

ORDINARY MEETING OF
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

ON

MONDAY 12 JUNE 2023 AT 2:00 P.M.

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TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY , JUNE 12th 2023:

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, bonjour, Monsieur O'Brien in France! Thank you very much for joining us everybody at this meeting. Thank you for coming here today. I will hand you over to Helen first to go through the roll call.

HELEN: We have a number of members of the public with us, thank you for joining us. I would ask the elected members to keep their cameras on and the members of the public to keep their cameras off and everybody to remain on mute, only the elected members to speak when they wish to speak, when the Cathaoirleach brings them into the meeting. If there are issues with connectivity contact myself or Teresa and we will get you back into the meeting. I will go ahead with the roll call.

[Roll Call]

We have apologies from Cllr John Snell.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen.

HELEN: We have a number of votes of sympathy. We extend our sympathies to the families of Thomas Phelan, father of our colleague Eamonn Phelan and Carmel Robinson, mother of Margaret Birchall and the family of our former colleague Kevin Roberts.

CLLR DUNN: I would like to be associated with the bereavement of Kevin Roberts. I worked with Kevin for a long number of years and anybody who knew him, he was a gentleman. We might just remember Miles Buchanan's mother who does the Wicklow People for us here who died recently. Condolences to the Buchanan family, thank you.

CLLR FERRIS: Thanks, I would like to propose a vote of sympathy to our former Director of Services, Sean Quirk, his sister died last week and I know the funeral service is today, so I would just like to propose a vote of sympathy to Sean, thank you.

Cllr O'Brien: Thank you, I would like to offer condolences to family of the Evelyn Goodman, her husband, son and daughter and Linda, and niece.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We might stand for a minute's silence please.

May their souls and all the souls of the faithfully departed may rest in peace.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Number one on the agenda, to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting...

HELEN: We have a suspension of standing orders.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Forgive me, I spend my life apologising, but it's coming to an end, thank God. I will just, we have a suspension of standing orders.

HELEN: Suspension of standing orders submitted by Cllr Mary Kavanagh, Cllr Leonard, Cllr Scott, Rory O'Connor, Cllr Tom Fortune, Cllr Dermot O'Leary. Wicklow County Council write to (inaudible) asking him to contact all party leaders and members to remind them of their own declarations on the climate and biodiversity agency and commitment to youth and community groups and to the two citizens assemblies adult and youth, regarding the restoration of nature as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, that Wicklow County Council writes to all party leaders urging them to work together with their members to pass strong EU nature restoration law without delay. If passed we request that Wicklow County Council forwards to all city and county councillors without delay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If you would like to put that to the 4.30, anyone with objection to that. Okay, thank you. Back to the agenda. Start again.

>>: I want to say congratulations to the Wicklow under 14 lady footballers. They won the all- Ireland gold final on Saturday against Clare, it is a huge achievement for these girls at the age under 14 to have this all- Ireland medal. So I think we should acknowledge them. It's a huge achievement and I think that it's great to see such young females holding such good titles. On behalf of the council, I want to wish them congratulations.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: I want to extend congratulations to the Wicklow hurling team that won the cup and they are now promoted to the next level up for next year, the Christie ring cup, well done to them, it is a fantastic achievement.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Back to the agenda. To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 8th May 2023. Do I have a proposer. Cllr Fitzgerald. Secunder Cllr Patsy Glennan. Thank you. Number 2, to consider the disposal of 9.45 square metres or thereabouts in the townland of Merrymeeting, Barony of Newcastle, County Wicklow, comprised in foal yes WW39978F by Transfer Order to ESB of Two Gateway, East Walk Road, City of Dublin. Do I have a proposer? We don't have a proposer for that one. I do, thank you, Cllr Flynn Kennedy and Cllr Derek Mitchell. All agreed? Okay.

3, to consider the disposal of 4500 square metres in the townland of Croneyhorn Lower, Croneyhorn Carnew, County Wicklow, comprised in folio N11630F being the property known as Croneyhorn Lower townland, Croneyhorn, Carnew, Wicklow, by Transfer Order to Ms Jamie Brownrigg. Tomacork House, Carnew, County Wicklow. Thank you.
Cllr Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: It says on the front page if successful the property should be done within one year, is it one year from today? Is that right?

>>: From contract date, the contract date. Not today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we all agreed? All agreed. Thank you. 4. To consider the disposal of 4400 square metres of thereabouts in the townland of Rednagh, Rednagh Road, comprised in folio NWW2468N being the property known as Roddenagh Td, is that a misprint? Sorry, Rednagh Road, County Wicklow by Transfer Order to Ms Shannon Dillon, 7 Merton, Sea Road, Arklow, County Wicklow.

>>: I propose.

CATHAOIRLEACH: All agreed? Five to consider the disposal of 164.92 acres in the townland of Tomnafinnogue, County Wicklow, comprised in folio NWW18490F and WW18491F County Wicklow, being the property known as Tomnafinnogue Wood, Ballyraheen and Ballykelly, County Wicklow, by Transfer Order to Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Proposed, Cllr Mullan and seconded, Cllr Vincent Blake seconded. All agreed. Thank you.

Number 6 to adopt the Wicklow County Council annual report 2022, section 221 of the Local Government Act, copy attached.

HELEN: In accordance with section 221 of the Local Government Act the members have received a copy of the annual report, the draft was listed on the April agenda, and since then the AFS has been adopted and figures have been added in and the performance indicators for 2022 have been submitted and they have been included as an appendix. It's listed now for adoption, if I can have a proposer and seconder or if there are any questions in relation to it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: No questions. Cllr Timmins. Cllr Flynn Kennedy seconded.

Number 7 on the agenda. To consider the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report May 2023.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just a couple of things to note, biodiversity funding for the county. So we have been allocated some funds under the National Parks and wildlife service and you can see it in the report there. Then to draw your attention then as well to the community projects from the

community recognition fund, 1.6 million in funding dispersed throughout the county. You will see the project is an HMD area for that. And I suppose we will take any questions and take the report as read unless you have questions on specific aspects.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins?

CLLR TIMMINS: Just two points, first one the one I bring up every month, it's been re-speded the street plan and hopefully sods will be turned in the next couple of months. But they haven't come back with the spec, they are coming back in the next two weeks with revised documents that will go to tender and then whatever 42 days after that we will have some movement, but I just want to bring up the point, can we keep an eye on Arups to make sure we reach that deadline. In a related matter, to do with RDF the court house maybe slightly left to one side, could be looked at moving on to get continue der documents for the court house funding as well, 600,000, but now about a million, but repair the court house obviously is a central part of the whole RDF funding.

My other point was in relation to the e- mail we received last Friday where by Wicklow County Council in relation to the Greenway at Blessington, it's with on Bord Pleanala and it came back looking for further information to the council a couple of months ago and gave Wicklow County Council a tight deadline to sport, 30, 45, 60 days, quite a narrow time line, and we've got notification on Friday that on Bord Pleanala have agreed that Wicklow County Council don't need to submit that further information until January 24. My immediate reaction was that was a very far out date, seven months from today. I wonder could the council look at perhaps at submitting that further information, maybe in the autumn, not to leave it to 2024, just seems a very, very long time away to submit a response to an FI request. I presume that would bring forward the response time line like a normal planning application. But just to explore the possibility of pulling that date a little bit further forward. Seven months seems very long on top of the couple of months that elapsed so far. Cllr Mullan: Again, just to echo what Cllr Timmins said about the RDF. It is essential that goes to tender if the target date is to be hit for construction to be hit in the autumn, the tender needs to be out and be assessed appropriately over the summer, because things dip in the summer. On the other Greenway matter, the arc Cleo Greenway, I know we're at a stage where we should be about to print or publish the detailed option map for all the routes along the 39km stretch and it's essential we keep up on that project because we have to have the public meetings have to be reheld to show the commutes along the stretch the different options being put to planning hopefully with a target to go to planning in the autumn, which is particularly vital at this stage.

CLLR DUNN: Just one query there, just want to thank the council for the work that has been carried out, Wicklow harbour, an application has gone for dredging and emergency dredging licence, I'm just a little bit concerned over the time it will take before the emergency dredging is done. I know it's at government level, but we have a pontoon there, it was meant to be installed a while ago and I know that we're waiting on the foreshore licence for a long time. But I want to compliment Joanne O'Dowd for keeping us in the loop and hopefully we can really bring this forward very quickly, because we're losing a quarter of the cargo coming into the harbour on each ship, so it's really, really important that it's done as quickly as possible. I would like to thank the council for providing funding for this as well. Cllr O'Brien: I was going to say merci, but thank you very much, and thank the Chief Executive for the report. Can I just put on the record my sincere thanks to the Wicklow municipal district staff. This was the first year there was no major incidents on a Bank Holiday weekend with concern with traffic. I was disappointed to read an article in the local and national paper saying there was traffic chaos based on what happened two years ago. I just thought it was very unfair on the staff, the Garda and landowners to put this forward. There is concern in the area and this is where I would like some clarification as soon as possible about the right of way to Magheramore Beach, there's concern it could be closed off. So can I get clarification from the Chief Executive that there is a right of way, it is concerning to some of the residents out there, but my sincere thanks to all involved in the work they have done over the last number of weeks, thank you. Cllr Walsh: Thanks to the Chief Executive for the report. Firstly on a negative note, looking at the housing figures and back to the arrears figure unfortunately remains stubbornly high and going in the wrong direction by comparison with last month's figure, I wondered again what arrangements if any are in place for payment plans etc to deal with the situation for people in arrears. On a positive note, the report in relation to the affordable units there in green hills road, great to see, 236 lucky people there received the keys for those properties and just a quick, you are looking at Rathnew, 44 and 22 planned for those areas and just a question in relation to Loghley and Kilcoole and the site in grey stones, I assume there are going to be affordable units there. And just the figure there the director the minimum house price in the far- right column on the green hills road site, I take it the difference between that and the actual house price state, that's the claw back figure, just clarification around that. And just on the mobility aids grant as well, for the private homes in particular, the spent amount by comparison to the total grant amount is high and I know COVID intervened, but is there an issue around that, or an issue around awareness or an issue around the complex nature of the application, a lot of that money remains unspent and also on the boiler maintenance, the

access rates, 60%, the contractors in question, are they making arrangements to get back to those properties, that didn't get access to in the first instance to arrange for an alternative maintenance dates there for those boilers, thank you. Chief Executive: Yes, the RDF project is very high on my agenda in terms of getting it delivered. There's two elements to it, the public piece and the court house library, they are two separate tenders, both departments working closely on it. I know Arup have been slow coming back to us, but we are very keen, we will be progressing as soon as we can. It is absolutely imperative we're on the ground in the autumn on that scheme. The Greenway in Blessington, the reason for the long setback is to do with ecological reports. So. studies cannot be done until November, they cannot be done at any other time of the year and that is why anything we can get back to the board we will get back to the board in advance, but that is the reason, it is the timing of the natural habitat investigations we have to do. But we will keep the members informed as we progress through the FI. Again, Wicklow harbour, thank you for your comments on the dredging, the time line, I will get Breige to come in in a moment. Cllr O'Brien, thank you for your wishes for the staff and thanks to the staff, there is a right of way over that beach, at the beach, and I have more detail on that if you needed. I might get Joe to come in on the housing question.

BRIEGE: The team have been working on this consistently. Unfortunately, it's not within our gift to say what the time lines of the various departments when they are going to come back and say it. But rest assured, we will keep the pressure up and as soon as we get the information on that, we just got the standard report that they will get to it as soon as possible. But I think at this stage Justine your own influence, in terms of political pressure, with regard to how important Wicklow harbour is to us, might be the way forward. But that's with a we've got initially, we will keep the pressure up.

>>: It is our understanding there's a right of way now, the detail on that we would have to look into that councillor, but when the new owners purchased the land a couple of years ago, around the beach, they did confirm that it would remain the access would remain open to the public. So it hasn't been any change to that and I haven't heard anything contrary to that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Director Joe Lane.

JOE: The rent arrears, we did a comprehensive report, there is timing issue, last month's was lower than north, 140,000 below last month and there's always going to be issues with arrears, it's going to be challenging but we take it on a case by case basis and we have success to a certain point, it is an extended period. I repeat that report if you need it, detailing it. Kilcoole, yes, there will be affordable in Kilcoole, there will be affordable and social, mixed development in Kilcoole. The consultants

have been appointed, we have had a preliminary meeting, there will be affordable and social, consultants will be dealing, we will be consulting once there's something done on it with the area councillors. The preliminary designs given before will be given, but they will be restarting it. But the concept of the 50- 50 split give or take, it might change a small bit, but that concept will still be there, they know roughly what we want and there's no change from that, what we all agreed with the members. So both of them will be mixed developments. Kilcoole is more advanced.

DPGs, yes, you have part of the question there, a small bit of it is awareness, we are trying to do with that with the stakeholders who may have access to older people, including the older persons committee and also part of that the private element part of that is there are issues with contractors, it's a private thing.

The buyers know we don't plan to recircle it. However if members - we will see what we can do. At about 80% coverage we have the small (Inaudible) available and the monitors if anyone wants them. I think that answers the questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: Apologies for being late. Thank you for your report. It's very comprehensive as usual. It's probably the best document we get as councillors. I have three questions that are indirectly or directly relate to parts of the report. The first one on housing and the housing department do an excellent job in very, very difficult circumstances. And all of us members have continued to say that meeting after meeting. It is the case, but there are challenges and we as Wicklow County Council are landlords and we have a duty of care both to the tenants and to neighbouring tenants, and I think the protection of tenants is very, very important when we're either dealing with an ongoing situation or dealing with our placing tenants and our tenants hand book is something that we put together very carefully, and very strategically. I hope that we refer to it, but it's an area I'm very concerned about. I would like to have some discussion on it. I know I can attend a housing SPC, but I think it's an area that we need to focus on. I have an urgent situation in my own area and we do, I put the challenge out there under the duty of care. It isn't good enough for us to say it's someone else's responsibility. We are the landlords, we are the ones that are managing the housing stock. So I would like something positive and constructive around that whole area. Number 2, the comment on town teams, I think it was back in January meeting or maybe the Dees meeting, because I have been pushing the boulder up a hill for a long time and it's getting heavy. But I've got strong shoulders and I will continue to push it, but I did propose in order to have a solution that the town teams would have in each district would have the

councillors on them and the chair of the district council would be the chair, which means the chair would alternate every year, which we all saw very democratic. I think that's the solution, as far as I'm concerned to the concerns I have raised on an ongoing basis. I propose that and was supported by Cllr Bee an. I would like to get reaction and follow up on that, because we did get a propose and second it. The third question I have is regarding climate. The organisation LAWPRO, my understanding that LAWPRO is a committee or gathering of 13 local authorities. I would like to understand more of what it is, because we haven't been told about it. And who is on it and how is it structured and all that. If someone could come back to me on that. Thank you, they are my three questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr M Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Thank you, chair and thank you to the Chief Executive for her report. I have two issues to raise. One could you give us an update on the coastal erosion for funding of the Murrough and a potential timeframe for that. It's nearly seven- and- a- half years on since this issue was first raised at an emergency meeting at The Grand Hotel. While that is been a lot of work done and I appreciate that, still no coastal erosion works per se, have been put in place, other than a bit of rock armour put in by Iarnród Éireann. And the last I heard was that there were reporting being commissioned like environmental reports and at what stage do we apply for the actual funding. Then, is there any update from Irish Water on the sewage problem we had last month with regard to the pipework and what was causing that terrible deluge of sewage into the harbour. Finally I want to talk the council staff, both Municipal and county for the Portaloos. They are going to be good to have in the summertime and it's good to see them at tourist locations, so thank you for the work on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: Just a couple of things. I will start off with a few positive things that maybe we could incorporate into the Chief Executive's report. The Craft Strategy are having their first networking event tomorrow and it would be great to see them in the Chief Executive's report going forward to get the word out there to anyone working in that area. Just in relation to the homelessness, the more homeless crisis, I would like to thank the staff. I think they are absolutely brilliant and this is no bad reflection on them at all, but I would ask, like I have had two cases of tragedies in recent months and they were both housing reps. I think that we need to look at more mental health supports maybe from the HSE to put something in place for people who are going through this and actually for councillors as well, because it can be so upsetting and so distressing. I am sure the staff are the same and I think that we need to wrap those supports in around with the crisis in hand. So then just I would like to ask

for a more up to date review on the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme. I know there is a bit in the Chief Executive's report about it, but just where we are at with that and I know there was staff going to be recruited to start the scheme, but where we are with that. Then, lastly in relation to the RDF funding, I was very disappointed to find out that I had a commitment from the Chief Executive that the councillors would be consulted with the URDF funding applications that were going in and I was just really surprised to find out that applications had actually went in for the URDF without any consultation to myself or other fellow councillors in my own area, some of whom have a lot of experience, decades of experience in their own local community. I think it's a huge missing piece of the jigsaw not to have that input from local councillors on the ground. We work very hard and we know what is going on in our local community, we know what coming down the tracks because we are trying to help. I think it's really important to have our voice at the table when these decisions are made. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Leonard. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thanks Chief Executive for the report. First of all, if I can pay compliments to the housing staff, there is almost 80 families received the keys of new houses in Rathdrum, so I want to thank Joe and the director in the delivery of those houses they are very much to be welcomed. What I would like to ask our Chief Executive is if our and our own manager from the Municipal District would get involved and in touch with Irish Water in relation to an announcement that was made, it must be three years ago about funding being made available for the village of Aughrim for a wastewater treatment plant. Every time we ask we are told it's gone from asset management to design. I don't know how long it takes to design a wastewater treatment plant for a small village, but there hasn't been a house built in that village for 14 years. As CEO of the county and the leading executive of the people responsible with manage the council, I think yourself and our own manager need to get involved to see what can be done to move this forward because it is dragging its heels and I would like a commitment if you can both do that?

CLLR McMANUS: Thank you very much. Just two questions. The first is in relation to the Bray Public Transport Bridge I think it's being called now. Just looking for an update on the Natura Impact Statement if it's been completed and do we have timeframe for that? The second in relation to the relet figure, I was struck by 59 vacant properties in Bray and I now that the housing director was looking to go to the department for additional funding because of the amount of relet and the pressures on the budget, so I am looking for an update on that, thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr McManus. Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you members. The tenants handbook is one of the key pieces of documentation for a council and for our tenants. You are right we do have a duty of care to our tenants and the role of our tenant liaison officer is very important when there are problematic issues in estates or with individuals. Sometimes those problems cross over into other state agencies and that is why it's important they liaise with those departments. The case you are referring to we take it on board and we will come back to you with a more detailed update on that. I will ask Lorraine to come in on the town teams. I would like the county to be consistent in relation to that, there is different set up in different municipal areas but for me it makes sense to be consistent on that. I will let Ms Gallagher come in on that. Mark Deveraux is going to come in on coastal erosion and the LAWPRO. I did make a commitment for calls on URDF. What the current call, if you want to call it that, was a request by the department for vacant properties to be identified. It wasn't a call for funding, it was a call for properties to be identified. The next call for the new URDF as we would see it in terms of urban planning, town centre first, regeneration has not been made yet. My consultant holds true, we will consult with members in the preparation for that. So what was asked for by the department is not just standard URDF call. The deadline for that was the 10th of March. So that is a good long while ago. So my commitment stands in relation to that. Cllr Kennedy, we will certainly engage with Irish Water on that, I wasn't aware of the delay on that, Leonora will come in with more details on that and Brid will come back with the Natura. I might start with Lorraine on the Town Teams.

ADMINISTRATOR: Yes, Cllr Fortune there was a review out of the Town Teams. That was something that came out of that review as well. I think to have the chair of the Municipal District chair the Town Team is an excellent way of communication and everyone being on the one page. It's my understanding that the Town Teams operate under their own separate terms of references and some are CLGs and as the Chief Executive says it would be good to have a consistent approach throughout the county. So I think in order to move this forward, the Town Regeneration Officer is appointed, Deirdre Whitfield. She works with the Economic Development Team. So to start the conversation we write to the Town Teams or the Municipal District managers to start the conversation about reviewing the terms of reference and the chairmanship. That is a good start. And that is okay?

>>: Thank you, Cllr Kavanagh. In relation to the incident in Wicklow harbour. Irish Water are investigating that event and looking at remediation works that might prevent that happening into the future. My understanding is that it was activated, there was an overflow down to the heavy rainfall. They have assured us they are looking into that and some

remedials to deal with that. With regard to Aughrim, so it is ranked number one on the small town and village programme and we have continually pressed Irish Water in relation to this. It is a project that is confirmed and it is our priority so we will continue to do that and keep matters going. In relation to Bray Sustainable Bridge. We are, in light of the decision by An Bord Pleanála for the Natura Impact Statement, we are reviewing the objectives and the project, so we will keep you up to indicate in relation to that matter once the review has completed.

>>: Thank you, I will ask Mark, the senior engineer to speak on the two points like LAWPRO That Councillor Fortune wanted more detail and the coastal erosion project and the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme.

>>: The first thing is LAWPRO. It's a local authority programme service. It's a shared service, an agreement between all the local authorities. Tipperary are the lead council. There are two employees, there is a catchment scientist and a community water officer who operate in Wicklow and south Dublin and other areas. They have an agreement, we give them a desk and they come and work here. They work closely with our pollution control team. So they are effectively local authority staff. They have central funding from the department, which they use for projects which are usually community- based projects and catchment scientist-based projects. They analyse the natural waters issues. They feed that information to us, they also feed that information to the EPA and all of their information and any project they are working on, or any information they collect is on a website called catchments, ie, all the information about them there is.

So they are effectively local authority staff and they work closely with us. There is two people who would be in and out of our offices every day. We give them a desk space and they work closely with our pollution control team. They do have a significant number of projects and sometimes they come to us looking for ideas for projects and we work with them directly and they may even get funding for us or they may even go to the community. They are more focussed on the community in fairness. We work closely with them and they are effectively local authority staff. On the costal erosion project, the Murrough in particular, they have funding from the NTA, from the department for transport and the NAT. They call that project east coast railway infrastructure protection project. They are at the stage, they have appointed consultant, they have done their baseline studies at the moment. They have indicated they will come to us to talk to us directly about the project in the coming months. I will go they will come and give you a presentation, they have talked about that, but they are at the stage where they should be doing the stakeholder engagement and starting it and they have said they will come to us and work to us and with the Cathaoirleach's permission we will have them

present to the SPC or the chamber in the coming months. They have started the project and that is all I can say about that.

On the question of Arklow flood scheme we have advertised for a temporary senior engineer panel just this week. One of those senior engineers we hope we would appoint to Arklow flood scheme. We have funding from the OPW for a temporary executive engineer and also a panel of executive engineers out at the moment for the HR section have advertised and are recruiting executive engineers and hopefully I am hoping to get one of those as well. So we will have two people on it. We are waiting for the process I am afraid. I do have a set of documents to go up on e- tenders for some contracts for consultants. Also we are hoping that towards the end of the summer we will do some archaeological investigation. The OPW are assisting me with putting together documents that has to happen this year. That is also under way, but both of those processes, the consultants and the archaeologists, the procurement process will take some time. That is the status of those three.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mark.

JOE: There is two orders outstanding. A note regarding the homeless issues. The relets we sent in the first phase of the application based on requests and we got in excess of a million euro. That, together with the monies the elected members, is there or thereabouts what is currently in hand. However, because of the amount of units Wicklow County Council is generating we will be requesting, we are currently completing another request for a further three million which is what we think will be allocated over the next couple of weeks and between now and the end of the year and what will be required for those relets. So that is currently being completed. We already have a million from the first phase which is what we requested for.

Thank you, director. Sylvester Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Good to see you looking to well, again Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You will get nowhere with your charm, but thank you very much!

CLLR BOURKE: First of all I would like to remind the management not to forget about Aughrim treatment plant. We have a number of families up there desperate for houses. One is a special needs case who has to live in Aughrim and I think we could push that over the line if we squeeze Irish Water to get them moving on it. The biggest concern I have in relation to the Part 197(a) in relation to the proposed housing scheme in Barndarrig. I would like to see the manager recall that and bring it forward as a part 8 process. It's very democratic to leapfrog the planning system and impose something on the community out there, or any community without proper consultation and I feel if we go down this road in relation to Barndarrig it will be Kilcoole next or Aughrim or it will be Grangecon or what else, we

will start using this power. We might as well hand back our badges as councillors. It's bad enough as it is with the diminished powers and responsibilities, in my opinion. I would echo Councillor Fortune's, I heard him on the radio a few months ago about the diminishing role of councillors. I can feel that is happening, I am strongly opposed to it. It's not like councillors in the south have never supported group housing, or halting sites. I have been on this council for nearly 25 years and I supported every single one of the proposals we had. We had Bill O'Connell in the chair even propose and I supported that for the St Clare's halting site in Aughrim. I voted for the Group Housing Scheme in Rathdrum for four houses, which are yet to be constructed but hopefully will be starting soon. The suggestion by the management is that the councillors can be trusted to provide accommodation for travellers or settled travellers or whatever we are providing this group housing scheme for. I reject that based on my record here in the Council. I would urge the management to bring this back as a Part 8, so that the whole community can make their submissions and that the planners of Wicklow County Council can make an objective assessment of the proposal and that way, I think it's democratic and it's fair to everyone. So, Cathaoirleach, my contribution here today and it's very serious, because it will affect everyone in this room, at some stage, the more we use this power and if we use it carelessly this time, it will be used very willy- nilly, I believe by management into the future, because I think there is a disconnect now. A greater disconnect between management and councillors, which I feel that this will widen that disconnect. So I urge you to reconsider this proposal.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr, but. I am going to bring in the Chief Executive on this.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just to confirm there is no Section 197(a) in place for that land. The land isn't zoned, we have no plans to do so at the moment. If we were to do anything with that land we would consult with the members, as we would have always done. So just, I received a petition in the post this morning and by email and a lengthy letter from residents in the area, so just to put your mind at ease, we have no plans to develop that land at the moment. At all. So there is no 179 [sic] in play. I know why that legislation was passed. That is not what is happening here. We will, if there are any plans for that land we will consult with the members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I have four issues there, if I could. Just the decision there, sad news there yesterday that St Teresa's Boxing Club in Bray now have closed up. They haven't affiliated to the county board this year and it's due to the lack of the premises and I have been talking to Mark Buckley there. I have a boxing club in Blessington myself for the last 42 years and I know Bray have, they have an

all- Ireland champion to beat the band and they have up to 60 members there. It's dreadful that something can't be arranged at this hour to accommodate these lads. Boxing really is there to help get kids off the street and they do very well in Bray Boxing Club. It's done very well over the years. The five politicians in the area, they are quick to be out there when the likes of Katie Taylor comes back with gold medals, but I don't think the five TDs in that area have put much effort into this. I know that maybe if there was some, to look at it, I guess some temporary accommodation for them and down the road maybe if they could be, if there could be a site there that say Teresa's could build their own club house. I know that in Blessington, I am there 42 years in boxing. We always have great support from Wicklow County Council over the years. Whatever little grants would be around, we always got great support. So I would say if Teresa's could get on the track, Wicklow County Council won't be wanting at that stage to help out, so I would really urge that we do whatever we can to get them up and running. It's dreadful that they are not affiliating to the county board this year. Number 2, I would just like to mention the greenway in Blessington again. The decision has been kicked down the road now until the 26th of next year and I am just wondering, I have asked before, I didn't get the answers, how much the consultation fee, how much the consultation to put that application in last January 12 months, I don't know what that cost, but I like to know that. I would also like to know with the major issues there, that the board has raised, there will be external consultation fees there and how much they will be and who will be paying for them? So, with the greenway and the issues there at that site, again every year it's the same and it's a calamity. We have 32 acres there. I have been harping about a car park outside the graveyard. The little bit of car parking outside the graveyard which is adjacent to the greenway and their 32 acres is a pure calamity. It was disgraceful at the weekend and the weekend before that. There was no emergency vehicles could get by there, people can't get to the graves, there is, it's a total mess. I would ask that we would immediately look at getting a car park in, outside the graveyard. I am not talking about putting the car park somewhere else, a half mile away, I am talking about where we need it, which would be outside the graveyard. Number 3 is this, I just want to ask the CEO what is the situation as regards planning in Wicklow and do we need, whether it be for, to provide accommodation for either direct provision people or the unfortunate people from Ukraine. If it is a permanent structure, do we need planning for that? I understand that we can put mobile homes where we like and we don't need planning in this emergency situation, but I am asking now if, I have written to the minister and he only sent me back a reply saying he had received my email. That was three weeks ago. There is concern in west Wicklow where there are permanent buildings going up, seemingly

without any planning. Not to my knowledge anyway. Maybe you don't need planning permission for buildings for this type of accommodation. I am not sure on that. I can't find out one way or the other, but I would like to flow clearly do we need planning for the building of permanent structures. The last thing, Cathaoirleach, I would just like to maybe, if we can do anything in this chamber, to support the St Mark's community college in Blessington, we are only a few months away, a few weeks away from back to school and the principal there is in a dreadful situation where up to 100 pupils will not be able to start this year, which he had hoped to. He is waiting on more temporary accommodation. There has been promises there will be a 1,000-pupil school on the way. If we can do anything here to make sure that the principal and the staff of St Mark's community college will be able to take in every child that is enrolled this year, it's really a serious case in St Mark's and it will be a sin if we have to turn up to 100 pupils away. I was just reading a book there, on a lighter note. I was reading a book the other night and we had a Monsignor out our way, Monsignor Brown. In the 60s, the man built a school, over a five- year period he built a school in Hollywood, Bali more Eustace and a new dispensary and got the work done in five years. I don't think there is a politician in Ireland that would do so. Maybe we should look at things again, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr O'Neill, I love listening to your advice, but I have to keep the meeting going. Thank you for that. Cllr Winters next, please.

CLLR WINTERS: You are fine, I knew who you meant! Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to the concern that Cllr Dunne raised about the right of way down to Magheramore beach. A lot of the residents out in that area are concerned and Director Gleeson has said he will have a look at it. The fact that the owners said there would be no change and they wouldn't stop it meant they obviously feel that it is within their gift to allow people to or from the beach and that is what people want to know. Is it within their gift, or do people have a right to go to the beach? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: I thought you had forgotten about me.

CATHAOIRLEACH: How could I forget about you.

CLLR MURPHY: Just a couple of things. Am wondering about the GB trees and the grants, as Cllr Gerry Walsh brought up there. It's amazing to think that private houses are not applying for these grants. Also, is there a waiting list on our own tenants on those grants? It would be interesting to see. Almost I am interested to know about where are we with the housing for people with disabilities strategy and I know I said in the report there was a meeting in April, but I don't know about that, or heard

about it and what way are we providing housing and consultation with the people who would be obtaining those houses.

Also I would be interested to know about the greenway and I know Cllr Mullen brought that issue up as well and how many routes are being designed and is it five choices, is it two? Whatever. And again the public consultation there really needs to happen sooner rather than later. And also the, I totally agree with Cllr Bourke regarding the Barrinderg issue. I think that is all from me, councillor.

CLLR SCOTT: Thanks to the Chief Executive for her report. A couple of positive comments, I wanted to compliment the council staff on a great program of events for biodiversity week, I attended a couple, they were very well attended and great feedback from people afterwards as well. And similarly with the recent events that were carried on all over the county and highlighted the importance of our library for having spaces for art for young people, so thank you for those. Just a couple of questions around our beaches. And just recognising the fact that and well done for Wicklow for retaining three blue flag beaches and I suppose I just had one question about bray and I was just wondering if there's any steps being taken in order to see if bray can go back and regain its blue flag status. And my second question was really I suppose just a comment about the lack of green flag beaches in the county and these are a different kind of award, the applications are usually made in conjunction with the local authority and members of the community for recognised beaches of high environmental quality and these are often beaches prized for their natural beauty. It is a much less stringent award than the blue flag, and in lots of ways I would think much more attainable to get and there's a large community involvement. If you have a look at on the blue flag website and have a look at the list of blue flag and green flag beaches Wicklow really stands out from the south coast and east coast as being the only county with no green flag beaches and that's a shame because we have beautiful spots that are being very well faired for by groups and members of the community. I have spoken with people locally here in grey stones and in Kilcoole pursuing the green flag and I spoke to some council staff last year, but there seems to be I suppose a lack of knowledge amongst the community as to what's involved or what work is involved. I just wonder if we could ask the council to either do a presentation on the green flag awards either to the full council or for perhaps at MD level, just to share the information and just to get the community activated in trying to pursue this. Because it would reflect the cleanliness of our beaches, the fact our beaches are being cared for by the community already in lots of cases but to have a formal recognition of this would be really good.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Shea Cullen.

CLLR CULLEN: Three points I want to make, the first I just want to follow up on in terms of Magheramore and Brittas Bay and I want to thank the landowners that engaged with us, early engagement with the landowners has resulted in very successful start to the year and start to the summer in terms of graphic and alleviating problems we have. With regards to Mcra more, there is a certain amount of scaremongering with regards to access, as far as I'm aware and I have this on fairly good authority, that there is no issue in accessing the beach and won't be any issue in accessing the beach. I don't want to comment because there was planning application in recently so I'm not going to comment on that. But I don't think there's anything to be concerned about certainly at this point from what I'm led to believe. Number 2 is the Glenda lock master plan and again there's a certain amount of frustration with the public in that there doesn't seem to be any progress. We have been told on several occasions it's imminent, but at this point I think the council need to put some sort of a press release together to make the public aware of what's happening. We have spent three or four years of engagement in terms of public consultation to bring this master plan to an end, a positive end I hope. But as I say, there's a frustration with the public that nothing is happening. I would ask the public to come up with some sort of a strategy to either release the plan or release a statement telling the public what is happening. My third point is on housing and it's to do with the Glenveagh site and Ashford and balance that Lee and Ashford and I want to say I am absolutely 100% in favour of housing. I have never voted against a housing development in my time on the council. Albeit with this particular one, there was concerns over planning issues at the time. But I was interested to find out last week from the public and I want to emphasise from the public, that the entire estate of 118 houses has been sold to a housing agency and this decision seems to have been agreed by the council, the council have been involved in it. One of my last comments when I finished as Cathaoirleach last year was the communication needed to improve with councillors on the management and that wasn't taken into consideration because we've had no communication whatsoever from anybody in the management of the council with regards to this estate and the reason I am raising this, as I said, I'm all for housing, but we could possibly have had looked at a mix of social and affordable housing in this estate. I have huge concerns over first- time buyers and the fact that they struggle to purchase a home in this county, never mind in the areas of where they live or where they want to live. For anybody that is not on the housing list, we have to think of those people as well. We have to think of those first- time buyers who are trying to get a start of a home in this county. And sometimes I think we forget about this. I have spoken before about Wicklow is an area where people want to relocate to from other counties and particularly

Dublin and in turn, and again I have mentioned this on several occasions, we are looking at the displacement of some of our own communities to bring other people into these areas. For that point I wanted to raise this issue and say number one, we have to think of the bigger picture in terms of social and affordable housing. And also we need to improve our communication. If I have said this once, I have said it 20 times. The communication with the local councillors in these situations is paramount. I shouldn't hear from the community of Ashford that this estate has been sold to a housing agency. This should have come to the councillors from the management of this council. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Dunn, I will let you in on this one, two minutes, okay. Cllr Dunn: I'm not trying to jump in front of others, but I agree with Cllr Cullen. It's a terrible situation. I don't think these estates work, we need a mix of housing, I really do. People need, in any other estates that's what we're looking for, for social, for people buying their own houses and that's what helps these estates to grow and be better estates. I'm really worried about it, too. I think we have done it before in another estate and I don't think it's worked. And I think from all the reps I get it hasn't work, because a lot of people are trying to move out and I totally agree with Cllr Cullen on this, I back him up 100%.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lorraine will come in on the boxing club and other matters to do with Bray in a moment. On the green flag councillor Scott, that is a really good idea. We will certainly look at a presentation to the MDs on how to go about attaining the green flag. It's an easier one to achieve than the blue flag and with the community participation and partnerships we have with the tidy towns and cleaner coasts groups, it's a really worthy thing for us to pursue. Again, around Magheramore, it's our understanding there is a right of way, we will look at the title deeds and look at what information we can get and communicate that to the members. Again, we have no plan to proceed with that site, there is no 179A in train for that site. And my firm commitment to you is that if that site ever does come into consideration, we will certainly talk to the members in advance of doing anything on it. I will get Joe to come in on the DPGs and on the Ashford site as well. Planning in Wicklow for permanent structures, permanent structures do require planning permission. They have to be fire safety compliant. Temporary accommodation is different. Temporary structure is different for the Ukrainian crisis, but any permanent structures do require planning permission to be constructed or to change of use. If it sued to be a convent or to convert it to accommodation or whatever it might be.

BREIGE: Just to say all development requires planning permission unless it's exempt to development and that is listed, it's listed in the legislation. In terms of something we investigated, we do need to have somebody to

submit a request to have something investigated. But that is it. All development requires planning permission unless it's exempt to development. And as Chief Executive listed there are some temporary structures, or legislation under the emergency in relation to Ukrainians only, in terms of exempted development. But as you know and as we have spoken to you about it before, any development associated with that will require a section 183 and we will have to bring that to the chamber. CLLR O'NEILL: What you are saying that it is not exempt, no permanent structure is exempt for anyone, no matter who they are

>>: Correct, yes, if you have something you want to investigate, we need to let the unauthorised development section of the council know. You have to write in and say I want this investigated. If it's authorised or not.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Brian, do you want to come in?

>>: Just in relation to the Glendalough master plan there is a steering group that was established some time ago and it's Failte Ireland are leading that, National Parks and wildlife and national monuments, as you are aware the environmental public consultation stage was completed a few months ago. At the end of last year. And at the moment what's happening is that the feedback and the information from that consultation stage is being introduced into the plan and when that is completed then the plan will be completed and published accordingly. But it's... Ireland the lead agency on that, so we don't have a say launching the plan or completing it, but we will feed back your comments and get a time line on where they are in relation to that project. Chief Executive: I'm happy to issue something to the councillors just in terms of where it's currently at, so that you can share it with the constituents in the area. I know you asked for a statement from us, I'm happy to do that, but as Brian said it's Failte Ireland led but we can put together a communication for you.

>>: Thank you Chief Executive and Brian. I suppose we just need to get a final date and if it's a month or two months or whatever, but let's stick to a date. I think the concerns that I'm getting back is that is this going to happen and it's dragging on and dragging on, going on a long time. I just want to firm up an absolute date so that it can be launched. Chief Executive: I just said I will give a call into Failte Ireland tomorrow, I know the guy leading the project. I know the next meeting is scheduled for first week in September. That will give you an indication, but I will make a phone call tomorrow to try and firm up dates for you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine.

>>: Cllr O'Neill contacted me during the week and I know this is something the Bray members have on their radar for St Teresa's and we are looking at it in terms of we have different ideas. So Cathaoirleach there are members from Bray with their lights on, I don't know whether they want to come in. Cllr Flynn Kennedy: Thank you, thank you Cllr

O'Neill for raising this. I have been working with St Teresa's boxing club now known as top end boxing for the last three- and- a- half years to try and secure premise they can occupy. And it's really unique for a boxing club because they actually have to have the ring permanently put up. That is what's causing us the challenge. They haven't been just looking for somebody provide them something, they have been pounding the streets themselves. Myself and Mark Buckley and others have contacted every available provider of commercial space to see if they would rent it to them. We have looked at alternative premises that are in use of the community. It has been extremely challenging because of the issues around boxing in Bray and some of the incidents that have happened in the area that has made it extremely challenging for them. This club are working with loads of young people, boys and girls, adults, they are also independently supporting a number of people who maybe life hasn't given them the best opportunities and they have been able to support them to get involved in sports. It has been extremely hard for them. I do want to acknowledge and thank Ballywalter community centre who did give them the option of using their hall two nights a week. But again, they haven't been able to actually put up a ring in three- and- a- half years. We have an issue not just for top end boxing, but for any of the minority sports in this county, I can think of rath drum, offroad biking, any of the smaller minority sports, we really need to as a local authority step up and start supporting them. The larger football and Gaelic clubs I am involved with myself, they have huge support in the town, because their membership is huge. But for the minority sport groups, they really need the local authority to step in. They are trying to work with the local authority as Lorraine referenced, to try and secure premises, but they really need a temporary space at the moment. To try and keep their membership as it is. I would really call on the local authority to support them and my thanks to Cllr O'Neill, who has given me guidance and support in this matter. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, Director of Housing please.

JOE: Two things, the DPGs, the question answering, there's always a balance between resources available and the other priorities of late I suppose, so if there's no systematic delay and for any member if there is a particular DPG we are always interested to follow up a particular case. There is economies of scale, however, in individual case naturally. As regards to strategy, the local strategy was agreed, that's what was feeding into the national strategy and we are awaiting an implementation plan as they are taking all the locals ones, they will give an implementation plan and we will that back to the full council in required. As regards the Ashford, in housing we weekly get requests for support from improved housing bodies where they ask, and developers and up to last year from lease companies and others, will they support an

application, we are not privy to contact but we support it. In this case in January, February when we got the initial one, we did indicate we prefer a mix with social housing. In January, February we did ourselves send out requests for everybody for affordable housing, we got no request at that location. In February March, early March actually, we got an application, sorry, the developer and approved housing indicated they were going to give us the full 117 units. A couple of weeks ago we didn't know how many would be ahead of us. We are aware as one of the councillors mentioned, in that area rath knew we have an application for 44 affordables and bearing in mind what we had gone through in green hills we felt in the short- term that would satisfy the affordable housing, so I was in a situation where I either supported the development going forward or I didn't. I'm not in a position I can't take social housing in that location, bearing in mind the housing crisis at the time. We did indicate our support that we would be willing to allow the approved housing body progress it. It is a contractual agreement between them and the Glenveagh. They have issued, or they have come to an agreement. It's gone to the department for their approval. I can't comment whether it's going to get approval or not. The old agreements are gone, there is a new form of funding with the department. So it's with the department at the moment. It will come back to us, if that is the case they will be supported for the units.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

JOE: We did have a meeting for the Wicklow municipal area today at 12 and that got cancelled. I will be back and I will talk to you again on it, but at the moment there is an application in with the department.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Shea Cullen.

CLLR CULLEN: Thank you this sounds that it's getting worse to be honest. Now we are being told that since last January we've known about this and we haven't had the respect to speak to the local councillors in the area. That's' the first thing I want to say, Chairman. It sounds like that we are as elected representatives that we are a nuisance in this regard, that our opinion doesn't matter. Well our opinion should matter, Cathaoirleach, in this situation. There's 117 homes that we could have looked at in terms of a mix use affordable and social, and to find out from the public that this is a done deal, that's just not acceptable, absolutely not acceptable. And yes there was a meeting to be held today at 12.00, but for one reason or another had to be cancelled. But that meeting could have been held with us last January is what we are being told. So I'm going to finish on this Chairman because I say too much. The communication is a shambles. It's an absolute and utter shambles in this situation. And implore the management of this council to engage with councillors in these situations and not to leave us out in the cold and not to have so much little respect for us that we're not worth speaking to. So I hope that message gets

through loud and clear, thank you. Cllr Dunn, I think Shea said everything there.

CLLR DUNN: It's something I am harping on a long, long time, one of the biggest issues for us is the Greenway, we've got no consultation whatsoever. I as a councillor, I feel I'm in the way. I feel useless. When people in the street come up to you and tell you of decisions, which I had only last week. The sooner, wake up councillors should wake up and demand that we are included. There's not much use for councillors nowadays, that's disgraceful there what Shea is talking about. Got no notification what so. That's continuous in west Wicklow, day in, day out we hear the same stuff, we know nothing about it. A huge project, I have asked questions again, I don't know when I will ever get the answers, how much this is costing the Greenway. I'm not going to hold my breath. We have no consultation. Our engineers in west Wicklow got no notification of a massive project costing millions and millions this Greenway and that is included to close off one side of the bridge, lights on one side of the bridge, all without asking our own people in Wicklow County Council.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I do agree but I have to stop you, because I want to bring in Cllr Dunn.

>>: What I would like to see is these issues being really addressed instead of coming in here again and again and again to the cows come home, and we're going nowhere.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Dunn, one minute.

>>: I don't normally come in a second time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Third time.

>>: I think the disappointing part about this, it seems like a deal is done and now we are having a meeting. I feel that in these situations, this won't be the first time this county that this can happen. The councillors should be told about what's happening. It's really important. Because there's so much innuendo and different things that go out there, it's hard for us to represent the people when we don't know what's going on. This is hugely disappointing. I will say this mix does not work. It's been proven it doesn't work. I understand that the Director of Services is under pressure to deliver housing and I support him 110%. But there's a certain standard of housing that we have to deliver and I don't think what we're doing in Ashford is the right way to deliver it.

CLL WINTERS: I want to support everything Cllr Cullen has said and Cllr Dunn. We come in here time and time again and we are told miscommunication, sorry you weren't notified, that won't happen again and people say, oh, it's disrespectful to the councillors, it's not disrespectful to us. It is disrespectful to the people that elected us. By saying that you have no interest in what we as councillors think or our point of view, you are saying to all of the rest dents and citizens of

County Wicklow we don't care. We're going to do our own thing and it doesn't matter who you vote in, because we won't have any interaction with them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I understand how important this is to Wicklow municipal council.

>>: Everything that has been said, I want to say at this stage of the 11th hour is it too late to say that 50% of these houses can be allocated to affordable housing and we do something like we did a couple of months ago, put them up for bidding or whatever because the biggest problem this country apart from the homelessness crisis is the lack of affordable housing, for young people, single people, people who don't have massive incomes. These people want to buy houses. This is now going to take all those houses out of the market. That's 117 houses lost to people of Wicklow, who could have bought them. So at this stage is it too late, that's all I'm asking, to try and do a split, 50- 50.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Joe.

JOE: It's too late, there was never an application for affordable houses and looking within January and February, affordable was not an option. We did have an offer in a time when there was notice to quit, we were all talking about it in March and April and we were asked would we support the full acquisition. At a different time. But like I said, on a preliminary look, Faite was never looking in that location. I am not withdrawing the application for social houses.

CLLR GLENNAN: Thank you Chief Executive for your report. I'm not going to go over some of the ground in detail, as my colleagues have just done. So I'm going to move on to page 48 of your report. I see there's another study been done on the bus stop and traffic calming at Hollywood. I would like to see that being advanced as soon as possible. I also noticed the park and ride that was previously mentioned for the same location, the one for the N11 still is there, I have no difficulty with that but the N81 one should not be forgotten about the Greenway covered by Cllr Timmins and Cllr Neil in detail, we were told some months ago that a study would be done at the bridges at the possibility of their structure and the possibility of the bridges being put on them to relieve the need to go one line of traffic across the bridge. I never got an update on that. I am wondering do you have further information on that. I know the bridges were studied structurally. Even if it was a long- term commitment to that happening when the Greenway does go ahead. I welcome lots of good work happening under the watchful eye of Breige and there's a lot of work going on the roads and the inner relief road has been advanced as best one can. I would like to see things moving on, we have forgotten about the west, and while obviously the issues with Wicklow council are very important, I sometimes we're put on the back tee all the time in west Wicklow. I would like that to change, I would like us to have a fair crack

of the whip in every aspect. And I welcome the proposed meeting that Leonora has organised and I welcome the inclusion of those who represent west Wicklow at that meeting. So thank you very much. I would like to see the progress being made on the things that have been promised for a long time. Thank you.

And I welcome the inclusion of West Wicklow in that meeting. I would like to see the progress being made on the things which have been promised for a long time. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Patsy Glennon. Cllr R O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you very much, chair. Just three things I want to raise and I will try and make it very quick. One thing I raised during the climate change and biodiversity SPC was about the new charging deal. I couldn't really get my teeth into it due to time constraints. How many electric charging points does the council think they have produced from this deal? Is there some timeline about when it will be done. A lot of the county doesn't have any charging infrastructure whatsoever. As I mentioned before, Kilmac in my own area is the only part of my MD without an electric charger, so if that could be looked at when you are doing it.

Secondly I want to ask about the HSE buildings across Wicklow. I know the council have been talking to the HSE about them. If there is any update around that, that would be great to hear.

Thirdly I want to ask about the Rathbarn House under Sláintecare. I see it's going to be a community facility, but I wonder what kind of public consultation would be done around that to see what kind of community facility the people want there. If that could be touched on, that would be great. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Connor. Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just one item. Thanks to the chief for the report and I am drawn to and I would like to work off a little bit of what Cllr Fortune and Cllr Leonard said in terms of the vulnerable people we represent that we are working with and that we serve. When I look across the report and I see again vulnerable people who are, when we talk about duty of care, when we talk about people presenting as homeless and international protection applicants, notice to quit, rough sleeping and then we look at tenancy sustainment and tenancy liaison officers, I would love to revisit Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive the emotion that actually this month two years ago in 2021 I had passed, that was about this organisation pursuing a journey to become trauma informed. I really would love for us to just sit down back with that and just consider how important it is for how we deal with the most vulnerable

people across the county when they present to us and if we understand trauma and its impact and we understand that how we deal with people can make a difference between how well they are and how they can manage really tough scenarios. For us as councillors how we engage and interact and have real proximity to people who are suffering, I think there is a layer of support that comes with becoming trauma informed. In particular our staff who we congratulate all the time for how they work and their commitment to their work, but I think we should also think about how well they are and how we look after them when we expect them to work with some of the most vulnerable people across the county. So I would really love for us to, even if we are considering the next iteration of this council and the brave or mad people who might end up in this chamber, alongside those who work in this local authority that if we pursue a journey towards becoming trauma informed, I think that would be transformative for the most vulnerable people in our county, who I think we all serve. I don't want to and I am sure every councillor could talk about constituents who have suicidal ideation, constituents who are hungry, constituents who are angry, constituents who are suffering, who have had legacy issues and we sit with them and with their pain, Cathaoirleach. I think we could probably serve them a little bit better if we became trauma informed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr D O'Brien. Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will be really quick. I just want to compliment the Arts Office on the Cruinniú na nÓg. I had the opportunity to go down to Rathdrum and it was a fantastic event. While down there I noticed the Pride flags flying in Rathdrum and in Bray. I want to compliment the staff and the library service for pushing forward the celebration of Pride Month throughout the county. Also to compliment Wicklow Pride who will be holding their first ever Pride event in the county on the 1st of July. Another local authority are supporting them in those efforts as well. So just giving us the month of June to acknowledge that. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy. Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to come in about councillors not being consulted and learning from the public of major projects in the area. This happened in Greystones a couple of months ago, where two six storey blocks of apartment, of 90 apartments each were sold to an associated housing body for rental to tenants. Now, these, the council doesn't construct apartments in Wicklow to rent to social housing tenants, for various reasons. Certainly I believe that councils such as Dublin Council who do, they make great care with the specification of the apartments that they are properly built for the purpose and I feel that, for me to learn, from members of the public, that

these six storey apartment blocks are sold to associated housing body and for the other people in the estates who didn't know about it when they bought their houses and I think they should, was not adequate and it's the same thing that is being said about the developments in the Wicklow MD.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Mitchell. Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just again on the Baltinglass RRDF. It is firmly in my sights and the team are working extremely hard to get that out and on the ground for Q3 this year. Really important. Leonora might come in and talk about the N81 and the bridges and the greenway as well. Just in relation to the communication piece, it's hugely important to me that we work well together. Hugely important. I can't comment on what has happened in the past, all I can give to you is my honest commitment to you that I want to talk with you, speak with you, consult with you. I don't want us here to be making decisions and communicating those decisions after the fact to you. There are some things that we are charged with doing and there are things that the councillors are charged with doing, but we have to work together, we have to be able to communicate with each other. I want to reiterate my commitment to you all that my door is open, my phone is always on, you will always get me if I need to talk to you about anything. My commitment to you is that I will endeavour to ensure that communications improve with the members. Some things are out of our control, some things we don't have control over and I can't apologise for something that is outside of our gift. What I will do and what I am committed to do for you all is to work with you. It's in my interest to work with you and that is my firm commitment to you. I don't want to be in a situation where I am having a councillor or anyone ringing me saying *"how come Mr Peoples knows about this and I didn't."* It's not the way I do my business and I want to reassure you of that, no matter what the subject matter is, doesn't matter. If it's anything about council business I want to be able to talk to you about it. I am going to hand over to Leonora now.

LEONORA: relation to the bus stop in Hollywood that is on the radar and we have continuing conversation with TII about it. We haven't set aside the park and ride, it may take more work and we didn't want to delay the bus stop and the traffic calming, so we are trying to move it along. But the quickest one gets delivered but we want to make sure that the bus stop and the park and ride both happen. But they might happen in a different pace and they come up at a different time.

In relation to the bridges assessment I will come back to you with an update on that to see what the latest is on that. The meeting with the TII yes, so we are, we have reached out to all the groupings on the council to look for representatives and we have looked to have a good cross

representation to make sure that all the counties are across the counties are represented. Just in relation to the charging points being provided across the county, there is 26 chargers being proposed and delivered as part of the agreement that we have with EasyGo. We don't have a timeline, but they are starting and will be on the ground, so we can check when the finish date is for that. Is that question for Cllr O'Connor.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine.

ADMINISTRATOR: Just responding to Cllr D O'Brien and in fairness you bring this up at the Bray meetings as well and I know you are coming from a very good space when you are talking about it. Just to say, for example, as an organisation, a senior Management Team we have recently adopted our Wellbeing Strategy for our staff. So we are going to be looking at that to see under the four pillars which is the mental wellbeing, physical and social and financial wellbeing of our staff. I think the whole trauma informed piece might come out of that discussion that we are going to have with our staff, in terms of our staff providing the services and then the people who are accessing the services, as a piece of, our customer services team, they are, they were, I know there has been a bit of movement, but they were trauma informed. I know there is a huge body of work that is to be done and there were examples out there within the sector, Cork City for example. I think you are right, the next, I think we will be looking at our corporate plan over the next five years, come next year, so with our public sector duty and human rights and all of that, we have a team set up inhouse to make sure that we are on site there as well. So just we definitely take on board what we are saying in relation to being trauma informed organisation. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Lorraine. That's it. Okay. Go ahead.

CLLR FORTUNE: On the LAWPRO thing, I am sure the members might like it, could I get a one- pager of what that is all about. The reason why I am raising it, it comes back to the whole communication thing. None of us were told about this. I was at a PPN meeting and a member of the audience at the PPN meeting announced that they were, announced this and made some reference or innuendo that they were on it. I thought about it when I left the meeting and said that makes no bloody sense. So I sent this individual a message and I said I am just curious could you tell me how you are on this particular body? That is four or five weeks ago and I haven't got an answer obviously. So that is why I was keen to know the structure of it, how it's set up and the rationale behind it. I think that would be good for all members. I am hoping I heard you correctly, Lorraine, on the question you dealt with. Are you saying that you accept the proposal that I made and that Joe, Cllr Behan seconded? Is that what you are telling me.

ADMINISTRATOR: What I was saying is that proposal has been made and it was something that came out of the review of the Town Teams, but what I said is that each Town Team has their own terms of reference they have been working on and whatever their CLG, so what I said was that I would write to the Municipal District managers to start the conversation about maybe reviewing those terms of reference, having regard to what has come out.

CLLR FORTUNE: The only comment I will make and I will shut up about it because I will get the chance to talk about. The Town Teams, that whole project is being driven by the local authority. They are not stand-alone entities.

ADMINISTRATOR: I understand that, with respect to the work that has been carried out and done over the last couple of years I think there is a way of starting that conversation and the way to do it is start well this is the resolution that is passed, proposed by yourself and seconded by Cllr Behan? How else would you start the conversation?

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you. They named me well when I was baptised calling me Doubting Thomas.

ADMINISTRATOR: No, you are dead right, thank you, councillor.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I just want a short clarification on the Barndarrig scheme. It's my understanding sitting object the Traveller Accommodation Committee that there was a scheme and we were given a presentation on it. The drawing and then it came to the MD and we were given drawings to show the community out there. Like I have to wear two hats in this because I am representing my own local community and the traveller accommodation families that need this accommodation in this area. So I would like clarification on that scheme. Has the scheme now been pulled, is that my understanding or?

JOE: There are two options being considered, we are still looking at those and we are coming back to the elected members in Arklow. We will be back.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, are you happy with that, Cllr Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: It's quite confusing to be told there is no scheme and yet there is a scheme.

JOE: It wasn't there was no scheme, there was no definite 197A plan was the point being made. Of course it still is on the TIP, so there are still options being looked that. I think that is probably the question being asked.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just to confirm it's not our intention to use 197A for anything. That is the plan, the plan is to talk to the members. My understanding was that it's still under consideration. Maybe it mightn't be that site at all, but it will be in consultation with the members. Just on Cllr

Fortune on the LAWPRO. That organisation is in existence a good while, but we will do a one- pager for the members and circulate it to everyone.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: Sorry, Cathaoirleach, yeah, there seemed to be a major again harping on, a major misunderstanding on the Barndarrig scheme. I know other councillors who attended with some of the staff members on this matter. Is that what you picked up? I mean there seems to be huge confusion. Again, we are being the ones with the red face. I even got a phone call this morning from some residents about it as well. So I think, a bit like Cllr Cullen there is a loop here not working and we need a meeting as soon as possible and I propose that now. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Murphy.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Certainly we can organise a meeting with the members, it's not a problem. I suppose part of the consultation process is bringing plans to the various committees with yourselves. That doesn't make them a fait accompli, that doesn't mean they are not going to progress. So that is probably where some element of confusion. Probably the mention of 197A in a piece of correspondence that I saw wasn't helpful, I don't think. It's not our intention, as I said. I want to be 100% sure with you on that. It is not our intention to use 197A and we will arrange a meeting with the members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. Number 8 on the agenda is to receive a presentation on the Draft National Waste Management for circular economy. Breege Kilkenny.

BREEGE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, this presentation item has been placed on the agenda to make the members aware of the Draft National Waste Management for the circular economy. We fortunate to have Hugh Coughlan the Regional Coordinator of the Regional and Midlands Waste Management Planning Office. To give you some background, I know that Cllr Fortune has stepped out. This is another acronym he has probably come across. Through are three waste management planning offices representing the 31 local authorities to throughout the country. These offices were set up during the complete regional waste management plan cycle in 2013. These offices are managed by a designated lead local authority and for each of the three waste regions and are responsible for the leading co- ordination of waste planning activities on behalf of the local authorities.

So then under the auspices of the CCMA, that is the national oversight group, the regional management planning offices have co- ordinated the preparation of this proposed national plan. This is the first national waste management plan and it's specifically prepared to address the circular economy. This plan sets out a framework for both the prevention and the management of waste in Ireland for the period from 2023 to 2029. So Hugh Coughlan has been the region and coordinator for the eastern and

midland region waste management office since 2015. He has been working in the environmental area for over 18 years. He is well-versed in waste. We are fortunate to have him here today and to make you aware of the statutory consultation period for this proposed national waste plan that commenced on Wednesday 3rd of May and will run until the 5th of July. So all draft plan documents and the full details on making a submission, this is the purpose here is to make you aware and if you have a submission you would like to make on it, it is available on the website called mywaste.ie. So Hugh is making the presentation remotely. So with that I will ask Hugh to come in and upload his presentation. Thank you.

HUGH: I am going to share, I have the PDF. Is that visible? Great. Okay. Listen, many thanks, Cathaoirleach, elected members, Chief Executive and staff. I am very much appreciating the opportunity to present to you today. I am conscious you have a very busy agenda as well so I will try and give you a whistlestop tour. First of all I would like to make apologies for my camera. I have been doing a few presentations today and it's gone a bit dark, so you are only seeing a silhouette of my face, so apologies for that. As Breege outlined the three waste management planning offices have co-ordinated the preparation of a Draft National Waste Management for a circular economy.

The presentation today is going to give you an overview of the structure, content in the context of the statutory consultation process which is ongoing. Very briefly there is three regions, in 2020, Government produced a new waste policy document, which was setting out waste policy until 2025. So again this is the local government response in terms of the plan, but also, as well, in that policy, a document the local government sector was set to come up with targets within the place for reducing contamination levels. Also, as well, the document also determined that it would be one national plan replacing the three existing regional plans. So significant changes, obviously the single national plan, the move towards circularity. I know that is a term, it's a general term in use, but a lot of the terms within that, you would be very familiar with in terms of reduce, reusing, recycling and repairing as well. It's just that there is a huge emphasis on that now more than ever before. Collaboration. It's a term that is used quite a lot. It's really important in terms of this plan. This plan will not succeed without collaboration of everyone working together in terms of the unified agenda.

In terms of oversight, you are familiar with the County and City Management Association. So in the context of this plan, it was filtered through that oversight group and they reviewed all the various elements of it and a plenary of the CCMA then determined that the plan could proceed to public consultation. In terms of the, how the plan is

constructed, really I suppose the one thing that we did set out, we wanted to make each volume of it an easily navigated piece and we wanted to make it understandable for policy maker, practitioners and the general public alike. We have come up with five volumes and all volumes are summarised in an executive summary, containing the key take away ways of the plan. Just drilling down into the various elements of it and these are the critical parts. You have volume 1, which is the current situation. That looks at the regulation, the legislation, the current arrangements in terms of the facilities and the volumes of waste we are dealing with.

Also as well we have the resources as well across the sector, but particularly within the local government sector. So a quick flavour, a few stats to throw at you. There is about three million tonnes of municipal waste. Always in terms of including municipal and demolition waste, we are talking about collecting in excess of 13.6 million tonnes annually. Our recycling rate is flat rating around 41% and we have targeted of 55% and 60% by 2030. In terms of resources, in the local authority sector collectively there is over 1700 staff working in the sector with an expenditure in excess of 280 million. In terms of the private sector, we estimate there is about 10,000 people working in the sector and that sector is worth over 1.5 billion. So volume 2 then is the in terms of landscape and what has been set, the challenges are outlined and then we have the policy response in relation to that. So we have our core positions, our core policies and our focus areas in relation to that. Then in volume 3, again it's all about looking ahead in terms of the projections, look ahead in terms of how we are to structure ourselves organisationally and with other partners and also how we implement the implementation strategy monitoring oversight as we go down through that phase. Again a national plan, you have to have a very strong ambition and again here I mentioned earlier, over 13.6 million tonnes. So if you break that down, for every person then there are about 2.7 tonnes generated for every person. In ambition we want to break the link between, as long as I have been around in waste, we have talked about the issue of waste generation and economic growth. It's always a thing where you have economic growth the waste tends to grow as well. So we want to try and break that link, so we have this ambition of zero percent growth per person. That is a really significant challenge. And again just outlining there, in the slide, in terms of how we are going to do that and it's all about making the best out of resources, reducing the amount of resources we consume in the first place. Again that whole transition to the circular economy and always making sure that everything is done in compliance with policy and legislation.

Underpinning that ambition then we have a series of targets, as I mentioned earlier. Some of these targets we are required to do under the Government's policy. So again we are targeting the residual municipal, to the material in the general waste bin. There is still a significant amount of material that one we can try and reduce it in the first place, but also there is a lot of that material that can go into dry recycling and the brown bin as well. Particularly around the commercial area, at least 70% of what is in the general bin and the commercial sector that could be moved to the other bins. We are looking at the construction and demolition waste, trying to reduce that. Compliance, an important issue. We need the quality of materials so we can get the optimum use of that once they are collected so again we want to get over 90% compliance. We have set here a target of 10kg per person and again there is some data to be published which could make it a higher target, but again here, if we just got that 10kg per person, you are talking about 50,000 tonnes per year, a significant amount. Reuse facilities. Again important to note we have over 96 sites across the country, they should be exemplar, there is a challenge for the sector to improve the consistency, try and integrate them a bit more and again have them as exemplar. So we have a minimum so, for exemplar site we would like to see reuse in as many facilities as possible. It's going to take a significant investment to do that. Repair, we still have a pathway here. What we are signalling in the plan is we have a pathway to a repair target. We still need to go into detail, when we are talking about repair, what are we talking about? How are we going to measure it?

So I think there is a pathway in relation to the development of that target over time. Underpinning that we have these core overarching policies. Again I am not going to go into each one, they are all there. Everything from climate to policy and legislation to the funding of this plan. So they are core policies, overarching policies. So then, because of the scale and complexity of the waste landscape, we are then delving into focus areas and we are going to have focus areas around operational material streams and infrastructure. In these focus areas, we are going to have targeted policies and actions and all of those will have an owner, or a co-owner, so again we are talking about that collaborative approach, but it's important about taking ownership in terms of this. This is just an example of a focus area fact sheet and there is 16 of these in the plan.

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In terms of the priority actions there's about 83 and they are broken between responsibility of the EPA the department, local authorities industry and extended producer responsibility initiatives as well. Just going into the area in terms of the delivery road map, we are looking at projections in terms of the policy intervention that is are coming down the

track, we are also looking, we are examining in terms of the resources we said 280 million over 1700 staff, but we are going to need human and financial resources in order to transition to a more circular economy. Also here in this delivery road map, there are certain key deliverables, which we think if they can be unlocked, it really makes the pathway in terms of our policies and our actions easier. Again, in terms of these key deliverables, they are really broken down between responsibility between the EPA, its department and local government. Here is just an example of one particular key deliverable. It is about collaboration. The department EPA, we need to work at a national level, we need to make sure that all our work plans are aligned, that our priorities, there's no duplication and we need to make sure there's continuity.

So again, I mentioned earlier about the investment required and we're signalling there is at least a minimum of 40 million over the lifetime of this planning and we are trying to put a focus on where that additionality is required. Again, we need to communication is key and we have the My Waste platform and a lot of campaigns are run through that platform, we need more communication because its message has to be run, we have to stay out there and keep on the message. Again in terms of investment as well, I mentioned earlier about the issue of the civic community side, there's a minimum of 2.5 million and it could be more 234 terms of trying to modernise our infrastructure. Regulation is key as well. We have our waste enforcement region lead authority with the national waste collection permit office as well, so there is investment in terms of having the appropriate resources there as well. We also seen there is a need of resources at a local level, so there is additional resources that are required at a local level and a cost of 2.5 million on that. Summarising it all then, so in numbers, you can see it there in terms of our ambition, our targets, core policies, focus areas, targeted policies, priority actions and our key deliverables. So they are there in numbers for you.

And as Breige mentioned earlier we are in a consultation phase at the moment. It runs until 5th July. All the details are on my ways, there is a communication campaign ongoing. We have had press release, an ad campaign going on at the moment. When you go on to my waste you can download the documents, make a submission online or by e- mail or go the traditional route and make a submission by post as well. So I hope that's given you a flavour of the plan and I'm happy to take any questions that you may have.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Members, any questions?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank, really good presentation and I can see how you delivered it, you are all in on this. For me, this is how we save the world. It's one part of it anyway. But I would love to hear your comments on, so you make a plan and everything is in there, to what degree do we need to look at sacrifice and degrowth, it's really interesting when you talk about

that relationship between growth and waste and are dare we talk about degrowth. And then a question when you talk about the ambition around zero percent waste growth per person, does that mean we don't move beyond the 2.7 tonnes per person, we don't want to go above that when we talk about 0% waste growth per person and then just to validate the importance of the engagement piece on this, I would say if we were to go round the room and ask people what their understanding of the sick lar economy is and where it fits into the scheme of things, we all have a responsibility to get on board with the understanding around that, but that requires engagement, it requires us to maybe, when you talk about transition to circular economy, transition means change and it's change from one state to another and that state of mind, state of looking at how the world is and there's maybe attitudes and behaviour change that's sitting in there, but really great presentation. I definitely don't want to underestimate the importance of this stuff.

CLLR LEONARD: Thank you for your presentation, Arklow is in a period of transition, we have a lot of sites that will be developed in the next few years and I was thinking what does a sustainable community look like if it is not going down the same road of consumerism and fast buying stuff and dumping it, and every skip I filled has been with temporary furniture, furniture not built for the long- term. There's a huge potential here to tie in with a lot of stuff that's going on in the county, like the craft strategy and looking at quality. Buying quality, re- using quality furniture that's been hand made in Ireland. Even our urban realm schemes we import stone from China that comes half way across the road and you can see in areas it's not the same quality of what was built historically. We need to be looking at in our local communities and in our building and construction, of building quality, quality buildings with quality materials and quality crafts people making them as well. When we look at our old bridges, they last hundreds of years, not 40 years, I was looking at a planning application recently and all the materials were listed, they had a planning thing and it was listing the materials that they had a life span of 40 years. That building in 40 years is going to be elements of that building that are going to be in the skips and landfill. So I think we have to make connect to everything and make it much more across the whole community and everything that we do, rather than just our recycling centres that everybody relates to circular economy. But our recycling centres there's scope for reselling quality furniture and bring our men's sheds and women's sheds into these areas so we can have everything on site and re- use, but prevention is a big thing, because it's not just the picking up the problems afterwards, if we put money into the prevention side of things and limiting people from consuming so much we will have more time to enjoy in our society, which will benefit everybody. That's my

rant.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you for the presentation, I think this is coming at a really good time when people are starting to look at what they're buying and consumerism and their whole patterns of buying stuff and what's going to last. I think for example, at home, we have WhatsApp group, 380 members on it and it's started out as just a few women getting together, but it's 380 women on it now and men, and basically if somebody has something they want to get rid of, it goes on the site and somebody will say I will have it and it's an amazing way of swapping things, it's all totally free and this is where in small communities where little apples grow. I will be putting up about the consultation on it because this is growing so rapidly, that it's a perfect opportunity, hopefully from Ennis Kerry, you will get loads of people writing in, it's a great time for it to be starting and for the consultation to be done.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thanks very much for the presentation. One of the things that always strikes me about the circular economy is the clothing industry. We import so much from abroad, very cheap products, sold for very, very little. People are paid very little to make them. Some people are as young as children that are involved in the clothing industry in Asia and places like that. And we sell them here and people wear them three times and then they go in the bin. We have to start looking at better quality products with more longevity. Even if, and I see it happening in schools all the time, and it's wonderful to see, youngsters are asked to bring in materials that are no longer used and try and make something to wear out of it. It is amazing how creative they can be. I have seen some in our local CCSD school and it just blew my mind, the creativity of youngsters. And they are very much into the recycling thing. I see it every day, people are advertising stuff that they would like to pass on. They are not charging for it or charging very little. People out there do really want to help and to get involved in it, but I think we need a very structured approach. I think it almost needs to become uncool to buy cheap clothing, that we invest a little bit more in quality, locally made garments or items with the idea they last a bit longer and when they are finished they can be used for somebody else. Because it costs a lot to produce materials and even with the likes of plastic, plastic has great use when it's refused. It can be used for bricks for houses to clothing. So there's a lot we can do and it is a matter of actually coming up with something that is acceptable, affordable and promotes the circular economy. Well done to date and I would like to see it become an even stronger movement and become almost imbedded in our culture that we don't automatically go to throw something out. We look to see what its next use will be. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much for that very interesting report. Hugh, do you want to come back in there?

HUGH: Yes and I'm really encouraged by - just in terms of an overall comment I think, some of the councillors are hitting the nail on the head. When I talk about a national waste management plan for a circular economy, the material has been, managing the material has been discarded, so we really need to push further up the chain and try and influence it in terms of how material is presented to us, how it's packaged, trying to get producers to reduce the amount of packaging and make whatever packaging coming to us, we have to give the general public the tools to be able to move the circular economy. In terms of making it more recyclable, less of it in terms of the packaging, making it easier for people to re-use it, easier to recycle it, all that. So I think people and as well, we are very much conscious that it is a broader climate agenda here and we are making sure we're integrated with that and obviously local authorities are going down a pathway with climate plans now over the next number of months. We will be making sure the message around the circular economy is embedded in that as well. That's very important. In terms of the question raised in terms of the 2.7 tonnes, yes, it is, at the moment I mentioned it's over 13.6, a lot of that is construction demolition, you have municipal, industrial waste, a lot of different waste types, 2.7 tonnes for every person. Our ambition is to, waste will grow because population growth, every person will generate a certain amount, but that per person growth we are going to try and limit that and obviously try and go below that if we can. That is the challenge. I like the term degrowth and that should be the scale of our ambition. There's another measure that is introduced now, across Europe and it's called our circularity rate. It's the rate of which we in terms of the resources we extract from the earth in terms of natural resource, how much goes back, that we re-use. Our circularity rate is around 1.8%. It's very low. The worldwide rate is just over 7%. It's a huge challenge there for us as a society in terms of trying to deal with that. In terms of sharing and swapping and the small communities, the success of this plan will imbed what we can do in our local communities and in terms of textiles, textiles are a very interesting example. People will probably, if you are reflecting back on those dark days of COVID, one of the areas that came under the most pressure during COVID was the textile area, because a lot of the markets because of the fears around transmission of COVID, a lot of the markets were in Africa weren't available and people were doing a lot of decluttering, so there was a huge amount of textiles built up, had no markets for it as well and it really crystalised the issue that in Ireland we have in excess of 170,000 tonnes of textiles being generated and there is question marks in terms of the quality of that as well. So that is an area, there is a national textile working group set up and I think we

have an obligation here to do our best because some of these materials are being re-used, but again, are they being re-used in the right circumstances and some of the markets for these, are we just passing on, that pressure of dealing with that material to Third World countries who have other difficulties that they have to deal with without the issue of textiles. I hope that addresses some of the queries that were raised today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Absolutely. Thank you very much for that. We can leave it at that, that presentation.

Thank you for your time. Members, number 9 on the agenda, before I go to the agenda, I would like to apply for a time extension, apologise, because I want to leave a clear sheet going in for the next Cathaoirleach and I want to get through to the motion. So if we can keep our questions short for the presentation or to a point, so the next presentation is Mark Devereaux. I believe it's raining outside, so it's not too bad. Cllr John Mullen, and Cllr Winters, it's forecast rain and we need it. We have a time extension and we will get through it as quickly as we can. The only thing I would ask, anyone that has their motions in, will you text your fellow colleagues to get them back into the room, because I want to clear this agenda and I need to have the proposers in the room for it. Thank you. Mark, thank you.

BREIGE: Members, thank you very much. This is an awareness-raising presentation and it's got to do with the new proposed climate action plan for County Wicklow. And just to let you know this is probably the second most important document that you will be adopting after the county development plan, and just to let you know where we're at with it. At SPC level in particular and at some of the district meetings we have been alerting you that this, something was happening coming down the line, and its adoption is going to be required fairly quickly. So in particular, just to let you know that the minister made the legislation for the climate action plans to be prepared and they need to be adopted before the 24 February 2024. So it gives us very limited time.

At present, with our tight time lines, and again being very mindful of consultation and engagement just with yourselves, but with all the different sectors, we are currently on a programme of both internal and external stakeholder engagement this is part of it today to let you know this is out there, and there's various different areas where you can tap in in terms of the sectors if you want to have an input in terms of the climate action plan. So just going through it very briefly, that first slide there, just to give you the background of what the climate action plan is about.

There are three aspects to the climate action plan. One is in relation to mitigation. That's where we have to do stuff and to reduce our emissions and the others relation to adaptation. You are aware that in 2019 we

adopted our climate action adaptation strategy, the climate action plan now is to bring about both those adaptation piece and now the mitigation piece. So the mitigation piece is about emissions, adaptation is trying to deal with what already that we're dealing with. So you will see on that Ven diagram, mitigation is basically reducing the emissions and adaptation is managing the risk that it's already there. Mitigation is about sustainable transport, clean energy, there's a lot in relation to energy associated with mitigation and then in terms of adaptation, that's our flood protection and we have the Arklow flood scheme from that point of view we are ahead of the posse in terms of our significant rivers and significant flood risk.

But in addition to that then we also have infrastructure upgrades that are required in terms, that would be our protection of our roads and our critical infrastructure as a result of climate change. And then the area in the middle which is the area that crosses between mitigation and adaptation, we have water conservation, new energy systems, working again with communities and with food production and a huge significant part there is in terms of awareness. Those are the two stages that I mentioned about. We have a third stage and that's related to climate action plan and that is the decarbonisation zone and as you know, we are way ahead of the posse on that when we adopted Arklow as our decarbonisation zone and all the work we do did, which was brought in to the guidelines associated with the preparation of the climate action plan. I'm not going to go through this in detail but just to say where it's come from. It's not just nationally, but it's global, European, national and then with our own county plan. You will see there climate change adaptation plans in 2019, and we're now looking at our climate action plan in preparation for adoption in 24.

So specifically this is a Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan and our role as the local authority is very much in terms of the facilitation, that leadership piece, even for the community, but the actions associated with the plan are very much what we are doing as a local authority. So again, just outlining there in terms of adaptation, there's those four areas, we have to have full accountability, in terms of our delivery of this man and in delivery of action within our area. We have to huge influence, as we all know in terms of our local area, in sectors of the community, we have direct in terms of our procurement and supply, our regulatory, our decision- making and our planning. And then broadly in terms of through the vision of our services. So we are in a key influencing leadership role. Then key action of the Climate Action Plan is in terms of the coordination and facilitating and assisting the communities again through our decarbonisation zones but also through our SECs. Then we also are advocates. We are as the local authority we are there to represent people, you are there as the members, you have your

representation. It's all part of that. We are to advocate for the people of Wicklow in terms of climate action.

One of the first pieces we did in advance of the minister making his decision that we should make a climate action plan, we had our baseline emission inventory done for the county. These are pictures for the county. So the first one there on your left is the emissions by transport within Wicklow. We can see it's pretty abysmal picture when you look at it in terms of public transport. There's 3% only coming from let's say the emissions is only coming from 3% from the public, from public transport. Whereas the majority of it is coming from road and the private car at 65%, and then in terms of freight, 23% and with light goods.

In terms of the impact in terms of climate car still seems to be king. In the middle pie chart is the sources of emission by the sector. The one on the left was just transport, you can see 40% of emissions is coming from agriculture within Wicklow. 25 from residential, 24 from transport and the commercial and public sector, the differentiation between the public sector and ourselves, we are municipal at 1%, the public sector would include schools and health facilities. So you can see from that, even our position if we tackle what is in terms of the targets, we are only dealing within Wicklow County Council 1%. That represents our buildings and our public lighting. 1% of the emissions is what we're responsible for.

So that element that we have to do is to get communities on board is such a crucial aspect. Mindful of the conversation earlier in terms of communication and engagement, that is what this plan is about. This is why we've put such an effort into stakeholder engage. The third pie chart there on the right is basically how private households, their energy is divided into, so you can see the vast majority of people's heating systems is oil and the next high sector is 36% in terms of natural gas. So again we have in order to decarbonise, we need to move away from oil and natural gas. So you can see it's a massive ask. But just to say we're not going to do it all in one go. And the targets for 2030 is 50% in both in terms of emissions and carbon reduction. I will bomb through the next ones because it comes back to what I said initially. Our role is in terms of being accountable, in terms of our influencing role, advocating for ourselves and the people of Wicklow.

This particular slide again, it's very specific to Wicklow. So the baseline inventory on the work we did prior to having to start the climate action plan identifies climate risk assessment. So what is demonstrated in this slide, if you see in the middle the white dots and then you see the arrows going up towards the red, towards the right hand top corner the white dots is where we are now and then if we have the do nothing scenario is where we're going to land. So you can see in terms of our significant issues in Wicklow, our coastal erosion, river flooding, and surface water flooding, and so you can see they can shift up from what is now a

moderate risk into basically a major risk, heading to catastrophic risk, that is if we do nothing. So that's if things move forward without us doing anything. But we are, we are already on the road to do stuff. But you can see even as we are existing, we have moderate, we are really in the moderate zone as we currently are, so it's really important we actually get moving on both in terms of our emissions and in terms of our energy efficiency. You will see there that looking at the white dots, four squares across and three squares up unfrequently versus moderate, there's also arrows going in the opposition direction. When you look at a drought, the more we don't do anything, the more you will get a drought, we have drought increase and then we can have heavy snowfall. In terms of the risk, I think it's very clear there that for Wicklow the biggest issues are coastal erosion and damage coming from flooding whether it's river or coastal flooding.

This is our role in terms of adaptation and also in terms of mitigation. You can move on on that. Now we are on Arklow decarbonisation zone. We have given a number of presentations in relation to Arklow's decarbonisation zone. The reason it's been given in a separate slide is because it is the third element, the third pillar of the climate action plan. As you can see to build on Arklow's status as a leader in terms of offshore renewables. To work on the retro fitting within the town, to create strong dynamic town centre. To raise citizen awareness. Awareness keeps coming up in every aspect of climate change and climate action. To work with the industries and buildings within the Arklow area, to help them to work with the SECs to decarbonise and move towards energy efficiency. Then a very particular one to create a network of towns in County Wicklow to implement the decarbonisation opportunities. I do think that message sometimes is lost, that climate change isn't all about negativity and how much we're going to lose and it's all about loss. There is massive opportunities here and then we see that in terms of let's say the enterprise that we have within County Wicklow, the number of businesses who are keen to move forward, and in terms of all our plans, we are working with the enterprise offices in terms of businesses to assist them. Like Wicklow again is leading in that area in terms of food production and in terms of the businesses actually adopting to green policies. So this is just the start, the vision is basically our ambition, to leverage capability and operation of resources within Wicklow County Council to effectively do that leading and coordinating piece. We have our only responsibilities, we have started working on them, but our contribution within this county is 1% of the emissions, but we have that massive leadership facilitation, organisational role to bring people along with us. And the mission is how we're going to do it. It's our action piece, and it's literally this word, sometimes can appear overused, transformative, but really that's where it's at at the moment. To gain measurable climate action in terms of both

our services for the people of Wicklow, against through our leadership in example and to mobilise on action of mitigation and adaptation through the partnership with our communities. Wicklow again is leading in that in terms of the number of SECs that are active, that are working on their master plans, to work with in their individual areas, to deal with climate action.

I won't go through the details of this. Those are the basic strategic goals, to adopt this climate focus, there's governance in there. The one I wanted to bring attention to you is the second bullet point, to achieve carbon emissions reduction of 51% and energy efficiency improvement of 50% of the operations by 2030, creating this pathway to net zero by 2050.

These are huge ambitious targets and are a massive challenge. Again, I would ask all of you as representation for the community of Wicklow, to encourage people to get involved in terms of our stakeholder engagement.

Again I would ask all of you to encourage people to get involved in terms of our stakeholder engagement. Then, Teresa, I might ask you to upload the other presentation, I want to give you a bit in terms of background of Wicklow specific. Is this the next presentation, Teresa? Okay, thank you very much. Okay, on this particular one, I will have to look this direction. I can't see. Sorry... one of the main initiatives that Wicklow is taking on board is setting up the energy unit. Part of that, as you know, we are working with both Wicklow, Meath and Kildare. Do you have it, Mark? Thank you. Okay.

So, just to give you an idea of the status of where we are at the moment. In comparison to the other two counties, from last year, in terms of our energy efficiency and carbon reduction, we are as good as the others at 28%, but really our original target should have been, we should have been up at 30%. But we are getting there, but with the initiative of the Energy Unit, because that is basically we didn't have the resources and we didn't have things in place to work on it, we will be working to improve that figure. So it has to go from 28% up to 50%, improvement by 2030.

In terms of the greenhouse gas emissions which is the one that people sometimes forget about, it's no use coming in with energy efficiency, we actually have real numbers on the ground reducing greenhouse gases. So out of the three counties, Wicklow is doing the best there in terms of our total greenhouse gas emissions, down to 23%. Next slide, please, Teresa. I just want to give you a little breakdown in terms of our significant users, within Wicklow County Council, that is significant energy users in terms of electricity, heating and transport. So out of that, you can see that public lighting represents 36% of our major use. Swimming pools are up there at 24.5% and county buildings are 5.5%. So you can see we are already

working in terms of public lighting and we are on that phase next time, I think Leonora might come in and just confirm that. I would like to bring your attention in terms of swimming pools. We have four leisure centres, they are significant energy users and during COVID when they weren't being used, that is when our numbers looked well. Just to prepare you in next year, until we actually deal with the energy use within our swimming pools, our carbon emissions and our overall usage will probably drop from that 28%.

Next slide, please. So there is just a summary of our energy profile within Wicklow. In total we use 19 million kwh of energy. But again that is again coming in in terms of, that is only 1% of what the county is producing. Next slide, please, Teresa. And then, you need to look at our carbon related emissions. That is in terms of kilograms of CO₂. I won't go into it in detail, but this is to let you know where we stand as a local authority. Next slide, please, Teresa. So this particular slide outlines our Climate Action Plan and the timelines which is what I wanted to bring to your attention today. This first slide shows in advance of the minister's announcement that the Climate Action Plan was to be prepared, we did a lot of advance planning work and that is when we did the baseline emission, etc.

So you can see from March 2023 onwards, that is the initiation period with a draft plan between July and October and then to be completed between November 2023 and 2024. Next slide, please, Teresa. So currently we are in this phase, which is in the initiation stage and this was where we are now. If you look down on the second column there, stakeholder engagement. That is where we are at. Internally we have both the stakeholder engagement done and at the moment it's external consultation that is going on. So we have our consultation hub and I would like you all to have a look at that, if you have comments, this is the time to make those observations known. The closing date will run up until the 13th of June and then after that, we have to get going and start preparing a draft plan. It's tomorrow! Just to say to you, this isn't the first time we have put this information out, it's just that I wanted to make sure that everyone in the chamber at this council meeting before the consultation closes is aware that it's there. We have been mentioning this at both MD levels and SPC as well.

Final slide, Teresa and again this is just to bring to your attention that we will be looking to bring it to the plan, sorry, we will be bringing you the draft plan in November. Again we will have a presentation in relation to that. So that again you will have, as much consultation as possible and then it will be up for adoption probably end of February meeting. So this is just to show you, this is our timeline that is quite tight and that is how

we will be going to bring it to you. So please add your voice. Because all voices are important, we particularly want to hear the voice of the members, so you can go to this link. Sorry, Teresa, you are on the last slide. So if you just type in even Wicklow Consultation Hub it will bring you to the portal and you can make your comments there and we can take those on board. It's the only consultation hub on our website currently. Okay. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Breege. Before I go to the questions, can I just, we have a suspension of standing orders and it's very relevant to this actually. So can I bring you in Cllr M Kavanagh. Sorry, Cllr Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: [On mute]

CATHAOIRLEACH: I could read it out again, if that helps?

Submitted by Cllr M Kavanagh, Cllr Peir Leonard, Lourda Scott, Cllr R O'Connor, Cllr Stokes, Mark Barry and Cllr Dermot O'Brien. That Wicklow County Council write to the minister requesting him to contact all Dail parties and MEP leaders to remind them of the biodiversity emergency and their commitment to groups made in 2019 and more recently to the two citizen's assembly regarding the restoration of nature as matter of urgency. Furthermore that Wicklow County Council writes to all party leaders urge them to work together with their MEPs to start a strong EU nature restoration law without delay. If passed we request that Wicklow County Council forwarded this motion to all City and County Councils without delay.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Thank you. Thank you, Helen. Just we were all approached to bring this as a motion today, so we discussed this between a few of us and decided that there is going to be a vote on the 20th of June which isn't too far away by the MEPs. If we want to act we have to act immediately. So just to remind people that the purpose of the nature restoration law is to tackle climate crisis and restore nature, which in the long- term will ensure affordability of food for everybody. The planet's life support machines are being pushed beyond their natural boundaries and there is currently up to 50% biodiversity loss of species over the last 20 years. An unprecedented growth, hitherto unseen. Sometimes it takes up to 100 years for a species to disappear, but in this case they are going in the space of 20 years. There is a climate change and biodiversity crisis which is already jeopardising food production. We have to take cognisant of the fact that farmers cannot be unfairly disadvantage with this law. We have to ensure that dialogue is kept open so that farmers and other major stakeholders will be reassured that it will not negatively impact their livelihoods. We need reassurance that there will be a separate funding over and above the Common Agricultural Policy. We need to continue talks and not shut the door on this very important natural restoration law which is so important for future generations. Now, if the MEPs vote no on the 20th of June, we may effectively have shut off a very

important opportunity, which may take a long time to come back to. All we are really asking is that it be given a chance. That we are not only looking at the current situation, we are looking at this generation, we are looking at the generation coming down the track, the children, but even more importantly, we are looking at the grandchildren of many people who are here today, will they have a future? Will they look back and say did nobody do anything to help us? So I am just appealing to everybody to please support this motion. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I would just like to second the motion and just to say that this is about the future generations. And as someone it's about us holding the gap for them to come and step into our roles going forward. To make these things happen and to give nature a voice, everybody needs to be sitting at that table and everyone's voice needs to be heard at that table, including the farmers and as Mary says, it needs to be done in right way, to create the right incentives, for it to be a positive thing, rather than a negative thing. And look it, I think everyone knows where we are at the moment, but it's our water, it's our air, it's everything that sustains us. So it's so important and we are intrinsically linked and connected to everything in nature and without it, we wouldn't be here. I was out in my back garden and the weeds were Cummings up through the cobblestones and it will be neglected. I said nature will survive, we will be the people who don't survive it. We are making things hard on our future generations of humans. Nature will come back, nature will survive, but it will be us that are really at risk are the human race. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Peir Leonard. Cllr Stokes.

CLLR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. I would like to support this motion. We know that we have the overwhelming backing of the people to protect biodiversity. Can I also just pay tribute to all of the groups and individuals that are promoting biodiversity and want this. Including Greystones Tidy Towns are doing tremendous work. They have an amazing plaza market that is going on every Sunday and I would also like to acknowledge the people who volunteered at the stands promoting biodiversity and also to lower carbon emissions. This is absolutely essential. We all have to play our part. I organised in the Dr Ryan Park a community clean- up. We took out 150kg of waste, everything from carpets to cans, to everything you can imagine. We just have to do absolutely everything we can. So I just want to implore the support for this motion, go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Stokes. Sorry, Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to add my support. The fact that we have a need, a nature restoration law means that by definition we need to restore, by also means that harm has been caused. There is damage. So I really think we need to just sit with the

reality of that. I sometimes do workshops with children and young people to try and get their head around the importance of this. When you actually step away from it, it's very simple. The planet that we live on, you can nearly map the, what it means to be a human and how it sits with what it means to live on Planet Earth. We have a respiratory system, the forests are our respiratory system. We have a circulation system, it's our rivers, it's our oceans, the tides, with the digestive system, it's the nutrient system, skeleton system is the valleys and the mountains. All of that works in harmony and we have lost that and this law drives us towards, again what was mentioned in Breege's presentation, the idea of accountability which is taking responsibility for the choices and impact of the choices we make. I very much support this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr R O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you, chair. I just want to put my name in to show support for this motion. I think it's very important and I think a lot of things were eloquently said by many members. I also want to say that it's not all groupings within the EU which are holding this up. There is a main group which is the EPP, who are holding things up, who are Fine Gael. I asked them, all Fine Gael councillors to call your MEPs and demand they get back into the conversation around this law. It's so important and it just can't be held up any longer.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: I support everything that Cllr Kavanagh said. I think we need to be careful as well, I think that we should not make this political. I think it's more important than that. We shouldn't be, we should be encouraging people to do the right thing. There is nobody now, there is no elected member of any persuasion, or very few anyway, who don't support what should happen. Can I also put a word of caution in. I recently attended a meeting of schools where they were talking about kids and anxiety and all that goes around that topic. It's a topic that I have an interest in and in all of this and I was, Breege gave us a very impressive presentation and it's all very important as well and I would support it, but I think we need to be careful and I am going to quote, make a quote, I read something recently, what I tried to do is read both sides and then come up with my own sometimes mad rationales! A Professor said in the context of all of this discussion he said, a concern he was expressing was, the way he described it, it's frighten the bejaysus out of young people. We have an awful lot of conversation right now about anxiety in young people, particularly young people at second level schools. All I am saying is as we go down this road and do the things that have to be done, I think we need to be cognisant of young people. We can't create a society that lives in fear. They have to be allowed to live and get on with their lives as well. I would put that in as a word of caution. It's something I feel strongly about.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Fortune. Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: I would be supportive of the motion, our biodiversity efforts and the planet and the worry of the whole lot. Really in the heel of the hunt, the small farmer and I am in the middle of them there, they know their days are numbered. I don't know what sort of compensation they would get or how that would ever be managed. I mean in talking to the ordinary farmer, there is lot of them gone off the face of the earth. Their backs are to the wall, the know alls, you would wonder when you were listening to sense, because these same small farmers were advised only to year ago to borrow and to reclaim their land and now they have been asked to borrow again to declaim the land. So it's a very tricky one. And it's, the EU, the EC has a lot to do that too, they realise it. We were all sucked into EEC in 72 and from then we had the different treaties or whatever. So we are all trapped into this. I am probably going a little bit far- fetched here, Cathaoirleach, but I think on the ground, the small farmers' days are numbered.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Neill. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Again I am very happy to put nigh name to and support this motion. I am autos agreeing with what my colleagues have said largely. Just following on from Cllr O'Neill, he makes a good point that farmers have, I suppose done what they have been told by previous Directives coming from the EU and you know that is what it is. It's certainly not their fault. But equally we have seen farmers embracing environmental schemes in general and I have no doubt that farmers will embrace this environmental scheme when it comes to pass as well. There has been assurances from the EU that first of all that the vast majority of the rewetting targets before 2030 can be done through public land and the proportion after that on agricultural land will be achieved through voluntary schemes and farmers will be paid to participate in this and there will be a valuable part of getting this scheme to work. That, I think goes without saying.

There will be active management of the land involved in a lot of schemes and rewetting. It won't just be a matter of sitting back and letting it work away on its own. But, the key is communication. I think Breege in her previous presentation, made two points on communication and community. I think this is what this law is all about as well. It's communication with the farming community as well as the wider community. This is what this motion is about. It's asking, like all the members here present, regardless of your political party to contact your MEPs and ask them to actively support this Bill going through Europe. It's key, not just for our own future, but for our children's and our grandchildren's future as well.

I just want to make reference to the point there, just the comment was made about stress and anxiety in young people. We had the pleasure at our climate and biodiversity SPC meeting just last week where we invited young delegates from the Young Person's Citizen's Assembly to speak at our SPC. They were phenomenal. We had two young people who were 12, 13 and 14- year- old who were able to present the findings of the children And Young Person's Assembly on biodiversity loss with clarity. The work that was done, I want to commend every single person, staff member, member of the public, elected member to get a copy of T it's available online. Read it. That is the work and the voice of the young people. Not just from this county but young people across Ireland. I would ask you to listen to them. They are asking our elected representatives to use our position of power and to support measures such as this being discussed. This is a hugely important part of our biodiversity and the country and the world. They are asking us to take heed and take action and listening to what they are telling us. So I would urge all elected members to support this motion and contact your MEPs. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Cllr Sylvester Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: I would like to support this in principle, being a farmer myself I see problems for the farmers affected by it though. From reading the press I notice that land values have dropped significantly in areas vulnerable to this new policy. That would be a concern for a lot of farmers and landowners. Another bone of contention for farmers would be that we are the custodians of the environment and have been for generations and will be for the next few generations. We all want to leave in a better place that we find it. But we like to compete on a level playing field. The European Union there now is very keen to get in and say beef and grain from Brazil, for example, where they are cutting down rainforests to make way for agriculture so you have to get a bit of balance in the debate. When you are allowing that to happen, there is not a mention of that and why are you allowing that to happen? We have our hands tied behind our backs a food producers. So we have to get real here with the debate as well and put a bit of balance into it and have fairness for everyone. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Bourke. Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: I would like to support this as well. I do think it's a shame as a group we are being target as Fine Gael when we only got emailed at 12.00am today asking us for the support. I didn't have enough time to really look into this, but again in principle I really do support this. I am born and bred living on a farm all my life and will hope to continue it on in my family as a small farmer. But we have got to all work together and work with the farmers. Particularly the small farmers and support each other. I am very involved with my own Tidy Towns and Pure Mile

and I work with everyone on the community in trying to reach our biodiversity targets and we have our churches on board where we are living areas. We all have to work together. I would have liked more time to have read the information, really understood it, but I do support it, yes, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Okay, we are all in agreement with this by the sounds of it. Sorry, Cllr Behan. Just for the people at home can you put your microphone on, Joe.

CLLR BEHAN: I know pier and Mary are very genuine and we had long discussions with this morning. I am not in favour of their **props** so I would like it to be recorded as being against it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

HELEN: Can I check if anyone else is proposed? In that case we would take a vote. Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: I have some concerns about this to be honest with you. I don't think we have had enough time to have a constructive debate on it. In terms of farmers participating in environmental schemes, I think that is a given. In my view, farmers are very proactive in protecting the land that they farm. As Cllr Bourke said, they are custodians of the land. And take pride in what they do. There is, I suppose there is a concern amongst the farming community that farmers are unduly blamed for the environment or biodiversity problem we have in the world. Cllr Bourke made a good point about the Brazilians cutting down the rainforests. We have a good product in this country, Origin Green, Bord Bia, we are promoting Irish beef and I would include dairy in that. How far do you push farmer it's in this situation? They are trying to work to make it better and make the environment better and make the country better. I personally think we need a lot more time to debate this. I think it's rushed. I accept where Cllr Kavanagh and Cllr Leonard are coming from and their issues, I can see where that can be debated. But on this occasion, I just I need more information before I would be willing to support it as it is. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you.

Tara, 5- 530.

CLLR LEONARD: I would like to say the most important thing for me bringing this forward with Mary was to actually bring it into the realm of conversation and debate. I think going forward I think it would be a really good idea to maybe have a presentation from our county farmers and get their voices heard in all of this. Because asking the MEPs for everybody to come to the table for me was as much about getting the farmers' voice there as just all the environmentalists, because without it we can't do it and they need to get their incentives, they get to get their financial, I have family who are farmers, nieces and nephews a my own children will probably take over farms eventually, it's not about being anti- county

farmers, it's about bringing their voice to the table. So everybody's voice is there and they can negotiate the right terms for them as well as the nature in restoration.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you. I would be concerned on the farming aspect, not that I own a farm or anything, but my family has history in farming and friends and to see and hear the stories of what they have to go through regarding the Department of Agriculture, and I put it down to the basic of having cows and if the cows produce too much dung, it's measured and they have to get rid of some of the cattle. I mean, my God, how can Ireland cope with that. I have seen a pro gran on RTE1, one guy talking about farmers giving the next generations to their sons or daughters, there was 13 young people went to Canada on the one day and won guy sat at home and said I am and am I going to be the only one here in my community to rear my children when all my friends are gone. It was the saddest programme to hear. He asked the government where will he be in five years, because of the rules and regulations. I totally agree with some of the things but I think reality is we just can't get rid of our farmers, we can't get rid of the land and we need our next generation, where does our food come from, it is a deeper conversation absolutely.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Helen, we are going to have a support, whether or not you support the suggestion suspension of standing orders. If you are for vote for. I will read the motion: The Wicklow county counsel... requesting him to call all MPs... and their commitment to youth community groups made in 2019 and more recently to two citizens assemblies regarding the restoration of nature as a matter of urgency. Furthermore that Wicklow County Council writes to all party leaders urging them to work with their MEPs to pass... without delay. If passed will request Wicklow County Council forward this motion to all city and county councils without delay and that was proposed by Cllr Mary Kavanagh, seconded by CLLR Leonard.

>>: That should be added in there before I vote for it,

>>: There has been some amendment already, such as there be another finance funding stream and there's more consultation, that farmers are reassured and that it's on a voluntary basis not a compulsory bases, but I have no problem adding in with consultation.

HELEN: Where do you want to add that?

>>: Could I secretary that it would be considering by the proposer and seconder we defer this and get a presentation from the farming community at our next council meeting. And I think that would give everybody a lot more information in terms of what we're voting on.

>>: The vote takes place on 20th June, that is the reason, I only got this e-mail last night at about 9.30 and the reason is because of the absolute urgency of the matter. But certainly I have no problem adding in to it.

Consultation takes place with farmers forest and other stakeholders to discuss any issues relevant to them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you happy with that Cllr Bourke.

HELEN: Takes place with farmers, foresters, other stakeholders.

>>: Could discuss any matters and issues relevant to them. Farmers foresters, community groups and stakeholders. Urging them to work together with the MEPs to pass a strong in nature... without delay, happy with that. Everybody clear on that? Will I read the whole thing.

That relate to minister requesting him to contact all party leaders and MEPs to remind them of their own declarations on the biodiversity emergency and their commitment to use a community groups made in 2019 and more particularly to two citizens assemblies, adult and youth, regarding the restoration of nature as a matter of urgency. The consultation takes place with farmers, foresters, community groups and other stakeholders to discuss any issues relevant to them. Furthermore, that Wicklow County Council writes to all party leaders urging them to work together with their MEPs to pass a strong EU nature restoration law without delay. If passed we will request Wicklow county council forwards this motion to all councils without delay. Are you happy with that wording Cllr Kavanagh, is that clear to everybody. If you are in favour of that motion, you vote for and if you are against you vote against.

(Vote taken)

The motion is carried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Breige, can I bring you back in for questions.

BREIGE: Shoot please.

CATHAOIRLEACH: She doesn't mean that literally! Ask her questions politely.

CLLR SCOTT: I won't shoot Breige! Thanks Cathaoirleach. Thanks for the presentation Breige, and just as chairperson of the climate and biodiversity SPC I want to commend the staff of the climate action team and yourself for the huge amount of work that's gone on behind the scenes and before really we had specific details of the climate action plan. It's fantastic and I was really foresighted because we are hitting the ground running with getting this off the ground and a huge amount of work has already got into it. I just wanted to really just say there's a lot, when you are presenting and talking about emissions and carbon reductions, it can turn people off, there's a lot of facts and percentage reductions and it can be hard to engage people. But you hit the nail on the head when you were talking about this is about communication and community and really this plan, this climate action plan is not just about

the climate SPC for example, it's of all the presentations that we get at the plenary, this plan really is for absolutely everybody. It is for every division of Wicklow County Council. It is for every councillor here present and every member of our community. And across all sectors of our community as well. Be it that farmers, be it that working people, people that are staying at home looking after kids or caring roles. So the one thing I want to say about the climate action plan, I ask every councillor present please spread the word about this and all the stakeholder communication and the public consultation process to really spread the word about these throughout your constituents. Even if you are looking at going that's climate action, and that's not for me, it is to do with you, it is about everybody. It's about all of your constituents. And please try to encourage people to engage, put in your own thoughts as well. We had a good discussion with the farming community and hearing their voices, go to your farming constituents and ask them to log on and put their thoughts and input into this. Everybody wants to hear from them. It's really, really important. And it is an opportunity, the climate action plan is really an opportunity to plan out and create a better County Wicklow and that's for everybody. So I will leave it there, I know time is getting on and I will let other people to have a chance to speak, but thanks to Breige and all the team.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr O'Brien: Just a quick one. To recognise if we think about this agenda, the climate agenda and the short amount of time it was front and centre in this council, this term, a new SPC and how it then became threaded into nearly every aspect of how the council operates, I want to give huge recognition to that that there is a journey happening here and people are navigating that journey and taking leads in it and this council is really stepping up and words matter and maybe it's me, but I love the vision, I love the mission and I think that holds us to account and it drives us and it challenges us and I am looking forward to playing my part in doing the visibility of this, getting people on board and there isn't a shortage of communication invitation to engage, going back and forth, committing, trying to get young people together, it didn't work out, go again, find another way, so I think the work that's being done in this regard is to be hugely commended.

CLLR WALSH: Just the director's presentation demonstrates a lot of actions and a lot of work have gone into this plan. It presents ambitious targets and significant challenges but my question is when it is adopted 2024, what impact will it have on the current county development plan will it require a variation or will there be work around the existing county development plan. Thank you.

BREIGE: Within our county development plan, we had three pillars and

one of them which was climate action, so it's already imbedded in there, we don't see any variation or anything associated with the county development plan. This document will stand on its own and will have its own actions, associated with it and I suppose, too, county development plan, which is more based on objectives. This is action. It's action-led. I just want to thank all the councillors for the consideration and we do have a very hard-working SPC and I don't think they would say that they haven't been consulted on every aspect of this and we actually sought to include their representation back to the consultants who originally was putting the original baseline together. The other thing I wanted to say, just in reference to Councillor Fortune's comment, I agree with you, it is so important that the youth see that we have hope, but it was also comforting to hear Dr Fitzgerald on the radio at the weekend. He's on the climate action, the national climate action advisory committee and for him to say that he has hope and he knows and he does see action on the ground and we here in Wicklow have actually started that, our first county council to declare the emergency and set up our SPC. But it is not just about setting things up. We are doing a lot of action on the ground. Particularly now, the emissions one is massive and the reduction in the greenhouse gases is considerable. The fact we are now leading and we have the energy team, I do think it will make a huge difference. That will help us in terms of our actions that we will be putting forward. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh. On other point before we finish. I'm sure we are all aware of the issue around the retained (Inaudible) and the threat of industrial action going forward into next week. Just want to ask the director present, have we any contingency plan should this action take place from a local authority? That nobody wants to see this, but I am wondering have we a contingency plan in place should that action take place?

>>: Thank you Cathaoirleach.

>>: There is a contingency plan being worked on, so that is where we are at. We had a recent meeting this morning. We would have had a contingency plan in place since last week in relation to the industrial action last week and we have now updated that and amended that contingency plan on the basis of the industrial action this week.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Number 10 is correspondence.

HELEN: One to remind members the AGM is next Monday, 19th June at 2pm. Also wish to note circulation by the housing and corporate estate directorate in accordance with section 791A for the development of 152 housing units and associated works at Loch Lane in Kilomole and also note the circulation by the planning and development section of land value sharing in urban development zone bills 2022. And also to note circulation

of protocol minutes for the 13th February, 6th March and 3rd April. There haven't been any CPGs, so no CPG minutes circulated since.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Helen. Finally on the agenda is the notice of motion.

Cllr Timmins would you like to read it out?

CLLR TIMMINS: It's fairly self-explanatory, short and not to do with the council, you will have to indulge me on this one. In the interests of transparency this council supports that bills from pharmacies for subscriptions show breakdown of cost of the medicines and dispensing cost and that we write to the Minister for Health on this matter. You don't know when you buy medicines you could buy two or three in the chemist, you just get a total bill, you have no way of comparing what you pay in one chemist versus the other, or what the dispensing cost proportion of the bill is. For example, if you just look for a couple of days medicines, it turns out to be a lot dearer per item than if you look for a month's supply. It is just a very simple transparent situation, it is not the case, the only thing I know you can buy in this country where you can't see the cost of what you are buying. We live in an open market economy, we have transparent pricing. I can't understand why pharmacies when they give you a receipt after you buy prescription medicines, don't...

>>: This is why I should have read out the motion. Have a seconder? Thank you very much. I do appreciate that Cllr Timmins. Cllr Kennedy is going to second that. Because Cllr Blake had to rush off. I think I am in agreement with that anyway. Anyone else? Anything to say on that? All good, thank you very much.

Number 2 notice of motion in the name of Cllr Stokes seconded by Cllr O'Connor.

CLLR STOKES: Can you read it out?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Wicklow County Council expresses solidarity with the people of Ukraine, following the one year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. Wicklow County Council thanks all of those who have welcomed Ukrainians to Wicklow. The council further resolves to write to the Russian ambassador to Ireland calling for Russia to leave Ukraine, including Crimea.

>>: Yes, firstly can I pay tribute to everyone who has helped Ukrainians in Ireland and County Wicklow, that includes Wicklow County Council, individual people and groups such as Tiglin in grey stones, when I submitted this motion it was just after the one year since the illegal invasion with no end in sight and as a small country we know what the struggle for independence is like from a larger neighbour. Vladimir Putin is man who is wanted on suspicion of war crimes for abducting children and as long as Russia continues their occupation of Ukraine, they seem hellbent on inflicting misery on the people targeting infrastructure. This is

going to continue. Last week we saw the ecocide of blowing up of a dam, creating more displaced people, some of which may end up in County Wicklow eventually and yesterday there was another dam that was blown in the Donetsk region. But if I could urge support for this motion, this is not an obscure international issue. Wicklow has the third highest amount of Ukrainians in Leinster. Many of them would like to return home to rebuild Ukraine, be a part of their nation, but this can only be done when it is safe to do so. So the first step in securing a peaceful Ukraine is to see Russia leave immediately. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr O'Connor, you second that.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Everything has been said, yes I second it.

CLLR WALSH: I would agree in principle with the contents of the motion. But should we not be directing any correspondents to the department of foreign affairs with a specific request of the same nature in relation to the ambassador, which should go to the department of foreign affairs rather than the Russian embassy.

CLLR BEHAN: I recognise the sentiments of the two councillors, I don't agree with it. I don't have a long debate about foreign relations here, but we are a neutral country. We squandered two years of a valuable presence on the UN Security Council, which we gave up six months ago, when we could have done something to perhaps mediate in that war situation. We basically went along with the NATO view of the whole conflict and what I'm most deeply concerned and particularly for young councillors representing the people of County Wicklow, to be really, really mindful of the fact that this conflict is being used by the Government parties to basically frustrate our neutrality as a nation. We were neutral during the first, certainly the Second World War. First World War we hadn't got our independence, we were neutral against one of the greatest dictators in the history of the world. The worst dictators I should have said, but we were neutral because we were not willing to align ourselves. What you see at the moment is a gradual push by the established parties in this country to begin a debate on whether we should be neutral at all. And I fear that getting involved in an issue like this and passing a motion saying we're telling the Russians to get out of Ukraine, we are basically going to get ourselves involved in this conflict now. I completely agree with the sentiments of gratitude to the many people in Wicklow who have taken in and hosted Ukrainian people. Of course, we have as humanitarian people we would do that. But there are also many Russian people who I'm quite sure have also suffered and continue to suffer, innocent people on both sides. And we as a country that suffer domination for 800 years should understand and realise that many ordinary people also are suffering on both sides of this conflict. Regrettably therefore I'm not willing to support the motion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

CLLR O'NEILL: I would absolutely fully support every word Joe Behan has said there, I oppose this motion absolutely. I want to put my money where my mouth is, I am involved with a local deacon teaching the English language to Ukrainians in our area. I do my best in a big way, but I don't think it's right that we should be sticking our noses in. If that be the case where do we stop. I have never in all my time, I have only been here ten years but I have never seen any motions condemning the presence of the British in our country throughout the years, there's been no utterance, so it's a little bit - we shouldn't be getting involved in this. When we did join the United Nations back when it was founded, 1946, Ireland has always shown and proved what we can do as a country. This is the line that Irish governments took throughout the years, but I agree with Cllr Behan, we are drifting in here, led by Varadkar. He is lining up the big job in Europe in two years' time so it's very clear to me any way that we are only a step away from attempting to join the American- led NATO. There's no way I would drift that way at all. I absolutely oppose it and I want to support every word Cllr Behan has said.

CLLR MULLEN: I completely support this motion. Completely support. There are times in history where you have to stand up for people's right to have their own country. We come from a country where a larger neighbour to us dominated our history and dominated our politics for quite some time. Cllr O'Neill, I didn't interrupt you, we can have our differences here in this room, but sometimes you have to stand up for what's right. And what is right here is that the Russian federation, which led by Vladimir Putin's regime, which isn't exactly democratic invaded the people of Ukraine a year ago and the response of this country in humanitarian terms has been overwhelming. The illegality of the war and the invasion, very few people dispute it. If you look at the countries of the United Nations that have backed Russia, and just list them and look up their governments and their type of regimes, there's something mentioned about neutrality and there's nothing in the motion I see from Cllr Stokes and Cllr O'Connor about neutrality. While we are on the subject of neutrality, a lot of misinformation floating around the plans. We have to have a discussion about our security in the 21st century. We had our HSC system attacked by foreign civilians. We have to have a full conversation about that. As for our neutrality in the Second World War, it's quite well proven by historians that we weren't completely neutral in the Second World War. We were officially neutral, but the allies - our neutrality was nuanced then and it should be nuanced now and we as a people, the idea I do agree with Jerry is we as an Irish people will decide who or what we should be aligned with. But as a people we suffered ourselves for hundreds of years from the interference of our larger neighbour. We should absolutely support this motion for the people of Ukraine to have their own national integrity, their own government, their

own democracy and ask the Russians believe immediately before they do more damage to an innocent people. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Stokes, I have to go to a vote here before we run out of time.

>>: I want to concur with Cllr Mullen. This is nothing to do with party politics, this has been proposed by an independent councillor and seconded by an independent councillor. I reject the statement that this is something to do with America-led NATO.

So our neutrality was nuanced then, it should be now. The only thing I agree with Cllr Gerry O'Neill and Cllr Behan on is we as the Irish people will decide who what we should be aligned with. As a people who suffered from the interference of our larger neighbour, we should support this motion for the people, the Ukraine to have their own national integrity, their own democracy and ask the Russians to leave, immediately, before they do more damage to an innocent people. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Stokes, I am going to have to go to a vote here. Are we running out of time?

CLLR STOKES: Cathaoirleach, I just want to concur with Cllr Mullen there. I also want to say this is nothing to do with party politic, this is proposed by an independent and seconded by an independent councillor. I reject the statement that this is something to do with American- led NATO. I mentioned that once, so I don't accept that. I do want to reiterate, I think we have something like 1700 Ukrainians in county Wicklow, I want to reiterate the support for people who have had to come to Wicklow because of something that has been inflicted upon them. Go raibh maith agat. Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Helen?

HELEN: Cllr Stokes, do you wish the read the wording as it is perfect. The motion is Wicklow County Council expresses solidarity with the people of Ukraine following the one- year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. Wicklow County Council thanks all of those who have welcomed Ukrainians to county Wicklow County Council. Wicklow County Council further resolves to write to the Russian ambassador to Ireland calling on Russians to leave Ukraine and Crimea. If you are in favour of it, vote for or against it vote against.

[VOTE TAKEN]

HELEN: We have 15 for, two against and 15 not present. Motion is carried and we do have a quorum, just in case anyone was concerned. Thank you. The motion is carried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you and I am sorry I ran out of time, I can't get to the final motion.

HELEN: You didn't specify a time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Then we will go for it. Thank you very much.

Helen, would you like to read it out, I have lost me page. I was packing up to go home.

HELEN: Sorry. As a symbol of hope and to demonstrate in a public way that a town or village supports the LGBTQ+ community and they are welcomed in their own county that this council commits to installing a permanent Pride crossing across each MD where there is a signalised crossing with the hope of completion within the next 12 months. The response to that is Wicklow County Council welcomes and supports initiatives that demonstrate support for communities, including the LGBTQI+ community. We are engaging with the relevant Government departments on how the request for Pride crossings can be addressed while ensuring compliance with regulatory design standards. Sorry, Cllr Scott, I see that you are present, Cllr Paul O'Brien isn't. Can I have someone to second it? A whole heap of hands went up. Cllr John Mullen caught my eye. Thank you.

CLLR SCOTT: Can I come in there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You certainly can.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you for that. I won't stay talking too long. I want to read out a paragraph, this was brought to me by members of the LGBTQI+ community. They said this is about symbolism. There is still a lot of hate and transphobia and violent assault towards members of that community across society. They said one of the ways of reaching so many people in a positive way is by flying the Pride flags, however these only remain in public for a month during Pride in the summer months. The sect was the rainbow crossing such was brought to Arklow in 2021, this can offer as a beacon of hope, because it demonstrates that a town or village supports the LGBTQ community and will not stand for hate or discrimination. It lets young and old know that there are others just like them, that they are not alone and that the broader community loves and accepts them for who they are. The Pride rainbow crossing shines a light of positivity and elevates Wicklow's profile as place of acceptance, progress and a supporter of minorities, a true ally. I just wanted to read that into the record, because it's really important. I just wanted to acknowledge, I have had loads of conversations with Michael Flynn over the logistics of how to go about doing permanent Pride crossings, properly. So that they are inclusive of everyone. I just wanted to thank the really positive engagement from Michael and the rest of Wicklow County Council on that and I really felt that there was real positivity and a real desire to put something, a permanent symbol like this in our Wicklow towns and municipalities as a symbol of hope for members of the LGBTQ+ community and that is a nice positive thing to get in this month.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Lourda Scott. Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Just to say I find this a bit surprising. There are many minorities in our society and between religion and race and all sorts of things. These crossings are for everybody to use, not just particular people in society and I find it funny to put it up, should we have a crossing for Jews or for Muslims or other minority groups in society? I think we should have one for everybody.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Stokes.

CLLR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. Can I firstly pay, I fully support this motion and can I pay tribute to Cllr Scott. I think this is a wonderful idea. I fully support it. I think in mid- December when it's rainy and dark there will be a splash of colour in the districts. What I would say is this could be so successful that a lot of other towns might say can we have one as well? We should think big on this, but let's start with one for every district and if we can do it and look to expand it if other areas want it. Again well done to Cllr Scott and I support this motion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Can I oppose this motion. I oppose because I don't really understand it as such. I know the LGBTQI stands for lesbian gay, bisexual transgender, intersectional, queer and A sexual. I don't understand what the plus is. I have asked this a few times and I find myself, in agreement with quite a few people in the gay and lesbian tradition, as such. They tend to agree with me here. That the, the gripe I would have here, I wouldn't like to ask the people of Blessington or Baltinglass to have a pedestrian crossing with colours on it I don't understand the significance of it. Especially the plus? What does that mean. If someone could explain to me what that would mean I would consider it as such. But another issue there, I don't really get the hang of the, with the I feel with the, transgender bit here and how it discriminates against women in the field of sport and athletics throughout the world, we are seeing it every day of the week on the CNN and the Fox News as well as in the UK how a lot of young girls are being discriminated against by men dressed as women in these, athletic events. So I would not support the discrimination of women by painting up their colours. I have no problem, as I say, and I have talked this, I have talked about this, I have talked to people in the gay community and in actual fact they fully agree with me. It is an issue of big concern in the UK and throughout Europe at the moment is the way the colours are being bandied about and being used by different groups. So unless I am very clear on something I would not be supporting it. I am absolutely not clear on this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr O'Neill. Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I would like to support it. Myself and my fellow Arklow councillors put the Pride crossing there a couple of years ago in Arklow and it was the MD staff that really looked at the, the engineers there, the

design and stuff like that. I would say have a chat with that, because the paint that went down originally, it came off and people thought the crossing was vandalised and stuff like that. There was a couple of issues with it. The one thing on speaking to members of that community for me was that like I have friends who are homosexual, that have spent the majority of their adult and childhood hiding from their own family members. I am not, I am 50. So these people had to hide their identity for over 40 years of their lives pretending that they were someone different to who they were inside. What the symbolism does is, it creates that little bit of hope for all those people and the young people coming up as well. I have worked with youth clubs and stuff like that. It's just that friendly symbol that says this is okay. That day and age has gone, we are inclusive now and you don't have to be afraid anymore to be who you are and be welcomed in your own community. So I would support it. Yeah.

CLLR O'NEILL: [INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC]

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Thank you, Cllr Leonard, you don't have to answer that, because, Cllr O'Neill can do his own research and find that out. It's not up to the councillors to explain that to you. Lourda Scott wants to come in here.

CLLR SCOTT: I would like to explain a little bit. I think having conversations would be important.

CATHAOIRLEACH: But there is a time and a place.

CLLR SCOTT: I am going say two things it refers to two questions that Cllr O'Neill referred to. The colours represent different things. Pink represents sexuality, red for healing, yellow for the sun, green for serenity with nature and turquoise for the heart and violet for the spirit. That can be welcomed by all members of community, but thank you for the discussion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you for informing me of that, because you are never too old to learn everything. I appreciate that and I have could done my own research, Cllr O'Neill, but I appreciate that, Lourda Scott. Are we going have to vote on it?

HELEN:As we have had some dissent we will be voting...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I speak on this, I don't speak on any motions because I feel like getting it through. I will say on the one in Arklow I was totally opposed to it at the beginning because I was teaching my son and friend how to drive, I said a pedestrian crossing is black and white, end of story. It says in the motion here that it has to be at a signalled pedestrian crossing. So that is very important. You can't just have a pedestrian crossing and put down Pride colours. It has to be at a signalled crossing. So that is for the safety of the drivers and of the pedestrians, which is most important. First and foremost. I had the pleasure of going to Wurzburg for the Mozart Festival. As I noticed as the pedestrian stops unlike Arklow it's on the foot path. I thought that was a fantastic event. It

wasn't as could be costly to go on and there is no wear and tear with the people. I am bringing that back from Germany. If I can bring anything back that is one thing that caught my eye. It was that as you went on to the entrance of the pedestrian crossing it was across the pedestrian entrance, nothing to do with the drivers, just the pedestrians. I said I would add that to the conversation. Thank you.

Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, I know we are running late. We had our run motion for Bray Municipal District, for a rainbow crossing, the Bray councillors. We obviously all supported the idea of supporting Pride Month etc. However there was an issue raised by our engineer which was that there is a difficulty apparently with rainbow crossings that has been raised by the NCBI. So the national Council For the Blind. There can be difficulties with dogs and with people who have visual impairment with the crossings. So I would have like that taken on board and noted that they may need to be adapted in some way or placed in some way that takes this on board, because obviously being inclusive means being inclusive to everyone. Thank, chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: I want to say we have had extensive conversations with the NCBI and they have published guidelines as to how to 'do', put down colourful crossings so they are inclusive of everyone in November 2022. I have been discussing this with Michael Flynn. There are guidelines. Our crossing in Arklow followed those guidelines so I know the council will be cognisant of that as well. But thank you for raising.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We have a quorum, yeah?

HELEN: Eight is a quarter and then one, so it's nine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I did ask that as we were losing councillors very quickly. I think they are getting bored of me talking.

HELEN: Notice of Motion is in the name of Cllr Scott and seconded by Cllr Mullen. As a symbol of hope and to demonstrate in a public way that a town or village supported the LGBTQ+ community and that they are welcomed in their own county that this Council commits to installing a permanent Pride crossing across each MD where there is a signalled crossing with the hope of completion within the next 12 months.

If you are in favour vote for or against vote against.

[Vote taken]

HELEN: We have 11 for, two against and 19 not present, so the motion is carried and we do have a quorum. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, members. Thank you very much for putting up with me for the last 12 months. This is my last meeting, so don't be so sad! I have the AGM. I am thanking the council who have stayed with me through the meeting.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

HELEN: We have the protocol for anyone on that, there is no escape yet.

END OF MEETING