temperature are rising, there is no doubt about that, they are rising across all seasons, the timing and spatial distribution of precipitation, which is rain, sleet and snow is also changing, we have observed that sea levels are rising and we have noticed that the frequency and the intensity, so intensity of weather events are changing. What it means by intensity is we are having stronger, we are having stronger storms and stronger rainfall events, so that is the

intensity changing over time.

Looking forward, between now and 2050 based on what we had observed and the climactic models that are used to look at how climate change will affect us so it's a combination of what the trends that are already in situ are happening and what the models are telling us. We are expect doing see mean temperatures increase between 1 and 1.6 degrees Celsius. In the east of the country will see the largest increase, 1.5 is the target, we want to keep climate change below 1.5 so already the models and trends are telling us we will hit 1.6 degrees change in climate. We are seeing particular warming in the extreme. So what that means is in winter and in summer that is where we are seeing the strongest change in temperatures occurring, so some are daytime temperatures and we are expected to see an increase in average summer daytime temperature of 2.6 degrees. Lower winter night-time temperatures we are expected to see an increase of 3 degrees Celsius, so frost-free days are likely to increase and the frequency of days in which we will have icy weather will decrease significantly, up to 75% reduction in the amount of icy days and 50% reduction in frosty days going forward.

We are also expecting to see an increased frequency of heat waves. In terms of precipitation and maybe rainfall, we are expecting to see lower rainfall in the spring/summer months, going forward to 2050, but linked to that we are expecting to see the number of extended dry periods extending, so five consecutive days of no rainfall, unusual enough in Ireland in general, but we are expecting to see increased dry spells occurring, that is of significance here in the east, with relation to water supply. We are also expecting to see the frequency of heavy precipitation

events increasing during winter.

So that brings with it the risk of flooding, how do we deal with that heavier rainfall that we are seeing going forward and we are also expecting that this change, both in the summer months and the winter months, in precipitation will have an effect on our rivers, on the hydrology. So in terms of hydrology, we are expecting to see flow in our rivers decrease in the summer months but during the winter months we are expecting to see increased flow in our rivers and that will bring with it the risk of increased river flooding in the winter. We are also expecting that fresh water temperatures and soil temperatures, their increases will match what is happening with the air temperatures. We are expecting to see an increased frequency of extreme rainfall events in winter and an increased frequency of extreme wind storms in the winter months.

Overall the frequency of storms annually will decrease, but where the storms happening they will be more intense. It is the more intense events that cause the damage and harm so that is what we need to keep an eye on, it's not the number of storms we are getting, it's how intense and strong that they are. In terms of chronology, which means plant growth, we are expecting a longer growing season, which in many ways will be a positive benefit for agriculture in the county. Spring is occurring earlier in the year and that is likely to continue and autumn arriving later. That can have positives for agriculture, but it's also having an impact on biodiversity and many species are getting out of sync with the other species they have relationships, that is basically what they are eating so. If a bird is nesting at a certain time of the year and it's food supply isn't ready

that can have a significant impact on the chicks in the nest. So changing in the season will have an impact on biodiversity as well. Why do we need to develop this strategy now? First of all under the climate change low carbon development act, all local authorities and a variety of sectors are required to produce climate change action plans going forward.

As Sean mentioned, we are in a region which has 17 local authorities working together to develop our strategy, there is 30 strategies at the same stage as ourselves around the country, being developed and processed at the moment. The Dublin local authorities have a slightly late, their climate action strategies went out about a month ago, but most of the local authorities are at the same stage as ourselves, putting together their climate strategies now and also very importantly the sectoral strategies are also being developed and present.

That is something that will influence our work, because many of the sectoral reports will cross relate with our strategies and we will need to work together, so we will need to work together with partners like the OPW, the National Parks and wildlife Service, Irish Rail, the ESB and link up our strategies and make sure that we are all working together to adapt to climate change. So the purpose of the strategy is to ensure that we have an understanding first of all of what the risks are, where are we vulnerable to climate change, how is it going to have an impact on us and then once we know how it's impacting on us we can start to develop actions that will help us to become more resilient and to plan and to take a proactive role in changing our policies and procedures to adapt to these

potential risks or vulnerabilities.

So, essentially we are going to be trying to ensure that climate adaptation comes in mainstream into all of our activities across the organisation and is fully integrated in all of our operations and functions across every service in Wicklow County Council because climate change is something that is going to impact on all of our services. Some services will be more impacted than others but every service will be impacted in some way or another. The strategy has six chapters, the first one is an introduction and background to climate action and climate adaptation. This second chapter looked a bit closer in the region, the 17 local authorities, what are the commonalities in terms of the challenges we face across this region and also it's a bit more local, what are the things we need to take account of here in county Wicklow, what trends in weather at a very local level will impact on us and our weather will be very distinct here to other counties, we have the uplands which has an impact on our weather and even in the west and east we see a difference in the weather, so we need with climate action to need to get down to that local level and understand what is happening in our weather here at local level.

Chapter 3 looks at the baseline assessment of our climate, so we have tried to identify where we are vulnerable and how we identify where we are vulnerable is we look at some of the past weather events that have had an impact on our service. Try to assess how they have impacted our services and what does that tell us going forward in terms of how it's going to impact on our service, when we have similar weather events and possibly more severe weather events. So

we are learning from what has happened in the past with relation to that, how we have impacted us and what we have to do to react to them. This leads on to identifying our climate risks going forward, so we are looking at the projected changes in climate out to 2050 and we are looking at our vulnerabilities, with relation to different types of weather scenarios and how they are likely to change over the next few decades and whether the risk is going to get stronger, or not and adapt accordingly.

Chapter 5, as mentioned we are developing a range of 61 actions that have been identified that we can take to make our operations and governance stronger and more able to adapt to the changes, so chapter 5 outlines what those actions will be and then chapter 6 looks at how we implement the plan, no time in having this strategy written, we are looking at how we are going to put it into action, how we are going to monitor progress and evaluate how we are performing with relation to the strategy going forward. So up here I have put up an example of one of the baseline assessments, so we are looking at heat waves and droughts, so we are looking at the type of weather we would have expected on that.

what has happened in the past and how we have responded? So the first one up there under heat waves, more call outs for emergency services and what the exposure to sensitivity was, we had an increase in fires last year in the heat wave, 2018. A bit more on this one later, but it was affecting the upland areas of gorse, forest and bog and how we responded was to call out the emergency services. We tried to give this a risk score in terms of the impact it's had on our services. With five being as a score being

catastrophic, you will be looking at total failure in services, you will be looking at permanent environmental damage, you would be looking at serious loss of life and multiple injuries. Down to level 3 you are down to moderate risk, you are looking at temporary impact on the environment, you are looking at a temporary impact on our service delivery, you are looking at some cost involved in tackling that, you are looking at a slight risk of injury involved and down to 1 where there is almost no risk involved, so we are scoring the impacts, what is the level of impact, so this was given a score of 3, it was a moderate risk and it did some very significant damage to some habitats which would take a year or two for those habitats to recover. We are looking at who is involved, who is working with us, who are our partners in tackling issues like that.

So, for this one with the fires, the National Parks and wildlife Service would be an important part, An Coillte, DART, with the closure of the railway and the Gardaí. So we are trying to identify who are the key partners in relation to the impacts. So there is a full suite of impacts that were observed during the heat wave last summer and we are trying to document those impacts and learn from what happened and what impact it had on our services last year. We do that for all of the different weather events and we do it for rainfall, when we have significant rainfall causing flood, what impact that had on our services, storms, rainfall and snowfall and we are learning from what happened during the past.

Some of the significant weather events we would all be aware of have happened in the year in the county and the

damage that was associated with them. We had Hurricane Charley, there was a lot of infrastructural damage county wide and there was coastal erosion that occurred as a result of that event. Storm Barney in 2015 caused widespread power-loss in the county. It damaged the roof in County Wicklow and the Rathnew GAA. Storm Ophelia, October 2017, did significant damage, coastal erosion in the Borough and there was a high point of damage to the Wexford-Dublin rail line with the erosion coming close to the line in that instance. Storm Emma last year caused major disruption to businesses, we had loss of water supply in some cases, the emergency services had difficulty getting out and the civil defence had to be called in to help people get to medical services and there were power cuts county-wide.

The heat wave last summer, we are talking high temperature, the heat wave and drought that resulted, we had a hosepipe ban from July-September and we had a significant number of fires throughout the county. Just looking in a bit more detail at some of these, we are trying to get some of the costs and the information back on the cost, that is important, we need to think about how much these weather events are costing us and how much they are likely to impact on our services going forward. The first figure I have up there is it's UK and Ireland, so it's giving a broader picture for the winter storms of 2015 to 2016. We had Barney which everyone is familiar with, cost 198 million, Desmond which came next a few weeks later, 907 million. Eva which came after Christmas, December 2015, this surprised me when I was looking at the data. 2.2 billion.

That was what the big costs were in the UK and Ireland. I think Barney did more damage in county Wicklow, but across Britain and Ireland it was Eva who did the damage. That was due to the land was saturated at that point with water and it couldn't absorb any more rainfall and Eva brought significant rainfall and there was nowhere for it to go. It caused huge flooding, I am sure you will remember the flooding in the Shannon region and parts of England. Then we have Frank finishing up at the end of December, causing 310 million worth of damage. You can see they are not small sums. Closer to home here in Wicklow what were these storms doing to us in Wicklow? Well, the Wicklow swimming pool roof which came off cost 190,000. The damage done to roads, drains and culverts, was estimated to cost €1.3 million, housing reported €38,000 worth of damage, the fire crews spend 24,000 dealing with storm-related issues and down to something as small as the Wicklow Library which only cost €1,000, but lots of small events like that, and the impact it's having on services at local level.

So those storms had a significant affect here in Wicklow. There was also damage done to the weir in Ashford and coastal erosion in the Brittas Bay. Storm Emma, last year, Wicklow County Council had a certified expenditure of €677,830. It's estimated that the cost of repairs to roads was just under 6 million and this was particularly in the west of the county and the south of a county. A lot of the roads were badly damaged during the snow. Fire services dealt with 21 incidents during those few days, there were several homes flooded in Wicklow town and also erosion occurring on the coast, you can see the building has been, the erosion has taken away a lot of the foundations of it and any of you who live on the coast will probably be aware

last year with Storm Emma, the amount of plastic that washed up on our beaches, as a result of Storm Emma, there was even debris from a marina, and there was a lot of effort put in place, with all of that washed up on our shores.

There was also extra resource for dealing with the homeless, providing them with the night-time shelter, but you also have to consider daytime shelter for the homeless. Last year we all enjoyed the good weather, but it did have a significant impact on our services, particularly the fire services and I have put up some data there, which shows call outs and their cost from last year. April was a pretty typical month last year, they had 90 call outs for fires during the month of April and that was fairly typical, that cost about 12,500. We expect to see some fires in the spring months, agricultural land has been cleared of gorse, and we expect to get calls, we don't expect to get it in summer months, but what we are seeing is the number of fires increasing into the summer months. May we had more than twice than was expected and June was totally unprecedented, there were 132 call outs in the month of June last summer. That cost 84,000.

It's estimated that 170,000 extra was spent dealing with those fires last summer. There was one school evacuated and several homes, so communities were at risk. On a more positive note a lot of our tourist venues were much busier during the summer month last summer, that did create challenges and one of them was dealing with the litter left on those beaches. You can see the pictures of the litter piled up, that was one day clean-up of what was left

behind on Brittas Bay and there were issues with parking in some of the more popular sites throughout the county. So after we have looked at the impact of past weather events we try to... following on, looking at the weather events we try to look at the future going out to 2050 whether those risks are going to increase, which in many cases they are and how much and we are using a system of marking to try and identify which ones were most vulnerable to, or likely to have most impact, so the higher the score moving from yellow through to orange into red and where we see arrows coming in in the red area it's one that we need to be particularly concerned, so we are concerned with relation to damage, to habitats by fires going forward into 2015. So we are using that data to predict where do we need to develop our actions going forward and we are developing our actions under different themes, we are looking at our governance and business operation.

The infrastructure that Wicklow County Council is responsible for providing and maintaining, we are looking at land use and planning development, we are looking at the drainage and flood management, we are looking at natural resources throughout the county and how we are protecting those and we are looking at our communities, how they are protecting the wellbeing of our communities going forward. Then we are developing actions based on that, across these different themes and how we are going to respond and ensure that we deliver resilient services going forward. So we are looking at things like setting up a climate action Steering Group, we are looking at incorporating climate action into the county development plan and into the corporate development plan, we are looking at ensuring

that climate action is something that will be discussed at management team meetings going forward. I am just going to try and rush through this, I know I have taken more time than planned. We are looking at actions across a range of different sectors. Where we are in the process at the moment, we have been working for the last few months on developing the strategy and I said at the start, we have already presented it to the SPC and we are now presenting it to yourselves for consideration, we are hoping to put the plan out to public consultation during May and we hope to have the plan ready to come back to the council for approval in September, so the schedule is quite tight. We need to have the plan strategy adopted for September, but that is where we are in the timeline.

Just before I finish up, one thing that did come in there towards the end of last week, there are 30 local authorities also at the same place as ourselves getting their strategies finalised and getting them ready for public consultation and we have been working with those local authorities, getting feedback from them on where their plans are, one thing that is coming up in many of the plans is many of them are looking at mitigation than was originally planned.

The strategy is supposed to be about adaptation, that is the statutory requirement and it is important to separate those two areas and have a distinct focus on that adaptation, but good practice seems to include some information on mitigation, so we are looking at putting something in referring a little bit more to mitigation in the final document than is in the draft that is before you

and how we hope to do this is put some information in the appendix, about the measures we are undertaking in Wicklow County Council already on mitigation, so how we are looking at energy and performance and we will add that into the document we are already working on. Okay, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Jim, thank you very much for the, you can feel the enthusiasm for this particular subject. Thank you very much for that. Now, there is a host of people who want to come in. I will ask for brief comments and no repetition. So Councillor Fortune is the first one in.

CLLR FORTUNE: Will I deal with the Notice of Motion?

CATHAOIRLEACH: You can deal with it, if you want to propose that, fine.

CLLR FORTUNE: First of all, can I say thanks to Jim and Sean for the presentation and Jim, in his usual style, very detailed, I would have to say also that generally speaking we have a very good environmental department I think here in Wicklow County Council, so and Jim kind of, I suppose reflects what that actually is, it was interesting that, as you got into your presentation that it was like, when you talk about the storms it was like a contrary family, if you go over the period with it.

Obviously the implications facing us and our cost and obviously the objectives and the actions you are talking about will be interesting when you start to roll out those, obviously the county development plan and the corporate plan are going to play a serious role in that. Just before the meeting we were outside talking to the group, I must say the turnout in the chamber today is probably the biggest we have in a number of years, I think the last time we had a crowd like this in the chamber we were talking

about illegal dump, if I remember correctly. But we were talking outside to some of the people and the kids were asking questions. One of the questions I was asked was why has it taken us so long to act on this? You get a question like that you say what do I say to that? It's difficult to give an answer. The answer I made to the chap was that yeah, it's taken a long time, but the initiative has been taken by the, primarily by the school children and the action they took, I think that has provoked and poked everyone in the right direction.

As I was saying, that you were going to do the presentation here this afternoon that was very important and that what should happen, resulting from this is that the presentation, which is 101 pages long, the draft policy should go out then to the groups and to the school children and they can look at that and submit then what they think about it and what they can add to it and everything else and dialogue with the local authority on it that is all very positive. The Notice of Motion we put forward was in support of all of that in support of that. Basically we are saying that Wicklow County Council acknowledge and support the action by the school children in Bray, Arklow, Dublin and around the country, Wicklow County Council have listened to them and demand that all act to ensure that young people have a liveable future in Wicklow and in Ireland on the planet in general. Wicklow County Council agree with the evidence of emergency is overwhelming from the various bodies that are talking about that to us that Wicklow County Council agree that the world's most liveable community must step up and show visible leadership. Wicklow has done that.

we have declared a climate emergency for Wicklow, publish a climate action plan, declare a biodiversity action plan for Wicklow, update and publish a biodiversity action plan and report regularly on progress and action plans and to be fair, Jim, what you have outlined to us today is indicating that is the way we are going to go, but I think with everyone's involvement to make sure it happens and it doesn't just become a plan that sits on a shelf that it is real and live and happens. So I suppose the momentum has started so I am proposing that on behalf of the district and I am sure the others may talk on it, if I may.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Please, I have given you a bit of latitude now, please.

CLLR FORTUNE: It's unusual for me to talk so long.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It's the last day, don't take advantage.

CLLR FORTUNE: I would never do that to you, chairman. We have two students in the chamber today Shona Edge and Molly Gordon, they are two climate change activists from Greystones. They and the students in Templecarrig have been doing tremendous work, the reason I wanted to highlight is that Molly and Shona have recently been in making presentations to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on climate action. So I invited them here today to see how we behave in the chamber and what happens at a meeting. But.

CATHAOIRLEACH: A pity we couldn't take make it more exciting.

CLLR FORTUNE: Maybe we will before the meeting is over. The other thing was for them to listen to the plan that Sean and Jim were putting before us today so they've can listen to us at first hand and take it away and go through it with the rest of the students and tell us what they like and don't like. Just two quick quotes chairman, and then I will

wrap up. Basically they are delighted to be here and Shona was commenting with their close relationships, the local authorities can play a key role in addressing climate change, they can react faster than many global agencies. Molly's view is that the council and local authorities have a critical role to play in using their local knowledge of the environment and working in partnership to make the community a safer place to come. With that, two 17-year-old girls with that kind of initiative and push is very good. I would like to finish with giving the girls a round of applause for the achievement in the Oireachtas talking about that. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Well done, girls. Councillor Matthews, I know you are going to be brief.

CLLR MATTHEWS: I don't know where to start.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Finish as quickly as we can. I am delighted to see a document like this, it's the reason I got involved in local government was to have proper environmental protection and to see a document coming on the agenda means it wasn't 20 years wasted on my behalf. I want to thank the chief for putting it on. To give people hope, you might remember in the 80s we talked about a hole in the ozone layer and we took it on and we defeated it and that can be done with climate change as well, but we have been talking about it for 20 and 30 years with no action whatsoever and it started off as the greenhouse effect and people thought we were the loony green tree-huggers and then it went to global warming and people thought great, we need it to be warmer, but now we are in climate breakdown and emergency and I hope this isn't more words, that it needs to be followed by actions. I read this strategy document and it's 101 pages and the first 92 pages describes what is climate

change and why and how it happened what is likely to happen and that is great for background reading but there is ten pages left in the document that talks about strategy. A lot of that isn't funded and a lot of it is aspirational, so while it gives me hope we have now produced a document like this, I am very disappointed that we don't see actual actions included in this. I appreciate it's a strategy document, we have loads of strategy documents.

This is really an emergency, it doesn't matter what background you are from, it doesn't matter where you live, it doesn't matter your financial status or what political party you are part of, climate change is the most serious thing that is going to affect us, it's the most serious issue we discuss in this chamber and people have to realise that. It does give me a boost of confidence to see so many people coming out and especially young people, looking and demanding action on climate change. Now, what I want to ask is that support will remain there, when we start to implement policies to address climate change, because I have suggested policy changes here over the last five years, chairman and most of them were rejected because they were unpopular, because they were long-term beneficial, but short-term pain and people are going to have to realise that is going to come, if we are serious about taking on climate change that is going to have to happen and I ask the people to stay with us when we start to introduce those policies that are required and I ask every councillor of the new Council as well to be strong on this and take it on, seriously, that this is the most serious issue that is going to affect us. We have had 30 years of inaction and that is why we are facing ten years of serious action is

going to have to be taken if we are to take it on. The opening line in the Chief Executive's forward says, "*this is a long battle.*" It's not a long battle, it's a very short battle, we only have a short amount of time, this isn't long-term. We have to take action on this now. I want at the thank the people who came down today and forcing councillors and politicians to take action, because we are the ones that set the policy and I ask for their ongoing support in this. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: I know you said not to repeat it, but I am going to get my last say here because I have been very quiet for five years. I would like to thank Jim and Sean as well, you know, we are listening here for many years and now it's here the discussion, at least, in putting the fractions of the action the budget and the education of the staff at all levels. And will it be a large cost, how many years will it take to even see a gleam of hope, but I will take the heat waves, what I am wondering is that whoever is lucky to sit here in the next five years that are formally put together from the Municipal District Members to network, so important. As the other previous speakers said, I suppose for the last 10 or 15 years we were worried about the climate change, it's here now and now it's probably a bit late, but at least we can go forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It's not too late.

CLLR MURPHY: Also that Jim has highlighted the national networks which I have never thought of before, how important it is, their big issues as well, we have here in the chamber behind us, the next generation and these are the future, these are the people that is going to be affected and on the last clip you showed, Jim, there was

six pointers, the last one being the community and wellbeing. I would put that up there as number one because it's the whole link, so I think that, number six should be number one and thank you very much for the people that has brought this here today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Miriam. Councillor Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you for this and in the meantime it will go out for public display and I will welcome submissions from the public, I am sure there be plenty. Just as a matter of interest, watching in Reeling in the Years during the week there was a feature on this topic and it explained the urgency we are facing with global warming. That was in 2006 and I know people like David Attenborough have been talking about this for 30 years now, but globally we face, Governments face challenges, big businesses face challenge in reducing their carbon footprint, but shamefully Ireland we haven't been meeting our targets and I think we are bottom of the pile in EU terms, but look on a more positive note we had the Government all party committee report published recently and we are hoping that this will provide a road map for a more sustainable future.

We know that our dependence on fossil fuel and other such products has to change and we have to look at alternatives such as wind, solar, biofuels as alternatives. Big business has a role, but we all have a responsibility in our own personal habits and our food consumption and the way we recycle and reduce our waste, our choices in transport, insulation of our homes, the way we use the internet, all of these, it all has a combined positive effect if we react in the right manner. Can I finish on a positive note? I want to complement the staff, Jim mentioned the weather

events we have faced in the last number of year, we want to complement the fire service, the civil defence and the outdoor staff for their responses to those events, they were exemplary and I want to thank them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Walsh, will you second what Councillor Fortune has said?

CLLR WALSH: I would certainly do that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You would second that. Councillor Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you very much, chair. Thank you very much, chair and thank you to Jim for the presentation. I would also like to say thank you to everyone in the gallery for coming down today and in particular for the students and the youth. I think it's safe to say you have spoken loud and clear and we are listening. It is now up to us to be the leadership that you are looking for, because this isn't an issue that is just popped up, it has been ongoing for a long, long number of years and we have not been listening. So now, that, we do have to change how we deal with this and actually start being proactive and getting things done. There is a lot of headlines over the years and even recently, 60% species loss, all of these headlines are coming at us and I think sometimes we can be immune to them. They seem a bit abstract and they are happening somewhere else, but each and every one of us around this chamber will remember years ago you would go out and see the curlew, the lapwing, there was flies over your windscreen, there was sticky things hacking out of the ceiling in every country and we don't have that anymore. While some people might be waiting for some big chaotic event to happen, it's not going to happen, it is going to be slow and it is happening now.

So, we need to start acting and we need to be very decisive. I spoke to Sean and Ben outside, two students I think from the Gaelscoil, one of them said to me why can't you just act, why is it taking so long? What is the problem, why can't you just do it? And they are right, we need to be a bit blacker and whiter with this issue and stop looking at the nuances. Unless we get this right we are going to fundamentally undermine every single ecological and biological structure in our society and so we need to deal with it, it's not something we can put on the long finger. I am really pleased to see the Climate Change Adaptation Plan and I think we need to look at it, but also biodiversity, they are linked we will not be able to look at climate change unless we look at our natural assets and ensure that the biodiversity loss we are seeing across the country is stopped. That will mean us, as a County Council, I believe, getting a lot more active in ensuring that our natural assets are being protected. I think we are going to have to look and appreciate some areas for just being there, not put any additional pressure on them and not looking to put recreation or tourism or business interest ahead of the value that that natural area has in its own right. I think that might be a challenge to us, actually, but it is something that we are going to have to look at. Restoring our environment is critical to addressing this climate change and that means looking at our forests, wetlands, peat bogs, all of that has to be part of the plan. What I found very welcoming in the document was the language that was used in the foreword, because you spoke about involving and listening to the youth of Wicklow, which I think is really important, because it's not our future that we are looking at, it's

their future and also the fact that you spoke about Wicklow County Council taking a lead on this. That is really important and it's important that we are strong. There is a few areas I think within the document that we need to look at, so including biodiversity, looking at the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Climate Action, I do believe we need to look at that and incorporate that into the plan. We made targets, there needs to be funding and grants associated with this, essentially every decision we make as a County Council should be guided and should take into consideration the environmental climate change and biodiversity impacts of that decision. I would like to see and I think, we have a biodiversity plan, but it was incorporated into the heritage plan, that needs to.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, finish up shortly.

CLLR WHITMORE: We need a climate change officer to deal with this and I would propose that any implementation committee, whether it's the SPG that is looking at it, that we would have a representative from Comhairle na nÓg on that, because this is very important to the students and to the youth, those are the ones who have been part of this and I think they need to be part of the monitoring and implementation of the strategy. Thank you very much.

APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Grainne McLoughlin.

CLLR MCLOUGHLIN: I will only be a few minutes. The bit that was most important was the bit we couldn't see in the video, to bring to life how bad things are, we all know about the storms and we do appreciate the costs involved, but I think when it's in colour, and it's getting redder that is when we really have to be concerned. There is one part in the objectives and listening to Stephen over there

saying 99% of it is information and 10% is implementation, so we do need to learn about this and I think we have learnt at this stage that it's this 10% that should go into a 90% document and the 10% is because we all know about it. The one part in the objective to ensure that the climate adaptation is mainstreamed into all activities and operations of the local authority and it then goes on with various actions, but the one action I think needs to be done immediately is appoint a climate action officer who has responsibility for climate related activity in the county and a minister for that area. That person has not been budgeted and it's not needed in the short-term, medium or long-term, it's needed now. APPLAUSE So what I am suggesting today is that Wicklow County Council would commit to putting the money in for that member of staff, who would be on the senior management team, he or she would also have an evaluating committee, so I don't like the word short, medium or long, I have been here for nine years and that is only short-term, so what does medium or long-term mean? We need to have exact timeframes, when things are going to be done, how they are going to be done and who that is going to do that. We have done it with the LEPC plan, for the Local Economic Community Plan and I think it should be an action for today that we are going to appoint someone, he is going to have a team, every single department within Wicklow County Council liaises with that and can do nothing without the approval of that team and also on the monthly CE's report an action comes from that which explains exactly what is going on. So, we have seen over the years lots of things like this and they go up on shelves and I really don't believe Frank and whoever is chair and whoever is going to be here will do that. However

it has to be much more determined than other plans and Jim, I know you will be part of that team and I know that you are doing a great job, but you need more support to stop the amount of money that has to be spent and to stop the things that have happened in the past, you need a huge support service behind you and I wish I was going to be here to be giving it to you, but I have no doubt the people around here and the people in the gallery are going to give you that support if they can only get it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Well done. APPLAUSE Councillor Lawless.

CLLR LAWLESS: Save the best until last, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will let Councillor Mitchell in, it's just because the motion came from Greystones I gave you more time than the people coming along.

CLLR LAWLESS: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There is a time constraint on this, I don't want this to go on all day.

CLLR LAWLESS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will be fairly brief because a lot of the councillors have already said more or less what I was going to say myself. Jim and Sean, thank you very much for the presentation and the plan here today, but I suppose I really want to thank is actually the children, because I was in Greystones that day when we had the climate strike action that was on. Myself and councillor Gerry Walsh. We spoke to them and I suggested to them, give us your actions and give us what your demands of what you want for climate change, what with can we do as local Government. I think they should be very proud, they have given us a kick up the backside. A lot of us are sitting around here, we should have been discussing this a long time ago and it's taken young minds to come along here and give us the kick we needed. Well done to those children

to try and create a better future for themselves as well.

The other thing is I would like to second Councillor Whitmore's proposal. About the Comhairle na nÓg having that on the SPC would be very valuable. We do need young people involved in our local politics anyway, even if it is under climate change or whatever it may be. So it's not going to be adopted until September, but I am afraid climate change doesn't wait. There is no time on it and I will be hoping that Wicklow County Council, regardless of waiting for the adaptation that you would start implementing some stuff now. Stuff that can be done, you don't need to wait for us councillors to say yes, please go ahead and help our environment, naturally the answer is yes, so I will be hoping that Wicklow would start and we have put in motions here, Sinn Féin, as well about the single use plastic here as well trying to reduce that down here in the building and obviously the carports as well with the solar power that was on the agenda as well. That is very welcome, all of those things are very welcome here. I suppose will I leave it with this. I will be short.

There was one sign that I saw a couple of children have that day down in Greystones when I spoke to them and it is there is no Planet B. I think that is very essential that we all remember that. We have only one planet and we need to make sure we look after it as best as we possibly can.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: I want to endorse what has been said before rather than repeat it, but councillor McLoughlin said about the implementation of the plan that has been prepared for the council I would agree with that, I think we need a greater emphasis on implementing what is there and the

concept of having early appointment of an officer who is going to kick the system into dealing with it, would be useful and important. Also, I think an important thing has been the Oireachtas joint committee report, where a number of political party, the majority have come together on a compromise and produced a document and we should look at implementing as much as possible of that, it will be very much Government policy for many parties and we should get that done. Thirdly just to congratulations the groups on raising this issue very publicly and making, demanding that things happen, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Oliver O'Brien. [INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC].

CLLR O O'BRIEN: The question has been asked why nothing has been done for 30 years, I read a statistic that 90% of the companies control 63% of the emissions on Planet Earth.. You need to change the consumer mentality that business is pushing consumerism and consumerism is consuming the universe. It's you look at packaging for example, that is one of the huge things I take a tablet called Nexium sometimes, it comes, that tablet or size and they come in a tiny bottle, but the tiny bottle is packaged three or four times over, so that I was talking about the two day week and I was laughed off it, I guarantee, if you stopped the problems you would have the two day week, there wouldn't be half the packaging, I grew up in the 60s when everything was bottled and they were recycled again, that was, you could get 90% people who control 63% of it. I saw something on the forum recently there and there was a person in Bray saying is everything the Council does nowadays does have to have a business slant on it?

That was the problem they were facing. It has to be sorted out overnight, but unless we are prepared to see there is going to be jobs lost not gained, you look at people taking away the rubbish from your house, two bins go out every week and most of it is packaging, if the way we do business doesn't change immediately, I was disappointed that Jim was rushed, I thought he was coming to the, actions I would love to see what they were, I didn't get to read the document, I think that it would have been far more useful, people are not looking for plans or policies they are looking for action. They realise that it's only 2 degrees if the climate will get more worse. They are looking for immediate action, are we going to get that with the present structure? That is my worry.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Mary Kavanagh, then Councillor Winters.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are moving along nicely.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you to Jim and to Sean for the presentation. Like Councillor Matthews I read through the document and for the first 90 pages wondered where the action plan was, it was full of statistics, charts everything we needed to know about increasing climates, heat, drought, precipitation, you name it, it was there, but I was looking for the action plan. My own particular interest is in biodiversity and I am going to mention just five points that I would like to see the council commit to, it's very simple but it would really help the biodiversity in this county.

Each one of the first four points are points that I have had to write to the council about, because they have been happening, so it's a fact. It's factual. Right, I would

love to see no further use of any pesticides containing glyphosates such as Roundup, because it is, it is killing our pollinators and we all know what will happen if our pollinators are driven off the planet, it will be goodbye to the human race as well.

The second thing I would like to see and it has been implemented by Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown is no cutting of verges. They are a valuable food source, they provide seeds for our birds and when they are blooming they provide pollen for our pollinators to pollinate plants. I would like to see no felling of healthy trees. It has been happening all over the country, there are conspiracy theories that it's to do with 5G, I don't know, all I know is it is happening. Finally I would like to see and this I have had to report recently no hedge cutting during the nesting season.

Apart from the fact that it's barbaric for the birds, there is no need for it, we know when the time, when the nesting season is, we know when the time that is allowed for hedge-cutting is. It can be planned in advance, there is absolutely no reason why it cannot be built into a calendar of works and done outside of that nesting season.

Finally the Local Tidy Towns here have started a sustainable energy community initiative, they are having their second meeting this Wednesday and, like everything else, so much work is falling on voluntary groups and an ordinary citizens. I think our local authorities should be taking the lead in this and I would sincerely like to think that some members of the climate action change group will be in attendance so they can work in tandem with the Tidy Towns community who are doing tremendous work as it is, but it shouldn't fall on them to deal with a project as big as

climate change and finally just as an observation, we have, we are a country that is roughly the same size as Scotland, Scotland is ahead of its targets on climate change, we are to quote the Taoiseach, the laggards of Europe, why is this? There should be no reason why two countries of a similar size should be at opposite ends of the spectrum. Finally I would like to say that it's taken the youngest, Greta Thornburg, a 16-year-old Swedish girl and the oldest celebrity, David Attenborough to try and concentrate minds, we really should be ashamed of ourselves. So thank you very much. APPLAUSE

CATHAOIRLEACH: Irene Winters, I have five left, a minute each, as John Bercow would say.

CLLR WINTERS: No bother. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I agree with many of the comments of the, my fellow councillors. However, I really don't believe that it was just today that this Council discovered climate change and I look at some of the actions we have taken over the last five years and the five years prior to that and would think we have been making steps and maybe small steps, we need to take an awful lot more steps and we need to implement them quicker.

The challenge for the new Council is they will have responsibility to ensure that all of the measures that are in that report are implemented and they are also implemented along with many others. Some of the measures are outlined in the report and some of the other measures that will need to be taken if we are to stop ourselves hitting the 1.6, 2 degree increase will not be universally popular. I would urge the new Council to look at them and say that we have to actually act in the common good for all of our citizens and that must prevail against small

interest groups and just small local communities. It will have to be a decision that is not just county-wide, but country wide. And I know everyone says it's not our future, well I actually hope to still be here in 20 years and not necessarily here, but I like to be still in county Wicklow and maybe in the 20 years after that, so I am not just doing it for the young people, I also want do it for myself, I want a nice, safe place to live for myself along with my nieces and nephews, so if I get re-elected I will be working to make sure that this Council implements everything that is in that report and a lot more. Thank you. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I absolutely support Councillor Whitmore's proposal that young people being on the Steering Group that is driving this forward. It's great to have them outside and they are making demands of us, but they should also be inside for every conversation and every decision that is made and similarly Grainne McLoughlin's suggestion that someone be the driver and be responsible for driving this forward. I am lucky I get to spend a lot of time with young people and feed off their energy and what I would say is to the people who came today, who are here on behalf of their children or their children, this is what it looks like when you hold us to account. This is what it looks like and this is what it sounds like, when councillors have to speak to you, because you here, so keep coming and keep making sure that you are listening to us, this you are in front of us, that you are making eye contact with whoever ends up in this chamber after the 24th of May. Keep making sure that you hold them to account for the decisions and the actions. Thank you,

Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Daire Nolan and then Councillor Burke.

CLLR NOLAN: My last ever say here. Just to touch on something that Councillor Matthews said, I read somewhere that the ozone by year 2050 the holes will be fully healed or repaired and that is a positive move and that came from people fighting CFC gases in the 80s. I would like to thank Jim for their presentation and the environment section for their presentation as a member of that SPC I was delighted to say, to bring it before the full council as I thought it needed to be done as soon as possible and the sooner it gets done and the sooner that the actions and implementations that are detailed there can be spurred forward the better.

I would like to thank the crowd that came down here today. Everyone, young and old, people who have been fighting this issue for years, this has been their first exposure to politics, it's great to see it, because it is the future for everyone, as Councillor Winters said, not just for young people, but for everyone. Climate change is a real issue, despite what dangerous and vapid populous leaders like Donald Trump would have you believe. Real politicians and real leaders know that the environment has to be protected. And, it is great to see so many young people down here, because they are the future, they are going to be getting into politics, as time goes along and they are going to see how this.

CLLR MURPHY: They might not.

CLLR NOLAN: Maybe not. But that is, it's great to see that young people are getting interested and taking an interest

in what is happening here and at national level and here is hoping that they are able to lead us into the future much better than we were. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Well done. Councillor Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you for that excellent report. Three points I would like to make. The first one, Jim, you mentioned about bringing in the panels hearing in the chamber and the car park, I would love to see you broadening that out to broadening it to bring it out to landlords, buildings all over the county that could be used for generation of, micro generation of electricity. As you know the ESB won't take in, you can't export a micro generated electricity to the grid, so that policy needs to change to allow people all over the county to micro generate and get paid for their surplus electricity generation. That would make a huge difference.

The second point, I would like to see the farmers in county Wicklow getting some credit in the report for what they have been doing so far to help address climate change and talking about specifically their participation in the Glas scheme, which was introduced about four years ago and a great many in the county are fully participating in it and reducing their carbon footprint by setting aside land, not cropping it intensively, by setting aside margins around headlands to allow natural growth and flowers to flower, to support the bee population and that has gone unsung, I didn't hear any mention of it in the report, but I think it deserves some mention, it might not be perfect for people, the world may not look perfect when you are looking at farmers and the criticisms they get for greenhouse gas emission, that is another debate, but I think they have

done a lot of work and are very conscious of the responsibilities to ensure that we have a sustainable environment into the future and I would caution a complete ban on Roundup, we currently enjoy very low food price, if you do away with Roundup, we will go back 40 years in terms of food production back to the 60s when my farm was farming, he was getting a tonne-and-a-half was the top yield because there was no round-up to control weeds like that, if we do away with that without an alternative, we are going to go back 40 years in food production and maybe not have enough ban to feed the world, because it's a worldwide ban on Roundup and it's coming based on what is happening in America.

I fear for food production we won't have an alternative in place and in a couple of years we will be back to food rationing like we were in the 50s and have no food.

CLLR THORNHILL: I would like to say to everyone here, the citizens of the future, here, it's great, to take the responsibility, to see this true, because, at the end of the day, like I know, the way the climate is going, something has to happen, in relation to the country itself I would like to see in relation to energy sustainability, the more emphasis on wind farms and wave power.

One thing I would like to say in relation to, at the end of the day the carbon footprint we are all responsible ourselves and we should all be ourselves because take for example, you take the traffic in the roads, I mean the cars burn fossil fuels, so how often do we see cars upon cars and there is only one person in the car, it's very inefficient and we are all responsible so at the end of the day, Government and this is true they have to bring out

policies but it's going to lie with the people, for example, I have to say in relation to an initiative that was brought up recently on the Bray Sea Front, go to the sea and pick up the plastics, little initiatives like that, it all adds up.

At the end of the day, I would say about the honeybee, it is something that we have to look at, because the honeybee, well the honeybee will be extinct we can be lucky and think about our future. Fair, fair play to everyone here, we have to remember that each and every one of us have a role to play for the future. Go ro maith agat.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Finally, councillor Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you to the people who have attended here today, I hope to see you here today, I would like to raise one issue, I don't think it's been mentioned and ow powers, as consumers and your power as a consumer, when you are buying something do you ever think about where it comes from? Be it the clothes or the food? How far has it travelled? What is the carbon footprint of what you are buying?

A lot of the things that are causing the climate issues are based, are coming from corporations, multinationals, they drive what we consume in the world. So, I don't think people are fully aware of stuff they are buying, where it's coming in, what the background is, they just, I think these corporations need to be made more accountable and people need to be more aware of what the background of what they are consuming is coming from and to think about what they are consuming. That is really your ultimate power, your purchasing power, because that is what the corporations and the consumption society is based on, getting you to

consume, getting you to buy and if you are aware of where that is coming from and what the background is and what the ethics of that company is. They often put in glossy language in their Annual Report but to get to the root of what the real background of companies and corporations is and I think once we get more information on that, people can make more informed decisions and that will need to change because it will be purchasing power and that is what drives these Corporation, purchasing power and profit that is the power that consumers have. Thank you. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, I am going to let the Chief Executive in and then the Director of Planning.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to thank everyone for coming down as well. It is reassuring to see young people taking such an interest in climate change and this strategy and the actions that come out of it will be a priority for the council and for the management team. It isn't just the environment section, it's roads, waters, housing, ICT, planning, community, fire, it's a priority for every section and they will all be developing their own actions and some of the issues such as, that were raised, the Climate Change Steering Group, will be enacted. That is an action in the plan. So the plan will be on display from now until the end of May. So I will invite people and members of the public to make submissions, it will be back before the councillors in September to adopt. So I would like to thank everyone again and we have noted all the comments that have been made.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sean.

SEAN QUIRKE: The support for the strategy is very encouraging I have to say, but there are 61 actions in it and there is one further action, that is for yourselves to

recommend that it goes on public display, or agreed to go on public display. The challenges will come following that, there will be financial challenges as I said at budget time, but I can sense an appetite to grasp those and move on with our mitigation measures, which are equally as important as the strategy. The strategy does provide for review and measurement against the actions and so on, so it won't be a document that will sit on a shelf anywhere. So I would commend it to you for going on public display.

CATHAOIRLEACH: With that, can I have agreement that this will go on public display? Proposer and seconder, the same two people. Also, can I have unanimous agreement in regard to the motion that was put before us, proposed by Councillor Fortune and seconded by Gerry Walsh that we adopt that particular motion that appeared in their names? Okay, can I, is that unanimously agreed? Okay, listen, thank you very much.

CLLR WHITMORE: Can I just?

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are finished.

CLLR WHITMORE: Can we send it to all of the councillors and to the TDs as well, because they are going to be very important.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is okay, we will do that.

SEAN QUIRKE: One final thing, there is a small bit of formatting on it to happen, so if you are going to circulate it, maybe wait for the formatting.

CLLR WHITMORE: It's the motion.

SEAN QUIRKE: Sorry, on the strategy, I was talking about.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We are moving on now. I want to be finished by 4.00pm with your help and co-operation. We are on to item 7 now, please. Just wait for a second until the room is clear, please. Okay, members, we are on to, I am

taking items 7, 8 and 9, the Chief Executive, please.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Sorry on issue has been raised.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, members, can I have your attention, this is important. Wait a second. Go ahead.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. An issue has been raised in relation to the site notice and newspaper ad, it's not complying with recent legislation. A paragraph should be included in schemes now that don't require an EIA, that paragraph wasn't included. Our legal advice is that process could be challenged as a result of this and legal advice is that we don't consider these today, that we withdraw them and start the process again and it will be back to the members in a few months' time and again ultimately this is a decision for the council, but the legal advice is that if there is an omission in the ad go back to the start and come back to the Council.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I want to propose that we withdraw them from the agenda here today. Do I have a seconder?

CLLR MCLOUGHLIN: I second that.

CLLR BEHAN: Before it comes to whatever new council, if there are housing policy.... [INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC] matters involved in issues like this, they should go to the housing SPC first. This did not happen in the case of 8 and 9. That was outrageous treatment of members of the housing SPC and whoever is here, we should decide here that the new council should, as a matter of principle, refer issues such as this to the housing SPG, that is why it was set up. I want to propose that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I can't see why that wouldn't be taken up, Councillor Behan. Is that agreed? I have proposed, seconded by Councillor Snell. Is that agreed? That will come back to the next council.

>>: Does it go to districts as well?

CATHAOIRLEACH: The recommendation I would have is that the district should have it and make a recommendation back to this council as well, because of the side of it, it's this council that is going to make the decisions but effectively it should be discussed in the municipal areas and a recommendation come back from that, I don't know what the next council is going to be, but the likelihood is that if an item does come back and he doesn't have the support of the municipal authorities should have no support.

CLLR MCLOUGHLIN: I think it's really important to hear, I would have no issues with any of these going into the housing SPC. I don't think they can overrule, when it's to a local council that is more important than someone's agenda on an SPC. I would be worried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I know where you are coming from. People are making decision and they are the people who are making decisions. The SPCs should have the information and that is what they are there as an information, but they are not there as a body like councillors are who are going to make decision, at the end of the day the councillors will make the recommendation and the decisions on it and if, it's no harm that the SPC has a view of what is happening in the particular housing area, I think that is only reasonable. Okay. Okay, we are moving on. To consider the Chief Executive's report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. One or two points. We have two new members of staff, a lot of members of staff recently but two in particular, Colm Lavery starts as Director of Services for roads fire and water, I am sure you a lot of you have met him and Dorothy Kennedy, who is a new law agent that started in the last few weeks. One or

two items.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Very welcome.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Yes. The Open Library in Arklow was opened two weeks ago, it's open 8-10pm, 365 days of the year.

There is going to be one in every county and it will be interesting to see how it works out. The feedback so far is very positive. The Kilmac safety scheme is likely to be signed this week, there were some technical issues in relation to the location of the gantries but all has been resolved. The Town and Village Scheme 2019 will be advertised soon for expressions of interest. We have had three, in Tinahely, Glenview and Laragh. We are looking at public realm, projects that create economic activity, encourage town centre living, etc.

There is funding available, 20,000-100,000 and 200,000 for exceptional projects, so closing date the end June, we will be looking at community groups around the county, but if you are meeting any of them, you might let them know this is open and to contact the community section. The applications we applied for 34,000 funding last week. Again that is around the Greenan area. We did very well last year, this is the small scale schemes that will go through the LCDC up to 20,000, you have the medium scale, 200,000 and we have funding last year for Vartry and they are also looking for large scale works up to 500,000 and again we got funding there last year for the Avonmore Bridge we, will be looking with various groups but to let people know that is open. What has come down is the RRDF, the Rural Regional Development Fund, at the moment they are looking for larger schemes that are ready to go, greater than 500,000. I think we put back in Baltinglass, but we expand

it to make it more attractive.

We are looking at one around Glendalough, Laragh, Roundwood, Rathdrum. The current one is for schemes ready to go for 500,000 and later they will be looking at schemes for feasibility and stuff like that. I will take the rest of the report as read and he take any questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Thornhill.

CLLR THORNHILL: I would like to ask a question in relation to a certain matter which has come up recently. It relates to.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, hold there for a second. Is this in the Chief Executive's report? Is it, can you point it out if it is in the Chief Executive's report, if you can't you are not talking about it, right? It's as simple as that. So it isn't? So we are moving on. You are not talking about it.

CLLR THORNHILL: I am only asking the question.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are on the Chief Executive's report, nothing else can be discussed you are aware of this, you are five years here, you are not speaking on anything that is not in the Chief Executive's report. You can argue all you like, you are not speaking on it.

CLLR THORNHILL: I am just asking the question.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am moving on to Councillor Fox.

CLLR FOX: Thank you, Chairman, thank you to the Chief Executive for his report, just in relation to the safety scheme on the N11 at Kilmacanogue, I would welcome the fact that it's going out to tender shortly in the next few days, I know there was delays around the gantries and the land required for the gantries, but can I urge, I know it's not, or it wasn't within the remit of the scheme but pedestrian safety and footpaths in particular, that are not included

in the scheme will have to be looked at, currently there are a number of residents in Kilmac who terminate at the bus stop at the Woodies roundabout on the Southern Cross and have to walk along the hard shoulder of the N11 to get back to Kilmacanogue, I note the safety scheme doesn't include a foot path along this stretch of the road.

I know, to be fair to the engineers involved in the scheme, it wasn't within the remit of the scheme, but we will have to find alternative funding and to me, it's simply a must that this pedestrian footpath is provided, because since the 145 bus route stopped travelling to Kilmacanogue, the amount of people who walk along the hard shoulder of the N11 is a disaster waiting to happen. Can I urge the Chief Executive to speak to the engineers in the roads section and try and bring forward some form of scheme for pedestrian safety? Thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

CLLR BEHAN: Just following on from what.

CLLR FOX: Said, first of all it's amazing me how long this has taken to get to the point where we would begin the work, many people are very disappointed, we are disappointing it's taken so long, but hopefully we will see progress immediately. The other point I want to make and it's across the road from Christopher Fox's point, it's becoming a real problem at the garage, for people coming down the Roundwood Road attempting to get out on to the N11. There are cars parked across that side road or service road at the moment and it is becoming quite a hazard and quite a hazard and frustrating for people coming on to the N11. I know it's not part of this proposal, but I would ask the Chief Executive to ask the roads directorate to have a

look and see can something temporary be done to allow people access on to the N11.

The second point is it's under housing and it's in relation to people who are living in the Oldcourt Estate in Bray, a number of them have asked me and I have already written to the director of housing on this and I got a very disappointing negative reply and I was asked to ask the Chief Executive today, there are a number of houses in the Oldcourt estate which originally were local authority houses but they have been bought over the years, either by tenants who were original tenants or people who bought them as third party purchasers and they are in immediate and urgent need of the same energy efficiency works that the council has just about completed in their own houses in Oldcourt. I am asking here, on their behalf that the Chief Executive do a full examination of this case. He may not be fully up to date on all of the ramifications of the Oldcourt estate and the various refurbishments and I am asking that consideration be given to a special scheme of energy efficiency works for the remaining houses in the estate, I don't expect an answer today, but I am asking him to take it on board with the housing directorate and the Department.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: I just want to fully endorse and support what Councillor Fox said about that cycle path along the N11. To make the Chief Executive aware there is a letter in circulation from the NCA saying they will positively consider an application from Wicklow County Council to provide such funding and infrastructure. I wanted to let the Chief Executive know that. Councillor Oliver O'Brien.

CLLR THORNHILL I would like to second that to ask a question.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, listen, you know the situation.

COUNCILLOR THORNHILL: I have had problems in Bray with minutes being totally eliminated, because.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Excuse me, Councillor Thornhill, you are not going down that road, you are not going down that road, he.

>>: He is entitled, (ALL TALK AT ONCE).

CLLR THORNHILL: You are not going to object me down this time, you might object me, but you are not going to shout me down.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There are not going to be any proposal from Councillor Thornhill on this matter. Mary McDonald.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead.

>>: I am going to put it to the floor.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead, Mary, you have the floor.

CLLR McDONALD: Thank you, it's just an observation and a question.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry.

CLLR McDONALD: I have a question around the HAPS scheme, I have asked before on previous occasions, I have asked where we are with the HAPS houses. It's just a general question, I notice from the April meeting we had 1063 houses under the HAPS scheme and this month, I think it's 1136, that is a difference of 737 houses in a month. I know there was a backlog with inspections of those houses and I was wondering where we up to date, 73 houses on top of what were already waiting for inspections a quite a lot.

It's slightly worrying, the condition of some of the houses being taken under the HAPS scheme, you would have to request are they up to standard what I really want to know

is are we on top of the inspections and do we still only have the one inspector inspecting the house and basically where we are at with the whole inspection of these houses and the follow-up inspections for any works that have been representing that are done on the existing works?

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will try and get something on that.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Chairman. I was delighted to see that the for the Oireachtas took place I would like to ask the Chief Executive when would these people start? I think it's important we get them out into the different districts as soon as possible. My second point is to do with the old FCA hall in Wicklow, given it stopped on the housing scheme that was down there and I am wondering has a new contractor been appointed and when he hopes to start that project?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor winters.

CLLR WINTERS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, in relation to housing under the rebuilding Ireland mortgages, I know people have applied and for various reasons they are turned down, but what seems to happen in other local authorities is if they have applied for an amount that is too grate, when they are being turned down they are told you applied for 275, if you applied for 250 you would have got it and they can come back in.

In Wicklow, they told you, you haven't got it, I am wondering if we could adjust our response to people so we can say to them, look you have applied for too much, your criteria gives you maximum, then they know where they could go in terms of houses.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yes, we will certainly take up with the TII and with the roads section

here in relation to the pedestrian safety at the Kilmac scheme and also across the road in relation to the cars parked there, they sound like very significant issues but we can certainly work with TII and our own inhouse design team in relation to that. In relation to the Oldcourt estate it's a problem which has been around for a long time, when people buy their houses they see schemes coming along, windows and doors and retrofitting in council housing schemes but our funding and our scheme is really only cover our own houses, but we will have a look, as I say, in relation to the specific issues in Oldcourt, sometimes there is funding for energy retrofitting where there is fuel poverty involved, but as a general rule schemes just cover our own houses, but I will have a look at it. In relation to the HAPS schemes and the inspections we are getting there, we have taken our new technician who is working exclusively on those and ensuring they comply with the Private Residency Tenancy Board standards. We will clear that backlog.

The GOs, we have the panel, I know there is one definitely in Wicklow and two in Greystones and two in Baltinglass and a number around the county. When the GSSs are upgraded there will be more vacancies coming down the line, there is about ten in a year or so.

So it's very useful to have that. The old FCA hall is going to tender again, it has gone and Rebuilding Ireland mortgages, that is a good point and it was raised with us by the housing agency as well, so we can have a look at that, absolutely.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, did you want to come in here?

JOE LANE: See you tomorrow [INAUDIBLE]. What stage that is

it I will have that for you?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we are moving on to note number 11, that is just to note that.

ADMINISTRATOR: Can we have a proposer and seconder for the budget.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Matthews and Councillor Walsh.. Brian needs to go through a few things here.

BRIAN: Sorry, it's just at the can request of our auditor to highlight the unders and overs as part of the AFS. If I can refer you to the financial review at the start of the document and on page 6, page 4, we just require approval by the members for the additional net expenditure in excess of budget as per section 1047 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The overspends, the net overspends are division A housing and building 109, 4607. Transportation 194,256. Division B, 20,854. Division E environmental services 793,115 and division F recreational amenity 100,031.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Proposer and seconder for that. Councillor Matthews and Walsh.

>>: No problem. Could we get the detail in the post as to who they are not now, Cathaoirleach?

BRIAN GLEESON: In the previous page it explains the reasons for over expenditure.

CLLR BEHAN: Sorry.

CLLR TIMMINS: I know you get over and under expenditures, it's a normal way that you operate. But is there a new department denture brought to our approval.

BRIAN GLEESON: No, it's always been part of the financial review and the auditory requested that it be highlighted as part of this process of noting. It's always been

highlighted in the documentation and financial review. It's just based on the auditor's request.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Fine, we are moving on to item 12, we have, there is a scheme of priorities were sent out to people, Jackie is here if anyone has any questions in regard to the scheme of priorities. Jackie is going to go through it for a couple of minutes and then we will take any questions on it.

JACKIE CARROLL: [INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC] Just to go over in relation to the scheme. Not used to public speaking.

As you are aware, the minister has given a commitment to progress an affordable housing scheme, which will target those who have been squeezed out of the private rental market and haven't got affordability to buy in the open market. So the 2009 scheme has been enacted, we commenced part five of the Act in June 19 so the Affordable Housing Scheme now has statutory footing. There is 19 different sections I am not going to go through them because I will be lynched.

The minister under this scheme is making regulations and part of those regulations makes a scheme of priority where we would chair a methodology to allocate the house when we have a scheme and assessment of eligibility under the scheme. The new scheme, places all previous affordable schemes, it provided for discounts of up to 40%, what was the clawback in previous schemes is now what we call in an equity share. Throughout the period of the 25 years or payment at the end of it, we will be going into a new strategic affordable housing fund. So our purpose here today, I suppose, is because the scheme was enacted or commenced in June 2018, it is a requirement of the scheme

that the scheme of priority be adopted by June 2019 which poses a bit of a dilemma because the regulations didn't come out until recently, so this is the last meeting that we are available to adopt the scheme.

It's important we have a scheme of priority in place for when we commence advertising scheme, when we have identified schemes that are suitable to provide affordable houses, so it's very important for the chamber and I know the members are keen on affordable housing, so it's important we have a scheme in place that will show our methodology and allocation of houses, section 85 is the making of the order of priority, I won't go through everything on these, so the scheme of priority is Section 85 and as I say, it includes the methodology that will be applied to determine the order of priority and we have to have it adopted before the 18th of June. There is an ascending order of priority. You can read that at your leisure.

Very much so, if you tick all the boxes you have the highest priority and descending in that order. There is provision for eligibility, that is where you are eligible to be allowed apply for the scheme, the dwelling suit the to your needs to your household accommodation needs. Living in the area for 12 months, preceding the application, that will be another tick box, then the two areas where the members have discretion to actually identify the number of kilometres, the distance from employment and education, education first and then employment. So I sent out a draft scheme where we mooted 30 kilometre just as a starting point to get the scheme across the line and get it adopted by the members. We can revisit that at any time, this is a

reserve function so this can come back into the chamber at any stage. I think the thinking around it was that would get people living in Wicklow, but going to the Gaelscoil in Arklow.

Some local authorities are looking at 300 kilometres, but to me that would lessen your discretion, if you want to look at making it more local, but this is something that can be revisited when we have a scheme on the table. So for today, the purpose of today, I suppose, is to hopefully adopt a scheme of priority, to have the methodology in place and we can revisit the kilometres, if you wish, at another stage. So, I am asking the members just to give it due consideration and adopt today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Fox.

CLLR FOX: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, Jackie. I would welcome putting on order of priority in place, I certainly feel that affordable housing is one area that perhaps has been overlooked. A lot of people seem to talk about social housing and rightly so, there is a huge amount of people on our council housing list, but for people on moderate incomes, the availability of affordable housing is certainly a huge issue. I know there are no schemes planned yet, we are just putting the order of priority in place and we have only two areas of discretion and I know you spoke about the 30 kilometres perhaps as the most appropriate distance, I have been thinking about it and I know I spoke to you during the week, but the distance between Bray and Arklow is 50 kilometres, so if there were circumstances where someone from Arklow lived or worked in Bray or vice-versa, they would be precluded under the 30 kilometre rule and I am suggesting 50 kilometres, but that is up to the other members, thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell, please will people be brief.

CLLR SNELL: It's very unfortunate with the time constraints in regard to the Department sending this out that we have been sitting and waiting for such a scheme for a number of years indeed and I know through the housing section they have identified land, certainly that would be available for affordable dwellings and we, as public representatives meet people day in day out who want to get on this scheme for families who earn over 38,400 unfortunately can't go on the housing list and therefore cannot be accepted for the HAPS scheme and there is an awful lot of people waiting who can't get a mortgage to purchase the new builds going on in this county, so this is a scheme and it's a core group of people that I feel have been forgotten about. I am glad that the Department have stepped up to the plate and they are putting something in place and for today's purposes it's very important that this has happened. There is only two pieces that can, we have any discretion on and it's something that the new council can come back and look at and earn certainly I would have no objection to moving the 30km to certainly the new council and the new SPC will be able to put that in front of the new council and it's something that can be addressed, but for the benefit of moving this scheme forward, we, like all other local authorities have something to go back to the Department with, I would be recommending that it would be accepted here today by all members and certainly it's a scheme that is worthy of support from everyone in these chambers.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I believe the scheme can be amended in September as well, so if there is any problems with it, it can be amended in September with the new council. Please be

brief Grainne McLoughlin.

CLLR MCLOUGHLIN: This will be very brief. I felt when I was reading it, maybe it's just me and I am tired, just difficult to understand, could it be put in really easy layman's language so when people want to know what the categories are, what boxes they have to tick they can do that, if that was possible?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you, Chairman, and Jackie, for the presentation. Any proposal that comes before us here I support them in terms of providing houses out there for people who really need them. Whether it's the social houses programme, the HAPS programme or anything else. I know this particular aspect of affordable housing schemes haven't delivered to the extent we hoped they would, but nevertheless if there is a new scheme there has to be tweaks in terms of mileage or kilometres or the distance or whatever else in relation to it I will support them. Anything we can do out there to help people to have their own homes, to have a roof over their head is vitally important and I certainly, if Councillor Snell's proposal I would second it.

CLLR MITCHELL: I have some concerns I am not sure if this applies to people in Wicklow or people in Dublin can apply. Which have enough trouble supplying houses to people in County Wicklow, so I wouldn't want the distance to go too far so I would prefer it was kept tight at 30 kilometres. That is my concern.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Winters.

CLLR WINTERS: I think we need to get it over the line today and we can tweak it or the new council with tweak it at that stage.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: Councillor Mitchell makes an eloquent point about the fact we cannot allow a situation where we give over our land to a possible sale by private developers who won't care where the people come from, that would have been my point if those parties had been discussed and I hope the management of the council take that on board, because Councillor Mitchell has made it very well. The other point is many thousands of people, young families in this county are waiting for the chance to get on the property ladder.

CLLR MITCHELL: That wasn't the point I made at all.

CLLR BEHAN: They might read this in the paper and say great there is going to be an affordable housing scheme, we haven't done one affordable house yet and the chances are this is going to be delayed for even longer and I think many people will be disappointed for that. The one technical question I want to ask Jackie is if this comes back before whoever is on the new council and there is a change in the distance, for example, is that going to be a simple majority vote or will we have this think where it will have to be a two thirds majority to change it? I am hoping it will be straightforward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Simple majority.

CLLR BEHAN: That is agreed. That is fine.

ADMINISTRATOR: Unless it's set down in statute.

CATHAOIRLEACH: As far as you are aware the council operates only in special circumstances that it's two thirds.

ADMINISTRATOR: Unless it's set down in statute.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There was a couple of questions can you answer them.

JACKIE: If the members want to change it to 50 today or leave it to September?

CATHAOIRLEACH: I would say leave it 50 today and it can come back and be adjusted in September and people think about it.

>>: Leave it at 30.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Leave it at 30, it can be adjusted. There is toos and fros in this, on one side there is one thing and there is always situations that will come up outside of that.

CLLR WINTERS: Unintended consequences.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If we leave it at 30 and the new council can adjust it if they see fit in September.

JACKIE CARROLL: AS regards the order of policy, Councillor McLoughlin, you are not crazy, I made that simpler than the legislation because the legislation is extremely complicated. So that is the simplified version of it. So you have eligible, B is that you have lived in the area in county Wicklow for at least a year preceding the application.

CLLR McLOUGHLIN: You have to live in the area of county of Wicklow.

JACKIE CARROLL: For the immediate year preceding. If someone is in school within X amount of kilometres and you go back again if someone's employment in the county, within X amount of kilometres, so that is really as simple as I can make it. That would be determined by us as we were processing the applications and we hope to have an IT system in place as well that will ease it forwards down the road. I think issues for the, we don't have a scheme at present but I will hand over to Joe.

JOE LANE: Just to get this, this is required within one year of the act, there is still a hole amount of

regulations to come out, the main one will be salary scales, that hasn't come out yet, we are still waiting on them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Still waiting on them, okay. Can I have a proposer and seconder. Councillor Snell and... is that agreed then? Agreed. We are into correspondence.

ADMINISTRATOR: Just before, can I have a proposer and seconder for the minutes of the protocol meeting of the 15th of January, 4th of March and 1st of April.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Brien... I will propose and Gerry Walsh as well. Now, there is no correspondence, is there? No correspondence? We are at the end of the meeting, thanks be to God, says everyone. Just before we finalise, just from my point of view I would like to wish all the members of the council that are standing again the best of luck in the elections in a couple of weeks' time. First time for a long time that I haven't been knocking, well I have been knocking on doors but not for myself, it's much easier to knock for someone else than yourself. It's my first time and certainly from my point of view I would like to wish all the members well in the election coming up and obviously I would like to thank the majority of members of the council as well for their help and co-operation with me, not alone in the past year but in previous years in regard to this. There are 7 members of the council that are leaving and almost 150 years of experience is going with those 7 members.

CLLR FOX: That is just you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If it was I wasn't talking about myself. I just want to pay tribute, I think on our behalf as chairman of the council to the returning members of the council, Jim Ruttle, who I probably, probably is the longest-serving

member of the Council. APPLAUSE.

Jimmy has been on the Council since the 80s, former Senator and former member of Fianna Fail as well. Jimmy has given a huge amount of his life to the service of people in west Wicklow, he follows in a long line of people who have given a huge amount of service in west Wicklow and I would like to wish Jim and Catherine health and happiness over the rest of their lives and thank Jim for your service and your friendship to me, particularly over that, and your support to me during that time as well. Thank you very much for that.

To Pat Doran, Pat Doran, I think is gone, I think he has gone, he is a colleague of mine of Fianna Fail, a quiet man, tremendous worker for the people in south Wicklow, particularly in Carnew, I remember I served on the Health Board and I seen the health facility in Carnew and I was blown away that someone could play such an important part in provision of the community. An unbelievable facility in a small village and that will stay testament to Pat Doran and the work he has done in the Carnew area. He is going to be a very hard act to follow in regard to this .

Grainne McLoughlin, I have often said, Grainne comes from a great Fianna Fail background. She strayed like her sister, but she has the work ethic of her mother and father who were great Fianna Fail people as well. Really Greystones will be all the poorer for Grainne going, I don't know if she will really be going, because she is the type of worker that will always be doing something for the community, chair of the LCDC, Grainne has contributed in a very quiet way to the development of Wicklow over the years. She has been a tremendous worker and also she has shown courage as

well because she is getting married in July and on all of our behalves I want to wish her well as with regard to that. APPLAUSE.

Daire Nolan is the youngest member of the Council and I have to say he brought a fair amount of freshness and youth to the Council chamber. Daire is going on to another job in the community as well and I am sure you will bring the same enthusiasm to your new job than you have in your five years here. You have been a great servant for the five years here, you have been absolutely wonder. APPLAUSE

My colleague in Bray for a number of years, John Ryan. Former Cathaoirleach of Bray Town Council, he has been a tremendous worker for the Bray area. He is a man of vision and he has always wanted to portray a positive image of Bray and Wicklow and he was the main driver of the think-tanks in his role as chairs of the Council. Had a strong opinion on how the county, Wicklow and Bray should develop and most importantly always had the courage to back it up, so John, thank you, again for your services. It's been wonderful. To Christopher Fox, I have to say one of the greatest honours I have had on this Council is I have sat beside the three Foxes in my time in the Council, when I came on to this Council in 1991, Johnny, Mildred and Christopher, it's been a great pleasure to sit beside you, they had everything everyone could wish for in terms of decency, integrity and humour and a work ethic second to none and there are not many families who have contributed to the people of Wicklow. He is a busy man as well and certainly I would like to wish him and his family well in the future years.

Now, for myself, I am 34 years in the Council as most people know, 28 of them have been in this Council here and the other six in Bray and certainly through all of that time I would like to thank everyone for their help and their friendship over the years.

Sorry. I am very proud to have served some great people in this organisation, of all parties over these years. It's been a great honour to be elected to the Council and the greatest honour has been to serve as your Cathaoirleach. I want to thank the staff, the Chief Executive here, we have had a number of Chief Executives here, Blaise Tracey, Eddie Sheehy Brian Doyle and Frank Curran here who have been a tremendous help to me over the years. I want to thank all the staff because I would leave out some people here and I don't want do that, I want to thank particularly Irene winters has been a very great help for me and filled in a number of times when I couldn't make it in the county in year, Irene, thank you very much and the best of luck to you in the next few weeks and I think I have spent most of my time in Wicklow County Council probably in the Planning Office and I have been lucky enough to be chair of the Planning SPC for a long number of years and they are a group of people that have been under siege from some members for the last number of years and all I have to say so when you are dealing with planning, as you all know, you never get everything you want, you might get something of what you want. You never get all of what you want and I think most people expect that you won't get everything, but I have never come across an organisation in the council that have provided more service, more honesty, more integrity than the planning department in Wicklow County Council.

>>: Here, here.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I want to say, particularly to the former Director of Services, who I am delighted to see here, Des O'Brien, to Fergal and Sorcha who have given me unbelievable advice over the years and particularly when we were developing the recent assembly, the report on the regional assembly. I got tremendous advice and professional help from them and I all I can say from them is thank you again for them and to wish them well and hope that they get the support that is necessary from the planning staff.

And finally, at home, I have a wife that tends to tell me all the things that I don't want to hear you know what I mean. When I am feeling good about myself can drag you down in a few words and tell you are run losing the run of yourself, for that I thank her. I haven't liked it most of the time, but it's worked and my family are here at the end of the room and I am delighted to see them here. I always say, Lorraine is my Wicklow County Council wife, she tells me all the things I would love to do, but I can't do that. All of the decisions I have made over the past year, you can blame them on Lorraine, because I was only taking instruction. Lorraine, thank you very much indeed, she has been a wonderful help and a marvellous public servant as well. Thank you again. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. A number of people asked me if they could say a few words at the end of the meeting outcome did you want to come in and say a few words.

CLLR RUTTLE: When I arrived there in 1980, a then councillor friend of mine John Leeson indicated on day one, you have two good days here, the day you come in and the day you go out. So I suppose this is one of the good ones,

but there was always a mixed bag in between. I suppose on a day like this, you look back on your career and in my case it goes back 39 years and who you have to remember and what you remember.

Firstly, I have to thank the west wicklow electorate for returning me to this council on five occasions and I am very honoured to have represented them. Their loyalty and support has been my bedrock over the decades and I thank them all from, I mention two places in west wicklow that not many people might know, two areas Ballyguile to Tubberville. I also want to thank my staff for all the support they did over 30 years. Never backed off, 100% commitment, it's quite amazing.

The other huge element, like you mentioned yourself, Cathaoirleach, too, in my political life has been the great support of my wife, Catherine and my sons. Catherine run the constituency office out of our farmhouse and it was a fantastic operation and we were a great team together. Without such family support I could not have functioned, I could not have endured for so long and I thank them all most sincerely for that.

Another aspect I suppose of my career was my association with the farming and the rural community as well is well-known and their unwavering support over all of the year has been crucial to me. I also tried to be involved heavily in education in west wicklow, particularly with my involvement with Blessington community college and the Blessington education service, I found that very rewarding. In more recent times I have pursued politically, given the Blessington Greenway Project, I looked for to the final fruition of that and it will be a great advantage and a

great thing to see and I hope it comes soon. The funding. I first became a public representative in public 39 years ago and it's a long time and many of the people I worked with then have now gone to their eternal ward, people such as Podge, Geoffrey and Johnny Fox. All of those benefitted their community with no spin tactics whatsoever, people of integrity and dedication. Just reflecting on it over the weekend, I am one of the few people who would ever have run a General Election campaign on a ticket with Podge Brennan, particularly given that he was elected to the Dail, the year I was born, so the connection with me with a past in the middle of the last century, but Podge was a fine man too like Godfrey Timmins and the late Johnny.

I would like also to like to thank the staff for all the work they did in my career years here. On behalf of the public and a lot of the Government as well. Various things came into my mind over the weekend. I recall the amazing Ultan McCabe and also the memorable contributions of Brian Johnston to debates in this chamber on how he could handle it. I never fell out with any official, I disagreed with them, yes, I fought hard, but I never fell out or had a disagreement with any official in my time here. I always had a good relationship with the manager, now CEOs, I don't know why I call them managers, from Blaise Tracey, Brian Doyle, all the way down now to Frank Curran who is a very good Chief Executive as well. I also want to thank all of the staff over the years in the Blessington office which I have seen for many years. In many ways the Blessington office was one engineer and one Jean Brady.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Our engineer from Bray is over there at the moment.

CLLR RUTTLE: For the helpful co-operation and friendship I

received there, I think it was a very good office to work with, a very positive and very communicative and supportive. I think I is gone now, but I also wish to thank Myles Buchanan of the Wicklow People for the fair courtesy I have received from them and their predecessors for the Wicklow People.

I also want to thank my own group for their loyalty over the last few years and wish them well in all they do, I think Miriam is standing so I have a lovely leaflet here worthy of support and I wish her well in the election. The other three of us are not, so you are our flag bearer Miriam in that one. Thank you very much. In this regard I want to say a special thank you to the man on my left, Christopher Fox, who arrived here I think 15 years ago and has been a huge support and help at all times to me, it was a pleasure to work with him and he would always be available and he would always speak and travel into west Wicklow and we would do things together. At a time like this, somewhere further back again I suppose I have to remember the support I would have received from Susan Phillips over the years and the great contribution she made. Over the years I worked with various members of one family in this regard. I have worked with three regards of the Timmins family, Godfrey, Billy and now Edward. All gentlemen of integrity and it was a pleasure to work with them and the help and support I received from that family will never be forgotten by me. Thank you so much for everything. Also, the Fox family, from Johnny S who is a very good friend of mine and we had great times.

CATHAOIRLEACH: They are here at the back.

CLLR RUTTLE: Are they.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I want to welcome them.

CLLR RUTTLE: welcome along. Also a great friend of mine, I can remember the '92 General Election campaign, which was a great day and sadly it all ended too well and then Mildred came along and then Christopher came along.

The Blake family I have caught up with them twice, because in my first incarnation it was Vincent senior, it was Vincent senior but then they redrew the map and I got Vincent junior. That was a great support with the people always to the fore and very constructive another family who have gone out of the Council, the Sweeney family in Arklow. I worked with John in the 80s and then with Pat, when he was here as well and I remember them. I wish all the retirees well and those who are going forward I wish you the best of luck as well, I hope everything goes well for you. I want to pay tribute to you as well, Cathaoirleach, not just for this year but for all of the years I have known you, courageous leadership, not afraid to do the right thing rather than the popular thing and it's wonderful what you did. May I also, on this occasion, say that, I want to acknowledge the co-operation and help I always got from my own party, Fianna Fail in this chamber. Despite the trauma of 1991, no one interfered, only helped what I was trying to do here and the same way the Fine Gael party. We worked together to get things done and I want to acknowledge that I received that all the time.

Now, I suppose, when you think of leaving this, I have farming interests obviously and I hope to travel and I have a good interest in music and dancing as well. But I always think of what a prominent member of my organisation said to me when I told him recently I was retiring, that is Peter

Corrigan in Hollywood, he said from now on, Jim look up not down, move forward. There is a good future ahead and hopefully.

Other things on occasions like this you have to thank the Lord for giving you the health and the strength. Thank you to everyone, I hope I have helped or made a difference in some way throughout my 30 odd years in poll I can it is here. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Irene Winters and Christopher Fox.

CLLR WINTERS: I will let Christopher talk first.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead, Irene.

CLLR WINTERS: To all of the 7 councillors who are retiring today, Jim Ruttle, Councillor Pat Doran, Grainne McLoughlin, Christopher Fox, Daire Nolan and John Ryan, along with yourself, Cathaoirleach, Councillor Pat Vance.

It's probably the last few weeks you may be called a councillor and some of you may be happy with that. I think it's clear from the closing remarks that Jim has made and Pat and the others who are due to speak, that the town councillors, that contrary to popular perception, all of these people have entered politics because of a commitment to better their communities. Being a councillor requires good communication skills and have you to be able to manage your time well and be empathic, sympathetic, you have to have a smattering of knowledge on everything and then the ability to do the research when you have a vote on something to know the topic well. But you also have to have understanding, patience and commitment, I think it's going to be a huge loss to this Council that the seven that are retiring are retiring together and it will be the new Council's loss, but what will hold it together is the fact

that the staff and the experience of these people, by working with the staff, that has been gained will still be in the building. I wish all seven of you well, I want to thank you for the time that you have all given to your communities and to all of the things that have happened within the council and I wish you and all of your families the very best for the future. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

CLLR FOX: Thank you, Chairman. I suppose I have to say a few words, first of all can I also thank the staff from day one since I came in here, the staff have been nothing but helpful to me in every section of this building, from the girls in planning, the whole way through and right to the top when I was chairman, again, Lorraine, you were fantastic, so professional, it was a total eye-opener, also to Frank, Wicklow County Council is in safe hands, because, since you have come into the job I have been nothing but impressed and you were certainly going to lead the county forward and I wish you well in that.

To all of my fellow councillors, both retiring and those that are not, or the ones who are not, I wish you well in the election. I don't envy you, we have always had lively debate, I haven't always agreed with some of your point of view, but I have always respected it and I respect each and every one of you, regardless of your political affiliation and, can I say that any time that I maybe gave it hot and heavy it was nothing personal and I never took anything personal when it was coming back the other way, so I wish all the very best. I can't remember seven councillors retiring at one time before, it's certainly a lot. When you see people like Councillor Daire Nolan part of me

feels sorry that someone so young and fresh, I know he has other interests, but it's Wicklow's loss when people like Daire are retire, so the best of luck, and also Grainne and I know Pat has gone, but Pat is typical of what a lot of councillors are, they are people who start at community level and get involved in community groups and there is no greater person for being involved at community level than Pat Doran and I wish him well in his retirement. Of course my constituency colleagues, both John Ryan and yourself, chairman, John huge amount of respect for you, your passion for Bray in particular is infectious and you know, I have enjoyed working alongside you enormously and you were one of the people that kept me going when things, some days are more difficult than others and it's people like yourself, kept me going.

To yourself, Chairman, I found that you are probably the most courageous politician I have ever met. Regardless of how popular or unpopular a decision was, you made it because you thought it was the right thing to do. Time and time again you came into this chamber and made unpopular decisions, which were for the greater good and I commend you for that, you were the least Populace person you could walk into a room and tell them what you wanted to hear because you thought it was the right thing. Your loss will be huge in this chamber, the same I remember Councillor Jones retired the last time, it's your knowledge and experience and I think your loss will be massive.

To the man on my right, probably the person who has been closest to me on this, in this chamber, Councillor Ruttle, he is the person I have always confided in, he has offered advice, he has been a superb confidant and when I listen to what Jim has to say I feel I should be going on another 10

or 15 years. Thank you, Jim for your help over the years. Like Jim, I had a fantastic organisation around me, they made it so easy for me, it was an organisation that started with my father, they were friends of my father and in 1992 when he decided to go independent and they stuck with Mildred after and they stuck with me and they were just so loyal, so knowledgeable, they were just a fantastic group of people and I would like to thank them. Of course, you can't do this without support from your family, as you know Councillor Thornhill spoke about family dynasties and it was maybe a negative thing, but really and truly politics for me started answering the phone as a 7 or 8-year-old when there was no mobile phones or emails and people were calling to the house and looking for my father. I know I spoke to Councillor Timmins and Godfrey's father had consultations on a Saturday when you were trying to watch television.

It was the same for me, my father used to come in at 1.00pm for his lunch, we were always telling people ring at 1.00pm, he would come in at 1.00pm and take the phone off the hook. At 2.00pm, he would put the phone back on the hook and go out the door. If it wasn't for my mother, she held it all together.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's right.

CLLR FOX: My mother is a wonderful woman and thanks to her. Also to my wife, Jackie and the kids for their support and of course Mildred as well. I was on the front foot from day one because of Mildred, she was a fantastic politician. My father, of course he was a very popular person. He died at 46, I am 46 now, so with that there is a realisation that maybe you should look at family first and politics second. So thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Well done. APPLAUSE Councillor John Ryan.

CLLR RYAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I suppose it's difficult to come after that, because sometimes I don't feel like a real politician at all. When I see the length and breadth and history of people in this council, it's quite amazing and for me, like 15 years is just gone like an absolute flash. It feels like yesterday when I arrived here and the previous council had left all of the decisions around the development plan to the new council, which was an absolute gift that they gave us. So that first meeting I remember just getting two big huge tomes of development plans and I thought it was the worst decision I had ever made in my life, but thankfully it didn't turn out to be that way, it was an amazing time and an amazing 15 years and obviously just for me, it's about saying thank you to so many people.

I suppose the person I look at most when I joined was George Jones, as a fantastic mentor and just to see the way he contributed in a very thoughtful way and kind of took the party political stuff out of it and I think recognising that when the election is over the election is over and you are all together here to try and better the county with something that was really important for me to learn. Pat, the year you have had has been brilliant, but it's exactly what I would expect because you have done it every single time, you, honestly have been a fantastic mentor to watch. You say you were, you sat with the three Foxes, you are as cute as a fox in everything you do, so now I know where you got it from. And obviously having the double whammy to finish as both Cathaoirleach of Wicklow and Cathaoirleach of your town of Bray it's very special for you and I know

every time somebody is being install as Cathaoirleach of the county, you always say that it's a huge honour for them to lead their county, or their town and for their family and I know the family piece is hugely important to you. I think when you look back at it you can look back at 34 years you can be, extremely proud of in terms of everything you have managed to achieve. Okay, so you are retiring but never say never, I know there is a few councillors out here who are still trying to get back in, who previously retired. Christopher, just to return the absolute words you said about me, absolutely just in terms of someone who just was always there, when I just needed to kind of chat through issues and get a decent honourable absolutely independent perspective on an issue, you were 100% bang on and never let me down and I never forget that, so thank you very much for that. To everyone who is retiring, I am going to leave someone out now, it's been great to be here, 150 years, combined services, incredible, but I am also certain that there is new people with new energy, hopefully new diversity coming into this council, which I think is important, that it really reflects the county as a whole and I think that is going to be a fantastic thing, to my party colleagues, it's been fantastic, the party, first of all to give you the opportunity to actually represent them has been fantastic, to the time I have spent with my colleagues here it's been a fantastic bunch of people, I think we have been extremely united and hopefully we have managed to achieve the lot. To the other councillors in the council it's been brilliant to work with you all too, but absolutely, as others have said, to the staff of this council who, as you said yourself, Pat, have taken a bit of a bashes over the years, I just have come across fantastic

people, who are completely passionate and hugely driven, you talk about us as councillors but also the passion they show for the work they do and the dedication they do and the hours they work and the interest has been amazing and I just wish there was some way that we could get that message across to the general public, because I don't think that they really get to see that and it is so, so important that they actually do get to see that.

So just again to absolutely everyone, also to my family as well, because it is really important, you wouldn't be able to do that without that. So it's been a fantastic joy to have been here for 15 years and to everyone who is going for election have a great election. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor McLoughlin.

CLLR MCLOUGHLIN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. When I started on this journey it was George Jones who said to me you are going up for election and said for what? He said for the Council. I said I didn't know how to do anything in the Council or anything about the council. He said you will very shortly with me beside you and you are probably doing it anyway. S.

O that was all of those years ago and I have to say George was one of those people who brought me along the way and most times he was giving me a kick up the backside if I wasn't doing it the way he wanted me to do it and then on the left side I had Fianna Fail Pat who insisted I was part of his party. I was quite secure on both ends. I want to say a particular thanks to the staff here, I remember when I started doing the Live Come for Wicklow, I had to go after all of the different departments to find out what was going on and I couldn't believe how much great stuff was

being done and I just said why doesn't anyone know about this? why do we always hear the bad stuff and never the good stuff?

Then, over the years and I know I have said this before, my colleague John and I know he is going to be so missed here, he decided that PR for Wicklow is so important and it is really important because the staff here, for the most part, are great. I don't like going to doors when I see staff upset because of media stuff and things being said about them that are absolutely not true and they can do nothing about it, so for me and I know on behalf of 99% of my colleagues here, we believe in you, we think you have done a great job and it's been my privilege to work with each and every one of you.

who do I start with? My colleagues, I can't believe so many are going. Jimmy, you have been there from day one, like the old dad, notice I didn't call Pat the old dad, he would kill me.

Daire, thank you I have much. when we were going out and about the burst time around, we got each other in our humble beings then you have Christopher Fox and I see Mildred and we went through the whole thing together and it's going to be so sad, I still don't understand why Chris is going, because you are needed and I was really sad to see you go.

who have I forgotten? Pat, what can I say about Pat? Pat has been an absolute wonderful friend to me over the years. Originally I was, I am from Bray so when I was growing up we used to call into Pat to get the shoes done and an estate opposite was where we used to get our hair cut, so I have known Pat since I was a child and party politics aside you have treated me with courtesy and you have treated me

with respect and I hope, Pat, I did the same back to you and I think the work you have done for this council has been absolutely tremendous and you have I know not everyone agrees with you, but I know whatever you were doing you were doing with the best integrity and the best will of Wicklow so for that I can thank you.

Mr. Doran, now we have a certain pleasant relationship over the last ten years or so and Pat I would like to say thank you very much, we laughed more than we did anything else. He has got, I was sitting beside him and I said we could be called the Chuckle Brother and sister, this is before me and Nicola got that reputation. To my colleagues here thank you very much. To my colleagues in Greystones, they are absolutely fantastic team and it just, I think other councillors should come in and have a look, be a fly on the wall, people working together, irrespective of parties can achieve a lot more than if you don't work together. I wish this council, all the new people, all the staff the very best of love and luck and I know I am not going anywhere, I will probably be in here on a rampage about something or other in the years to come, thank you very much. It's been an absolute pleasure and privilege to have worked with you and served with you. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Daire Nolan.

CLLR NOLAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I will be as brief as I possibly can. I would first just like to thank the people who elected me five years ago, the communities in east Wicklow, but in particular the community of Newtown and Kilpedder which is where I am from. We hadn't had a councillor for a few years and people felt they needed someone and now came together as a committee to get me elected and it worked very well. I had the most incredible

team behind me in New town, it was absolutely unbelievable, we had a team of, at nights there was 20 of us descending on a housing estate to go canvassing I never saw a team like this and the great part of it was we were all new to it, so there was no one who was very experienced, we went out and learned as we went. I would have to pick out a half a dozen people from that. My own mother and father, of course, every night of the week they were out with me. My aunt and Geraldine and Robert, my aunt and uncle, they live in Bray, but they were out with us just as often, but there were two others who started the ball rolling at lot, who kept it going and were behind the scenes a lot and they were Pat Doyle, a former councillor here and Paul Kavanagh, the two of them were hugely involved and I owe them a debt of gratitude as well. I would like to thank the municipal staff and the Wicklow Municipal District. They were brilliant and I never had any problems with them, we have had seven district managers and I would like to particularly pay tribute to two who I have worked closely. I was sad when they left because I felt we had lost two great people, they were the former District Administrator, David Porter and Paul Byrne.

I felt they were an excellent for the Wicklow District and I would like to thank them for their work. I would like to thank the council staff themselves, in particular Lorraine Gallagher, whose name is always on the letter requesting we attend. Sometimes they don't get the praise they deserve, particularly in the press. One of the things, when I was elected I always wanted to try to do the right thing, to try to be on the right side of history in particular and in the five years there were two referendums and I was on the

yes side in both of them. Whether you agreed or disagreed with the cause you have to admit that is a wonderful thing about Ireland we have a truly healthy democracy because when the results came out, whether you agreed or disagreed with it, people moved on, they got on with it and they accepted it and everyone I think was happy at the end of it and I think that is a wonderful thing about a healthy democracy that we have in this country and I don't think we appreciate that sometimes, that this is a fantastic country for democracy, that everything is so open and so transparent.

I would just like to also pay tribute to the people in our own grouping here, Miriam, Christopher and Jim. It's been a great five years to serve with the four of us in this group and it was a wonderful experience and I also want to wish all of us who are stepping back as well the best of luck in whatever they do, I am sure your significant others have nice long lists for you, cutting grass or whatever, whatever project you may have put off, you now have no excuse, have you to get them done. And to those of you who standing for re-election, it's to stick your head above the parapet and put yourself before the public. It's a daunting task and I don't think that people appreciate that. I think it's a very daunting thing and a very scary thing, but at the end of it it's a very rewarding thing and to those of you who going for re-election I wish you the best of luck. I want to say a very small story, I have a deep connection to the Newtown and Kilpedder, but also Kilmacanogue and the connection is my mother, she taught for many years in Kilmacanogue National School in the first class she taught in her career, Councillor Fox was in that class. I think he has just recovered from it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: She didn't make a good job of that.

CLLR NOLAN: You can take it up with my mother. To show the circle of life, in the last class, Christopher's son John was in that class, so it was like the full circle had been completed and it was a wonderful time and she is delighted she has just got her free travel pass, so she is absolutely delighted with that, but it was definitely to say that is how deep the connection goes back to Kilmacanogue and the Fox family. It was an honour and a privilege to be here for the last five years and I want to thank you for the time we have had to work with her. I don't think any of us have fallen out completely. So I, no doubt I will still be around, like Grainne McLoughlin, I will be in here giving out about something. So best of luck to everything, thank you very much. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: As a first time councillor I would like to pass on greetings to you, a huge wealth of knowledge going to be lost. To you in particular I sat beside you for four years and tunnel coming in here for the first time I learnt so much from watching you in action. Have you been a good friend and I am sure you will continue to be a good friend to me. Again you are going to be a huge loss here, but you have contributed so much over the period of time in the council. You have had a fantastic last year as chair here and as Cathaoirleach in Bray.

Looking across, Grainne, you commented how well we worked together the six of us did, have a good working relationship over the last five years and hopefully whoever is there the next time will continue on with that and I thank you for your help and support, we go back to when you

were on the Greystones arts festival and I saw how you ran that and I would work closely with that you at that time. Again your role with Greystones 2020 and the huge effort you have put into that is to be commended and Councillor Ryan, I think I only got to know you there, you were part of the economic think-tank and your role in that, I was privileged to travel with you when you were Cathaoirleach of the county and you certainly did the county proud on that visit. Chris, I knew you through GAA circle before I came in here and I think I can certainly say you brought your strength, your tact, your guile that you had on the GAA field into this chamber and again you were a rock on the field and a rock in here and you certainly will be missed. Jim, we will miss the story, I really enjoyed the stories of times gone by and how interesting you are to listen to and to talk to and you shared a wealth of knowledge.

Daire, disappointed you are not going again, like us first-time councillors, it takes time to get to know the system and how people work here and I feel you are into, you have three years gone and you are only getting on your feet. I was disappointed you were not going again, but I know you have made the right choice for you personally. Pat isn't here, I used to follow you with hurling teams around the years and I have seen the tremendous work Pat did in his community in Carnew and I will be missed. So again thank you to all 7 of you for your help and support over the last five years.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: I know you are probably waiting for the refreshments so I won't delay things. I fully totally and

utterly agree with everything that has been said about everything about the retired councillors. I wish you every health, happiness and success in the rest of your lives. I am just looking down, I see mother, sisters, sons, daughters, brothers, all of the family members here today, as has already been said by yourselves, none of us can survive in politics without the support that we get from our family members and it's fantastic to see all of Pat children and Mary here. I know them since they were small, myself and they have given you, as you know, massive and huge support. In particular I want to single out Susan Fox, while everyone has talked about Johnny and Mildred and Christopher and rightly so there was one person who was the beating heart of the Fox organisation from day one and I don't think she got the full credit they is entitled to, so Susan to you, a very big thank you on behalf of all of the people of county Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: I wasn't going to speak, I actually wasn't going to speak, but I couldn't let it go out the door.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You couldn't resist it.

CLLR MURPHY: I might never be here again. There is 7 outstanding councillors leaving today and I came in five years ago and I know Alison, I can't think of your name now, I came in and they were fighting over where our seats would go and I turned around and said Jesus Christ, no one ever fights over my seat, no one wants it and she still slags me about it. Grainne, you were the first person that came up and said to me, look it, we are here now and we will sail this storm together and I think we have done that as women and as independent women and I am very proud to say that. Pat, the chairman, seen a good-looking woman,

besides his wife and decided to take me under his wing. There was two reasons for that, he needed me as a sideliner and I needed him to get on the Wicklow Tourism Board.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It was a mutual attraction.

CLLR MURPHY: It was a mutual attraction, actually my name is Mary by the way. I came in and I was accepted for me and me as a person and I will have to say sincerely thank you to every one of us. Especially the outgoing councillors. I am probably going out more broken-hearted than everyone else, because will is not many women who can say they can lose three men in the one day. In all honesty it's devastating. I don't know who is going to sit beside me and it's a big, if I am here, it's going to be a big change for me. But look it, all I can say is you all supported me and Chris has a special link with me because of family connection and that family connection died not so long ago but I value our friendship, Chris. Thank you. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are coming near to the end now. Shay Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Just like previous speakers I want to pay tribute to all seven councillors.

Firstly to you, Cathaoirleach, I have always seen you as the father of the council. You are not afraid to make a tough decision, whether it's popular or not, and certainly you need to be commended for your efforts over the last whatever, 30 years that you have been here. The contribution you have made to this county, the experience, the dedication that you have shown is to be commended and I would just like to wish you well in your retirement, I think it's unfortunate that you are leaving, like the other six councillors, but I wish you well in your retirement. To

both of my colleagues here on my right-hand side councillor Ryan and Councillor McLoughlin. When I came in here it was a daunting prospect not knowing what happened. Certainly my colleagues Councillor Ryan and Grainne here beside me were experienced and knew how to guide me in the right direction. I appreciate that from both of you. I have been lucky enough to sit on the community SPC with Jim, I will call you Jim rather than councillor. Jim has a wealth of experience, he will certainly be sadly missed by the people of west Wicklow, we had a nice tribute to him on our last SPC meeting, there is no question you have given a tremendous service to your county, in particular west Wicklow, I think you should be very proud of your achievements on that. Councillor Doran, the quiet man, a very productive man, particularly in the Carnew area. Might not say a lot, but get things done and was a popular man with councillors and staff alike. Daire, my municipal colleague, you mention your support base in Newtown and Kilpedder, there is no doubt you have served those well for the last five years and you should be very proud of everything you have achieved in the area over the last five years and I would like to wish you well in your future roles. To my good friend Councillor Fox.

I suppose a little story I have, about five-and-a-half years ago when I was considering going for Wicklow County Council myself I went over to visit Chris on the farm and we sat down on a bail of straw and we had a chat about what was involved as a councillor and he told me nothing only a pack of lies. And to add insult to injury he is leaving me now. He has a bigger smile on his face on the day he is leaving. To my mind I am disappointed he is leaving, I think he is far too young, sorry to say that to him, to be

leaving this council. His experience, his dedication, his vision, his promotion of the county, it was mentioned earlier about the word respect, he has respect for everyone, whatever side of the fence you might be on, he will respect your point of view and that doesn't come easy in this job and it's just his dedication to the people that he serves, across the county because I know he has served people across all parts of county wicklow and never says no to anyone, I think that is tremendous testament to his efforts and values that he has. He will certainly be missed by, certainly by myself and certainly by all of the other people, particularly in the other areas of the people that he has ably supported and so again I wish you very well, make sure that herd of cows are looked after well and enjoy your retirement, well done. APPLAUSE.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: On behalf of myself and our group I would like to wish everyone all the very best in your retirement, retirement, it's probably not retirement, it's probably a career change is a better way to describe it. I find coming into the chamber brings it back to a sporting parlance is like playing a football match or a hurling match back in the day when the ball, you came in here the ball is thrown in and we get stuck in in different ways. Sometimes we agree with each other, sometimes we argue with each other and that is democracy and it's healthy and it's good for our constituents but when the whistle is blown we are good pals and friends. I want to wish every single one of you the very best. Some of you are very young and age, I don't buy into the age thing, I think it's just a number.

So I have no doubt that you will probably rethink as time

goes by and you will probably end up back in here. I just want to wish everyone, it's great to see the families here supporting you and the traditions and everything else, but you can't beat the bit of competition, it's great. We can't all agree with each other, we have to have an argument, chair, if I can, and Grainne, because I have worked with you in the town council and the district council for many years. He always had a great team and we agree and sometimes we might have the odd disagreement and again I think that is very good, personally, but talking to you about yourself, Chair, I have a lot of respect for you, I have had a fair bit of interaction with you, I haven't always agreed one and you haven't always agreed with me and there is nothing wrong with that at all.

It's all part of what we did, every one of us has different opinions on how the world should be and how things should be, but the one abiding memory I have of you and every time we end up in a situation when we are having conversations I always think of it and that is you walking down the main street in Bray past Woolworths and you were heading down to go out to play for Bray Wanderers, that is the memory I always have of you. Every time I have an argument with you, I think of that. I wish you the best, you have had a long political career and I am sure you have enjoyed it, it's a challenging activity, it's an enjoyable activity, but the public own you once you get into it, whether you like it or don't like it, that is the way it is. I think most of us probably enjoy out of what we do here is being of service to the community and servicing people and trying to do our best in every way we can for them, so I wish every single one of you the very best.

Enjoy what you decide to do going forward and if you change your mind you might come back into the chamber under a different guise so well done, everyone.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We have three more councillors and then I want to let Frank in for a minute and I am conscious of catering staff upstairs as well, so please. Councillor John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: I will be as brief as I can be. I suppose it will be seen as a sad day indeed for the loss of the experience, the hard work and the honesty that I whether refer to you as the magnificent 7. Over the course of my ten years here, decades here in this chamber, I certainly appreciate each and every one of you individually and collectively and I won't discuss sports, whether it be football, hurling or Gaelic, because where I am from we don't forgive, so we won't mention anything about sporting achievements or otherwise. But certainly, while it is a sad day for Wicklow County Council and the staff and the members of these chambers to lose that experience from the shortest term to the longest term, .

I think each and every one of you in your own rights have achieved a huge amount for the county and as Jimmy Shaughnessy used to say, our garden county and this county of ours. I just feel like no doubt we are losing you to the chambers but as a county we won't be losing you and the most important thing outside of, because this is the toughest challenge anyone can have is to be a public representative.

I would sooner play against Carnew or any of these teams but certainly, at least your families will get you back and that they will enjoy having you 100% around the house and

under their feet. Certainly for a week or two.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't know about that.

CLLR SNELL: I certainly want to thank you on behalf of myself and Gerry and Oliver, I think it would be remiss if you didn't mention today of all days, Councillor Pat Kavanagh, Mervyn Morrison and Conal Kavanagh.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Thornhill and last speaker is Nicola Lawless then.

CLLR THORNHILL: [Speaking in Irish] Cathaoirleach, may I just say I would agree with what everyone has said. I wish everyone that is retiring the best and I myself, like my colleague and speak on behalf of our group, the group, I like to say that like Councillor O'Brien and myself, newly, new people to the council, we do appreciate the fact that, being a councillor it's a very hard job from the point of view that you are putting your head above the parapet and an awful lot of people can't see, but the thing about it is there is so much in it, but I would like to say especially and I know from my own view, to your family, to your spouses to your children, people don't realise what an intrusion it is to your life and you are doing it for the best, I mean people are there and they say, well, what are you doing, but fair play to anyone, for putting your head above the parapet and I would like to say, as well, and I would agree there with Councillor Snell saying about the late Councillor Kavanagh, I mean it puts everything in perspective, but overall I would like to say and I know that I, as a member, maybe things have come to the fore, but we have to discuss and as public representatives it's on us to discuss matters and put things out in the open and whatever and the thing about it is it's discussion and if we can't discuss together and I think it's for as

Councillor Nolan said it makes for good democracy, so from that, go ro maith agat.

CLLR MITCHELL: Just in relation to the seven retiring councillors, thank them for their service and I will echo the comments rather than repeat them. I would like to comment on the retirement of Grainne McLoughlin, having a running mate in the same party can be a difficult experience, because there are natural frictions but I would say that relations with Grainne were always bright and cheerful. That is not easy to achieve, so I would like to thank her for that. Also I think has Greystones has been much improved by the work that Grainne did on summer festivals and the Live Come and various other websites and to thank her for her work on the LCDC, it was a great pleasure working with her, thank you.

CLLR LAWLESS: Thank you, on behalf of Sinn Fein here, we would like to wish the 7 retiring all the best. As I said 7 heavy hitters of councillors are now gone, but it's still opening up an opportunity for some new fresh blood to come on and we are losing a lot of experience, very nice to see a very emotional today, Pat, 30-odd years, he does have a heart, that is what I was, I was a little bit emotional seeing you getting emotional Pat, there is something seriously wrong there.

But, look, we all have had our ups and downs here, we have had a great political debate here in the chambers over the last five years that I have been here and I know, just from the five years that I have been councillor, you are given nearly 100% of your time to this job and I can't imagine what it's been like for the other councillors who have been here long-term and so I am sure you are going to enjoy your

peace and quiet and as I am sure your spouses will be sick of you within a week, so with the divorce referendum coming up it may be dropping to two years it might be useful!.

Sorry.

I want to wish you all the best for the election and hopefully I will be back here myself and see familiar faces. I would also like to acknowledge Grainne McLoughlin, I know we are on different sides of the fence, but my first experience of you was at the summer festivals. You were like a little peacock I was only a young girl, the experience doesn't go unrecognised and us as six councillors have worked together cohesively and we have got a tremendous amount of work done so hopefully we can continue that. All the best to everyone and well done for your retirement as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Finally, Councillor Timmins and then I will let the Chief Executive and then refreshments.

CLLR TIMMINS: I am not going to spend time going over the 7 people. They all know what I think of them. A high opinion of every one of them. I would like to thank the service they have given. My old friend Jim from the west, thank, Jim, Christy who started the same time as me got elected 15 years ago the same day I as I did. Thank you, a guy of superb integrity.

Daire Nolan, I just gold to know you in the last five years, a lovely guy, a great guy. May two party colleagues here, John Ryan who started the same day as me, thank you for your contribution. Grainne, your commitment is plain to see. Pat Doran my colleague in Baltinglass I would like to thank him and finally chairman to thank you and really thank you for the support you gave me when I was chairman a

year ago, you were advice chairman and you were a superb support and really something I will always remember and just to thank everyone again for the support they have given to this council. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just on behalf of myself and staff I would like to wish all 7 outgoing councillors the very best of luck. In particular to Councillor Vance who was a gentleman and a pleasure to deal with. So professional and courteous and you will hear from the staff in Bray, in housing in corporate and around the organisation. As councillors have said he always wanted the right thing and always saw the bigger picture. He didn't always agree with us and when he didn't he told us straight up, but when he did he backed us 100%.

We saw that recently in things that will benefit Wicklow for year cost come. He was a man of patience and resilience, we have seen that through the years and we will see projects coming to fruition in the last year or two. I know he will be watching from a side in relation to the likes of Fassaroe and the Bray Golf Links and I would like to wish himself, his wife, son and daughter the best of good health in years to come. Also to the other councillor, to Councillor Ryan and Fox, also very progressive and supporting projects that will benefit the people of the county for many years. To Councillor Doran I have been there in the Wicklow Home Care and Hospice and councillor McLoughlin who put Wicklow on the map as the most liveable town.

And Jim Ruttle and to Councillor Nolan, who brought the young man's perspective to the chamber over the last five

years. It is disappointing to see so much experience going, there is no other way of putting it, but it is a tough job that people have in terms of representing and developing their communities and balancing that with work, business and family life.

So I would like to wish all seven and their families the best of luck and again on behalf of myself and the staff to thank them very much for how professional and courteous they have been to us. Also to members who are running again, wish them all the best of luck. Thank you. APPLAUSE
CATHAOIRLEACH: Up in the canteen there is refreshments and everyone is welcome.