

**Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meeting held on  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 via Zoom.**

Present: Councillor Gerry Walsh Chair  
Councillor Pat Kennedy  
Councillor Tom Fortune  
Mr. Killian McGreal  
Mr. Christopher Fox  
Mr Huw O'Toole

In Attendance: Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Services  
Ms. Christine Flood, Senior Executive Officer  
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise  
Ms. Susan Nichols, Administrative Officer  
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield, Administrative Officer  
Ms. Linda Healy, Administrative Officer

Apologies: Councillor Avril Cronin  
Councillor Mary Kavanagh  
Councillor Irene Winters  
Mr. Michael Ryan  
Mr Michael Allen  
Ms Ruth Donnelly

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**ITEM 1**

**Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup>  
June 2021**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 as circulated were proposed by Mr. C. Fox, seconded by Cllr. T. Fortune and agreed.

**ITEM 2**

**Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**ITEM 3**

**To receive a presentation from John Gleeson, Partner, Saffrey Champness Ireland and Vaughan Coetzee, Assistant Manager, Saffrey Champness Ireland on the Draft County Wicklow Screen Sector Development Strategy**

Mr. J. Gleeson and Mr. V. Coetzee made a presentation to the members of the SPC covering the following items:

- Introduction and background
- SWOT analysis
- Content Creation Enterprise Hub

- Screen Wicklow
- Foreign direct investment
- Domestic Screen Content Creation
- Screen Tourism

Following the presentation, the Chairman thanked Mr. Gleeson and Mr. Coetsee for their work on this project and the detail presented. Ms. L. Gallagher advised the members on the status of the report; it is in draft format and will be considered internally before being formally presented to the elected members.

Ms. V. Delahunt provided some information on the background to the project and the provision of supports for the sector.

Following some queries raised, it was clarified that:

- The hub will not provide educational facilities to compete with those located at various institutions such as Ballymun but will compliment and provide additional opportunities for graduates.
- There will be a critical mass of screen sector activity along the Eastern Seaboard and the hub is being viewed as a central cluster for the sector, servicing all the film studios in the eastern region, including Tara and Grangecastle.

#### **ITEM 4**

**To receive and consider update on:**

**LECP: LCDC and Community Activities**

Ms. D. Whitfield provided a report to the meeting (copy circulated) which covered the following:

Goal 1: Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban and rural regeneration

#### **Town & Village Funding Scheme to Revitalise Towns and Villages 2021**

The Town and Village Scheme objectives are being refocused to align with commitments within ‘Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025’. The 2021 Scheme will prioritise the objectives of this policy such as tackling vacancy in towns and villages, remote working and supporting town centre living. Other projects which will be welcomed include regeneration projects that support active and vibrant town or village centres, upgrading shopfronts and street facades, and green spaces and parks, etc.

#### **Grant Levels:**

For the 2021 Scheme, the minimum grant which is available is €20,000. The maximum level of grant funding available is being raised to €500,000 in respect of one application from each Local Authority. A maximum of €250,000 will apply in respect of 2 applications and €100,000 in respect of 4 applications. **2 applications must** be in respect of Towns/Villages that have not previously received funding under the Standard Town & Village Renewal Scheme

### Town and Village Applications Submitted July 2021:

Town/Village	Project
Kiltegan	Transform a derelict vacant site into a multi purpose community facility. The project aims to purchase the site and renovate the existing building to rehouse the community shop and café, provide community space, rehouse the CE scheme and provide a remote working hub.
Lacken	Refurbish a town centre building into a community shop, café and remote working hub. The project aims to maximise opportunity for economic benefit from the Blessington Greenway and from walkers and cyclists. It also aims to develop a heritage hub and a community space to create a resilient and socially cohesive community, using the Smart Village Model
Wicklow	This is a placemaking project to reconnect Wicklow centre to the port area by reanimating and revitalising the network of laneways with creative lighting, murals, riverside seating with canopy and parklet planting
Hollywood	Placemaking project to create a quality and environmentally friendly public space. This project aims to transform an underutilised space which is close to woodland so lends itself to a natural approach to designing a pocket park with associated walkway and car parking.
Ballinaclash	Renovate the community hall to revitalise the village by providing access to remote working facilities and community activities to the community and possible new residents. This includes the replacing a dividing wall with a movable divider, fitout of remote working space and insulation works to the building
Coolboy	A placemaking project to improve public space in Coolboy and maximise social and economic benefits to the area. It will rejuvenate the village green by resurfacing and upgrading existing paths to make them more accessible and age friendly and reconnect a small underused annex area. It will also see the addition of picnic benches, a bandstand and an area of planting and landscaping, improving the biodiversity of the area.
Donard	Rejuvenation of community hall to develop a community café and to provide remote working spaces.

### Announcement of the Rural Regeneration Development Fund Category 2

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, on May 12<sup>th</sup>, announced the third call for Category 2 applications to the €1 billion Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. This fund is for projects that will drive economic growth and footfall, combat dereliction, regenerate town centre and heritage buildings, develop pedestrian zones and outdoor spaces and make rural towns more attractive places to live, work and raise a family.

The €1 billion Fund is also part of the Department's Rural Development Investment Programme, which is funded under Project Ireland 2040. Projects that will be funded under Category 2 are those that require significant development before they reach the stage of being shovel ready.

RRDF Applications Submitted July 2021

Town/Village	Project
South West Wicklow – Shillelagh, Tinahely, Carnew	Reimagining South West Wicklow 1. Maximise all opportunities for the area, arising from significant planned infrastructural investment and development of the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway. 2. Revitalise Rural Towns in Southwest Wicklow to become vibrant sustainable SMART centres of commerce and attractive places to work, live and recreate in harmony with the natural environment 3. Maximise all economic & social opportunities arising from the Coollattin Footprint in line with the Irelands Ancient East brand 4. Maximise economic, social and environmental benefits from the critical mass of 'National Walking Loop Trails' already developed in the area.
Blessington	Regeneration of Blessington Renovation of the town centre and public space and significant development works to Russborough House to enhance visitor experience and maximise economic opportunities arising from the Blessington Greenway development.

#### CLAR 2021 – funded projects

Area	Project	Funding
Askanagap	Astro turf	50,000
Knockananna	MUGA floodlights	22,510.13
Knockananna	Community garden	9,747

Goal 2: Promote Active Citizenship and Public Participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making

#### **Age Friendly Programme**

The national Age Friendly Primary care centre guidelines were launched in June. These guidelines were compiled by Kildare and Wicklow Age Friendly Programme managers. Walkability audits are still to take place.

The final garda vetting process is being undertaken for the Arklow Befriending service.

Regarding housing, we are looking into making Rathcoran Estates in Baltinglass an Age Friendly estate. It was built by and will be run by Respond.

#### **Comhairle na nÓg**

The Comhairle na nÓg, through the Coordinator, are taking part in the COVID-19 Community Response Forum, bringing the perspective of young people to the table. They are also taking part in the Time Machine project which is an intergenerational project.

Funding has been secured from DCYA to continue to support the Comhairle na nÓg. Tablets were purchased for use by the Comhairle in each Municipal District, to help them to keep the youth council going during the COVID-19 restrictions.

### **PPN – report attached**

Goal 3: Strategic Direction – Develop high quality integrated services, available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups

#### **1. Healthy Wicklow Strategy**

Round 3 of Programme is underway but implementation has slowed down because of COVID-19. An extension to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 has been granted.

In 2021 the Healthy Ireland Programme has focused on the Keep Well Campaign which is coming to an end. The final round of reporting is being completed at present.

The HSE is launching the following:

**1. The launch of the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention Annual Report for 2020**

Friday 3rd September 2021, 10:00am to 11:30am

**2. The launch of Developing a Community Response to Suicide**

Wednesday 15th September 2021, 3:00pm to 4:30pm

Goal 4: Develop a vibrant and innovative community and social enterprise sector

#### **Social Enterprise Grant Scheme**

Minister Humphreys launched on 6th of September 2021 a €1 million fund to be allocated nationally to the Dormant Accounts Fund Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme 2021. This scheme is to be rolled out by Wicklow LCDC. Wicklow has been allocated €28, 515.90. Grants can be applied for in the range of €2500 to €5000.

The scheme is now open and will close for applications on the Wednesday 6th of October. Applicants will be assessed and shortlisted by Wicklow LCDC. This list will be sent to the Minister for Rural and Community Development who must approve each project before funding is awarded. Wicklow LCDC will inform successful applicants in November and final drawdown will be at the end of February. All applications must be completed in full, include three quotes and a copy of the Organisations Article of Association.

#### **Bray Area Partnership**

In addition to the ongoing work being undertaken by BAP in supporting the operation of social enterprise activity in the Bray and north Wicklow areas, some key developments to note are as follows:

1. A market research and feasibility study report is nearing completion with respect to the establishment of a social enterprise employing individuals having had interaction with the Probation Service and criminal justice system. Collaboration Ireland has been commissioned to undertake the report with funding being provided through the Probation Services Kickstart grants scheme and supported by the Dormant Accounts Fund.
2. As part of a collaboration involving BAP and two neighbouring LDCs, a support initiative, SEED 2, has been developed to work with social enterprises in the Bray/north Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and South Dublin areas. SEED 2 will cover Strategic Planning; Income Diversification and Governance guidance and supports using group training, individual mentoring and networking sessions. This work is being resourced by the Covid 19 Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme through the Dormant Accounts Fund and will run for six months, commencing in September/ October coming.
3. Work is continuing on developing the Care and Repair Action social enterprise initiative aimed at providing home supports to older people living in the Bray and north Wicklow areas.

Following the presentation, Ms. Whitfield clarified that no decision has been made on the RRDF application to date.

A further update was provided on a joint project by Wicklow County Council and SIPSI looking at Food Poverty. It has proven difficult to access evidence based research on Food Poverty but a consultant will be engaged to carry out detailed research in this area.

#### **ITEM 4**

**To receive and consider update on:**

##### **LECP: Economic Activities**

Ms. C. Flood provided a report to the meeting (copy circulated) which covered the following:

##### **RETAIL**

Bray Central: Activity on site over the summer months was at a minimum for a variety of reasons. There is a commitment from the developer to resume construction within the next four weeks with a view to practical completion by the end of January. Efforts will be made to try to open the car-park in the run up to Christmas.

The major anchor is now at legals and Oakmount have leases agreements/commitments in place on nearly 80% of the total letting space

##### **TOWN TEAMS**

In June and July Wicklow County Council published features in the People Newspapers and the Wicklow Times promoting the re-opening of our towns, highlighting some of the Covid 19 town centre enhancement measures taken by the County Council, the Look for Local campaign, Outdoor Dining, the Wicklow Passport and Wicklow Naturally.

### **Arklow Town Team**

Arklow Town Team was successful in securing €3,000 to develop a play area at the Duck Pond area, Seaview Avenue. The application was submitted under the Wicklow County Council Community Enhancement Scheme 2021. The proposed project includes a painted playground and will really uplift and transform the space.

The joint Community Garden Biodiversity project between Glenart College and Arklow Town Team is due to commence this month with the installation of a polytunnel.

The Harbour to Headwaters –River Tourism project is progressing well. Six of the information panels are now complete. The information will be locally relevant at each selected site, highlighting what aquatic and terrestrial ecology exist nearby. The project has received a three month extension to complete.

### **Blessington Town Team**

Baltinglass Municipal District launched a shop local/support local campaign which commenced mid-June and will run until the end of September with the aim to support local businesses as they reopen following the recent Covid restrictions. This initiative is being run in partnership with the Blessington and District Forum and Blessington Town Team. West Wicklow Youth Project was invited to design a logo for the campaign and the winning designer was presented with a hamper at Baltinglass Municipal District office. Blessington Town Team recently supported an online commuter survey, which was submitted as part of the Rural Regeneration Funding Application for Blessington.

### **Bray Town Recovery Team**

On 12th August Bray MD held their final Town Reopening Committee Meeting. The terms of reference for the Town Recovery Team were circulated to the committee members. These terms of reference were adopted by the Bray MD Members in May 2021. An inaugural Town Recovery Team meeting will be held in the coming weeks.

### **Greystones Town Team**

Greystones Town Team has recruited new members from a variety of backgrounds, to participate in its sub-committees and is in the process of developing a strategic plan, developing a new constitution, establishing a new business network, coming up with a plan for the management of the website and maximising the use of social media, examining the feasibility of developing an arts and culture space.

Members of the Public Realm Sub-Group have drafted an excellent document on shopfront design and shopfront guidelines which can be used to maintain a high quality of design in the town.

The Town Team is preparing an application for funding for the development of a Heritage Plan for the area.

### **Wicklow Town Team**

The LEADER funded Wicklow Town Heritage Trail was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphreys on 30<sup>th</sup> August. The Heritage Trail incorporates seven lecterns situated at the various

historic sites in the town and five additional tourism information boards. The Heritage Trail includes QR Codes linking to videos bringing the history of the various sites to life.

The Minister also launched the lighting of Wicklow's Historic sites during her visit to the Town.

The Town Team and Wicklow Tidy Towns have submitted a joint Community Power application to LEADER to carry out a survey in Wicklow Town.

Good progress has been made on developing a Youth Theatre in Wicklow Town. A Feasibility Study and Survey Report have now been completed.

### **Outdoor Dining**

Faite Ireland earlier this year announced funding for Outdoor Dining:

Part One of the Scheme - *Outdoor Seating and Accessories* - supports individual hospitality businesses with grants of up to €4,000 for seating, tables and outdoor accessories. This scheme which is fully funded by Faite Ireland, is administered by the Local Authorities. 63 applications have been received to date, half of these have been paid out so far. Where the tables and chairs are located in a public space, the business must apply for a Section 254 licence, if the equipment is located on private property, planning permission may be required.

**Closing date for receipt of applications is September 30<sup>th</sup> 2021.**

All Local Authorities were invited to apply to Fáilte Ireland for funding under Part Two - *Local Authority Weatherproofing & Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme* - to develop streets and public spaces to facilitate outdoor dining in urban tourism centres, enabling access to outdoor seating for extended periods throughout the year.

Wicklow County Council applied for and was awarded funding for Outdoor Dining and Weatherproofing for Market Square in Wicklow Town (€119,000) and Abbey Lane in Arklow (€81,000).

### **Streetscapes**

Six towns/villages in County Wicklow have been selected to participate in the Streetscape and Shopfront Enhancement scheme. The areas selected are Arklow, Baltinglass, Blessington, Enniskerry, Kilcoole and Wicklow Town.

The *Streetscape Enhancement Initiative* is a key part of the Government's 'Our Rural Future' and is designed to make our rural towns and villages more attractive colourful and vibrant places to live, work and visit.

Types of projects funded are: Upgrades to building facades, artwork, murals, lighting, street furniture and canopies, as time does not allow for the making of planning applications for new shopfronts, the funding will mainly cover painting and decluttering of shopfronts and facades.

The closing date for completed applications has been extended to **14<sup>th</sup> September**.

### **Urban Animation Scheme**

Wicklow Town's application for Urban Animation funding to enhance the links between the Main Street, Market Square and South Quay was unsuccessful however an application has been made for Town and Village Renewal funding for a similar but smaller project.

### **RRDF FUNDING: RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND**

Wicklow County Council's most recent Category 1 RRDF applications in respect of Rathdrum and the Mountain Rescue HQ at Roundwood were unsuccessful. It is anticipated that a further call for Category 1 proposals (planning in place) will be made in October/November 2021.

Two applications were submitted for Category 2 funding:

**Shillelagh/Carnew/Tinahely  
Blessington**

### **URDF: URBAN REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND**

The Wicklow Town URDF Project for the development of the library at the old Ulster Bank Building and the redevelopment of Fitzwilliam Square has been completed. Total cost for the development of the Library was €6 million, with €3 million funded via the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage URDF and €1 million from the Department of Rural and Community Development. €2 million matched funding was committed by Wicklow County Council.

The €2m Fitzwilliam Square refurbishment project, funded by an amount of €1.5m under the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government URDF scheme, has created a multi-functional space, improving accessibility and enhancing the presentation and public realm of the Town Centre at Fitzwilliam Square. A new outdoor venue for community events, performances and exhibitions, and outdoor dining is now available. The Halpin monument which was concealed is now made more visible and contributes to tourism and the town's maritime heritage. The newly created space is also now responding to the recent health and safety challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and will go towards helping to support the recovery of the tourism and hospitality sector.

Part 1 of the Arklow URDF Project the refurbishment of the Courthouse and the development of an Enterprise Space in the former Town Council offices. Part 2 of the project the public realm works are currently underway.

### **Bray Public Transport Bridge**

The closing date for submissions under the Part VIII process closed on Monday 6th September 2021, with over 150 submissions received. All the data received is being collated and reviewed, with the intention of preparing a report for the elected members.

As this is ongoing, An Bord Pleanála are reviewing the application and will determine whether an EIS is required.

### **Bray Harbour**

Funding of €7.14m was awarded for Bray Harbour Area Integrated Regeneration Project. This funding has the capacity to unlock the great potential of Bray Harbour and surrounding area. The harbour, its piers and adjacent lands are a major asset for Bray and this funding will facilitate an

integrated scheme to develop the harbour and associated public realm works to provide a vibrant waterfront area with excellent connectivity between the promenade, the town centre, the Dublin Road area and beyond.

Work is ongoing to further develop the unsuccessful applications for Wicklow and Arklow Harbours. A meeting with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage URDF unit, to review the applications has been held. It is likely that the next call for URDF funding will be late 2021/early 2022.

## **TOURISM**

Official figures have yet to be released, but indications are that it has been a reasonably positive year for tourism in terms of attractions and the hospitality sector. Some tourism businesses have been seriously impacted by the almost complete absence of overseas visitors others have been boosted by the “Staycation Summer”. We know that in the very good weather, areas such as Brittas Bay, Magheramore, Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains have come under severe pressure.

In 2020 a **Tourism Recovery Taskforce** was established by Failte Ireland – this Taskforce is chaired by the Chief Executive and Brian O’Flynn of Ireland’s Ancient East.

4 key objectives have been agreed:

Project 1: Wicklow Outdoors

Project 2: Wicklow Passport

Project 3: Family Market

Project 4: New Wicklow Experiences - maximising the potential of Wicklow Naturally to link food experiences with the outdoors and adventure experiences and emerging film tourism opportunities. The task force meets on a monthly basis. Participation in the Taskforce has resulted in funding for marketing of some of the Wicklow products and in particular the Wicklow Passport. Failte Ireland in collaboration with Wicklow Tourism and the Taskforce have developed a new series of itineraries for the County.

### **Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains Masterplan and Visitor Orientation Plan for Wicklow**

- Failte Ireland funded project led by FI with Strategic Partners NPWS, OPW, Coillte and WCC
- The Plan covers visitor attractions and activities available in the area,
- The first stage of stakeholder engagement has been completed.
- The Consultants Team led by Consarc have prepared a draft plan and are now engaging with some of the key landowners to assess the feasibility of developing additional off road trails between Laragh and Glendalough and provision of additional parking.
- The process has identified a number of issues: congestion at key sites, concerns over security, capacity and quality of car parking and visitor services, issues with local access, and erosion and degradation of the environment.
- Visitor Experience Hubs have been identified around the county where there is a particular focus of visitor attractions. Development of these hubs will build capacity, help disperse visitors across the county, encouraging longer stays and greater investment in the area.
- The team is developing detailed plans for walking, mountain biking, off road family cycling.
- Measures have been taken this year to introduce additional temporary parking and to use traffic counters to improve parking management and signage.

- Traffic counts carried out on the June Bank Holiday Weekend 100k+ visitors visited Glendalough between 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June
- Toilets have been upgraded

### **Thematic Experiences**

- Film Strategy is being finalised
- Enniskerry's *Disenchanted* is a great opportunity to promote film tourism it is estimated that the net benefit to the national economy is of the order of €63 million and €20 million to the local economy .
- *Wicklow Naturally* provides opportunities for the hospitality sector and for the development of food trails and food experiences. October Feast will be the highlight of Wicklow Naturally's 2021 calendar a series of events and food related experiences is planned for the month of October. In addition to promoting food and beverage producers in the County, October Feast will cover areas such as food resilience and food poverty.
- Wicklow Outdoors and the Wicklow Passport are cornerstones of our unique visitor experience
- Avondale Forest Park – development has commenced to be completed in 2022.
- Blessington Greenway and the Blue Light Blueway

### **Destination Town Funding**

Wicklow Town was awarded €500,000 Destination Town Funding for the redevelopment of the Abbey Grounds the 13<sup>th</sup> century ruins of the former Franciscan Abbey which form a picturesque centrepiece located in the heart of Wicklow Town.

It is proposed to restore the garden to its 19<sup>th</sup> century layout, in tandem with maximising the usability of the entire site as multi-functional public amenity and outdoor events venue.

WCC has appointed Mosart consultants to lead the design process. Initial proposals have been presented to the Municipal District and are due to go to Part VIII following the September meeting of the Municipal District.

### **Wicklow Passport**

- Sales of Wicklow Passport have exceeded 2,500
- Promotion of the Passport continues on social media, supported by video and extensive imagery with enhanced distribution to hotels and tourism providers throughout July and August.
- Work continues on a series of promotional itineraries and tours around the Wicklow Passport including; South West Wicklow covering Carnew, Shillelagh, Baltinglass, Donard and Tinahely; Day Tour covering Glencree, June Blakes Gardens, Hollywood and Shekina Sculpture Garden.

### **Celtic Routes Project:**

Funding of €1,917,770 for the second phase of the Celtic Routes tourism project has been secured for Ireland / Wales's tourist project, Celtic Routes. This is a partnership project between Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority in Wales and Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford City and County Councils in Ireland. It is a branded

collection of tourism experiences encouraging travellers to visit Ireland and Wales to discover the Celtic spirit by suggesting immersive and authentic experiences in West Wales and South East Ireland. A toolkit is available for businesses and destinations with guidance and ideas about how they can create their own Celtic experiences and contribute to the success of the project.

The Celtic Route Partnership project has released an online platform to access the database of imagery that has been produced over the past year. The imagery has been used to support the extensive promotional campaign that is undergoing, including high quality and high resolution photos and videos.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGY**

### **Wicklow Naturally**

The Wicklow Naturally Newsletter has been circulated with the meeting documentation. The newsletter provides a comprehensive overview of the activities of Wicklow Naturally (now Wicklow Naturally CLG).

The company has been awarded €220,000 Leader Funding for a Food and Beverage Co-ordinator and for costs of participation in promotional events over the next two years. The company will contribute 5% funding through membership for each of these projects and Wicklow County Council will provide match funding of €50,000 over the two year life of the project.

## **MARITIME**

There are a number of Offshore Wind Energy projects proposed off the coast of County Wicklow

- Dublin Array – Bray and Kish Banks
- Cailleach – off Bray Head
- Codling Wind Park between Greystones and Wicklow
- Arklow Bank between Arklow and Wicklow Head
- Shelmalere just south of Arklow

### **Arklow Bank**

SSE Renewables has submitted a planning application to An Bord Pleanála for the development of the landfall for two offshore export circuits underground high voltage connections, a new sub-station and transmission compound along with a 220kV overhead power line connection from Shelton Abbey to the transmission network.

SSER is planning to make its application to Wicklow County Council in respect of the O&M base at Arklow within the coming weeks.

### **Codling Wind Park**

The Codling Wind Park has published its Onshore Infrastructure Scoping Report which covers the land-based elements of the Codling Wind Park project, such as the point at which the cables will come ashore (landfall), the routing of onshore cabling and any electricity substation(s) that may be required to connect the project to the national grid. It also describes how the operations and maintenance base for the project, which will be located at a port along the east coast, may be considered in the EIA.

The Codling Wind Park is expected to announce its decision regarding the development of an operations and maintenance base by the end of October.

**Benefits to the local economy**

- Each O&M base is likely to employ 80 people. There will be thousands employed during the construction phase this will benefit wide range of local companies in the supply chain.
- Both Codling and SSE are engaging with companies interested in participating in the supply chain.
- There will be extensive training and educational opportunities.
- Wicklow is in discussions about developing training facilities at Clermont
- There will be a substantial Community Contribution Scheme

**Key Milestones**

The enactment of the Marine Area Planning Bill, 2020 is expected in 2021

The Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) Auction whereby the companies bid for a grid connection is expected in 2022

Ms. C. Flood explained that two locations within County Wicklow are being considered by the Codling Wind Park for their O&M base; Greystones or Wicklow. She advised that herself and Marc Devereux have been appointed as key liaison staff to work with Codling and assist them.

**ITEM 5**

**Report of Head of Enterprise, LEO supports**

**ITEM 6**

**Wicklow County Campus, Content Creation Hub**

Ms. V. Delahunt provided a report covering Item 5 and 6 (copy circulated) which covered the following:

LEO Objectives
<p>To foster an enterprise culture and stimulate enterprise at local level by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of the enterprise message at local level.</li> <li>- Working with the relevant stakeholders in the county to foster entrepreneurship.</li> <li>- Delivering appropriate enterprise training and mentoring to entrepreneurs.</li> <li>- Providing funding options to entrepreneurs, early stage promoters and viable businesses to support growth and development of micro enterprises.</li> <li>- Developing a progression pathway for clients to Enterprise Ireland</li> <li>- Acting as a 'First Stop Shop' for business information and referral</li> </ul>

METRICS: Grants	HISTORICAL	TARGETS	YEAR TO DATE
	2020	2021	2021
<b>Grants Approved (number/ value)</b>			
- Measure 1	- 27/€663,778.00	- Meet Demand	-21/ €424,769
- Technical Assistance for Micro	- 3/€3,850	- Meet Demand	-2 / €3.150 (to date)

Exporters			
NB: Ability to meet demand is influenced by the amount of funding allocated to the LEO			
<b>METRICS: Training/ Capacity Building</b>	<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021</b>
Total No. of All Programmes (Training/Networking/Events/Seminars)	64	60	49
Start Your Own Business Participant numbers (included in total training programmes)	75	75	74
Total No. of all Participants participating in above Programmes	1542	1000	626
Women in Business Network Number of Meetings	10	12	8

<b>METRICS: Business Advice &amp; Mentoring</b>	<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of new clients added to database	1302	1000	539
Number of One to One Business Advice meetings including Businesses assigned a mentor	803	600	316 (Including Brexit 1-1 Mentoring)

<b>METRICS: Student Enterprise Programmes</b>	<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>
No. of Secondary Student Participants	962	1000	962

<b>METRICS: Irelands Best Young Entrepreneur</b>	<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Year to Date 2021</b>
Number of Applications	Programme review	Programme review	Programme review

<b>Trading Online Voucher</b>	<b>HISTORICAL</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	
<b>No of Trading Online Vouchers approved</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Year to Date 2021</b>
Trading Online Vouchers	430	70	116 (Total value: €245,630)

Lean For Micro Project	HISTORICAL	TARGETS	YEAR TO DATE
	2020	2021	2021
No. of Companies who have undertaken a Lean for Micro Assessment by a Lean Expert	8	11	8

Microfinance Ireland	HISTORICAL	TARGETS	YEAR TO DATE
	2020	2021	2021
No. of Companies who have submitted a MFI loan application through the LEO	21	23	5

### August 2021 Activities

- The August Network of Entrepreneurial Women network meeting took place via Zoom
- Two Wicklow clients accepted onto the Hi-Start Programme for high calibre start-ups seeking investment from VCs and business angels.
- A national programme of training supports for craftspeople commenced, in conjunction with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland and LEO Wicklow clients are engaging in this.
- The 'Stimulus' and 'Green for Micro' consultancy programmes are in train, offering expert guidance to approximately 50 growing LEO client businesses in 2021. Good progress is reported by the consultants with all participants.
- The LEO is continuing to help clients work through their customs queries with a further customs training course scheduled for the autumn to help companies adapt to new regulations following Brexit.
- There continues to be a high level of demand for business advice clinics throughout the summer month which are currently being run remotely. Additional Clinics are being provided to ensure that demand is being met.
- Fortnightly newsletter is circulated to clients on supports, training courses, events and other relevant information.
- Social media and LEO website updates are carried out a number of times a week to raise awareness and promote the LEO supports.
- Applications for the Trading Online Voucher Scheme continue to be submitted with 116 approved to date for 2021, at a value of €245,630). The grant has now reverted to 50% from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.
- The LEO national **#LookforLocal campaign** continued throughout July / August 2021 to support the re-opening of the economy and showcasing local businesses in order to stimulate investment in local economy through digital marketing channels and e-newsletter. A #LookforLocal digital promotional day took place Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September while campaign is now wound down.
- An extensive Export Development programme has been developed for role out in partnership with LEO Kildare in Q3/4 2021 to assist first time exporters get ready. Seven Wicklow businesses are registered to participate. This event is part of our strategic focus on assisting longer established clients to successfully develop new markets.
- LEO Wicklow and Kildare are taking the lead on organising one national virtual event for National Women's Enterprise Day to take place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October. An events co-ordinator has been

appointed to project manage the event on behalf of the LEO network. The programme features a strong line up of female entrepreneurs and workshop sessions covering topics such as internationalisation, competitiveness, digitalisation, sustainability and inspirational case studies of LEO clients. The event was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> September with the theme #Build the Future.

- LEO Wicklow is the lead LEO for taking bookings for the East region Food Academy Programme with 10 food producers from the east region booked on. First workshop took place in July and will continue throughout the remainder of the year with another 4 workshops and a Supervalu buyer pitching session.
- The next meeting of the Evaluations and Approvals Committee takes place on Tue 15<sup>th</sup> Sept with 7 funding applications seeking approval from the committee.

### **Business Skills and IT skills Training Programme**

The Autumn Winter 2021 business skills training programme is now open for bookings through our online portal on [www.localenterprise.ie/wicklow](http://www.localenterprise.ie/wicklow). An extensive training delivery procurement exercise preceded the organisation of the programme.

### **Autumn Winter Business Skills Training Courses now added to our website for booking include:**

- ✚ Start Your Own Business course, 31<sup>st</sup> August (Full and commenced)
- ✚ Trading Online Voucher Seminar, 2<sup>nd</sup> September (27 participants)
- ✚ Export Development Programme – Joined programme between LEO Wicklow and Kildare, starting September. (7 participants)
- ✚ Tax & VAT for Start Ups, 15 & 17 September, 10 participants booked on.
- ✚ The Owner Manager Development Programme, 21 participants booked on, commenced in first week of September.
- ✚ Effective use of Social Media, Beginners level: 22 September 2021
- ✚ Prepare your business for Customs, 12<sup>th</sup> October
- ✚ Employment Law, 30 September 2021

### **Clermont Enterprise Hub development:**

- Contracts were signed with the appointed Construction contractor on 25<sup>th</sup> August, with a photo opportunity to promote the development of the Hub. Contractor to move onsite week 13<sup>th</sup> September for construction to commence.
- Foul drainage system to be developed for the whole campus concurrently. Topographical and CCTV surveys carried out to inform the design.
- Directors invited to the board of Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG. AGM held on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Next board meeting is on 14 October 2021.
- Lease agreement to be finalised.
- First REDF advance payment drawdown in Q4 2021.
- Promotion and marketing of facilities to commence, Q1 2022
- Recruitment of Centre Manager Q4 2021 / Q1 2022 depending on construction progress.
- Screen Development Strategy for County Wicklow: Roundtable event with industry scheduled for early October. Final Strategy report due end September.
- Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG has led a consortium application for €365,000 funding for screen skills training courses under the Crew Development Hub at Screen Ireland. Announcement to be expected.

Mid East Regional Enterprise Plan 2021-24

Draft plan ready in next couple of weeks. Focus on actions around Screen Content Industry and Hub development, Network of Remote working Hubs, renewable energy / Maritime opportunities and Enterprise Hub, Food Development Incubation Hub.

In response to a query raised by the Chairman, Ms. V. Delahunt clarified that it has been a challenging time for staff but that additional resources are to be provided by the Department and it is hoped that there will be more information available before the next meeting.

## **ITEM 7**

### **Update on Blessington Greenway**

Ms. S. Nichols provided a report to the meeting (copy circulated) which covered the following:

In December 2020, the Department of Transport gave a commitment to funding the project to the sum of €15 million.

Through the process of route identification, the scope of works for the project was changed. These elements included some route change, new bridges, engineering works to construct the greenway may incorporate some lake shore protections work, underpass, a new bound surface type and an increased width of the path. These project changes triggered the need to review the environmental reports undertaken to date.

As the project works/scope and legislation have changed since the previous Appropriate Assessment screening, which was carried out in 2015, AECOM conducted an Appropriate Assessment screening and which examined the potential adverse effects of the proposed project on Natura 2000 sites i.e. the Poulaphouca Special Protection Area. It was concluded that the project requires a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

The NIS with the relevant planning documentation, which will include the following key documents will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as the competent authority to make decisions on local authority developments under 177AE (relating to appropriate assessment (AA)) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. Some key documents include:

- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Appropriate Assessment Screening
- Natura Impact Statement
- Archaeological Impact Assessment
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Environment Impact Assessment Screening

The documents and drawings for the ABP submission are currently being finalised. Wicklow County Council is working closely with both the consultants, Aecom and the main landowner, the ESB to complete the comprehensive suite of documents. It is envisaged that the submission to ABP will be made in October 2021.

Following the completion of all these reports, the Council are confident that the scheme is a robust scheme, with all environmental issues and planning concerns addressed, thus making it a high

quality and deliverable project, which is ultimately the overall objective of Wicklow County Council. During 2021, the Council will further engage with the public, local community groups and all stakeholders on the progression of this project.

With the construction phase of the project taking approximately eighteen months, the proposed completion date is in quarter four of 2023.

#### **Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway**

Wicklow County Council's consultants are currently preparing the required documentation for the statutory process. Currently additional environmental surveys are being carried out to finalise Planning and Environmental Reports. These environmental surveys will be carried out in September and October, they are non-intrusive and limited to a walk-over of land that form part of the preferred route.

Ms. V. Delahunt advised that a course has been arranged focussing on preparing businesses for Greenway opportunities.

#### **ITEM 8**

##### **The Forestry Sector: Felling Licences**

The Chairman noted that an email, as received by Cllr. A. Cronin, from Minister Hackett's office had been circulated to the members. Mr. C. Fox advised that the issue has moved to a national level and that he will continue to monitor. It was agreed that the issue could be revisited in the first meeting of 2022.

#### **ITEM 9**

##### **Correspondence**

No correspondence had been received that had not already been dealt with during the course of the meeting.

#### **ITEM 10**

##### **AOB**

There was no other business to discuss.

#### **ITEM 11**

**Next meeting:** It was agreed that the next meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC will take place on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 @ 10am.**

Cllr. G. Walsh noted that the December meeting will be his last as Chairman, as the position is due to change thereafter.

**Signed:**

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**Cllr. Gerry Walsh**

**Chair, Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC**

**Date**

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