

**MINUTES OF WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING
MONDAY 16th DECEMBER 2019 3PM**

DISTRICT CHAMBER, TOWN HALL

Present: Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen, Councillors Gail Dunne, Paul O'Brien, Mary Kavanagh.

In attendance: District Manager Brian Gleeson, District Administrator Joan Sinnott, District Engineer Kevin Scanlon, Assistant Staff Officer Anne Marie Kelly,

Myles Buchanan Wicklow People.

Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen opened the meeting at 3.05pm.

Senior Executive Officer Vibeke Delahunt entered the meeting at 3.15pm and left at 4.00pm.

Senior Executive Officer Christine Flood entered the meeting at 3.15pm and left at 4.00pm.

Consultant Engineer Peter Phelan entered the meeting at 3.15pm and left at 4.00pm.

Administrative Officer Linda Healy entered the meeting at 3.15pm and left at 4.00pm.

James O'Donoghue Architect Bluett & O'Donohue, entered the meeting at 3.15pm and left at 4.00pm.

Cllr John Snell entered the meeting at 3.20pm.

Cllr Irene Winters entered the meeting at 3.22pm.

ITEM 1.

Confirmation of the Minutes from the Wicklow Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th November 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor Gail Dunne, seconded by Councillor Paul O'Brien and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes from the Wicklow Municipal District meeting held on the 18th November 2019.

ITEM 2.

Presentation by Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects on Proposed Enterprise Hub at Wicklow County Campus, Clermont House.

Administrative Officer Vibeke Delahunt outlined to the members that Clermont House was purchased by Wicklow County Council in 2005, and is partnered with IT Carlow as a centre of excellence for, 3rd level education, enterprise and innovation. The Local Enterprise and Film Office are currently based in the campus alongside the college. Ms Delahunt informed the members that it is the Governments' intention to enable Ireland become a global hub for the production of film, TV drama and animation, and it is hoped that by implementing the strategies contained in the Audio Visual Strategy (Creative Ireland Programme of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), to double employment in this industry over a 5 year period. Ms Delahunt outlined that the proposed modifications and extensions to the Campus would be for use as an Enterprise Hub for the Audio Visual Industry.

James O'Donohue of Bluett & O'Donohue Architects presented the design drawings to the members detailing the proposed modifications and extension to the campus. It is proposed to conserve and restore the existing courtyard buildings, and convert them for use as office space. Under the

proposals, the existing chapel is to be converted to a conference room, the existing 1st floor of the former dormitory is to be converted to additional office space. The proposals also include plans to demolish redundant farm outbuildings to the north of the courtyard to facilitate the construction of a new two storey office building. Mr. O'Donohue advised that the overall design proposals have regard and compliment the older structures already in existence on site.

The members broadly welcomed the proposals, and stated that a hub such as is being proposed would enhance Wicklow's long established involvement in the film industry. Currently 70% of Ireland's activity in this industry is based in the Wicklow Area and the members expressed their desire to further capitalise on this by supporting this development. The proposed conversion of the existing Chapel to a conference/training centre was particularly welcomed by the members, who stated that a conference centre is needed in the District. The members stated that Claremont Campus is of historical value and an integral part of the district and appreciated the Architects respect for the preservation of the existing architecture.

Ms Delahunt informed the members that the overall cost of the project will run to around €3m, and that WCC has applied for €1.8m from Enterprise Ireland towards capital costs, with the remaining costs being met by WCC.

The members thanked Ms Delahunt and Mr O'Donoghue for their presentations.

ITEM 3.

Wicklow District Engineers Report.

Housing:

- Work continuing on general maintenance and repairs.
- Technical support to WCC-Housing Dept:
 - Re-lets (quantities increasing following transfers to new houses):
 1. 5 standard. 3 purchases.
 2. 4 returned to WCC Housing Dept.
 3. 10 have works continuing on site.
 - DPGs: No info.
 - Part V: 2 houses snagged.

Roads and Footpaths:

- Drainage blockages in various locations repaired.
- Gritting carried out on 9 nights. 3 of these were double runs.
- Roads in charge queries continue to be processed.
- Road Opening Licences (approx. 23) continue to be processed and agreed.

Environment:

- Grass cutting and edge cleaning continues.

Planning

- Reports on applications and compliance with applications continue to be issued.
- Estate taking in charge reports and inspections continue with WCC staff.

Playgrounds

- New playground in Roundwood, substantially complete. Community athletics project next door has commenced too.
- Vandalism at fencing at the Murrough repaired and fence damaged again last week.

Public Liability

- 6 new cases and 1 settled.

Discretionary Works:

- Newtown traffic calming at Dunne's crossing agreed with Town Team/Gardaí.
- Ballynerrin playground lights. WCC crew installing ducts and cables this week.
- Seaview Heights resurfacing. Drainage works at blockage started last week.

Town & Village Renewal Grants

- Newtown footpath and streetscape works. WCC-Roads crew currently onsite. 55% of works complete. Trees planted. Footpaths 80% complete. Public lighting LED bulbs complete. Dunne's junction lights agreed with Gardaí/Town Team.
- Wicklow Lighting at historic sites project. ESB have agreed connection points. Heritage status of sites being agreed for permission. Ducting and civils ongoing. Works at 1st 4 sites to be carried out in January.

Councillor's questions and queries.

The issue of 'snow tourists' visiting the Sally Gap when the road is closed was raised. It was reported that bollards and barriers are being removed by some of these individuals to allow access to the closed road. It was asked if the Gardaí could prosecute those participating in this dangerous activity. It was also requested if more secure barriers could be erected which could not be easily removed. District Engineer Kevin Scanlon informed the members that on the occasions where it is necessary to close the road, staff check that the cones and warning signs are in place each night.

ITEM 4.

Discretionary Fund Review.

A report was circulated to the members at the meeting, detailing funding allocations for the various discretionary projects agreed by the members to be undertaken in 2018 and 2019. Alongside the figures, a brief update was given on what works had taken place on each project to date. The members acknowledged that a lot of work had been carried out in 2019, however voiced concern that there are some works still outstanding. Where works are not complete or have not commenced on a particular project, the funding allocation will be 'rolled over' to 2020, with a total of €176,137 going forward into 2020.

One of the members put forward a proposal to perhaps choose a few large projects as opposed to numerous smaller projects going forward. This would be intended to take pressure off WMD staff where staffing constraints can sometimes mean difficulty in implementing numerous projects throughout the year. Other members expressed the view that smaller projects would likely not be undertaken but for the discretionary fund, and that these smaller projects usually come about through requests from the public. Some of the members also stated that smaller projects can mean a lot to a community and is good PR for the local Councillors. It was also stated that the District is large which is challenging when trying to ensure that projects are evenly dispersed.

It was asked if funding towards footpath repairs could be applied for from IPB, and if the planning permission for the houses at Mount Usher Glade included a condition for a contribution to be made by the developer towards public footpaths in the area.

Concern was raised about the appearance of the footpaths in Wicklow Town and tree roots disturbing paths in the Church Street Car Park.

ITEM 5.

Update on proposed works on Fitzwilliam Square.

District Engineer Kevin Scanlon gave an update to the members on the planned works on Fitzwilliam Square. Funding for these works were successfully secured by WMD under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. Works are due to commence on the 6th January, with a condition survey of the buildings along the route being carried out first before the contractors physically move in on site. O'Connor Sutton Cronin Consulting Engineers are managing the project and Shareridge Civil Engineering are the contractors charged with carrying out the construction works.

Mr. Scanlon advised that road closures will be in place around the square to facilitate the works, however that they will be restricted to one section being closed at a time while works take place, and then will be re-opened up again as the works move onto another section. It is anticipated that the works could take up to a year to complete. Mr. Scanlon informed the members that he has requested a monthly update from the contractor and project manager.

The members voiced their disappointment that the construction works would take so long, and stated it will be vital to keep the footpaths open in order to maintain access to local businesses. It was also requested if hoarding could be erected around the roads which would be blocked, in order to minimise noise and dust disturbance.

ITEM 6.

Housing Progress Report on Housing Developments within WMD.

District Administrator Joan Sinnott presented a report on the progress of social housing projects in the district, which was distributed to the members at the meeting. The report detailed the following;

106 units are expected to be completed in the second half of 2020

8 at the FCA site, 51 Convent Lands and 47 in Rathnew

102 units expected to commence in 2020,

36 on the Greenhill Road, 40 on Ashtown Lane and 26 in Mountainview Drive NTMK.

21 units to be acquired by the Local Authority through Part V at NTMK, Rathnew and Ashford.

16 Turn Key – (2 complete and allocated at Rathnew, and 14 units purchased in Bollarney Woods).

73 units in Rathnew were completed by approved housing body (Capital Advance Leasing Facility CALF).

Ms Sinnott also advised the members that the remedial works on the units in Hillview are substantially complete.

The members welcomed the progress made, and stated it would help in reducing the Council Housing List which would be very positive thing. The members commended all involved.

ITEM 7.

Town Team Heritage Trail.

District Administrator Joan Sinnott updated the members on Wicklow Town Team's plan for a Heritage Trail in the Town. Their plan includes the provision of information lecterns at St. Patrick's Church, Bachelors Walk, the Halpin Memorial, Travelahawk beach and at Market Square. It is intended that these lecterns will tie in with the one already erected at the Black Castle and the planned similar lectern for The Abbey Grounds. A new Town Map and information boards will be provided at the Railway Station and Abbey Street Car Park. The existing information boards in the town shall also be updated. The proposed Heritage Trail will tie in with the 18 existing plaques dotted around the town, and it is proposed to have a QR connection with audio visual available. Ms Sinnott advised the members that the Town Team had applied for funding for this project through the LEADER Programme.

The members congratulated the Town team on their initiative in approaching the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in connection with establishing a Park & Ride on the N11 and that they are very supportive of this.

ITEM 8.

Correspondence.

No correspondence was received.

ITEM 9.

A.O.B

A minutes silence was observed at the meeting in honour of the late Mayor and ex Councillor of Wicklow Town Council Nora Fitzpatrick. The members spoke highly of her enormous contribution to the town as her time as a public representative and also her time as Matron of the former Wicklow Hospital.

One of the members queried if any of the Wicklow Town Team's recommendation on parking had been considered. District Administrator Joan Sinnott advised that she has a report ready to go back to the Town Team on this matter.

It was queried if the progress on the lighting of the Historical Buildings would be halted or slowed due to the requirement to carry out a Bat survey. District Administrator Joan Sinnott advised that the requirement for the survey will not affect progress on the project, and that it can be carried out in the summer months. Ms Sinnott further advised that depending on the findings of the survey, the lighting can be adjusted accordingly if needed.

The members congratulated the Ladies of Wicklow Rugby Club on their win in the under 12, 14 and 16 Leinster titles over the weekend. It was requested that a letter of congratulations be sent to the club on their success.

One of the members reported that 5 cars needed assistance when they got stuck on the Sally Gap road during the snow. A request for a permanent barrier to be placed at the entry to the road was made, in order to prevent barriers/cones being moved by 'snow tourists'.

District Manager Brian Gleeson informed the members that every county in the country will be allocated significant funding by Failte Ireland to develop the tourism potential of their destination

towns. Up to €500,000 per Local Authority will be allocated to boost attractiveness and tourism appeal. Proposals for WMD are being examined.

Cathaoirleach Shay Cullen wished everyone a happy Christmas and thanked WMD staff, Myles Buchanan of the Wicklow People, Godfrey Byrne of Wicklow Active Retirement and fellow members for their contributions in 2019.

CATHAOIRLEACH SHAY CULLEN CONCLUDED THE MEETING AT 4.40 PM

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: _____