

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW
COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT DRUID'S
GLEN HOTEL
NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY,
CO WICKLOW

ON

MONDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2020 AT
2:00pm

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Elaine McCarthy

MS GALLAGHER: Good afternoon members, you're welcome in the Druid's Glen in the last meeting of 2020. Motions of sympathy are for Vera Marnane and Declan Roberts.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Any more votes of sympathy?

So, we'll stand for a moment. Members just before I get into the meeting, I want to point out that today's meeting is 1hr 55 minutes, so we'll finish at five to four all right.

Cllr Jodie Neary: the ongoing Greystones Community National School and Greystones Community College. Do you have a seconder? Cllr Mags Crean. OK, members I'm going to take that suspension of standing orders if that's all right for anybody. No objections to that?

I'll take that at ten minutes to four, Cllr Jodie Neary all right. We have a busy agenda today so just to go through the agenda before I start. I'm going to take items from 1, 2-13 as they're laid out on the agenda and then 16, 17 and then item number 15 and take the Chief Executive's Report last all right. Item number one, To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 7th September 2020 (copy

attached). Already agreed thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number two. To confirm and sign minutes of LPT meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 21st September 2020 (copy attached). Thank you.

Number three, To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 5th October 2020 via Zoom (copy attached). Cllr Paul O'Brien proposed and seconded by Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

Agreed, yeah, thank you. Item number four, To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 2nd November 2020 via Zoom (copy attached).

Proposed by Cllr Edward Timmins and seconded by Cllr John Snell, agreed? Yes.

Item number five, To consider the disposal of 0.0580 hectares comprised in Folio WW4484 Co. Wicklow being land situated in the townland of Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Thomas Tutty and Ms. Marle Tutty of Watery Lane Cottage, Hollywood, Co Wicklow (as per notice previously circulated). Proposer and seconder?

Proposed by Cllr Irene Winters and seconded by Cllr Paul O'Brien. Agreed.

Item number six, To confirm and sign minutes of annual budget meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 23rd November 2020 (copy attached).

Proposed by Cllr Gail Dunne and seconded by Cllr Anne Ferris, agreed? Thank you.

Item number seven, To consider the disposal of property comprised in Folio No WW2758L being the property situated at 30 Beechwood Park, Kilcoole, Co Wicklow by Transfer Order to Ms. Linn Trogen and Mr Aidan Kelly, 30 Beechwood Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow (as per notice previously circulated).

Proposer and seconder, proposed by Cllr Tom Fortune, and seconded by Cllr Gerry Walsh.

MS GALLAGHER: Is that agreed? Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number eight. To consider the disposal of property comprised in Folio No WW2842L being the property situated at Bawnogues, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow by Transfer Order to Mr. Gerard Halloran, Bawnogues, Co. Wicklow (as per notice previously circulated). Proposed by Cllr John Mullen and seconded by Cllr Patsy Glennon, is that agreed. Thank you.

Item number nine. To consider the disposal of 176 sq. meters or thereabouts known as The Science Laboratory, Clermont House, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Ms Caoimhe Doyle, 128 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow by way of a 2 year and 7-month lease commencing 8th December 2020 (as per notice previously circulated). Proposed by Cllr Paul O'Brien and seconded by Cllr Gerry Walsh.

Thank you members. And item Number Ten, To establish the Wicklow County Council Access and Inclusion Committee. I need a proposer and seconder, proposed by Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, and seconded by Cllr Anne Ferris. Thank you.

To ratify the nominations to the Wicklow County Council Access and Inclusion Committee: Wicklow Municipal District: Councillor Gail Dunne. Bray Municipal District: Councillor Melanie Corrigan, Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy, and Councillor Grace McManus. Arklow Municipal District: Councillor Miriam Murphy. Greystones Municipal District: Councillor Mags Crean. Baltinglass Municipal District: Councillor John Mullen. is that agreed? A proposer and seconder. Cllr Paul O'Brien and Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy seconded.

And all agreed.

Item number eleven. To consider the nomination of a representative from the Wicklow Municipal District to the Local Traveller Accommodation Committee due to the resignation of Cllr Irene Winters. I want to thank Irene for her work there. That is a Municipal District nomination, do we have a proposal from the Municipal District for that position?

MS GALLAGHER: If there isn't it can go to the Municipal District.

>>: We can put it on the agenda for January.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll send that back to the Municipal District. To consider the Nomination of Cllr. Sylvester Bourke to the Wicklow Naturally CLG., that is proposed by Cllr Tommy Annesley. Do we have a seconder, and seconded by who it was? Cllr Peir Leonard. Agreed?

MS GALLAGHER: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number thirteen, to take charge Oakland Arklow Cllr Pat Fitzgerald and seconded, Cllr Sylvestor Bourke.

MS GALLAGHER: We'll go back to Hill View Carnew.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Proposed by Cllr Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Can I make a query on it.

Normally taking in charge all works are completed before we take them in charge but certainly the work on this particular estate and another one in Shillelagh, hasn't been completed, the lights aren't working in it, and secondly there's an issue in terms of a development there as well.

While I propose we take it in charge as an effort to get the works carried out and finished off, nevertheless there's issues there as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. So, you're proposing we go ahead and take it in charge, do you have a seconder for that, Cllr John Mullen. Is that agreed?

We can note those concerns of Cllr Vincent Blake.

MS GALLAGHER: Agreed OK.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Oakwood in Arklow, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald proposed, and seconded by Cllr Peir Leonard. Pierview Wicklow, Cllr Gail Dunne and Cllr Paul O'Brien.

MS GALLAGHER: Agreed members? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Seahaven in Wicklow, is proposed by Cllr Gail Dunne, and seconded by Cllr Irene Winters. That agreed. Taking in charge of the Willows, Kilcoole, proposed by Cllr Tom Fortune and seconded, do we have a seconder, Cllr Mags Crean, Cllr Lourda Scott.

MS GALLAGHER: That agreed? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Next housing estate is upper Ballard proposed by Cllr Vincent Blake and seconded by Cllr Anne Ferris.

>>: Lights not working in it and residents there, only a small number of houses in it. But, again, I just restating again before we take over the estates all the works are carried out in regard to them this is not the case the work hasn't completed but I have no problem taking it in charge to get an effort to get the works completed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You're happy to go with it, so we'll go ahead and note your concerns for and bring it back to the relevant persons. So that's agreed? The next one is the Village Gate Kilcoole, proposed by Cllr Tom Fortune and seconded by Cllr Derek

Mitchell is that agreed, agreed. And final estate is west mount court Wicklow, proposed by Cllr Paul O'Brien and seconded by Cllr John Snell. Is that agreed?

Yes. Item number 16 on the agenda is To consider the passing of a resolution to vary the car parking charges as set out in Schedule A Bray Municipal District of the Wicklow County Council Parking Bye-Laws 2017: Zones D and H from 30 cent per hour to 50 cent per hour (from 3 euros per day to 5 euros per day) and to extend the parking period from : Monday to Friday to Monday to Saturday (Zone D=Strand Road from Martello Terrace to Fontenoy Terrace and Quinsboro Road - East of railway to Strand Road and Zone H North Beach Car Park) and this was discussed at the Bray Municipal District and passed by a vote of five to three. And - Cllr Grace McManus you want to come in.

CLLR MCMANUS: I have a proposal, we had a very good discussion at Bray MD level about this, but, it wasn't on the agenda for the Bray MD meeting and we haven't had a chance to do much public consultation on it, so, since that Bray meeting, we've done a little bit of chatting in the community

and there's two big issues that are really coming back one is in terms of the amount of businesses down the beach who have workers there, who park for the day, there's nursing homes down there, so you'd have front line staff, who are unhappy with the increase in the day rate. And the other big issue that came back is the people who park down the beach for the day to use public transport to get to work. I had a couple of people tell me who don't work in the city centre but near the centre that said the increase of two euro a day or ten a week, would mean it is cheaper to get to work, rather than, so we keep the increase so go from 30 cent a hour to 50 Monday to Saturday but keep the day-rate at three euro which is paying for six hours anyway under the new cost but will hopefully act as protective measure for the workers down the beach and try to promote people using public transport.

So, I have it in writing if you want it.

MS GALLAGHER: If you want mind.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan table ten.

CLLR BEHAN: I'm not in favour of this, I voted it against it on the night in question. Mainly because the public got no opportunity to give their

view on this. It was just, it wasn't on the agenda on the night in question it came up as a result of a discussion. And so, it wasn't a formal motion that had been sent out to councillors in advance and the public did not have an opportunity and as Cllr Grace McManus has very clearly pointed out there are views about this, particularly the people who work on the seafront area.

So, I mean, I'm quite interested in what Cllr McManus has proposed but I actually think rather than delaying the meeting this should be referred back to Bray Municipal District and opportunity for the public to give a view on it before we make a decision on it, thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity, this motion was brought to Bray MD in the light, that was over a month ago, and since then, I've had the opportunity to consult people through social immediate a face-to-face and speak to businesses relation to it, and the results have been very positive, nobody wants to see any increase at all, but the reality of the fact is that we have no discretionary spend in Bray Municipal

District. We have community members and community groups, really actively looking for works and improvements in the area, and they're not going to happen without a source of funding to support them. So I was speaking to, I've spoken to people who park down there, and travel, on the DART as Cllr Grace McManus has referenced we do have free parking in Bray at the moment which can be used and some of the parking where you would park your car to walk down to the DART is an equivalent distance to where you park your car and walk to the DART, as council Cllr Joe Behan mentioned this came without a wider consultation, there's ample time since then to speak to members of the public with it. And I really, really want to see improvements to pray Enniskerry and Kilmac and I think this will allow that to happen thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor, Cllr Anne Ferris, table twelve.

CLLR FERRIS: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Yes, this item is on the agenda following our council meeting which took place on the November 3rd, which is five weeks ago, five weeks and three days ago. I brought it up under the context when we were talking

about the budget for the Municipal District and where it was indicated the Municipal District would not be getting its money for the public realm, I for one would be very concerned about that if we didn't have money to provide for the needs of whatever is needed to be done in Bray. So, under that context, I brought it up, to the at the meeting, I know that three members voted against it for various reasons, one that wasn't on the agenda or that there wasn't sufficient public consultation, but as I say, I mentioned the date the third of November there has been plenty of ample time since it was well documented in the local newspapers, it was some of the members took to Facebook to get the views of the people out there and of which I kept a close eye on, and certainly, there was a lot of public support for it.

Basically, because we're raising it by 20 cents. Now, I would ask anybody what can you buy for 20 cents? Very little on its own. And also, apart from raising the much-needed revenue of 200,000 for the Bray area, I do not believe that it will put people off parking down the seafront, in fact hope three it will have a turnover of cars and especially

in the summertime when people come in early during the school holidays, park there for the day and I know we all love to see tourists and coming to Bray but really it is just to have a turnover of traffic down there. I have surveyed a number of businesses on the seafront who have been asking for this increase for many, many years now. Because they're concerned about all day parking outside their premises and their customers can't get parking. And drive off and go somewhere else. This was well discussed at our meeting on the second of November. On the third of November rather. Every member had a chance to make their views known. Five members of the council supported it, three members voted against, so, I am asking that this proposal be taken today and voted upon by the all the members of the council. I don't believe bringing it back to the Bray Municipal District council will make a difference or change the vote in any way, but it does put us back a number of months from being able to collect the moneys that are really much needed for Bray in order for us to make improvements and also to keep up with the, the case of footpaths or whatever else, I'm formally

proposing this motion and asking that it be voted on.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Cllr Anne Ferris. Cllr Erika Doyle? Table seven.

CLLR ERIKA DOYLE: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Cllr Anne Ferris said a lot of what I was going to say, I suppose this has come about, we all know the funding structure for local government isn't fit for purpose, so we've had to be imaginative this year, especially with everything Covid-19-related. The reality is for a 20-cent increase this will bring over 200,000 Euro to the Bray Municipal District. Money that can be used for our constituents are looking for every day of the week. Just a quick comparison the equivalent parking in Dún Laoghaire, another attractive coastal area with my demand parking is two Euro per hour so to stick 30 cent is to encourage long stay all day parking. The businesses that I have spoken to and in fact residents that I've spoken to would encourage a higher turnover of parking, they don't want people being able to park there all day every day. And pay such a small amount.

Quite a few of the businesses do have staff that

park all day, I would argue that having spoken to some business owners some of those staff are possibly driving a minute or two down the road to park all day, maybe something else could be looked at there. I think the benefit to the seafront, to visitors to the seafront and the locals who like to walk would be worth it in the charge so I would like to second this proposal that it is taken today thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, that's the proposal from Cllr Anne Ferris, and you're seconding, thank you. Cllr Paul O'Brien, table 22.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you Cathaoirleach and I am happy to second Cllr Grace McManus's amendments and I recognise that no-one wants to necessarily sit here and listen to all the Bray councillors have a debate about parking in Bray. And I also recognise that this came before a Bray meeting when there was the looming budget scenario that left Bray without discretionary spend.

But, I think there's been a healthy consultation with people of Bray and for me it is easy to maybe sit and look at the issue and have a view on it, but, what stood out for me is the people who are

directly impacted by an increase, and 20 cent adds up for some people maybe others not, 20 cent an hour adds up for people when they add it up at the end of the week and month, and I suppose, they have a right to have a view on impact on them directly. And I suppose, for us, there's a challenge, imagine across the whole county in part of parking situation how we manage in our towns but this is something that the message to impose extra charges on people at a time when the imposition of extra anything represents a burden, so I would be listening to the people who are directly impacted, and be looking at I think quite a measured response from Cllr Grace McManus to say yes people do come into Bray and they do see it as a tourist destination and might step off and they're using our seafront as an amenity and it is fair to ask them for the 50 cent increase but people working in a nursing home or really serves the community need to park for the day I think they deserve to be looked after and recognised in terms of the day rate. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Cllr Paul O'Brien.

Cllr Edward Timmins, table four.

CLLR TIMMINS: Could I just ask for future references that matters like this be dealt at MD level and voted on at MD level, I know before we had long discussions what can be delegated but here is a perfect example of something that should be done at Municipal District level if that's legally possible. For future references I could ask this does locally.

CATHAOIRLEACH: This was in voted of favour five to three. Will you read the proposal.

MS GALLAGHER: It is reserve to vary these charges, that's the legal advice. So, we have a proposal on the agenda, proposed and seconded and if I understand it correctly, it is to the amendment the proposal is to increase the car parking charges from 30 cent to 50 cent per hour in the zones outlined there on, and Cllr Grace McManus is proposal is the same to increase the charges from 30 cent per hour to 50 cent per hour so no difference there. The amendment is the day rate stay at three Euro as oppose today five Euro so we will be voting on Cllr Grace McManus and Cllr Dermot O'Brien's

proposal. So, the increase is 30 cents to 50 cents, but the amendment is if you're going the full day it is three opposed to five, but still paying the hour rate is that correct.

MS GALLAGHER: Cllr Joe Behan, I want to refer it back to the Bray Municipal District for the public to be consulted.

Later can I clarify in relation to that there's no public consultation requirement under the act for this, this is a reserve function of the elected members of Wicklow County Council, so there's no public consultation required by law.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan, I'm bringing in, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald I will bring you back in in a he canned is.

CLLR FITZGERALD: We're discussing the rate going from 30 to 50 cent. We have hour rate in Arklow in one Euro and in that context, I will vote against it, we're spending time here where we could spend on other matters, if it were discussed at MD, we take it that County Council with it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Joe Behan, I said I will bring you back in for a minute.

CLLR BEHAN: I just want to say because there's not a legal requirement to consult the public, doesn't mean we shouldn't do it and from the point of other members too, these issues come up in your municipal district it is an important the precedence set that the public is asked their pin opinion. We should be discussing this in Bray.

CATHAOIRLEACH: This was discussed in Bray and it was voted on, now, I'm taking the vote now. You didn't have a seconder. Can you write that out and hand.

MS GALLAGHER: We're OK with that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Proposed by Cllr Joe Behan and seconded by Cllr Peir Leonard.

Later I'm at the behest of the elected members because it is not an amendment, the proposal is not an amendment, it is a second proposal.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So, I'm going to take... It's already it is not an amendment, it is a reserved function of the elected council, if the elected members want to vote this today, we take the

amendment first. I'm going to go with the amendment with Cllr Grace McManus and seconded by Cllr Paul O'Brien. Already proposed by Cllr Grace McManus and seconded by Cllr Dermot O'Brien. Cllr Tommy Annesley?

CLLR ANNESLEY: I'm not happy with this vote but I never abstained from a vote in my life before, but I believe this is a matter for Bray municipal area, no-one, split the hairs on this, but, definitely, after Cllr Pat Fitzgerald pointed out to me it is one euro an hour in Arklow I do agree that the charges should go up, so, I'm a bit confused, Cllr Grace McManus's proposal is to go up on hour rate but leave the daily rate at three Euro. Already amendment is the same as proposal with the exception for daily rate remain at three euros as opposed to five euros.

(counting votes)

MS GALLAGHER: So that's 13 for, 17 defence and two not present.

Now we take the proposal from Cllr Anne Ferris, seconded by Cllr Erika Doyle 22 for, nine against and one not present.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Item number seventeen is, Wicklow County Council Meetings: (a) To consider the holding of Remote Meetings (amendment of paragraph 6 Wicklow CC standing orders: Place of Meeting: Document attached) (b) To consider and adopt draft Supplementary Standing Orders to regulate proceedings of remote meetings (copy of draft standing orders attached). So, I'm going to hand you over to Lorraine on this one.

MS GALLAGHER: So, members will be aware that ministerial order has been signed given affect to the holding of statutory meetings by local authorities and this basically means all decisions are both taken by elected members at such meetings whether physically or emotionally present is the same status in law as taken as a physical meeting. You may avail to facilitate the attendance and participation to ensure efficient carrying out of business while protecting the health and safety of elected members and local authority staff. So, it is a matter for the elective members of the local authority to decide if and how meetings of the local authority will be held remotely so if the elected

members of Wicklow County Council decide today that they will hold meetings of the county council remotely or a blend of remote and physical, then we'll have to amend the standing orders and I have circulated it, paragraph six, in terms of the place of meeting and then also, to adopt draft, the draft supplementary standing orders which will be required to regulate the meetings, so if for example we're holding remote meetings or a high the standing order of Wicklow County Council, will be in situ but run alongside the standing orders for the holding of remote meetings so the, we received like all local authorities, guidelines for the preparation of standing orders for remote meetings and that was circulated considered by the Protocol Committee and considered and circulated by the corporate policy group this morning, so I've circulated the supplementary standing order, and the areas outlined in red are the changes or additions in relation to Wicklow County Council meetings. So I just run through, it is not a large document, so the first page, talks about holding remote meetings and where they can be held, a blend and mix in the council chamber and elected members

rooms or online, how we're going to manage those remote meetings, and I suppose, one thing that would be of concern is if an elected member loses connectivity while participating remotely, so we have provided for that, so for example, members should inform the Meetings Administrator or designated staff member by telephone if they lose connection in accordance with the provisions of connectivity of standing order but it would be a matter of the elected members themselves where their connectivity is so they would need sufficient broadband from where they're zooming in from. So, for example, if we were taking a vote, I suppose that would be the most important thing not to disenfranchise any members for connect and it is there at 18 where connectivity cannot restore in a period of three minutes the elected member would immediately telephone the meeting's administrator or receive a call from the administrator and the vote will be recorded accordingly, playing aloud the meeting into the microphone. The other area is meeting procedures and we're asking elected members just in terms of logging on, minutes in advance, you know, so we can make sure that

everything goes OK. Another important item to mention would be where motions are coming from the floor, we had an example where Cllr Grace McManus moved a motion from the floor, elected members if it was a wordy motion, in a physical space we would circulate them but that won't be possible if we're operating online, so we're proposing where elected member participating remotely proposes a motion not listed on the agenda or amendment not in common form that they e-mail the motion to the Cathaoirleach and administrator so we read it out to participating row motely and just give clarity. Again, it covers important things like declarations of interest, elected members do have to declare their interest under the ethics like they do in a physical space and it is important that's made known. If an elected member is participating remotely. Again the order of debate, this is all contained in our own standing order so it is in the supplementary standing orders, and I suppose, one important thing is relation to meeting in committee, it is a reserved function of the council to pass resolution if they feel they need meeting committee at any stage that

would involve members of the press, and members of the public leaving a public space, that has to happen if we're on a remote meeting as well so we're asking all elected members to confirm that in such a situation that there is nobody at the meeting that shouldn't be there. And again, Cathaoirleach, in our standing orders, matters not governed by standing order, are a decision for the Cathaoirleach and that's mirrored here in the supplement considering standing orders as well. So, the first thing for the elected members to decide today is if and when they're going to have remote meetings, so Cathaoirleach I'll hand it over to you and maybe you mention what we discussed this morning.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There's two parts, part A and B and first is the Wicklow County Council meeting to consider the holdings of remote meetings and amendment of paragraph six, Wicklow County Council standing order place of meetings. So, I think as Lorraine has outlined, I will need a proposer and seconder for part A and B, if there's questions. The other thing that we did discuss this morning was that we would have a six-month sunshine clause

in this was as Cllr Joe Behan's proposal or suggestion earlier on and that's a very good thing and we should put that in. And we will review it in six months' time because none of us know at the moment how long co-individual will last or how long we're in the situation we are now, about you we can review that in six months' time. Is that all right? I'm going to start bringing in members. Cllr Tom Fortune wants to come in.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, yeah, I just the only comment I'd like to make is propose what has been put forward as a good way of us operating going forward for the six-month period.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I want to second what Cllr Tom Fortune has said.

CLLR BEHAN: Cathaoirleach just following on from the point you made there, it was a sunset clause I was proposing which the councillors body nationally has also recommended. I think that should be included as part of the standing order amendment today rather than just noting it

separately that it is an intrinsic change, we made today that it is only for six months.

And it can be reviewed as you say Cathaoirleach if we need to, hopefully we will be back to normal action in six months.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I would second that Cllr Joe Behan as well. Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I wanted, you came in on a point I wanted to make, but to second what Cllr Joe Behan has suggested there. There's many of us here in this room at the moment who are actively working and looking at trying to get these flexible options on a longer-standing so to be able to very view in six months rather than in six months it is not valid would be something I would support. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Just, I very much support it as well. Just as the one issue that did come up what Cllr Joe Behan has eluded to as well, but hopefully it won't last more than six months and is it possible that if we do get all clear within three or four months, that we could be reviewed with during that

period of time.

MS GALLAGHER: We had a corporate policy group in the new council chamber and we were mentioning to the corporate policy group we can't facilitate 16 members in the council chamber so it would be proposed moving forward in January is a hybrid meet something we will talk to the elected members working with you, and people working with you over the next couple of weeks and new year about getting a number of elected members, maximum 16 into the council chamber, then other members who might want to come into the building can participate in the elected members rooms and then for those elected members who want to participate remotely can do so, we have the technology and we have the capability and we're going to work on that. So, you know, so, just in terms of reviewing it, I think we'll keep it under review month by month and see how it is all going.

>>: That's fine. Hopefully as I said three months, but I know we're optimistic in that regard, if it did happen, a miracle did happen in three months and we got all clear I think that I know from being a representative, it shouldn't continue any

longer than is necessary.

MS GALLAGHER: What you're agreeing to today is that we can, a changing standing orders and you have the legislation there to hold online meetings, meetings online, make statutory decisions online basically, so I will take two votes, one for the amendment, one for six months standing orders and another one, so proposed by Cllr Tom Fortune and seconded by Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

So, this is the amendment of the standing order to be reviewed in six months. (counting votes) 31 for and one not present and to adopt the supplementary standing orders to regulate the meetings and that is proposed by Cllr Joe Behan and seconded by

CATHAOIRLEACH: Myself. 31 for and one not present thank you members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number fifteen on the agenda is to receive a presentation from To receive a presentation Consarc Consultants: Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains Masterplan and Visitor Orientation Plan. and I would welcome presenter online. First, I want to welcome this presentation from, and it is funded by Failte

Ireland so I will hand you over to the consultants and we'll take it from there.

DAWSON: Good afternoon councillors. Thank you for inviting us to talk to you today. My name is Dawson of leaders of a multidisciplinary team appointed by Failte Ireland to prepare a visitor experience master plan for Glendalough National Park and visitor orientation plan for County Wicklow. In the next slide please.

We started in September, this year with the six-month programme but Covid-19 restrictions have had impact on both our site surveys and consultation process so it is likely that that timescale will need to be extended. Overarching vision for the plan is to enhance the visitor experience, to maximise the economic benefits of tourism to the whole of the county, to protect and enhance the national built-in heritage and minimise destruction to local communities and to across key issues such as congestion in the sites, car crime, relative lack of visitor accommodation and trail erosion.

We believe we can achieve this by dispersal of

visitors more evenly across the county and investment in facilities, infrastructure, and sustainable environments. Encourage slow and sustainable tourism, people coming and staying for longer rather than thinking Wicklow as a place for day trips and community involvement and education. To date, we have consulted with a wide range of groups, organisations, including Wicklow tourism alliance, Wicklow recreation forum and key state bodies such as National Park and wildlife service and others but Covid-19 restrictions have stopped us carrying out face-to-face community consultation we would normally do, we are looking at ways to start this in January and welcome your ideas on how best we can do that, and we're proposing at the moment sessions in Blessington, Arklow and Laragh, pocket centre, I'll come back to that. The purpose of today, is to give you a presentation on what we have done so far, key issues, merging ideas, and a way we have limited time today we want to encourage feedback from you and we're obviously open to formal and detailed further workshops for further issues. I'm going to start with quick review of what we know of the

numbers and profiles and I'm handing over to my colleague Sarah.

SARAH: Thank you. Hello everyone. An important part of our project is to quantify the number of visitors coming to Wicklow. And understand their behaviour and preferences, and this has been done as Dawson mentioned through consultation and analysis of available data and research. Looking at tourism in Wicklow, County Wicklow is less well known to international tourists as a destination and has relied heavily on the domestic market traditionally and looking at the table on the right we can see that the Wicklow is seen as the day-trip experience and the journey times is around one or two hours would fit the bill for those travelling to Wicklow from Dublin. If want to improve the economic impact of the area we need to persuade visitors to stay longer and spend more. So, looking particularly at Glendalough this is what our consultation is revealing the experience, visitors numbers are generally high all year around with peak days when the car park is filled up with getting more frequent. And on busy days this volume of visitors is leading to congestion on the

roads and carparks and also a key entrance point around the monastery Visitor Centre on the upper lake so you could in current format the visitor format is unsustainable, and it is becoming worse as congestion increases and negative effect on local communities and environment. Glendalough will always be iconic visitor attraction, so we need to make sure we create an outstanding visitor experience to ensure visitors come and enjoy with a Glendalough has to come in years, that is sustainable and has positive impact.

There's a lot of information on the next couple of slides but you will receive them so, can you go through them in detail and we can arrange for further meetings and consultations if we want them in detail. There are 13 vehicle counters in trend lock, some big numbers here, for example over 500,000 on the Green Road Walking Trial but we're not sure factually how many are visiting on annual or daily basis as we have to question the data here. These counters can account for two-way traffic so visitor walks out past the counter and walks back later they can be double counted so a number of these have not worked properly or recently

installed so we need to invest time and money to baseline vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the area. But what we can say from looking at the data is we can see there's those honey pots where there's really high traffic and other areas that are less visited, for example Dairy Barn, recorded 26 passes on the visitor counter so there's an opportunity to dispense and spread out the load across the valley. Glendalough is receiving far higher number of visitors than other visitor attractions in Wicklow, although popular spots are experiencing congestion, the visitor counters don't give full picture so more research is needed but what we can say is after Glendalough you can see here, Knocksink Wood in Enniskerry is the basic identifier forming but this figure 56,000 is an underestimate. Iconic, although Glendalough is always going to be that iconic visitor attraction, and it will be difficult to persuade any tourist coming to the Wicklow for the first time not to visit Glendalough there's plenty of other attractions that could satisfy visitors staying for a longer holiday or absorb traffic from day visitors.

Day visitors from within Wicklow and surrounding counties, especially Dublin are often repeat visitors and usually come to spend time in the outdoors. They tend to gravitate toward Glendalough because it has what they're looking, family friendly walks, safe parking, and catering options. Are there ways to spread the load and relieve the pressure on Glendalough and Laragh and spread the benefit throughout the county. In order, to inform our plans on this, we have to be clear what visitors in Wicklow are looking for and what they want to do to provide alternative activities to their needs. So we've carried out research into what is known about preferences and behaviour, there's commonalities that cut across the main segments and will benefit everyone, activities active in nature and inspired by exploring beautiful environments appeal strongly to all the priority markets segments identified, but to support the experiences we also need to offer the basics, at a high standard in terms of visit, welcome visitors providing accessible activities suited for all ages and facilities in toilets, catering sustainable trails and access to

information and interpretation.

So, there's still a lot of uncertainty with the future and it is dynamic with Covid-19, we don't know how long it will last but the world tourism organisation is predicting tourism to recover at the beginning into perhaps 2022, but there's no guarantee on this, so having to work to the assumption tourism will recover and continue to grow and meanwhile domestic tourism will continue to grow, so nothing is done to manage the overall experience and visitor, flow of traffic, in Glendalough and wider Wicklow there will be a negative impact on the natural environment and local communities. Both of which are the key assets of the visitor experience depends upon. Now I'll hand to my colleague Andrew who will talk about how we propose a solution.

ANDREW: Thank you Sarah well you've heard a little bit about the statistical analysis of the tourism sector within Wicklow county now we'll focus on visitor experience. So, if we go on to the next slide, we can start to see some of the analysis that as a team we've been undertaking over the last few months, making sure we have a good understanding

of the visitor experience, across the whole of the county from the bigger attractions such as power security to the smaller establishments where you get good food or accommodation and to the outdoor experiences as well.

We've taken that into consideration relative to the towns and villages that support that visitor experience, and the ways people get around whether that's by car, by bus, by train, walking and cycling trails. What we've been trying to do is to start see synergies there, we've a whole range of experiences and they start to come together in really helpful groupings. So, if we go to the next slide and we start to the west of the county, we have the more family-focused more gentle pace around the Blessington area, and the lakes and with the proposed Greenway trails and the use of water itself, so, that becomes a very distinct offer which is different to some of the other areas. So, if you start to come down, that's south-west side of the county, we've got the area around Baltinglass and Hollywood and it's got some lovely qualities of itself, it's got its heritage that is very distinctive, and it got the lovely qualities

of the village. So, let's play to those strengths. As we swing around to the south of the county around towards Shillelagh and Tinahely there's a much more, again agent tell quality to that. Trails which are suited to families and gentle strolls, food, and beverage offer, so let play to the strengths it offers. And now in the next slide as we come up to the east side along the coastal fringe there, there are the areas that are well known, Bray Heads, Sea Life Centre, there are the beaches that people enjoy down at Brittas Bay, but it is about how we can start to unpack the rest of that, so it plays to its full strength.

And towards the north of the county, we have the more active area, focused around Ballinastoe and going over the boundary into south Dublin and Ticknock area, establish activities, yes consolidate what those areas are offering. As then we start to look towards the more central parts of the county, sorry around the fringes of that, we have the necklace of wonderful managed estate, houses and gardens and golf courses and hotels as well. Then of course, right in the middle we have the monastic area around Glendalough the part most

people know about the county with all its historic qualities. And it is surrounded by the we've got Rathdrum just to the south there, and we're seeing this as having an important role to play, it used to be important, I think with the rail connections and its connections with the Avondale Forest, the Avondale Way has got a lot more to offer going forward.

And that's within the context of the Wicklow mountains themselves and we'll hear in a moment from Caroline how to utilise as asset base more currently that is. We have the elements there that work together and if we look to the next slide, we're seeing how they sit together and then the next slide again, suggesting that actually it would be very helpful if we start to see how this from a branding perspective all the elements that have got synergies with each other can start to belong as part of the Wicklow mountains experience.

So, I'm going to hand over now to Caroline to pick up the story about the outdoor experience.

CAROLINE: As Sarah said one of the key issues that we need to consider is how we can address a congestion within the Glendalough valley. So, we

have really been focusing on the role that outdoor recreation can play in this regard and also, how we can use outdoor recreation to strengthen that wider Wicklow visitor proposition, that Andrew's just been chatting about. So, to help us achieve this, we're proposing three strategies:

Dispersal sustainability sites for outdoor recreation and improving the sustainability of existing honey pot sites, and then enhancing car parking and visitor service provision at some of the key outdoor recreation sites.

So, the first strategy is about the dispersing visitors to sustainable site and we're looking at promoting alternative places to go, to achieve this through an enhanced web presence, also, developing new products, and product enhancement, particularly with walking and cycling. And also, then creating very strong outdoor recreation hubs, to help us really spread the benefits of it across a wider Wicklow Council, particularly to the western side of the region. And finally, to improve connectivity. So, our second strategy then involves improving sustainability of the existing honey pot sites. Now whilst we recognise

that many of the areas across Wicklow are actually way beyond their carrying capacity at present there are four sites in particular that causes concern. That's joss, the great Sugarloaf. These four sites are all high value, high volume sites, basically because they provide stunning views of the surrounding landscape, they're known as the key signature outdoor recreation experiences in the area. They're easily accessible from the road. And many of them receive publicity particularly through social media. But as you can see from the next slide, that overuse of the sites is causing a huge amount of damage, not only to the soils and vegetation but the landforms and also, are reducing in many examples of visitor experience. So, some work has already taken place, to address the erosion problems and as you can see in the next slide the National Parks and Wildlife Service have already started work on for example Jouce to improve the erosion problems there, but much, much more work will be required in the future either through both light touch intervention and through hard construction.

But I think most important of all is making sure

that there is an ongoing commitment to maintaining these sites and the maintenance and management of these sites. So, our third focus of our work then is really about enhancing and improving the car parking and the visitor services provision at many of the key upland recreation sites. So, through car parking enhancement, redesign, extensions or developing new car parks where we need to, and also, putting in toilets and trail head signage and way marking in other sites and finally an issue that keeps coming up time and again, in the upland is the issue over car crime so we're looking at that as well. So, I'm going to pass you over to Andrew.

ANDREWS: Thank you. Back to me this time. So, I'm picking up the story back in the middle where we're looking at the monastic area in Glendalough into Laragh, so if we go on to the next slide. That's the focus for the next moment or two. As Sarah said there's an awful lot of pleasure on that area, which is focused on an area as you see in in site is just quintessentially wonderful, it's got those ancient monastic elements in it, but set within a very beautiful landscape setting as well.

And that is a setting which is on from next slide,

extend from upper lake right the way down to Laragh down the Glendalough valley. But, that landscape and monastic heritage, isn't the experience that many people experience. It is compromised by the quantity of people there, and as Dawson said it is a hit and run of people taking a photograph and moving away and not actually experiencing it. So, the experience for many is not quite where we are. Sorry can I go back. That's the effect. Has that we're hearing Caroline take the person away on the mountains and uplands and if we go to the next slide in the longer term, we're also hoping that we can start to displace some of the secretary movements we're getting by car and coach and start to move more sustainable transport modes of using rail, cycle, and walking, long-term strategy but something we need to work towards.

We've taken time to understand the valley itself, asset bases in terms of the heritage, but the landscape itself. And we're reminded in the past people have experienced this area, much more as a valley experience the whole experience from Laragh right to the way to the upper lake and its connections as well, rather than that sort of hit

and run of going to the monastic site and moving away again. How can we start people to experience that in a way again. So, we have these assets.

And part of this is helping people to explore those and experience them in a much fuller way so starting to encourage those movements from the village of Laragh right up to the upper lake, St Kevin's Bed and all the bits in between.

Improving the setting of the landscape rewilding in places, but also improving the setting of the heritage assets themselves. Improving the quality of engagement of visitors so improving the existing visitor facilities in Glendalough and in interpretation that goes with them. And then, as part of that support, encouraging more vehicles to be parking back in the village where they are more easily handled and where you can catch them as they approach from the Clara Vale side and troopers town side so you can provide a good quality of parking facility and a new visitor centre there that starts to work alongside those other elements of the valley opening up to the whole valley experience. And that then compliments an enhanced series of facilities within the villages of Glendalough and

Laragh which increase the economic strength of them but also the community facilities as well.

I'm going to pass this over to Andrew Todd to pick up a story how to tell the story of the area.

ANDREW: Within the team our role really has been to look and focus on the monastic sight and Glendalough lower valley, we have been exploring the visitor offer as that stands and what it could be what, are the opportunities?

The national monument stated significance states overall complex comprises a unique and early medieval buildings and other features, they pre-date the close of the 12th century, making largest and best preserved ecclesiastical and beyond, there's no doubt the significant of the built heritage but are visitors connecting, currently there's a passive experience with little to no interpretation on the ground, the importance is missed, and opportunities are being lost. Our journey so far is one of discovery, of looking back, how the site has been regarded over the centuries and how antiquarians view it, connect to it. But we don't only look back but see how the site is captured today. The significance the

powers not faded in some eyes, that connection is something greater. It is about connecting to nature, about the landscape, and looking to find out why and discover why St Kevin chose this place. Kevin sought solitude, spirituality to show his devotion to follow his own pilgrimage. Just St Kevin sought that connection we can as well that connection to nature to create our own moment of splendid isolation.

This can be achieved through an opportunity to touch the past to connect to the landscape, whilst very much-in-being in the present. There's a quote one of the live St Kevin compared Glendalough to a gracious room, city of angels Western Europe's room. There are certain moments in the valley, three moments are unveiled as you explore. These moments create the opportunity to shut the modern world out, and an opportunity to journey on your own pilgrimage, connecting to the past, but often overlooking markers that make the site through significant. But also, to create your own moment of connection on your level, in your own time to contemplate, reflect for that restorative moment to connect beyond the built heritage, connect to

the change this season and change in landscapes to create Harmonia awaken the senses. This is a beautiful landscape. And accessible landscape for locals and tourists alike. As everybody's discussed today already, the presentation of it is somewhat disjointed.

It appears as a series of small and large sites, disconnected currently incomprehensible, unconnect with opportunities we missed. It is impossible for any visitor to imagine the valley's importance, importance locally, nationally, globally. We need to connect those threads, make the narrative and connections comprehensionable and in turn, a meeting.

What we experience is far cry of monastic way of life and nature, the balance within the landscape, we have a once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity to create a unique journey where every visitor, be local or international can have a truly meaningful visit, return to the fast through solitude, to reflect to re-energise, let their body be the guide and to listen to where it wants to take them. Bridge the gap between self and nature, let the forest in and just simply to breathe.

We've opportunity to finally realise the potential of the whole valley to set out the ambition, potential to join the Skellig Michael, the Pyramids, Great Wall of China with World Heritage Site status, I'll hand you back to Dawson.

DAWSON: Thank you, councillors, that is the end of our presentation for you today. And as I said at the start, we're very keen to engage with yourselves in any subgroups you have in the wider community and are proposing community engagement sessions in January. Both web-based and hopefully in reality as well, face-to-face, potentially in Blessington, Arklow and Laragh, we're open for questions but keen to follow-up this presentation with more detailed workshop sessions. As well as speakers you've heard from, we also have two other key members of our team on the call, and Keith on a team from Arklow and Carl, our planning consultant locally based so councillors thank you for your time and that's our presentation, but we'll do our best to answer immediate questions you have. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Dawson, Andrew, Sarah, and all of the team for that. Cllr Shay Cullen you wanted to come in there.

CLLR CULLEN: Thanks. Thank you all for your presentation, I suppose first of all I'd like to say I very much welcome the proposal from Failte Ireland in terms of investment forever Glendalough. I think Glendalough is the jewel in the crown when it comes to County Wicklow and it is well overdue in terms of investment. A few points I just want to make, myself and the Cathaoirleach actually were appointed to steering committee, two-and-a-half years ago, and we met once with members of the different stakeholders, OPW, National Parks and Failte Ireland and so on but it never went anywhere. I don't know whether we're been sidelined or whether there's a future there, but I think it should be resurrected. I have concerns about the where this is going in terms of a vision. I'm still not clear on what the vision is for Glendalough. In other words what will it look like when this is completed? I'm still not, I'm hearing a lot of things about parking, I'm hearing about World Heritage Site, you

know, you haven't discussed anything about the different types of visitors that visit Glendalough and what I mean by that is you have regular Walkers, visitors that visit Glendalough on a weekly or monthly basis and seasons of tourists, so, I do think we need an extensive consultation process in terms of the communities, the surrounding villages, and as I say the different types of visitors that visit Glendalough on a regular basis. It is not just about parking in my view. Parking is an issue, and everybody is aware of parking is an issue, but to take a lot of the parking out of Glendalough could possibly cause difficulty as well so it is something that we'll be very cognitive of when we're going ahead. Most of the presentation or so much the presentation wasn't really about Glendalough. Again, I have concerns over that. I've concerns over you know, the economic situation in terms of Roundwood, Laragh, Rathdrum, areas that are close to Glendalough. And you spoke about bed nights we have a problem in terms of keeping people in the county and that's something we need to look at in a wider scale, so, look, I want to finish I'm very much supportive of

the idea, but I have lots of concerns that I think we need to obviously sit down over a period of time and make sure they're out of doubt, I wish you the best of luck and hopefully we'll get a positive and outlook from the general public. Thank you.

>>: Councillor, do you want me to respond to questions as they come? I'm happy to.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I might take them in these if that's all right. Cllr John Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: Cathaoirleach and thanks for the report, I'd like to welcome again the broad strategic game even though I share with counsellor Cullen serious concerns about some elements of that presentation. In particular I think Failte Ireland as a funder probably have a trend that they're following which was 50% hugely successful, and 35% failure and by what, I mean by that is this compartmentisation of the tourism product, the Wild Atlantic Way was a massive success. At a marketing, funding, and community level it got it right. Ancient Ireland east, was not a success by many who are involved in this sector and I have a

background in this outdoor recreation sector. It failed to realise that you can't compartmentalise the offering in Ireland, to say that ancient Ireland east, in other words heritage and all that goes with that is on the east coast and the outdoor recreation, Wild Atlantic Way was on the west coast had inherent flaws, particularly on the east coast and there's elements of that I think in your presentation today with the various parts of Wicklow and what you're saying exists, I come from the Tinahely/Shillelagh area where we've invested in outdoor recreation, so, outdoor recreation goes from north Wicklow, right down to the bottom of south, and north east and west, it is a county-wide activity. It is actually east coast Leinster activity based on a strong domestic Dublin market. And the reason why north Wicklow sites, those mountains have become damage asked because of saturation of Dublin-based walkers so I do think you may rethink some of that when it comes to outdoor recreation it is entire county when it comes to outdoor recreation. I think the flaw, and I know the year that's been in it, it has been difficult to have community consultation, but

Glendalough is a living landscape, there are communities for whom Glendalough is their home, Laragh is their home, they live this, their business sincere there, you know, and you compare it to a City of Angels, I was thinking that anybody who played Laragh GAA wouldn't come away with that particular memory. But the community who live there and have lived there for generations need to be one of the first people to be consulted and get their ideas as to the management of the site. And I know with Covid-19 that's been spectacularly difficult but, before this report comes back in a more detailed proposal, I would love to see very much that the community themselves, all the stakeholders two have businesses in the Laragh/Glendalough valley and with the view we're trying to anchor this to county wide strategy or vision as Cllr Shay Cullen mentioned I want to see that vision being more holistic, not compartmentalised like I saw in the presentation. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks for the preparation. Obviously Glendalough is up there with the one of the top attractions in the country, probably the top attraction after the Cliffs of Moher, and the cathedral secretary to improve sustainability of the site and the visitor experience, but the connectivity is the important one in relation to the other sites that so-called honey pot sites you referred to, again, and the inter-spread of the visitors and recent report there was being carried out at the moment, it was almost completed out by tourism accommodation subgroup indicates that there's a disproportionate level of day tourism and lower than average spend. The number of overnights visitors is relatively low by comparison to the rest of the country. So, really, the big challenge is in the accommodation need and I think the findings also, point out that we're probably, the offering is dominated by five-star, four-star hotels, and other accommodation but there's a hybrid need there like parking, caravan parks, budget hostel accommodation, to cater for other needs but the secret is the connectivity with all of the other

visitor attractions you described earlier inter-spread around the county. Transport links is important. Maybe the local link system has a role to play here. New attractions like Belmont and Kilruddery has proved successful, you have the Cliff Walk in Greystones and Avondale park and Blessington Greenway so there's a wide range of attractions to keep visitors in the county. We suffer from close approximate equipment to Dublin, but I think that will change with the provision of the type of accommodation that to meet the visitors' needs going forward so that's the big challenge to identify the potential locations for sites for accommodation and prioritise these locations over the coming years to meet the visitor needs thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Dawson if you want to reply to those.

>>: Yes thanks. Councillors I hopefully you appreciate this is a fairly wide study and detailed study and we've had a limited time today to go into all the detail but in terms of all three of your comments, I don't think any of us disagree with any

of the sentiments you expressed. First of all, in the read of activities, we have been meeting with outdoor recreation forum County Wicklow one, they identified Carolyn referred to five hubs spread around the county and one of those is the Tinahely area, Cllr John Mullen, so very much we're absolutely on board with the whole idea of our dispersal strategy is to recognise the will of the county has got opportunities for outdoor recreation so we're completely on board with that. In terms of Glendalough and focused on that, we recognise absolutely the value of that, we're focused very much as I say on the vision. They asked about the vision. The vision is to points I made at the start of improving the experience, getting rid of congestion, reducing the impact of local people and focusing in on what makes it attractive for people to come and stay, and that links with the accommodation subgroup, we met with the Wicklow visitor alliance and told we will be receiving a copy sometime soon of the subgroup's recommendations and accommodation, but everything we're doing is trying to encourage people to come and stay longer in Wicklow, slow them down a bit

so they appreciate all the county has to offer and that, that is the chicken and egg if you like of in the right accommodation, accommodation from camping, parking, self-catering, hostels through to the better hotels and high quality hotels so a full range of accommodation. I think, at this stage I would stress we don't have any predetermined outcomes for this at all. We see things happen in a phased and incremental matter, car parking needs to be addressed it is not because we like car parking, but it is central to the visitor experience in and around the Glendalough/Laragh area. But we're conscious very much of that spread of visitors, there are people who come to go for a walk in the hills, we want to facilitate those but don't want those people to get in the way of other people coming in for the longer slower experience and there's many, part of the reason why people congregate in trend lock is because of car crime and isolated carparks up in the mountains so if we satisfy some of the car crime issue that also helps with the dispersal strategy as well.

Consultation, we're absolutely on board with

consultation, I hope you appreciate as I said at the start and end, I hope you appreciate the difficulties of trying to do a study like this during Covid-19 restrictions, we're going to do our best and welcome support from you are as councillors and we're open for engagement, either online or in person, if we're allowed to do so. And as I say, during January and February probably as well. So, we're open for consultation, detailed consultation, we want to consult as widely as we and we've done already with groups and organisations and stuff, it is now down to more the community level we know we need to engage with. It is a tricky one during the pandemic but we'll certainly with your support hopefully do our best to do that comprehensively.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There are a number of other people looking to come in, so if I ask the members to keep it sharp and brief. Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you for the presentation it was very informative. Just a few points - I welcome that the whole county was taken into

consideration when you were doing the survey. As you said, Glendalough is reaching saturation, so it is good to look at other towns and villages with the support both economic and other ways. I think a lot of investment has to if into we all saw the car congestion during the summertime in different areas, but I know, Park and Ride has been suggested, so suggested from the public transport and also from accommodation so we were supporting both sides of the economy there. You also noted there not sink was a high foot fall area, it is on the border of county Dublin, where, you know, we have a huge amount of cars and blocking up during the summer months but I think while I welcome the money going into Greenways we also need to look at updating some of the pathways, you can't actually walk from county Dublin out, safely out to Enniskerry in County Wicklow where we could reduce the amount of cars on the road, people a could walk ought and spend money in the areas so I would welcome if that's all taken into consideration as well in the consultation. Thank you.

CLLR LEONARD: Thank you for your presentation. I

think there was a lot of valid points made in t I love the idea of the pilgrimage up to Glendalough and initially I suppose we're an island and the maritime aspect of tourism has been overlooked in this I'm based in Arklow and I'm working on a project harbour to head water which where the source of the river starts and with Brexit on the horizon we have potential to entice visitors from the sea and yachts and stuff into some of our ports down along the coast and I think that could be interconnected and I'd love the opportunity maybe to for you to come down to Arklow and south of the county and meet the locals and myself and a couple of the other councillors and we can explain what we're working on and see the local history that's there, and the eco-tourism that could potentially be brought there.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the presentation. I'd like to join with fellow councillors in welcoming your plans for Glendalough. And the idea of spreading it out around the county when this was first mentioned in the chamber Roundwood and Rathdrum were mentioned

as being too hubs for Glendalough. I'm glad to say you've widened it out since then. I'd say 30-40% of traffic go to Glendalough comes from Hollywood the west of the county, that is midlands and north of Ireland and it needs to be dealt with on the same level as Roundwood and Rathdrum. And I'm glad to see you mentioned Blessington and spreading owl the benefits of Glendalough throughout the county and I welcome the work you've done, and I hope that you continue to include and be inclusive of parts of the county that are not always remembered. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm going to take three more because they're more comments than questions.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you to you and your team for the presentation. I got six point I want to make resulting what you told us today, basically what I hope to see when you put your final document together for us, I'd like to see what the solutions are, and how the solutions are going to be achieved because as a county over the last 15-20 years, we have done a massive amount of what you and your team are attempting to do. So, the points I would ask am coming out of your presentation would be: What

I'd like to see when you have a conclusion, how do you make people have the full experience?

I'd like the end result to show us that. You talked about the one of our team talked about improving the setting of the landscape, I'd like to under what you mean by that?

And also, in talking about the Rathdrum area, which is very close obviously to Glendalough, that we needed more trains, so obviously we do, so again, I think we need to really look and see how that can be made happen. The fourth point I would make is the point about infrastructure, every bit of research that's been done in the past one of the massive gaps had been infrastructure and while we have some very good hotels overall from a tourism product perspective, we lack a lot of infrastructure. So, I'd like to see the end result telling us how we solve that one.

The fifth point I would make is, how do we one of your team said connecting all the various threads. I'm very interested in that, I'm passionate about the tourism product in the county and I think once and for all we need to come up with how we're going to do it. So, I'd like to see that coming out big

time out of your final document and just final comment I'd like to make is there's all kinds of things done in the past and slogans and Failte Ireland and everyone else, I must say in regard to spreading the visitors around the valley the greater valley of Glendalough and surrounds and wider county as members have said already, is my favourite slogan was always, that Ireland is all here. In other words that if you want to come to Wicklow you can get everything would you get anywhere in Ireland, and I hope, I personally would like to see that hopefully reflected in the final product that you deliver. Thank you.

CLLR WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and thank you to the people who gave the presentation. You said that it was about a visitor experience and I suppose the fact how difficult it was to do your public consultation given Covid-19 which you say you're starting in January, now, Glendalough wouldn't really be as busy in January and February and March if you're doing a three-month consultation, so, I'm just wondering where you're going to get to interview the visitors, we probably won't have a

good compliment of regular visitors until the summertime and hopefully we will have in the summertime. I'd also like if we could be sent a copy of the presentation as it was quite hard to read harder details on the screen. I was a bit concerned to hear that two public representatives we had put on to the county council task force hadn't really heard about any of this until your presentation today. So, and you said you'd engage with the groups and organisations to date and I just like some clarity on who those groups and organisations were. And when you say you're now going to on the ground public consultation, who has been involved in it so far?

It is an issue that has to be sorted and addressed and I welcome the fact that we're looking at doing something, I just want to make sure when we do it the people who live and work in the Laragh trend lock wider area are fully on board with what is proposed for what is effectively their home thank you.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you Cathaoirleach and thank you very much for the presentation Dawson, very

interesting.

I suppose the reason you are on board is to make the visitor experience more acceptable in Laragh and Glendalough. I'm actual represent the area among six other councillors and one of the things I would like as Cllr Irene Winters mentioned really, we knew nothing about what was going on until basically today. I mean that you should come to the Wicklow Municipal Council meeting to let us know what is going on, because we're on the ground dealing with this day in, day out. We've all received phone calls over weekends, where Laragh has been basically blocked up where the guards have been called, very difficult experience, both for people visiting the area, for the local people in the area, and for the business community in the area.

And foremost, you've talked to a lot of people at the moment, but to me the first people you should have went to is definitely the local community.

And the people running businesses, because nobody knows the area, in Laragh and Glendalough better than they do. And in my opinion, they should be their first point of contact. Now I accept, due

to Covid-19, there's difficult circumstances, and I know your intention is to address this, the sooner that happens the better. The other thing at the moment, due to Covid-19 it is impossible to tell how many people are visiting the area. Hostile the numbers are now low. So, really, if you go to the peak season like this is an amazing amount of visitors going to Laragh. so, you're not really getting the true reflection in my opinion of the visitor capacity and people visiting Laragh, and I think that's something you have to take on board. The big thing for me though, as an representative in the area is you do need to come and talk to local councillor who represents the area. I know it is a big project in time and time could be a problem, but we are there representing this area and we need to know what is going on, no the coming into a meeting today basically concerns from the community and the business community, wondering what is going on and that's hugely important going forward Dawson, to make sure that that is addressed, and I know you will understand that, but it has to be said too, so it does. Because, without them, there would be no solution. Absolutely no

solution.

I very rarely go over time Chairman, but it is something that we're all passionate about. We want to see this, the last thing I would say is, my previous experience as a councillor the amount of people who visit the county throughout the county and leave the county the next, that day, leave the county that day and I know you're looking at that, how to keep them in the county that's huge. Thank you.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and thanks for your presentation today. Yeah, I'm a huge fan of tourism especially home-grown tourism but as Cllr John Mullen said and I agree with him, we can either get it right or we can get it wrong. An example of a thing that's done well is Killarney Park, so it is no wonder it is our number one tourist attraction. Example of something that was done very wrong in my opinion was the cliffs of mow her. The interpretive centre, it is absolutely ruined and stagnated the whole area, I think it is appalling and I don't think I'll ever go and visit it again, and I used to love going through. Killarney got it right because it hasn't

overdeveloped the National Park it allowed it to be itself. It if you're a regular to Glendalough the one thing that you will get from Glendalough is the sense of peace and the restorative qualities of walking around the trails that are all around monastic site. There are two types of people who go there, there's the visitors who come once in a bus take photographs and go and people who keep coming back and they're the ones we need to make sure are looked after. Yes, park something a huge problem. It is the main problem that was sorted out it would enhance the experience for everybody, even if nothing else was done. That's the major problem. I won't delay, I know a lot of people made the same points, but it has been pointed out to me that the steering committee only contains the representatives of state bodies like the National Parks and wildlife, national monuments, Wicklow tourism, Wicklow County Council, there have been no, there's no input from the local people of Laragh and Glendalough, they have to input into this. Their businesses are invested in, their lives are invested in their homes, their families, they have to be consulted with. I'll finish by saying, that

Glendalough is not just a business, it is much more than that. We are the custodians of our heritage. We cannot ruin it. We one chance to get this right. And it has to be done properly because this has to be able to stand for another 1200 years.

CLLR MCMANUS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just quick point, so I'm sitting here wondering about all these amazing plans and how we're going to improve areas and that's great. I'm thinking if I was sitting here in a wheelchair will it be accessible to me, am I included and considered or if I have other accessibility issues so I will ask in terms of inclusive tourism, how what work has been done or what will you do over the next while to ensure I know earlier in our meeting we ratified having inclusion committee and we've met before so maybe we can play a role in that, or how else will you ensure that every person who comes to Wicklow to enjoy our beautiful heritage can be included. Thanks.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach and thanks Dawson and your team for the work you've done today.

I think all 32 members here will be very positive in regard to county-wide strategy and work that you' are doing, but the one box you have made to tick so far, and I accept you have been given an undertaking and that will be addressed in January, going forward, but it is rather embarrassing for us as 32 members and particularly the six from the Municipal District to come here today and just been no consultation whatsoever with us as public representatives. It is our job and our role to represent the public in general and express their views to the likes of yous and to officials in Wick Wicklow County Council and when we don't know what is going on with someone like myself who has a lot of family connections to the Laragh, Glendalough area, I can tell you that, a lot of people in Glendalough and Laragh know nothing about what has gone on today and that's people living there for generations and generations and then you have the business sector, you have people who are not depending on tourism but they still have businesses in the areas. A they want to know what the effects are proposed because they don't know what is being proposed. On the general thing, it's 99% that's

positive. But I suggest that your team need to engage with us as public representatives. I know you have with officials but unfortunately that doesn't tick the box for members of the public who elect us to be their voice. And if we don't know what is going on, behind the scenes, we can't represent them and in turn they feel there's something untoward or something kept from them as a Municipal District I believe this should be on the agenda of all five districts. I think everyone here represents a different body on the strategic policy committees, whether it is tourism or heritage or otherwise I think it is great we're pushing forward now, finally, pushing forward County Wicklow. And I do understand that people from various areas want to get their district involved and I agree with that. It is a big county, and we need to keep everyone within our county, they're tourists but we have to remember that we're the people who live here on the ground day in, day out.

And to Dawson and his team, I welcome the report, but I also believe that you know the locals know best as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, before I hand back to you, I want to make a comment on this myself as a one of 32 councillors who probably has the closest family links to Glendalough, my mother was from there, my family, some of my family and cousins still live there, in houses overlooking the lakes and my wife is from Glendalough, the to deliver a master plan in Glendalough is to be very welcomed but I do believe the approach and methodology has caused huge concerns not just among the public reps but has caused concerns of business people who learned about this in the last couple of weeks. The last Cathaoirleach, Shay Cullen was right when he said that himself and me knew very little about this, until the laicity or two, when somebody contacted us, and to think the National Parks and wildlife service, Office of Public Works, national monument service in Wicklow County Council, executive, Coillte, all were involved in this, and that we weren't involved in this. I think, is something a question that you have to answer. But having said that, do I welcome it. But when we talk about traffic in Glendalough and someone who knows

Glendalough extremely well, the traffic problem in Glendalough is 40 or 50 days a week, it is not 365 days a year problem and that has to be taken into consideration. The work you've done so far, is to be very much welcomed, but I was wondering what time frame did you carry out this work in a year of Covid-19 when we had little tourists in Glendalough. You talk about the new car park and visitor centre and coach parking, and I noticed on the map there's a piece of land identified for a car park visitor centre and car park and I'm wondering has the landowner been consulted or will he read it in the Wicklow people next week. And in relation to the steering group, you're going to set up in January, I would ask, that the businesspeople who employ people in the valley of Glendalough and people that are sole traders up there, be involved in that and they are given a seat at the table in that, at that steering group and also, that the local people have somebody at the table. I would like you to see carry out clinics and public consultation in locations that everybody is involved. I would like to see leaflet drop done to every house in Glendalough and there's

not that many and Laragh so everybody can have their say on this. I do very much welcome it, and I will hand it over to you for the last minute. Thank you, Dawson, for your presentation and everybody on your team.

DAWSON: Thank you councillors, I suppose, we can hear the passion and the knowledge coming across in all your comments there. I suppose, it is impossible in the time I have to answer all the points. We've noted them all down. First thing I would say is that we do not see this as a report or this is the end of the process this, is very much to us the start of a process with yourselves and consultation. The nature of the steering group was set up not by us of course it was set up by Failte Ireland who is paying for the study. And but I do know in talking to them and talking to their council officials the very keen they're a local forum in the key areas set up with the local councillors and businesspeople community representatives on that. So, please don't go away thinking we're, we've come up to any conclusions at this stage. We've got, been studying things, and looking at things, and brought in bringing our experience to bear on this.

And we now have got, to the stage we think where we understand a lot of the issues and we have been talking to a lot of individuals and property owners and commercial owners and tourism alliance and the outdoor recreation forum, bodies representing the activity providers and users, we've been talking to a lot of people we do recognise we need to talk to the wider community, local community, and that's exactly, we think the time is right now, in January, for us to be doing that. And we will do that and work with yourselves, throughout the county to try and get that next stage of consultation in. So, we take on board all the comments we've made today, we hear the passion and the knowledge, and the understanding in testimony and we want to work with you, to get the best result we can out of this study. But we're not coming with foregone conclusions here, we're coming with ideas, we're coming with open mind and open hearts, and we want very much to work with you to get the best result we can for Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Dawson and thank you for that. We look forward to meeting you in the future.

DAWSON: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Bye-bye.

Thank you, members, that took quite some time. And hopefully now you will understand why I changed the agenda a while, we spent one hour and two minutes on the agenda, but it is important that we did spend that time. I'm a believer in the Chief Executive's Report being one of the main items on the agenda and I think Frank and the team do a great job in presenting that to us each month, however, we're not going to get to it this month because we have a few minutes left and I have promised Cllr Jodie Neary that we would take the suspension of standing orders, if anybody has any questions they e-mail them in and they will be answered this week, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald you want to come in.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I want to go back I'm aware of the work that went through to get to that consideration so can I just thank Grainne, and Stephen for the work they did, because I know they had a difficult task there, and without their work we wouldn't have these states been taken in charge.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah. Thank you, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald. Just before I come to Cllr Jodie Neary because I have told her I'll give her five minutes Frank do you want to run through a quick point.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: N11, M11, junction 4-14, it is planned now to issue an interim update bulletin on the scheme to progress, it is posted on the scheme website 2pm next Wednesday, so all members will receive a invite to online briefing session held in advance of the bulletin at 10am on Wednesday morning, local members have been invited, it is phase two, option selection, so, which looks at bringing scheme from preliminary route options to an emerging preferred option. So, look Wednesday's update will provide a and progress where we've got to date, and some options will be decision counted and show you where it is going in terms of preferred route, so I wanted to say that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Chief Executive and we'd encourage everything to lock on to that. Cllr Jodie Neary it is ten to four now so do you want to come in now.

CLLR NEARY: Thank you very much for facilitating this discussion. It is very much appreciated.

2020 has been a most difficult year for parents and children due to the pandemic. And the interruptions it caused in relation to children's schooling, parents teacher staff and principals should be commended to all the work they've done to alleviate the stress and anxiety the pandemic caused for children as their school routine has been interrupted. This year was further made difficult for families due to an ongoing accommodation crisis, facing several schools in the Greystones district, Greystones Community National School, located at the Rugby Club is still waiting to move into a brand-new building just down the road. And the post primary Greystones Community College remains in a tennis club waiting for appropriate temporary accommodation and the Irish school for site acquisition, without the necessary infrastructure in place, school capacity in the area has been limited, resulting in the subsequent issue of unmet demand of school places in the area and in particular for children with additional needs. I have met with Rory Farrell the principal of Greystones Community College and commend them for the work they've done to create

a safe and healthy school environment for the school community despite setbacks, myself and deputy Jennifer Whitmore put pressure on the minister of education and department to have the needs of each school, accumulative efforts of all in the community resulted in a start of dispute resolution process between the government and the developers of the new school build, for the primary school and renewed focus on the acquisition of site in Charlesland for the post primary school. While progress is slow, I welcome the increased engagement between all stakeholders and attempts to look at duplication on waiting lists to get a picture of the demand in the area, outstanding success still remain how the situation was left to develop where we have parents anxiously waiting to know whether their child will go to school in the new year and if capacity can and will increase to facilitate demand for school places in the future. There are also serious questions around planning for capacity, and school places in the district where huge numbers of housing developments have taken place, and where it was obvious demand would be there. Why were schools not built and temporary

accommodation units and extensions not facilitated in time for the current and next school year?

While I acknowledge the potential for waiting lists to reduce and learnt over time, children and families should not have been left with such uncertainty and I believe it is a reflection of inherent flaws in our school building system..

CATHAOIRLEACH: This is a statement.

CLLR NEARY: I'm requesting Wicklow County Council write to the Department of Education seeking officials from the department, to address council members and their questions in relation to going school accommodations crisis and unmet demand for school populations in Greystones and Wicklow.

CLLR MITCHELL: I think all TDs in Wicklow met the Minister of Education, I know Simon Harris has and other TDs were present on that, this is an absolute disgrace, I was present and zoned the land for the primary and secondary school, 16 years ago, on the advice of Wicklow County Council's planners so clearly, it was seen by the planners that this was necessary. We saw it was necessary. And the department has sat on its back side for 15 years

it is an absolute disgrace and people should be, people's employment in the department should be sanctioned over this complete mess that they have left it in. And what have they done for 16 years?

CLLR CULLEN: Yeah, first of all I want to congratulate Cllr Jodie Neary for raising this issue but it is not just Greystones issue this is affecting Newtown, Roundwood, Kilcoole in particular for my district Kilcoole and Roundwood, or sorry and Roundwood and Newtown, Newtown is such a fast-growing village and we have so many problems in terms of school places and I know Lorraine has written to the Department of Education in a previously, but, from what I can gather we've had no response, so I'm imploring on the council to get back on to the department to get a response because, this is issue is really serious, and getting more serious by the week.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It is now 3.55 I have to stop, and I know Cllr Tom Fortune wanted to get in.

CLLR FORTUNE: Let me speak. Very quickly, the time for political speeches is over. And getting them on the record is over, that's all been done, we need action and TDs to act, not make speeches.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. That concludes the meeting thank you. Sorry, any other business Lorraine. I nearly forgot to wish everyone a happy Christmas. I nearly forgot that, can I thank everybody for all of the work you've done throughout the year, it has been a difficult year. And I just want to extend my sincere gratitude to you all. And to thank the Chief Executive.

CLLR O'NEILL: If I could for two second.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It won't be recorded because the meeting is over.

CLLR O'NEILL: In light of the recent activities or whatever on the N81, could I make a plea here I know it is not absolutely the fault of Wicklow County Council, but the road now is in dire straits, there's people getting more militant. It looks, it is turning to be a serious issue and I make a plea here today, instead of councillors to walk out - listen to me for two seconds. We've been talking about the other side of the county here all day. And I'd like maybe a little, a few seconds there, if councillors could even sit down and get out of my way, I could address the chair there please. I'm just making a plea here today the county

manager, weekly County Council write to T11 to look at the N81 and the state that it is in at the moment. It is in a dreadful state. The TII as we said they're quick enough at objecting to one-off housing on the N8 is, but don't, they never open their mouth when there's dozens and dozens of houses going up. At the moment, if I could just, I never seen the likes of it in the chamber before, where councillors just walk away, when one of our colleagues is trying to get this on the agenda, before it gets out of hand, and that being the state of the N81, the TII is responsible for that road, it is in a dreadful way at the moment and I'd make a Lea today that Wicklow County Council would immediately make contact and start dialogue there with it TII to make improvements on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Jerry for that.