

**Minutes of Wicklow Municipal District Meeting**

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - 3pm**

**District Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present:** Cathaoirleach Daire Nolan, Councillors Gail Dunne, Shay Cullen, Mary Kavanagh, Irene Winters.

**Apologies:** Cllr John Snell

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

**Cathaoirleach Daire Nolan** opened the meeting at 3.00pm.

Jason Cooke and James O'Hara from SSE Airtricity entered the meeting at 3.10pm.

Cllr Mary Kavanagh entered the meeting at 3.13pm.

Cllr Irene Winters entered the meeting at 3.15pm.

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES FROM THE WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019**

It was proposed by Councillor Gail Dunne and seconded by Councillor Shay Cullen and it was unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes from the Wicklow Municipal District Meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

**PRESENTATION BY SSE AIRTRICITY ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE ARKLOW BANK**

**WIND PARK**

Jason Cooke Head of External Affairs SSE Airtricity, and James O'Hara Project Manager Arklow Bank Project SSE Airtricity made a presentation at the meeting on 'The Expansion of the Offshore Arklow Bank Wind Park'. This presentation follows one which they gave at the full Council meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018. It is the intention of SSE Airtricity to expand the number of Wind Turbines on the existing offshore Arklow Bank Site by up to 90 – 110 wind turbines with a generation capacity of 6 -10 MW.

An overview of SSE Airtricity's operations in Ireland was given

- 735MW of renewable energy generation capacity.
- Contribute €5bn to Ireland's economy.
- 750,000 gas and electricity customers.

- Maintain 250,000 street lights.
- Have awarded €8.6m in funding to 2500 local projects (largest investors currently into local communities).
- Largest provider of offshore wind energy.

It was outlined that Climate change is a huge global problem and that Ireland will not meet 2030 Renewable Energy Targets.

It was outlined why the Arklow site is suitable for expansion, namely there is a 99 year Foreshore lease and planning consent issued in January 2002 with permission for 200 turbines. The site is 27km long x 2.5km wide, 7-15 km offshore. The bank site sits in water depths of 2m – 45m. Phase 1 of the Wind Park saw 7 turbines erected on the site in 2004, and SSE Airtricity has partnered with GE Energy to provide power to Irish customers, generating 25MW of energy and is the only operational offshore wind farm in the country.

Stage 2 of the expansion project, is set to deliver 520MW minimum of energy, and expected to create 60 long term maintenance jobs at a new service base developed at either Arklow or Wicklow Port, providing enough green energy to power 420,000 homes each year. SSE Airtricity anticipate that €1 – 2 bn in capital investment will be made during construction, including an onshore service base. Once operational will make annual offshore rates payments. A multi million euro community fund will also be put in place.

At present, SSE Airtricity is carrying out a Local Port assessment. Wicklow and Arklow are possible locations at present for O&M base. This assessment will see an engineering appraisal of port side facilities against projects constraints and requirements with regards to layout and requirements of operations buildings and type/number of crew transfer vessels. There may be a requirement to consult with local landowners with regards to acquiring land for office and storage space, with a view to submitting a planning application this summer. The port assessment study is anticipated to be complete in the coming months, with a preferred location to be selected by summer, with a view to submitting a planning application for onshore buildings soon after.

Time lines for the project were given

<b>2019</b>	Local port assessment complete and location selected. Grid connection secured/onshore grid route selection.
<b>2020/2021</b>	RESS contract secured.
<b>2021</b>	Green light to construct
<b>2021/2022</b>	Construction begins
<b>2024</b>	First energy production.

#### **Councillors observations/comments.**

The Members agreed that this was an exciting development, acknowledge the need for more green energy production and the need to limit our carbon footprint. It was outlined that Wicklow has the

capability to accommodate this project. Offers of assistance to SSE Airtricity where possible were given. It was also mentioned that the proposed 60 jobs would be welcome to the town and surrounds, and it was suggested that SSE Airtricity should liaise with KWETB in relation to training and apprenticeship schemes.

The Members agreed that the offshore windfarms were now the preferred option over onshore. It was stated that Wicklow Town is strategically located and close to Dublin and that one of Wicklow's strengths is the port access relief road and the accessibility to the motorway. It was the view that SSE Airtricity could play a part in creating a tourism product in Wicklow with the hope of an anticipated 'spin off' from such a project for the area.

The Members expressed their hope that Wicklow would be looked as the preferred port for this development, however in the event of this not being the case it was hoped that both ports could share rather than lose out entirely.

The District Manager thanked SSE Airtricity and stated his support for the project. He invited them to come and ask for help if they came across any obstacles. All councillors thanked SSE Airtricity for their presentation.

James O'Hara assured that any offer of assistance will be taken up if obstacles arose and that it would be envisaged that both ports would be utilised during the construction phase.

**Presentation concluded at 3.44pm.**

## **ENGINEERS REPORT**

Kevin Scanlon District Engineer presented the District Engineer's Report

### **Housing:**

- Work continuing on general maintenance and repairs.
- Fire damaged houses in Ashwood. 1 starting this week and 1 underway.
- Technical support to WCC-Housing Dept:
  - Re-lets: 6 new houses received. 4 returned to WCC Housing Dept. 3 have works continuing.
  - DPGs: 1 ongoing at present in Glenealy. 5 OT reports awaited.
  - Part V: 1 completed.

### **Roads and Footpaths:**

- Winter maintenance continuing. 7 days/nights gritting since February 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Roundwood to Knockfadda Rd resurfacing complete.
- LIS additional 2 projects complete.
- Footpath repairs commenced in Newtown. 700m<sup>2</sup> to get tarmac this week.
- Roads in charge queries continue to be processed.
- Road Opening Licences (approx. 21) continue to be processed and agreed.
- ESB/SIRO currently installing broadband cables on poles in Wicklow Town.

- Drainage works at Cooladoyle currently under construction.

#### **Environment:**

- Grass cutting and edge cleaning continues.
- Cliff Walk works and signage being completed.

#### **Planning**

- Reports on applications and compliance with applications continue to be issued.
- Estate taking in charge reports and inspections continue with WCC staff.
- Housing development between Crinnion Park and Broadlough View commenced.

#### **Playgrounds**

- Ongoing inspections and maintenance.
- Newtown equipment to be replaced this month.
- Murrough fencing to be replaced.

#### **Public Liability**

- 1 new personal injury claim submitted to WMD this month.
- 4 historical claims finalised.

#### **Discretionary Works:**

##### **2018**

- Glenealy crossing, works commencing this week.
- Ballinastoe, purchase order given, works with ESB to commence soon.
- Dunbur Rd crossing, ramp and lights to be installed next week.
- Lights at Newtown Main Street, being looked at with other grants.

##### **2019**

- Newtown footpaths under construction.
- Murrough wildflowers progressed with Tracey.
- Glebemount to Sinnott's verge completed last week.
- Rosanna footpath extent agreed and meeting with Landowner.

#### **Councillors Questions and queries**

The members asked why there were cones at the bottom of Friars Hill, what works are taking place there, and why the works are taking so long? The District Engineer advised that water had been bubbling from a manhole at the location, and upon inspection there was a leak detected which was repaired last week. Another leak has now been detected, and WMD are waiting for this to be repaired.

A question was raised as to when the works would take place on the Pedestrian Crossing at Dunbur, and if the lights and crossing are being moved, will this mean that resurfacing works will not be done on this stretch of road? The District Engineer advised that the lights and pedestrian crossing would be commenced next week, and the plan is to plain out the existing pedestrian crossing and move it south, and re-do the lighting poles. The road resurfacing works will take place later in the year.

Members raised concerns about problems coming out of Belair Manor to Glenealy road. The members asked about the proposed Glenealy pedestrian crossing, and will it include traffic calming which was already approved by the members? The District Engineer assured that the money allocated in last year's programme of works is still in place. The best location for these works need to be decided on. Works will commence in 1 / 2 weeks and will include signage, dropping kerbs and lighting. The members stated that the €30,000 allocated for this project is for speed ramps, and that it is ramps that are needed on this road, and that is what was previously agreed by the members. It was stated that a pedestrian crossing

was not agreed. The District Engineer agreed to liaise with Paul Byrne to go back over what had been agreed last year.

The members enquired about a proposed Footpath to Wicklow Rugby Club. The District Engineer advised that there is money in the discretionary fund for this work. Currently there are 2 housing developments under construction in this location, and it is hoped to have talks with the Developers to establish whether their plans can help or enhance ours.

The members welcomed the 51 social houses on the Convent Lands

The members asked how much Wicklow Municipal District would receive out of the €280,000 Local Improvement Scheme grant monies? What will we decide to spend this money on? The District Engineer advised that to date the WM District have received 12 applications under this scheme and a meeting was to take place the following day with all District Engineers with regards to the LIS scheme.

Cllr Shay Cullen updated the meeting on the status of the proposed Roundwood playground. Legal issues are now resolved and all equipment is purchased. This was noted by the District Engineer, who advised that site clearance work would commence in the coming days.

The members expressed concern about the 'FCA site' whereby a Contractor was awarded the tender to construct 7 social houses on the site at the Murrough. The Contractor has now removed from the site. A local company was subcontracted in to carry out the works on behalf of this Contractor and has now been left at a considerable loss. It was asked if a Contractor could remove himself from a contract with Wicklow County Council without any legal repercussions. The District Manager stated that a report from the Housing Department WCC will be sought to address these queries.

Wild flower meadow needs to be done as soon as possible as it is now the optimum planting period.

Members expressed delight with widening of footpath from Glebemount to Sinnott's Garage Bollarney. It was asked could it be further extended out to Rathnew Graveyard. The District Engineer advised that the hedges and edges at the side of the footpath would have to be looked at, to see how they could be kept back going forward. Also advised that if there was money left over from this project, it could be looked at to see can the footpath be further extended.

The members welcomed improvement in traffic lights at Grand Hotel.

Asked could the Maritime project be started as soon as possible, the District Engineer advised that he would ask WMD technical staff to meet with the Thomas Flynn with a view to progressing the project further.

#### **ESTATE DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS 2019**

In assessing how to divide the €8000.00 amongst the grant applicants, it was decided that those with 2 or less Council houses would not be considered. The size of the estate, how many Council houses in the estate, what planned maintenance/improvement works they have in mind for the coming year and the funds they already have available to them were all factors in deciding how much they will receive.

17 applications received in total.

5 were not considered as they were not LA Estates or had 2 or less LA Houses

12 assessed and considered as follows.

Rosehill (Wicklow Town)	€500
Gleann Chill (Glenealy)	€500
Ballinalea (Ashford)	€600
Grahams Court (Wicklow)	€550
Darragh Park (Wicklow)	€550
Beechwood (Laragh)	€800
Springfield (NTMK)	€500
Mountainview (NTMK)	€1100
Vartry Heights (Roundwood)	€500
Sycamore Drive (NTMK)	€800
Mountain View (Wicklow)	€1000
Hillview (Wicklow)	€600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€8000.00</b>

Members asked could this list be circulated. The District Administrator agreed to this.

#### **CLIFF WALK UPDATE**

The District Administrator updated the members on the project to date.

Signage has now been installed and Sports Ireland Trails are to carry out a final inspection of the walk before the route can be officially opened.

A meeting took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the walk with Friends of the Murrough, however only one member attended. They are pleased with the work and have walked it with just have a few issues, namely drainage on the path. A further meeting is planned to finalise matters.

One of the members stated they had received a letter via email from friends of the Murrough that morning in the hours prior to the meeting. In it, they had raised issues regarding drainage and had sent photographic evidence of these problems. The member voiced concern regarding future overgrowth of flax plant on the path and that the path seemed very narrow in places, plus problems with the fencing being too close to the pathway in one place in particular. One other Cllr had also received the same correspondence from Friends of the Murrough that morning and other members asked for this to be circulated to all. The District Administrator advised that the meeting the previous week with Friends of the Murrough had been a positive one.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The District Administrator gave an update on Wicklow Tidy Towns.

- Geophysical survey almost complete on Black Castle, with 6 images of the Castle, 2 x 13<sup>th</sup> Century, 2 x 17<sup>th</sup> Century, 1 Bronze Age and 1 Viking period.
- Have a lectern/storyboard describing history of Castle in keeping with what is on the cliff walk.
- Public meeting on Sustainable Energy Community 9<sup>th</sup> March: Developing a sustainable community project to encourage and support greater use of sustainable energy practices in the town to see what we can do personally, locally and in the community. 2 leading experts have joined the steering committee who hope to put together an application form to enter a partnership agreement with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland in the coming month. There has been little response from the general public on this matter.
- Urban Orchard at Bachelors Walk. 10 Apple Trees planted. Plans being made to submit to WMD for a path, 2 benches and some planting.
- Fronts on shop units: Fronts have been placed on 3 units on the Upper and Lower Mall, some fronts have 'Things to do in Wicklow Town' with images of the Gaol, The Murrough and Skatepark on it, and the others have 'Wicklow Outdoors' showing all the things to do in Wicklow as a county.
- Have been working with residents of Hillview Estate to try and see how they can help them with projects in their estate to improve it's appearance.
- Have also engaged with residents in the Grand Hotel through the Volunteer Centre to bring them on board.
- Planting is currently being planned for the coming season.
- Plans to hold an open day in April in a unit on the Main Street to let people know they are there and how they can get involved.

The members raised concerns about some of the shopfronts on the main street 'dragging the town down'. They questioned whether there is an onus on shop owners to maintain the shop fronts. Can the Council make improvements? Can we check with the Planning Department WCC to see if any of these properties be entered onto the derelict sites register? Can derelict shops/houses be CPO'd and used to house people from the housing list? The District Manager will enquire from WCC Housing Department.

It was advised that the next WCC meeting on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April will clash with the WMD meeting.


Cllr Irene Winters proposed that the WMD meeting be held at 12.00pm on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April in County Buildings. This proposal was unanimously agreed by all members.

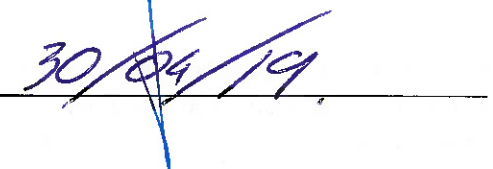
The members have said that they will decide at the next meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April whether they will have a meeting in May.

No Correspondence received.

Meeting concluded at 4.35pm.

Signed:   
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:   
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:   
30/04/19