

**ORDINARY MEETING OF**  
**WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ON**

**MONDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT 2:00 P.M.**

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**Heather Casali**

**Nicola Dutton**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for attending the meeting. Thank you for the people who are attending remotely at home. We will start with the roll call please, Helen.

HELEN PURCELL: I would like to welcome the public and the press to the Chamber and to those attending remotely. To remind you of the etiquette, if you keep your mobile phones off and keep your cameras on so that we can see you. Thank you. If anybody loses connectivity, connect myself or Teresa. Thank you very much.

[Roll call]

CLLR GLENNON: I'm having some difficulties hearing you?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can you hear me now?

CLLR GLENNON: I will be at my laptop in a few minutes. I'm on the mobile in a moment. I'm with you anyway, okay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Okay, Helen.

HELEN PURCELL: Condolences for a number of people. We pray for Christine Fox, mothers of our colleague Caroline Fox, Michael Byrne, father of our colleague Damian Byrne. John Heslan, father of our colleague Colin Heslan. Robert McGrogan, brother of our colleague Mark Grogan, and Louise, mother of our colleague [inaudible].

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Just to say I'm present.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: For family of Jimmy Doyle in Aghrim who passed away last week. Jimmy was part of the deaf community in Ireland, as was his wife as well. Jimmy had a career in soccer, played 16 times in Ireland, played in two Olympics, in Romania and in Los Angeles. But for the fact he had a serious injury during that particular time, he would have played an awful lot more times for Ireland. To his wife, Niamh, his son and daughter and his brothers and sisters, our deepest sympathy. Thanks, Chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you. I knew Jimmy as my time as a referee. I only found out today he played international football. Jimmy would have been heavily involved in schoolboy and schoolgirl football. I know all of the referees in Wicklow, he'll be sadly missed because even with his disability, he always made people very welcome. A very professional man and very courteous. I would like to extend my sympathies to the family as well. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Can we stand for a minute's silence, please, members.

[Pause]

CATHAOIRLEACH: May their souls and all of the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace, amen. Thank you, members. Members, I have three suspensions of Standing Orders. I'm going to

do something unprecedented, I'm going to take them first, if that's okay. So, the first special standing order is my own, and that's to acknowledge Cllr Jodie Neary. Do I have a seconder for that? Thank you very much, Cllr Joe Behan and Cllr Stephen Stokes. Thank you very much. I believe we have Cllr Jodie in the Chamber. I can't call you councillor anymore but you will always be known as a councillor for a while anyway.

Jodie, can I say my own opinion of you. You were very, very polite and very articulate and very mannerly, especially to me as a new Chair coming in. I realised how difficult it was for you coming in as a new councillor. As you said yourself, into a male-dominated Chamber, but that's changing.

You've definitely left your stamp on your seat in Greystones. I had the privilege of attending the people awards ceremony in Greystones a number of weeks ago, and the people in Greystones think very, very highly of you and rightly so. You handed out an award to a young lady boxer, Cassie Rock. I thought it was just fitting that you were presenting that award. Even though Cassie wasn't there, she was away in training, but her mother and father really appreciated that award and you had lovely words for the family and the whole event. You will be sadly missed in the Greystones municipal area, not only there but here in the Wicklow Chamber as well, because I don't know what the lads and ladies are doing in Greystones but this is the second female councillor we have lost in Greystones. I say that jokingly, okay, because Lorraine is looking at me now giving out, don't be saying that Tommy, but I will say Jodie, this is -- you point it out yourself, it is not an easy game. Politics, I will just clarify, it is not a game, politics is not a game because it's so serious but in the two and a half years you've been to do the Council you've contributed so much and the words you spoke was so sincere and it was felt through this room in the Chamber but also through Greystones municipal. You will be sadly missed. I would like just to take this opportunity to say thank you very much and I wish you the very, very best luck in the future and I know it's not the last we're going to hear of you. Jodie, the very best of luck to you. Thank you very much again.

Now, I will open it up to the members. Cllr Stephen Stokes.

CLLR STOKES: Go raibh mile maith agat, Cathaoirleach. Jodie, I'm sorry to see you go. You're a tremendous human being, not just a good councillor, but a wonderful human being. You were always so helpful for myself when I was co-opted. I remember we had a lovely long chat just after. I think the people of Greystones have really been bettered by having you involved in council life for the last couple of years. You know, you brought forward a lot of really positive initiatives, a lot of new ideas, a lot of new energy. I think one of them was the overnight facilities for the camper vans, you know. So, I think you've definitely made a very positive, you've a very positive legacy. I think I'd just like to say on behalf of everyone in the Greystones district, a big thank you for all of your hard work and success in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Gosh, I'm feeling like I'm a dinosaur, I'm the last female councillor standing in Greystones district at the moment. I really, really was really genuinely sad and disappointed to hear that Jodie was moving on to maybe a better place, but look, she was co-opted in the middle of COVID and I can say she just immediately settled into our group on the Greystones district. I could say she also made her mark immediately. She was so proactive in getting out and introducing herself to the communities, even though it was all online, and making herself known. You know, her work both at the municipal district level and all on the climate SPC, where she was a valued member will be greatly missed. She was fantastic to work with across party lines. We collaborated on a number of different projects locally and I really welcome that. I think it

was for the benefit of the wider community. And also, she was great just for support, particularly as a female councillor, it is important to have. She was already there on the end of a phone that I knew I could pick up and chat to her and get something off my mind and that was immensely valuable to me on a personal level. I wish her all of the best. I know whatever she turns her hand to, she will be a huge success and we hope to see her back in her professional capacity in the Chamber in front of the SPC in the future. Thank you, Jodie for all of your work.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Lourda Scott. Cllr Shay Cullen.

CLLR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I just want to pay tribute to Jodie. I got to know Jodie very well, when I was Cathaoirleach last year and I found her to be very articulate, helpful and encouraging. I know she had a very difficult start; it was very difficult through COVID and, you know, we spoke on many occasions but, you know, having your contribution and making your voice heard. I certainly think Jodie, you had a great impact in this Chamber when you spoke. I think everybody respected your opinion, which was always valued. I've no doubt you will go on to great things in the future. I want to wish you and your family every success and hopefully our paths will cross soon again. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Shay Cullen. Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. As current Cathaoirleach of the Greystones municipal district, I was certainly disappointed when I learnt of Jodie's decision to step back from the municipal district. I always enjoyed an excellent working relationship with Jodie. You know, always she had a positive approach to everything she did and she the best for the community at heart in her work. Look, I understand, while I understand her reasons for stepping aside, she will be missed and I just want to wish her the best in her future endeavours. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Look, Cllr Lourda Scott couldn't have put it any further. Jodie, I want to wish you the very best of luck for the future. You're a huge loss not just to the council but the grouping, the Greens, Soc Dems and others, the whole five of us are more friends rather than colleagues, we spoke on a number of occasions we always support each other. Jodie's work ethic is second to none. She didn't beat around the bush and she just asked the questions as they were. She put her constituents first rather than engaging in populism or anything like that. You were always very favourable to our requests that were put forward. I will miss our chats and laughs and our WhatsApp group. She has a very bright future ahead of her. She will be missed. The best of luck to you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Paul O'Brien. Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: Yes, I won't go over everything that everybody has said but I want to wish Jodie the best looking forward. I'm sorry to see yet another woman councillor step down. Hopefully your replacement will be worthy of the shoes you made great impression on everybody and else on the climate action committee as well, with very valuable. Any times I ever asked Jodie for help outside of the Chamber, she was more than intelligent and professional and really efficient. I just want to thank her for all of the help she gave me.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr Peir Leonard. Cllr Grace McManus.

CLLR MCMANUS: I'm really sorry Jodie I can't be there in person to wish you well but to add to what everyone has said, I will really miss you as well. I think the sincerity and the clarity and friendliness

you brought to the role was valued by all of us. More than that, you have such a sharp policy eye and that came across every time that you spoke in every piece of work that you did. I know it is going to serve you in your career going forward. I just hope we can stay friends and colleagues because I think you really are worthy and we need to hear your voice on big issues. I wish you all the best. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Grace McManus. Cllr Anne Ferris.

CLLR FERRIS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Jodie, I'm also sorry that I'm not there in the Chamber to wish you well in person. I don't know whether people know but I've known Jodie probably a lot longer than most of you, about 10 or 12 years ago when we both worked in Leinster House. She was always a great source of wisdom and friendship there which continued. I must say I was delighted when she joined us on the council in Wicklow. As the other members have said, Jodie, your contributions were very heartfelt, they were very clear, they were very fair, and I know that you're one of the first people who would put their hands up to join the councillors' women's caucus and you had great ideas on that. I too am sorry now we've lost two great women, you know, in a relatively short time. And I just -- you know, I just want to thank you. I'm sure that we will be in touch and, you know, hopefully our paths will cross. And to thank you for what you have done on behalf your own constituents there in Greystones. I'm sure you will be missed. I want to wish you the very best of luck, Jodie. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Anne Ferris. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I won't go over everything that everybody has said and the fine contributions given to Jodie. Just to say I got to know Jodie when I was lucky enough to be Cathaoirleach of the Council. The one thing that struck me about Jodie, you weren't just a councillor for Greystones, you were a County Council and it meant you were a councillor for the county. With all of the chats I had with over that period of time, you came across that because you phoned me on many occasions and I found you on a few occasions as well. And you genuinely had the county at heart and there's no doubt about that. And I think whoever comes into fill your shoes has big shoes to fill because you definitely were very dedicated and very professional and I wish you the very best. I have no doubt you will be back in this Chamber wearing another professional hat in the very near future. All the best, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Irene Winters.

CLLR WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I just want to wish Jodie all of the best in the future in her time on the Council, she has always been very constructive, very fair-minded and very thoughtful in her contributions and in the way that she has approached all of the issues. I think she is a loss to politics a loss to her own area, a loss to the county. I wish her well. I would say that politics' loss is definitely going to be the gain of the energy industry and hopefully for all of us in her work on climate action and in the future. Thank you.

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

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, not to repeat what colleagues have said, I got to work with Jodie, again a privilege, on the Climate and Biodiversity SPC, and yeah, building on what Cllr Irene Winters said, local authorities and county councils need Jodie Nearys, I hope her replacement, as was said, can fill the boots. For me, what stands out for Jodie is that I sometimes consider myself, I know a bit about a lot of things but what Jodie brought, in particular, to the climate and biodiversity SPC was a depth which was really valued, a depth of knowledge, a depth of insight, and

that was only matched by her passion for the topic which again will be sadly missed in that space. So, I really wish her the best and I sincerely hope our paths cross again in the important work she'll be doing in her new work.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Brien. Cllr Jodie Neary -- sorry - Cllr Avril Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: I want to wish Jodie the very best of luck. We worked together in Leinster House for a number of years. I knew she was very passionate about what she was doing and I knew she was working in politics for all of the right reasons. I want to wish her the very best of luck. Jodie, you've been a great friend of mine over the years but you've been a huge support since you came on Wicklow County Council. You're a great support to me. We have had many chats and conversations over the years, I hope that will continue. I wish you the very best of luck in your career in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Cronin. Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Jodie, I'd like to wish you the very, very best. I enjoyed very much working with you on the council, particularly on district council. As I said at the Greystones Council recently, I also enjoyed the various banter we'd have discussing various political ethos, and all that goes with that. Of course, politics is ingrained in you. You have a massive amount of experience having spent a number of years working in the Dail, so you do know what it is all about. In particular, I like to wish you very well in your new career. I think it's a tremendous opportunity for you and a great career move in an area that you're very interested in. I know you'll do very well at it. That's what I'd like to say to you, well done on your career move and the best of luck with it in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Fortune. Cllr Rory O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: I want to say to Jodie best of luck with the new job. I think you are leaving the SPC, but I think with your new job, you won't be leaving to be honest because you will be talking to us and all of that and, you know, I think you did a brilliant job as a councillor and you will be a huge loss for deputy whist more with all of the brilliant work you do for her. Best of luck, Jodie.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Connor. Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Yes, thank you, Cathaoirleach. Well, I'd like to thank ex-Councillor Neary for her contribution to the town and to the decisions about various things in the town and I wish her well in her future career. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Derek Mitchell. Can I hand over to the Chief Executive now?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just on behalf of the executive and all of the council staff, I want to thank Jodie for her valuable contribution and input into council affairs and, in particular, in the Greystones Municipal District. I want to wish you very best with your new venture. I'm sure you will be a tremendous success in that role and no doubt we'll be meeting each other with that new career in mind. So best of luck with that, Jodie. You'll be missed by all here. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Jodie, we've a small token to show our appreciation for you. I think Helen has gone down there. Thank you very much, Jodie. [Applause]

Thank you, Jodie, again for coming in. Would you like to say anything, Jodie? No. That's okay. Thank you very much.

HELEN PURCELL: The second suspension of Standing Orders was submitted by Cllr Peir Leonard. There's quite a number of elected members as listed as supporting it. Can I have one seconder, please?

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will second that.

HELEN PURCELL: Okay. And the wording is, "That Wicklow County Council asks the Government to recognise the European Commission's confirmation that the Government could exceptionally address the case of CG Gaffney and the MV Mary Kate through the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF)."

And can I just say to the members, as advised previously, this is a private legal matter and it doesn't link in to any of the areas that the council is responsible for. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Leonard, would you like to come in?

CLLR LEONARD: Can you hear me?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

CLLR LEONARD: So, I suppose, look, a lot of councillors have actually supported this motion today, this Notice of Motion as Helen has just read out here. I've been in touch with a lot of senators and this motion is actually supported by MEPs at European level. This case isn't just a private case. This is a case -- I suppose I will read out what I had written if that's okay. It's not my intention to go over the complex details of this today in the Chamber. The intention is to add strength to CG and to the Gaffney's family plight and gain support of all of the mechanics, the majority of which who have already showed their support for this Notice of Motion. Each and every day, all of us has the luxury of knowing that ...[speaking too quickly] ... in accordance with design standards and certification to keep us all sort, whether in the building of a house, using a power tool or having the peace of mind sitting on a plane knowing it's reached design standards to the highest standard so we can all be safe.

In CG Gaffney's case, he bought a fully certified fishing vessel from another member state, which was subsequently found to have 20 tonnes of unaccounted steel in the design which had been certified and re-certified over and over again. As you know, Arklow and indeed Wicklow have a fishing heritage spanning back over hundreds of years. The Gaffney family, I want to introduce you to CJ's father and his sister, at the end of the day there are people behind the stories and we are their voice. I appreciate the council point of view on this, but, like, if we are not here to support them, what is our role here at all? The Gaffney family are a local fishing family who have not only worked honestly and hard all of their lives to build their business up, but they've also given -- five generations of their family have given service to the RNLI, putting their own lives at stake for the sake of others.

All I'm asking today is we would respectfully stand together, all of us members together to support this Notice of Motion so we can give this family, you know, the support going forward to submit this to the Government. And just ask for it to be review. I don't propose to reopen the issue of the Mary Kate saga here today. There are many questions remain unanswered about the issue which will be for other forums outside of this Chamber to pursue. My ask here today is simple and it is just one ask, that we resolve together to write this Notice of Motion public to the Government. You know, it is not our place to prejudge the outcome of any minister's response either but I would like us all to together, this is our one chance to be able to support this family with this Notice of Motion going forward today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Joe Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: I want to welcome CJ and his family here today. If anybody is aware of the huge struggle this family have had and CJ, in particular in try to have some justice brought to his very, very difficult situation, I mean it is incredible, but it is a testament to him and his strength of purpose that so many people across the political spectrum, both in Dail Eireann, former ministers, former TDs and TDs and in the former European Parliament, former MEPs and MEPs have rallied together to get behind him and his case for compensation for an injustice that was done to him. It is quite clear for many of the correspondence, particularly provided by Sean Kelly MEP, a Fine Gael MEP who I think has been outstanding in the support he has given to CJ and his family, it is quite obvious that the European Commission themselves are saying the Irish Government have the power to deal with this man's situation, they have the power to ensure that he receives adequate compensation. So, what we're doing here is providing moral and political support for this family to get the support from the Irish Government that they are entitled to.

We, as public representatives, are entitled to pass a motion like this and ensure that the Government intervenes. It is a sign of good will that members of this Chamber that so many people signed a suspension of Standing Orders motion. I have never witnessed 18 councillors supporting a suspension of Standing Orders before we even got to discuss it. It indicates our will is settled on this. We want to support this family. We should ensure this motion is passed unanimously and the contents sent on to Government buildings, to the Taoiseach and the relevant ministers involved.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: As we know, people from the fishing industry, fishing men and women, families, are made of tougher stuff than the normal members of society. This has been going on for 15 years. Reality is that they are passed backwards and forwards with red tape.

Here in this Chamber, I think it is important that the Wicklow County Council family, native to Arklow, that we send out a strong message, not just through the Chambers that we support this but to be asked it is forwarded to every local authority in the land that they are asked to vote on this to do what we do here today. The reality is that, the MEP, as outlined by Cllr Joe Behan and Sean Kelly, of the DGA, a man of high integrity, he said that this should be dealt with on our land we all know the history of this, anyone that took an interest in regards of the Netherlands and German but the truth is that it can be dealt with and should be dealt with here in Ireland and if we have a strong leadership here, so let's send a message from all parts and independents here today, that are united in supporting the family, the Gaffney family, to send out a strong message here, that we want this to be dealt with. It can't go on for another 15 years, it is not fair. They are trying to make a living, to make an income for their family and to pass on the tradition, as Cllr Peir Leonard said, for five generations. It is important to say that we want these people to, in the tradition that they have been born into and their grandchildren are born into.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Very much support this proposal and to send to all other councils, if ever there was an opportunity to do the right thing, the pathway is presented to us. All the lights are shining on it. It is clear that something can be done if those in power choose to do it, I really hope that they do.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Briefly, as Cllr Peir Leonard has stated, we are not here to try this case as a judge and jury. All we are doing is sending a strong voice from this Council, the Council which represents



this family, and should represent this family. That is all we are doing, sending a message that we strongly support action to be taken on this. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Kavanagh, Cllr Tom Fortune?

CLLR FORTUNE: Sorry, I apologise ... yeah, I think that Cllr Peir Leonard and Cllr Joe Behan and Cllr John Snell have said it very, very well. Not to repeat that but fully, fully supportive of the family. I think it is absolutely disgraceful the way that they are handled and treated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Fortune. Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: To fully support the family in their endeavours I worked on County Wicklow harbour for ten years. I know the family. Anyone knowing fishing, it is a tough game. I see these people going day in, day out, to make a live, I fully admire them. I fully support them and thank you, Cllr Peir Leonard for bringing it to the Chamber.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: It is difficult to understand, how a certified boat doesn't seem to be doing what it was supposed to be doing. It has been hard on the family. I support this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I was first contacted about the situation back in 2009 and travelled to Kildare to meet a member of the European Parliament and nothing happened after that. In recent times, instead of talking, I made contact with the minister. I last spoke to the minister on the 24th of September/October [sic] Mr McConallough. I spoke to him in May and happened to be on the phone on the 1st of January in 2021, he made a mistake in answering to me. But I got my message through. I have to say that the minister and thinks conversation with me on the 24th did not indicate that he was going to, that there was going to be a positive end to this. Now, I mean, which was disappointing. He was quite adamant, actually, and his view, and also, from the European Union, I didn't catch the full account, that the European Union can talk to the Irish Government to get the money paid and so it should be. But that is not the way that the minister is looking at it. I have to say that sorry to be negative but myself and colleagues will make contact with the minister, with Charlie McConallough but I have not had a positive response and it was on the 24th of October.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald. Cllr. Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you. I support Cllr Peir Leonard's proposal here today. And second it by yourself.

Look, it's been a very tough number of years, 15 years as has been said here on the Gaffney family in Arklow. The family associated with the fishing industry in Arklow for generations.

As somebody who tried to deal with this in the past as well, indeed a number of TDs, ministers, various different people in the department. It has been absolutely frustrating for anyone in politics to get a positive outcome to all this issues. And certainly, in terms of the family it must be awfully frustrating for them over the years as well. So, I have no problem whatsoever in supporting Cllr Peir Leonard's proposal today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you to voice my support for the motion and to thank Cllr Peir Leonard for presenting it to myself. I didn't know the background to the case, so to presenting it, the background

clearly, much appreciated. My sympathies go out to the family. The least we can do is to put our names to the letter of support, I am happy to do that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Cllr Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you. I fully support the motion, very strongly. It is a very sad day that we still, and the Gaffney family still have to struggle to get support for this, I think. Certainly, it beggar's belief, what belief anyone can have in the political system of going up a ladder to go past your own country, out to Europe and still getting no answers. It is just sad, very sad, and the emotional effect on the family and not just CJ but the whole family, it is just shocking. I think we fully need to press. I would second Cllr Snell as well, also this must be opened up to other county councils as well. I am sure that CJ's situation has not been and will not be a sole run, I'm sure many people are fighting similar situations. So, absolutely, I fully support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Murphy. Cllr O'Brien.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, and after speaking to Councillor Anne Ferris a number of days ago, obviously with our full support. My apologies for not coming back to submit my name. I thought I did, and realised it was stuck in draft, the joys of living in an area where the Wi-Fi is not great. It is not often we are united in a stance but an injustice is done. We had a counterparty development plan, and we united as one voice. It is what I believe we should be doing and are doing today. You have my full support.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Irene Winters.

CLLR WINTERS: I did not get a chance to add my name prior to the meeting but it has my full support and we must look at any certification system that can make that large of an error and to have no comeback for the people that are caught in the consequences of it.

This is a much bigger issue than just this one family, although for this family, it has taken over their livelihood and their life and anything that we can do to help them, we have to do. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, thank you very much, Cllr Winters. Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Briefly, I would like to support this motion as well. Reading through the documentation, over the weekend, I think it struck me that, they could not take a legal case because it was time-barred in the Netherlands, I think statute barred and time barred in Germany as well but the two countries responsible for this massive error, that it just struck me as extraordinary you could not take a case in those countries. If that is, if that obviously is the case, can't the European Union commission not deal with a situation where someone can take a legal case, it was not that many years later after the certification of the boat by the German authorities, it struck me that it did not make sense as all. I would have thought there must be some way around that from a European Commission point of view. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Timmins. I think that is unanimous. Can I add my tuppence's worth? Mr Gaffney, I grew up with you, lads. I know how hard you work. Out of all the members in the Chamber, I went fishing for 3 months, I didn't have the stomach, nerve or will power to put that much work into a day's but you have done it for a lifetime. I am delighted you have come here today. You have the full support. What I am reading from the meeting is that you have the full support of the Wicklow County Council members. So, gentlemen, I wish you the very best of luck going forward and I hope it will kick-start again. I know how long you have peddled the road to the

ministers and to the European Parliament, I wanted to acknowledge that today. So, if I can say, do we have unanimous decision.

HELEN PURCELL: The third proposed by Cllr Tom Fortune, seconded by Cllr Mary Kavanagh to discuss the situation with the fishermen at Greystones harbour. I will say before going further that the law agent has given her opinion, that this matter is before the courts. The Members risk contempt of court and defamation of proceedings should the matter be discussed. I know that the Chief Executive would like to come in.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I have received separate legal advice on the matter. As Helen mentioned it is subject to ongoing court proceedings and therefore, due to [inaudible] if discussed it will leave both officials of the council and elected members open to possible contempt of court and defamation proceedings, for that reason, it cannot be discussed at the meeting today. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you. The first thing, I hear what the Chief Executive is saying. I find it astounding in several ways. And why is legal advice not available to me as it is to the Executive taking legal advice and it not offered to me as a public representative. I will not say anything that I believe is anything to do with the terms of the CEO outlining but if I cannot be allowed to make the case that I want to make today, I have to again ask, as Cllr Peir Leonard did earlier, why am I here? Why are we as members here? I listened to the previous discussion. Everything that we have said, about the Gaffney family, it applies equally to the fishermen in Greystones. Chairman, I want to ask a question, I have lots of things I could say, I could talk an hour, no problem, and back it up. But I want to make a proposal, am I allowed to make a proposal? I don't want to do the wrong thing here. But I think ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Tom Fortune, I've been advised you cannot make a proposal on the subject. We cannot talk about it. I do apologise. If I could, I would let you, but I have to shut it down. I can't have a discussion on it. It is before the courts; I do not want to be brought before the courts to be held in contempt. You are an educated man, you know what it means, so I hope that you appreciate my point of view on this.

HELEN PURCELL: Two thirds majority are required to discuss a suspension of Standing Orders. Clear at the last suspension we had two thirds in favour, it was not as clear in it this one. We can hold a vote.

CLLR FORTUNE: That makes no sense. I am not discussing anything. I am looking for clarification? And nothing has been put to the members. I have not asked for a discussion. But I want it recorded in the minutes. You will have to speak up so I can hear what you are saying.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: It is clear, councillor, it is not to be discussed. You will not expose the couple or the other members within the Chamber to legal proceedings.

CLLR FORTUNE: That is not what I'm about.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: If you wish to come afterwards to discuss a proposal, that is fine but not in the Chamber.

CLLR FORTUNE: I will do that after the meeting to be with you to have the conversation. The last thing to say, I want my comments made so far, recorded in the minutes. I have not had a discussion but I want the comments made leading to this moment in time all recorded, please.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. Thank you. Cllr Mary Kavanagh, do you want to come in but I cannot discuss this.

CLLR KAVANAGH: I appreciate it is undergoing judicial proceeding but to emphasise that. I have to say ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: You are discussing it now. I hate cutting you off, sorry, Cllr Joe Behan, I am not having a discussion. I have said we are moving on. OK, is it relating to the first thing on the agenda?

CLLR BEHAN: The Chief Executive is using to cut down a discussion and item that is of extreme importance to the fishermen. He comes in to say he has legal advice, show us the legal advice and maybe we are entitled to get our own. And stop giving directions to the Cathaoirleach, to shout on, to move on. Move on. Can we see the legal advice that the Chief Executive has got, please.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I appreciate your concerned for me to be advised by the Chief Executive, but I am trying to do a job. And to be fair to the members as said. This is a members' meeting, I will not cut down anyone, but the Chief Executive has a job to do as well. I will ask that advice, please don't be so aggressive. I know it is your passion but when you are up here it comes across very bad. It is not ... [inaudible] right, passionately, I can say. Passionately. Thank you very much. Chief Executive, can you answer that question?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: First of all, I am not shouting in anyone's ear, there is only one person shouting in the Chamber, councillor. I cannot release that legal advice, it is specifically directed to myself and as there are ongoing legal proceedings taking place, there are professional issues taking place. This is not rocket science, we cannot discuss the matter or else we open ourselves up to further legal proceedings. It is not hard to understand. I am not trying to be obstructive on this, we are not in a position to discuss the matter. It is before the courts.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Vincent Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: We would like the Chairman of the council, I respect that decision you are making, to move on. I support you on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, councillor. Cllr. Vincent Blake, thank you for that encouragement. The first thing on the agenda Helen?

HELEN PURCELL: Confirm and sign the meet minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12th of September 2022. Is that proposed by Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy and seconded by Cllr Shay Cullen? Thank you. Confirm and sign the minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 3rd of October, 2022 as circulated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Shay Cullen and Cllr Sylvester Bourke.

HELEN PURCELL: Item 3 to confirm and sign the minutes of the special meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 10th of October, 2022 as circulated. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald, seconded by ... Cllr Gail Dunne.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Thank you. Item four, to consider the disposal of 10.2 m sq. in Knockanrahan Upper, Barony of Arklow Co. Wicklow, Folio No. WW3743F land in Delany Park, Arklow Co. Wicklow by transfer Order to ESB, 2 Gateway, East Walk Rd, Dublin as circulated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Pat Fitzgerald and Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Item 5. To consider the disposal of 0.0170 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of Knockanrahan Wicklow County Council come priced in folio WW4065 Wicklow County Council being the property known as 17 Pears Terrace Arklow, Wicklow County Council by Transfer Order to Nicola Hobbs and Joseph Hobbs.

And item 6, to consider the disposal of 0.0226Ha or thereabouts in the townland of Abbeylands Wicklow County Council comprised in Folio No. WW1063 Wicklow County Council being the property known as Rory O'Connor Place, Arklow Town, Wicklow County Council by Transfer Order to Adrian Molloy.

Item 7 to considers disposal of 0.0208Ha in the townland of kindle town Lower Wicklow County Council comprised in Folio NoWW4484 Wicklow County Council being the property known as the 30 Upper Grattan Park Greystones, Wicklow County Council by Transfer Order to Mr Rogers.

And item 8, to consider the disposal of 0.0138Ha in the townland of Bray Wicklow County Council being the property known as 6 Cillmanntain Park, Bray, Wicklow County Council by transfer Order to Mary O'Hagan of 189 Killarney Road, Bray, Wicklow County Council.

Item 9 to consider the disposal of 0.0262Ha or thereabouts in the townland of Blessington, Wicklow County Council Folio No. WW2482 Wicklow County Council being the property known as the 65 West Park Blessington Wicklow County Council by Transfer Order to Ms Plant of 65 West Park, Blessington of Wicklow County Council.

Item to approve a temporary overdraft of accommodation of £20 million for the financial year ending 31st December in 2023.

CATHAOIRLEACH: All agreed?

HELEN PURCELL: You are on mute.

Proposed by Cllr Sylvester Bourke, seconded by Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Having difficulty getting the hand down.

HELEN PURCELL: OK. Thank you. Item 11 to consider the vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr Neary in accordance with Section 19 of Local Government Act 2001.

And circulated I wish to advise the members, that the Local Government Act 2001 in accordance with section 193 of the Local Government Act 2001 I contacted the General Secretary of the Social Democrats but no nomination for co-option has been received to date. If someone wishes to propose and second to defer it?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lourda Scott and Cllr O'Brien. Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Deferred. To the December agenda.

Item 12. To consider the vacancy to the climate and biodiversity SPC arising from the resignation of Cllr Jodie Neary. Defer that as well? Proposed by Cllr Irene Winters. Seconded by Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Item 13 to consider filling the vacancy to the audit committee arising from the resignation of Cllr Mary Kavanagh from this committee.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: I would like to propose Cllr Gerry Walsh, to give a background. 3 of us were originally nominated in the audit committee in 2019, they only allow two outside members. So, for the first two years I was a member and rotated between the two of us, now it is Cllr Gerry Walsh's turn to go back on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry Walsh happy to take the position? OK. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Cllr Edward Timmins to propose. Do you need a seconder?

HELEN PURCELL: A seconder, please.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It is a very important committee to be on.

HELEN PURCELL: Seconded by Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: My colleagues on the committee for the last 3.5 years I've been on it, it has been a pleasant committee to work with. We all got on well and I appreciate the input of the Chair and the Vice Chair and the other members and the council members as well. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Item 14. To receive a presentation on the master plan for Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park. And to have this introduced in a presentation. To hand over to Consart Consultants [sic].

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Dawson and Mark Rowlette for coming in.

MARK: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and councillors and executives, thank you for the opportunity to present here today. If we can get the presentation up. I'm Mark Collett, I'm in the activities and the product development section. Working for the last number of years with a number of partners in relation to develop a master plan for Glendalough and Wicklow. We have been working with the national wildlife service, the OPW, [inaudible] and Wicklow County Council. We have had considerable consultations and public consultations, and we have met on a number of times with the local group in Glendalough itself and meeting with them again in the near future.

This area is, as everybody here in Wicklow will know, an area of international renown and importance when it comes to the heritage and the history. The picture in front of you has been seen all over the world when it comes to Glendalough and to all of the stories and also when it comes to the story of the two lochs itself and the area. And it is well recognised in the Wicklow Tourism Strategy and across the Board. However, it would also be recognised for a number of years there have been issues, either relating to traffic, whether it relates to all of the different agencies involved in and around Glendalough and probably not the greatest co-ordination and co-operation between all of those and the local community. So, at times you would have had traffic problems, you would have had disruption to local residents, and you also didn't have the best experience for the visitors as when the visitors got there, they found less than a joined-up story of what Wicklow has to offer.

What the master plan looks to do is to have the natural build and the cultural heritage to disperse the benefits and impacts of tourism, to improve the visitor experience to do that working with the council, with all of the stakeholders and the local community to deliver a plan that will see visitors spending more time in the area, and most importantly, to spend more money in the area and to provide more economic benefit.

At times, you would have had traffic problems, you would have had disruption to local residents and you also didn't have the best experience for the visitors because when the visitors got there, they found less than a joined-up story of what Wicklow has to offer. So, what the Masterplan looks to do is to enhance the natural built and cultural heritage to disperse the benefits and impacts of tourism, and to improve the visitor experience. To do all of that by working with the council, all of the other stakeholders, and the local community to deliver a plan that will see visitors spend more time in the area and most importantly, spend more money in the area and provide more economic benefit, and also to get more visitors to spread out and spend revenue across the whole of County Wicklow.

We went through a tender process. We had a group of consultants. They started work in 2020. Throughout COVID, they've continued to beaver away. We did some innovative online consultation when face-to-face consultation was not possible. We're nearing the end of the process where we're going back out for consultation on the Masterplan, and the environmental reports, and thanks once again. I will pass over to Dawson now thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mark.

DAWSON: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for inviting us to bring you up-to-date with where we are at the moment in the Masterplan. I have presented this twice before to the Council through the process. We're now at the stage of putting the final draft of the plan out to public consultation again. We're nearly at the end of the process, as you can see up on the slide at the moment.

So, just a few sorts of brief headlines of where we are at the moment. As Mark has said, we started back in 2020, with surveys, research and consultations. We did the first draft and outline proposals back in February/March 2021. It went out for a wide consultation. We got very broad support for that, about 75% positive support but lots and lots of comments and lots of feedback and lots of detail, lots of ideas came out of that public consultation process.

So, we spent most of the rest of 2021 reviewing all of that, looking back and going out on the ground again, doing more surveys and more research, more talking to people. Towards the end of 2021, I came here to the council and we presented to the council and we then got broad support from yourselves to where we were heading to.

The steering group signed off on it in January of this year. And then that let us into a formal process called a Strategic Environmental Assessment, it is something required by European law for any plan, coupled with Environmental Impact Assessments. That has taken us through this year. Those have long now been completed. They came up with some issues that required some changes to the plan to fit in with the requirements under environmental legislation. We have the environmental assessments and we're going into a formal public consultation process which will be starting at the end of this week.

We wanted to come here today to give you a bit of a briefing before it goes live into the public consultation to it will you what's in it and to tell you predominately how we're handling the public consultation and to get your input into that.

So, I have them in hard copy as well, if you can't see them. There are five of these boards which will be going up on the [wicklow.ie](http://wicklow.ie) website. It will be going as actual boards around libraries and council offices around the county. What these boards do is it will be replicated by what is online so people can choose to physically look at the board or they can go online and look at the detail. It sets out the principles of our strategy. Online, we will give full access to the physical documents and plan itself,

which runs to something like 700-odd pages, including all of the appendices, plus the strategic environmental report, and the Natura documents. They will be available on website for people to look at in detail.

The first one sets out the overall strategy. You will remember, those of you here in previous conversations, we know that we're trying to disperse the flow of visitors much more evenly around the county. So, where there are hubs and clusters in Baltinglass, and Rathdrum, Avoca and Avondale in the south-east, and, obviously, Avondale has opened up this summer, a new and important tourism destination. The principle of what we're trying to do is encourage and develop tourism in those areas but on sustainable sites, so that they can cope with more people coming in and that in some way will also take some of the pressure off Glendalough and Laragh.

So, the next four boards really focus in on the physical proposals in Glendalough and Laragh, that's where all of the problems have been, where the congestion has been and where the difficulties and negative feedback from visitors and from the local community has been. So, most of our proposals, most of the hard physical proposals are in the Glendalough and Laragh area and that's why most of the specific proposals are there.

Some of which you know about at the moment, this summer there was a pilot scheme that the council ran in terms of a shuttle bus to encourage people to get out of their car in Laragh and travel by shuttle bus up in, that was very successful, it worked well. It avoided this summer the congestion problems we've had in other summers. It points the way forward to trying to encourage people to get out of their cars and spend more time in the area.

So, what these boards do is set out the issues in the area and then specific proposals as to how we're intending to deal with those. There's quite a lot of detail in these, but it is still a plan and as you should remember that, it is a strategy. We've identified potential areas for car parks in and around Laragh. These are potential areas. There are a number of them. There are more than we actually need to look at all of the options there. But it is part of a strategy to encourage the main visitor rival point to be in Laragh and people to move either by shuttle bus, bike or walking, up into the Glendalough valley itself at peak times. At off-peak times, this was something that came out of the feedback we got from local people, was that they wanted to be able to park as normal in the upper lake car park and the middle level car park when there is not a congestion issue.

So, we have set out a strategy, we have had that assessed environmentally and we're going out to this pedestrian of public consultation on to that. The boards will give the detail of that. I'm not intending to talk through the detail today, just to show you and indicate and the boards will be widely distributed.

So, where do we go with that after the presentation today? Toward the end of this week, the formal notices will be in the newspapers. The consultation website will go live this Friday. There will be public displays set up in the libraries and council offices and that runs right through until 18th January. There are public consultation meetings being held in the Baroca Centre in November. There will be online meetings as well in November and December. There will be every opportunity given, as we did the last time, for people to submit their views and opinions both electronically and in hard copy.

So, that's where we're going with the consultation. It runs right through until January now. We'll hopefully be seeing some of you as councillors at the public meetings but we're available for discussion and for comment and feedback at any stage through the process. Thank you.



CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Dawson. Can I open it up to the floor? Any members want to come in? Cllr Cullen.

CLLR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks, Dawson. You're welcome back again, you said for the third time at this stage.

DAWSON: I think it is the third time.

CLLR CULLEN: First of all, it is great to see that things are moving along. The public in general are a little bit concerned about the length of time this has all taken. Unfortunately, we've been through a couple of tough years in terms of COVID. You spoke about the consultation which was difficult. But certainly, the final draft is very welcome. I suppose you were saying it is going on public display. Can we, as councillors or the public, make amendments to that final draft? I suppose that's important because there will, obviously, be aspects of that may not sit well with local people in the area. It is something I do think that we need further discussion on in terms of keeping the public involved in this right through the process.

You spoke about parking facilities and possible hubs around the county. Have these been identified as specific locations or are they sort of movable areas depending on availability of land in obviously the various areas? Because it's very difficult to maybe nail that particular point in terms of, you know, piece a land that you're identifying. Something I'd like to know a little bit more about.

The overall strategy for I suppose Laragh in that we're talking about park-and-ride type systems and, again, that is going to have a major disruption to the village of Laragh. Has that been taken into consideration in terms of traffic congestion in and around the Laragh area, let alone the valley of Glendalough? We need to be mindful in terms of the local people there. Obviously, we're all very enthusiastic about this plan. I think it will be fantastic for our county from a tourism point of view. We've made great strides in terms of tourism over the last number of years and I think this is very, very welcome. I look forward to the public meetings in the next number of weeks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, are you okay to take the questions in three?

DAWSON: Certainly.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Miriam Murphy, you have your hand up.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you for the presentation. My God, it's huge and a brilliant undertaking for all involved. I will just come and add, as a person with a disability, and I'm sure you have visited the Avondale project which was huge success, as someone who can use the facility fully from the gate, back out to the gate. I'm just enquiring again, on the public consultation, how disabled friendly is the website for those people with impairments, physical and otherwise? And also, on the product itself, the environment, you know, with lighting, all of those issues need to be covered, large print, large signage, both inside and outside surroundings.

I'm sure Christine has this flagged, will there be a Changing Places facility in the visitors' centre in Glendalough? Also, for children with autism, will there be a quiet area assigned on any locations planned? We have a disability officer in the house and also a consultation with Laura O'Callan if you need more consultation on that, or contact myself, either. I know we will certainly be keeping an eye on it. Again, another tourism attraction which will be really welcome. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Murphy. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'd like to start by going back to the very beginning, which was the first presentation we had down in Druids almost two years ago. To be fair Dawson, I suppose, you were a bit like the rabbit in the headlights on that occasion because the one that came out loud and clear from that meeting was public consultation, engaging with the local community, and to be fair to you and your colleagues, I think you did take it on board. It was difficult at the time in regards to the COVID pandemic. We had spoken about trying to get literature out to the local community which is very important. I'm married to a native of Laragh and Glendalough who has parents buried in Laragh, has grandparents buried in the graveyard at Glendalough, so I know the importance of local community engagement.

To be fair, you have, as restrictions lifted, we had opportunities in regards to that. It was a very good well attended information night in the Glendalough Hotel, which was attended by members here and the officials. I know there's a group there who you are engaging with all of the time. That was an open invitation to everybody and that was so important for the local community.

At the end of the day, you know, I shared my concerns with regards to the lack of access, vehicular access to the upper car park. I know we were talking about a phased programme over many years. You're taking it on board for local community in regards for them to be able to get up to the upper car park in off-peak times because the reality is in peak times most locals don't go up there, they can't outside of their own gate and that's the truth. You did share one of the previous presentations that you gave. I said that, you know, you had to be very, very careful in regards to identifying which was the preferred options in regards to the car parks because, therefore, obviously, the value of the land then goes up, and you end up with people profiteering from what you're trying to do, which is make it accessible to all and keep your options open. Again, I commend you on doing that.

This is a great opportunity for investment into what is the jewel in County Wicklow from a tourist perspective, with regards to outlining the south-east, north and north-west. This is in our minute is pal district in the east, we would be looking at our share of visitors not to be taken away from east Wicklow, the Black Castle, Wicklow Gaol, Killmacurragh, Mount Usher Gardens, so please don't exclude us from any promotional events that you're holding in regards to getting people around the county, because we'd like to have our fair share as well.

I just wanted to say that initially from that first meeting, it was loud and clear everyone had a concern about how you were going to engage with the public. I want to thank you personally, Dawson and the rest of your colleagues, for taking all of that on board to say that you have done an excellent job to date. It's so important now that we're at the final hurdle, don't fall at the final hurdle. Re-engage again. As previous councillors have said, take on board whatever the public are saying. Thanks a million for your engagement to date.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, I have a couple of speakers, they might just repeat the questions. If you can keep statements to questions, it would be great. We have another presentation to get through. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: I will be brief. I will be brief. Dawson, as you know, I have been talking with you many times on this project, as has others. But tourism is hugely important to the county. I see that in Rathdrum now with the development of Avondale. I suppose the one thing I would like to see when the consultation is finished and we have tied this down fully and we know exactly what is happening here, is that we continue on to look at the dispersal of the tourists, because tourism is hugely important to the county and we disperse that around the county and we also provide the

facilities for them to park around the county. I'd like to see probably a second phase to this Masterplan other than Glendalough that takes in places, where Cllr Snell has said, like Glenmalur and west Wicklow and we provide car parking spaces for those. It is important we have entry points with car parking on those as well. Thank you for all of the consultations you have done on this. It has been hugely important but hugely appreciated as well. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thanks to Mark and Dawson for the presentation. You know, the progress in has been made on the plan to date and the positive impact it's likely to have on our tourism product for county.

Just an observation really for one of the points there, one of the objectives of the plan, obviously, was to disperse visitors to other tourism destinations and more sustainable sites around the county and reducing the pressure on Glendalough, and extending as Mark said, extending the visitor stay and spend. Just again on that point, the accommodation. I know the tourism group carried out a toolkit on behalf of Wicklow County Council low county tourism there maybe two years ago. It did find a shortfall rather on our accommodation offering and particularly in certain types of accommodation. So, I think, I don't know whether Mark has any comments to make on the actual existing shortfall of accommodation in the county, which has been exacerbated in recent months due to the Ukrainian situation. So, that is a big challenge going forward, the availability of suitable accommodation to keep the visitors in the county and obviously extend the spend. Thank you.

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

CLLR LEONARD: Hi, Dawson. I did meet you very early on in the consultation and we discussed Arklow and the lack of Arklow having a product to sell. We've actually been working on a lot of projects in Arklow to tie in with this. I hope that the dispersal bit won't leave Arklow out. We have a craft and ecology centre gone in for funding into the Government for quite a substantial funding and it is actually in the first location of the Arklow to Shillelagh in the Arklow train station.

Also, we have since had the craft strategy which Wicklow County Partnership have done great work. Evelyn Murray has been spearheading that. I would love if you could tie in with them and the steering committee and, actually, Wicklow Craft Foundation which has been set up as well which will be the first, it is kind of the strategy is the first of its kind I think in the country but there's a real opportunity there to tie that in and create lovely sustainable outlets for all of the makers of County Wicklow. Thanks a million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Leonard. Cllr Patsy Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the presentation. Just, like some of my colleagues have mentioned there, it's important to quote from the dispersal of the benefit throughout the county, when this matter was first mentioned, the previous Chief Executive omitted to include the west and we brought it to his attention and he assured us that West Wicklow would be included in it going forward. And I got the same commitment from the current Chief Executive. It is just important that it be dispersed throughout the county. I would say 40% of traffic going to Glendalough goes through the villages of Hollywood and valley mount. It is obviously important that they are facilitated as well. I wouldn't like West Wicklow to be forgotten about. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Glennon. Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Dawson, for your presentation. It's nice to see the amount of work that's been going on in the background there. I brought up at a previous meeting if you would consider applying for UNESCO World Heritage status. I notice that recently a couple of very important sites in Ireland have been nominated, the Giants Causeway, Skellig Michael and Brú na Bóinne in Meath. I want to know did you make any application for Glendalough. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Kavanagh. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thanks for the presentation. A couple of questions there around the environmental piece. I just see one of the objectives which I very much welcome which is to set up targets for improvements in biodiversity. I'm wondering, has there been a baseline survey or analysis done of the current biodiversity because it is important to maintain what we have while welcoming in additional visitors as well.

And the second question I was going to have which actually Cllr Murphy has asked, will there be provision for conflict Changing Places facilities? Just to echo Cllr Murphy's point, the piece on accessibility would be really, really important, I know for many families. It is one of the major complaints they have, the lack of truly accessible facilities for them to visit.

The third question was I really welcome talk of the shuttle buses. I was just wondering is there any consideration of expanding the shuttle buses sort of beyond Laragh and to actually allow people, say, for ourselves in the Greystones district, where you have no choice to get a car to go to Glendalough, but to have a shuttle bus in peak times or link in with the proposed new park and rights on the N11 during the peak period.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Dawson, I know there's a few questions there for you. Thank you.

DAWSON: I will try to link the questions together to speed up the answers. Thank you very much, councillors, there is lots of very interesting questions within that. I will do my very best to answer them.

First of all, right at the very start with Cllr Cullen in terms of impact on Laragh and traffic there really is an impact on Laragh and traffic and what we are trying to do to resolve it. It links a bit to what Cllr Snell said as well. We have identified areas of potential car parking in and around Laragh but we're very conscious we don't want to -- it is quite possible that maybe the council that is purchasing these and developing these in the future could be one of the other state bodies. We're very careful not to get into a situation where we're inflating prices for the public to be able to buy. So, we have more showing than we need, so it is not like we need to get all of these sites and we're in a captive position. There are also variations within that and combinations. So, we have been trying to indicate the principle of what we're doing but at the same time not stymieing commercial negotiations that may go on with individual landowners. It is a fine balance, as I said, to try to do that.

One of the areas we are looking at, this is quite important one, is that the majority, yes, quite a few cars come over the hill from Hollywood and some come up from Rathdrum, but the majority come in on the Roundwood roads into Laragh. We are looking at the eastern area, to try and get people out of their cars before they get into Laragh and before they cause the congestion within the site. If we can get that car park going and links to that, we think it will make a big difference to car congestion within Laragh itself.

So a link into that, the shuttle buses, right at the end there, but yes, we are proposing a shuttle bus within the valley but we have three other routes for shuttle buses proposed to run as pilots. They're more in turn to deal with the upland car parks, so there's a lot of small car parks and they get congested. So, what we're trying to do is get shuttle bus routes where people may park down in Laragh or in other valley car parks and be able to drop off and then walk down to their cars at the end of the day. It has worked in other areas. We have identified three potential routes for that within Wicklow. So quite a lot in the longer term, the longer-term strategy for dealing more with buses and trains as well in terms of access.

So, a pick up on the accessibility issues. It is a very important issue. We're designing visitor facilities now we always, for example, put in Changing Places toilets. We have built a number of them. They are essential. There would be a Changing Places toilet. We have had a lot of very detailed negotiations with the National Park and Wildlife Services and OPW, in making the trails around the monastic site accessible to people. They are not at the moment. There are sensitivities, both archaeological sensitivities and heritage sensitivities to that, but we have finally taken the best part of a year where we finally got an agreement with the statutory bodies as to how we might make the routes more accessible for people with disabilities. It is a very conscious effort in the plan. It is one of those areas you can do more, so we welcome further suggestions or insight that. But accessibility for everybody is a key part of the proposals.

Picking up again some of the few things that came out of the consultation. Two areas which I think Cllr Snell mentioned, there was a lot of feedback at the consultation stage about accessibility to places like the upper car park during the off-peak times and stuff. Our initial plan that we put forward was to close the upper lake car park completely. We've gone from that. We are saying we will close it at peak times, except for the shuttle buses and potentially also people who hold blue badges and with accessible transport. At off-peak times, those car parks would remain open for people to be used so there is not a congestion problem at peak times. We've taken that from the consultation.

We also have one other aspect that came out of the local consultation was, access and car park into the graveyard and particularly the modern area of the graveyard for local people to gather. We've been talking to OPW, National Parks and Wildlife Service about that and we think we have identified an area that could be used for that. We have tried to pick up on specific local issues as they've been raised with us.

There are answers to some of the questions about dispersal and the fair share, we were talking to our economist who in the background is working out the economic value of that plan.

What they tell us very much, is that moving people, encouraging people to go other places out of Glendalough will not reduce numbers in Glendalough as there is a demand for people to want to come in. We are not reducing numbers in the key areas, we are trying to reduce congestion and trying to move people. As you move them to other attractions there is demand behind the sites like Glendalough that will back fill with more people. What we try to do with the people is to attract people who will come and stay for longer, staying in the local hotels, see attractions like in Avondale in South Wicklow as Blessington is developed and Baltinglass Courthouse is developed to encourage people to stay for 1, 2, 3 days in the county, rather than thinking of Wicklow as a day trip from Dublin that is crucial from the accommodation strategy that the council put together two years ago now. But how to get the accommodation ... so the chicken and egg with the accommodation strategy, you must encourage people want to stay and for the private sector to respond by providing the facilities to stay in, so that is where that comes back into the strategy. There.

There is a question on car parking, the focus on the boards, there is a lot of car parking in and around but we have proposals for enhancing the uplands car parking, like in Glendalough and [inaudible] to make them attractive and to increase the capacity and to try to stop car parking on the roads that is causing difficulties and there are proposals for about Upland car parks as well as those in the valley themselves.

Picking up on the craft strategy. That is an interesting one that we have not gone quite far yet in terms of that. We identified, if you like, marketing and promotional strategies to link together producers of local crafts, local accommodation and a general proposal to add to that but the idea is that there will be a Wicklow-wide website which goes beyond the county Wicklow one does to pick up on all to do with the natural accommodation with things like craft strategies and things whereby you can promote things and there by directing people to where you want them to go and keep them away from places you don't want them to go like the sensitive and environmental sites. And finally on the environmental strategy, the colleague on our team, Faith Williamson, a local Wicklow resident has written the appropriate assessment on the ensured impact statement for it, that draws on ... sorry, we have not done primary research into things but drawing in on all the research that is available. Putting that together, showing how the plan works with that, and recommend decisions for further research in particular Upland bird studies and things, species that maybe affected by the proposals. So, a mixture of reviewing existing information and showing how the strategy can develop further environmental benefits to it. I think I have answered most of the questions, or at least tried to.

Oh, sorry, OK, so, not within the gift as the consultants, there has been discussion about it, and between the Wicklow County Council and the National Monument Service, at the moment it is not to proceed with requesting it just yet, as the feeling is that further research and studies needed to be done to have a compelling case for that but it is a discussion for the council officials and the National Monuments Service and OPW on that. So, the official position, is it is still there, as a poem in the future but the submission or the request for wild herded status has not been made as yet [sic].

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Dawson. To the Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: You are right in relation to the World Heritage status, in relation to works done in the relation to the masterplan, that is to be prioritised there is a lot of work to be required to get to that status, it is a pausing of the application process, rather than not putting it in but at a more suitable date into the future when we can put it forward. I would like to thank Mark and Dawson in relation to the work that they have done with myself, and Christine Flooder on the implementation and the masterplan, a huge amount of work has gone into this and glad to see the new public consultation stage is kicking off after the meeting. Thank you, Mark, thank you, Dawson.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mark, thank you, Dawson, thank you very much. Take care.

Members with your indulgence, I have the Manager's Report on the agenda next. But another presentation, I will say quick, if the questions are kept short another presentation on the Manager's Report, with your indulgence. Is that in agreement with the Members?

HELEN PURCELL: Can we have a seconder?

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think it was Cllr Irene Winters. Thank you, for that. If I can call on ... sorry Oonagh Messit [sic]

>> For the benefit of the members while Oonagh gets set up. There are three counties of which we are one. We have colleagues in Wexford and Walford and three counties in Wales, Carmarthenshire, [inaudible] and Pembrokeshire, funded under the Ireland/Wales [inaudible] Project. Going on for a number of years. Carmarthenshire are leading on the Wales side and Wexford is leading on the Irish side and Oonagh is working with the Wexford County Council, so advising her to keep us up to date on the project [sic]

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Michael.

>> Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach and thank you, elected members for having me here. I think my slides that will pop up any second now by magic, I hope, will fit in well with your previous speaker. We are tourism and Michael has done the first two slides. Brilliant. The first one, we have lots of logos being a co-funded project. We have the European funding logos, our own Celtic Routes logo and the 6-partner logos down the bottom, in alphabet call order if you wonder why they are in that order, it is the easiest way to do things. As Michael says, the who and where we are. The European Territorial Co-operation funding, Brexit hit us. We will hopefully get around that.

Get around that in the future. The major stakeholders that we deal with at the moment are the Visit Bodies, the likes of your Visit Wicklow Here and Discover Carmarthenshire are all the Visit bodies for the local areas. We deal with Ireland's Ancient East, Failte Ireland and we deal with collaboration with Ireland and Wales tourism projects, I know of some of them, particularly the project in Wicklow with stakeholders in common with that. Dealing closely with the special project areas and the Heritage and the Film and the Business Development Officers within each of the councils.

The why. Why we were set up. We were set up in late 2017. Running from the 1st of January 2018. I came on board halfway through that year. The main aim is to convert potential visitors to stop transiting through our counties, to linger longer as Failte Ireland used their tag phrase. How we do that, as opposed to doing a very big, fantastic master development plan as seen on the previous presentation we are actually marketing and promotion, that I would say, 75% of all of our work is marketing and promotion.

We do this by, with the support of all six partners.

Now, unfortunately, we don't have sound. We have 3 videos but no sound as our videos is made for television, both terrestrial and satellite. So, I would encourage you all to go to our website and to go down to the bottom of the page and go to the YouTube channel where you will get the music that goes along with all of our videos. We have 30 videos on our website. This was the very, very first one that we did. Just before lockdown, which, of course, as a tourism project, really did kick us a bit. That I think is the Piper Stones here in Wicklow.

They do make a very good impact when you have the sound to go with it. These videos, while they are playing, they are available on a lot of the streaming channels, the likes of all four, in particular, Sky have done an awful lot of our ones.

This is our coming out of lockdown. The whole idea of the particular video to start off dark, as in emerging from the darkness out into the light and we released this and then we went back into lockdown again, so, that was, ever so slightly unfortunate but there are some things that we thought, with the best will in the world, we just can't control.

Now, you are wondering about paying, Sky plays a huge amount. They don't charge us a huge amount; they use it in an international forum.

As you notice as well, on all of our texts, you have the three languages. You have the Welsh first, the English in the centre and the Irish at the bottom.

It's not for preference, it is by law. I know that does sound a bit strange but the Welsh language has to come before the English language in anything that they produce. So, anything we produce we also include the Irish language, even though we are not legally obliged to but the Welsh are. There is a little bit of a, I will not say discontent but that is the way we have gotten around that piece of legislation.

Right, what we are doing right now. We have two major contracts; one is with a company call Gully Slater and another with a cop called Working Word. As I said, we are primarily promotion. Gully Slater takes care of the video on demand, that is Netflix, BBC player, iPlayer ITV Hub, All4 and taking care of digital audio. We have been heard on Siri and Alexa. When you are playing your radio channel on either device our videos, sorry, not our videos, our advertisement will come up on that. So, for Gully Slater, they do the obvious and the subliminal as in they do lots of Google Ads as well. We had a presentation on that recently. If you thought that Google is watching you, it really is, believe me, it really, really is. Especially if you are syncing devices. But it plays into our hands. A social media contract is more obvious, taking care of the 3 social media channels, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. And also taking care of travel journalists, at the moment, we have, sorry, we have just had a travel magazine, Camping and Caravanning spending nearly a week in Ireland and 3 days in Wales, so their 6-page spread is coming out soon, that is what Working Word take care of and we have work on Hallowe'en, and that is taken care of as well. The bottom line is not highlight as I want, I wanted a full slide for that. It is out of date as well. This moves so fast. Up until the end of September, 137 million people throughout the world has had an opportunity to see something on Celtic Routes. Now, that can be in the Google Ads, straight in front of them on the Rosslare roundabout, down at the port, where we have an enormous big sign or coming through SIRI or on our social media channels, so I think we are doing something very right if we have 137 million and we have been through two lockdowns and one pandemic.

What we continuously do, our Asset Library is nearly 30,000 photos and the visit entities can use this, Failte Ireland use it as do Discover Wales, they use the photographs. The next contract we have coming up is a 360-degree drawn work. I know that a few businesses here in Wicklow have been constantly on to me, "When can we have it?" It is something that they really, really want to use. They don't have to pay for it, brilliant for them. If they are a small business, you know, having a 360-degree drawn contract is probably not within their wallet.

The next thing we are going to be doing are thematic groups, there is a separate slide to encompass the learning journeys and grouping various different businesses together under one particular theme. We are doing roadshows; trade shows and talks to elected members.

All through this year and through early next year. We are always expanding the website, putting more photographs up. More video up and more content on to our YouTube channel.

We have the Pooka Chase Comics, so any of you with children or grandchildren in primary school, you will have had, the kids will have had the Pooka Chase Comics there last Hallowe'en. Before the Hallowe'en they were in the school library and libraries themselves. some of the nitty-gritty. We don't have a huge Budget. Phase 1. From the 1st of January 2020 was just under 2 million. We were lucky to get phase 2. That went from 2021 to, at the moment, we are going to be close be the end of August next year. 80% of all funding is through the Ireland/Wales fund and 20% coming from the Local Authorities. Which is usually in staff allocation, so not actually a huge amount of money as you



will be paying the salaries anyway. Of course, our main areas of expenditure are the content creation, the media and the social media contracts. We do have the last 25% to spend on the thematic groups.

These thematic groups, at the moment we have eight of them, varying, now, that is not the full list and the list, I won't say, change but Blueway has changed to All Water Sports. If that is river or maritime.

We are taking a lot of the smaller businesses that are engaging with us and using our assets, encouraging them to talk to each other, to come up with ideas of how they would like to spend a packet of money, and basically an awful lot of knowledge transfer, that we are expecting from those. At the moment, we are just starting them.

They are backed up by a new section on our website, that we put up quite recently. The Celtic Collections. These are all the businesses that have engaged with us so far. And we have them hyper linked to the website and their own pages on their websites so getting traction from businesses from our website, so that they can increase their sales. There will be a pot of 200,000, including updates on the website. But most of that will be to facilitate further bookable products from the businesses that engage with us.

90,000 for the learning journeys themselves which are cross-border and cross-county.

The last slide, please. Before I sign off, as Ireland/Wales is disappearing, unfortunately, and there really is nothing we can do about that, as Project Partners and in consultation with our other Ireland/Wales tourism projects we are very seriously looking at legacy options. So, if it is all right with the Cathaoirleach and with the management, I may be back to you again to approve further ideas. That's me for now. So, if anyone has questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Oonagh. Cllr Gail Dunne. Sorry, Cllr John Mullen. Sorry, John.

CLLR MULLEN: Thank you very much for the presentation. Again, two obvious questions. Obviously, the impact of Brexit on this co-operation, which is essential, it is what it is but again, it must be said in the public forum it reflects the daft nature of Brexit and all of the very, very important projects we had and similarities we have with countries like Wales and Northern Ireland, Scotland in particular in relation to tourism and a project like this, done in my view, fantastic work, as the other project I was hoping you may discuss, if you had involvement in it is it is the coastal uplands heritage and tourism project, which is also Copat [sic] and they have had a number of meetings, and they are trying to put together a plan for the heritage tourism region in the area, with Wales and again, the future of both projects, hangs in the air now because of the nature of Brexit. Yet, the obvious heritage landscape similarities between the two nations, is extraordinary. The more that is delved into, particularly in the heritage aspect and the potential for heritage tourism, where the families want a more educational experience on the holidays as well as the activities that go with the outdoor recreation is enormous. So, I would like to again get your ideas on your project and Copat [sic] can integrate and if you have started discussions on the Welsh side, if you can co-operate in the future through whatever resources are cobbled together. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Welcome to Oonagh and thank you for the presentation. Nice to put a name to the face as I was dealing with you recently with the group I am working with regards to Wicklow and Glendalough, so, you kindly put us in contact with Dr Phil Brennan and his wife, and I wanted to

thank you for that, we have had a meeting and they were informative and full of ideas for us and things like that. One of the things that came from the meeting is how people's, the way that people holiday, it has changed since lockdown. People are now looking for more. They don't just want to get out and walk. They want to understand the heritage and the landscape and they want to feel, in a way, a kind of a spiritual connection with the land. That's coming across in your presentation as well. I think it is going to be, I think it's going to be something that will develop over the next few years both in Wales and in Ireland, so, thank you very much for that. Hopefully, I will be in contact with you at some stage in the future as things progress, thank you, Oonagh.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Oonagh, have you anything to say in response to the comments?

>> We deal with Coplet as we do with ancient connections, and port Tallis, and [inaudible] the other projects that we work with that are funded within the south-east of Ireland with the exception of Live, which is over in Kerry, the ones in the south-east of Ireland, yes, we had an online meeting, at the beginning of September. I asked a simple question: Do you want to continue? Everybody said, "God yeah, please." We have so much information here. If we stop it just disappears, the whole lot of it disappears, the website, all of the back-up history, everything just disappears.

We do have tentative ideas as to where we would like to go. Some of those will cost money. Hopefully not nearly as much as the 4 million that the project has already under way with.

One or two of the options will be a particular EU-funding strand, the Atlantic area, or the Interreg Europe, that way keeping the Welsh as partners and also bringing in other European countries, specifically, the Brittany and the Normandy area of France with the Brittany in particular with the Celtic connection and the possibility of northern Spain with their Celtic areas. We would also love to bring in the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Scotland but we have to wait and see what the programme, the funding will allow us to do, how far we can possibly stretch that mark in including other countries. But, yes, we have tentative discussions under way. That's why I said earlier that I will probably be back to you again for approval.

Cllr Mary Kavanagh, yes, holidays have changed ... people are taking longer holidays. They want more impactful holidays. They want more mindfulness about where they are, what they are doing, what this are seeing, how they are seeing it, absolutely everything. They are actually spending more on holidays on more bespoke holidays, nowadays, it is what the OECD are telling us at the moment, that travel is changing and it is changing very, very fast and Brexit had a major impact on that. As did the pandemic. Both of those had a major impact on how people holiday now, how it has changed.

One of the other interesting things that we did have throughout the pandemic, is that albeit we never deliberately advertised to anywhere else, other than, we have the UK, the US, Germany, France, Spain, the Benelux countries, that is where the main concentration always was but through the pandemic we actually found a very big uptake on the Google Analytics from the Indian continent and recently China and Japan popped up, considerably, an awful lot more than expected which we know that is down to Google. And so, although Google is watching, thank God they are!

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Stephen Stokes.

CLLR STOKES: Thank you very much for presentation. Very positive. In terms of expansion, I thought it would be worth mentioning that Greystones has been twinned with Holyhead. This year marks the 10-year anniversary celebrations. In the future, if there's a way to tie that in, it would be wonderful, because we've had many wonderful community groups come over. In fact, Saturday week, on November 19th we will have once again Holyhead Santa will be parading around the

streets of Greystones, bringing lots of joy to all of the children. Also, that evening, we have a male voice choir in the Whale Theatre, tickets are on sale if anyone wants to get some! It's going to be a great event. Just to show there's a lot going on between Greystones and Holyhead. It would be a lovely area to tie in for expansion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Stephen Stokes. Never miss a moment! Cllr Rory O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thanks very much. Thank you for the presentation. Just putting my young person hat on here. You mentioned four social medias, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. And TikTok is the fastest growing social media right now and you really are missing out on a young person demographic from not including it. I was just thinking if you do consider it, you have some excellent clips you showed there, you can put that in there and help promote the project. Thank you.

OONAGH: We will definitely consider it. It may mean tweaking a contract, but we will put it to the partners, Michael.

DIRECTOR: For the benefit of members, Wicklow has twinned with Port Balloch in Wales, Arklow is twinned with Aberystwyth, and Greystones is linked with Holyhead. We have lots of links. We already had those relationships. Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Director.

DIRECTOR: Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Oonagh. Thank you for your presentation.

OONAGH: Don't forget to go on to YouTube.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Until we see you again. We look forward to it. Thank you.

Now members, I just have one more thing to squeeze in here. I know I'm pushing my luck here, but I'd like to bring in the civic reception, if I can, please. Then we will go straight on to the manager's report.

HELEN PURCELL: You need a proposer and seconder.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Shay Cullen. Are you seconding me, Cllr Cullen?

CLLR CULLEN: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much for that, then. Go ahead.

HELEN PURCELL: Is that moved up the agenda?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen will talk about it there.

CLLR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for putting this on the agenda. I will be as brief as I can because I know we want to get to the Chief Executive's Report. I would like to propose holding a civic reception with the support of my fellow council members to bestow a Lifetime Achievement Award on John Boorman. He has lived in Wicklow for over 50 years. Synonymous with film, as I'm sure you are all aware, John has directed 22 feature films, including Point Blank in 1967, with Lee Marvin, Helen the Pacific in 1968, Deliverance in 1972, Zardoz, in 1974, The Exorcist 2 in 1977, Excalibur in 1981, The Emerald Forest in 1985, Hope and Glory in 1987, The General in 1998, Queen and Country in 2014.

In 1998, John Boorman won the Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival for *The General*. He also won numerous Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations. John has received five Academy Award nominations twice for Best Director for *Deliverance*, and *Hope and Glory*. In 2004, he received a BAFTA Fellowship for a lifetime achievement for the British Academy of Film and Television. In January 2022, he received a knighthood.

John Boorman's involvement in Irish film began in 1975, when he became Chairman of Ardmore Film Studios. The studios originally opened in 1958 and were renovated and renamed as the National Film Studios of Ireland and subsequently hosted major movies, including *The Purple Taxi*, and *The Great Train Robbery*, starring Sean Connery. In 1981, John's film, the 11.5-million blockbuster epic *Excalibur*, where he cast a then very unknown Liam Neeson, Gabriel Byrne and Ciaran Hinds at the studios and here in the local hills of Wicklow.

The industry recognised John Boorman's role in developing Ardmore Studios into an internationally viable and welcoming centre of excellence within film-making. It cannot be under-estimated the legacy of international actors, producers, directors, such as the Coen brothers, Jack Nicholson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Glenn Close, Mia Farrow, Mick Jagger and many more who have made a significant contribution to film. And not to forget John's friend and neighbour in Annamoe, Daniel Day-Lewis, and what he did for our magnificent county in terms of his generosity and love of our county of Wicklow.

Celebrities aside, the greatest passion in John's life is his trees. He planted tens of thousands of broad-leaved trees in Annamoe. He considered that be the single most important thing he ever did in his life. Indeed, RTE's *Nationwide* made a documentary on John's last publication, *Nature Diary*, written during the lockdown in 2022, where he speaks about trees and how much of a part they play in his life.

Besides the incredible body of work he embarked on over the years, he found time to pursue literary works, when he wrote a novel *Zardoz* in 1974; his 1985 *Money into Light*, *The Emerald Forest*, *A Diary*; his autobiographical 2003 published and critically acclaimed *Adventures of a Suburban Boy*; and in 2016 he wrote a fictional novel crime of passion that allowed him to write a book on film-making through a novel.

I know we're all extremely proud of our county in terms of the film industry and what has been achieved and more importantly, what we can achieve into the future. Ardmore Studios, Ashford Studios and our own Claremont Campus are national and international leaders in film industry and all play a part in the economic benefit of film industry that brings to Wicklow and indeed Ireland.

In my view, John Boorman is a national treasure in our film industry and as John approaches his 90th birthday he is reluctant leaving his beloved Annamoe after 50 years to spend time with his family in the UK. It is fair to say that John Boorman has had a lasting impact on County Wicklow and the wider community and the community are sad to see him leave his home in the hills of Wicklow. He always understood the precious community he found himself in. He has never been an outsider. The local community respected him and delighted including them in his life.

Chairman, I'm conscious that this should have went to protocol first but unfortunately, time is of the essence on this particular issue because John is leaving Wicklow and Ireland before the 20th November. So, I had to speak to you directly about this and I do appreciate you putting it on the agenda. So, finally, Cathaoirleach, I want to conclude by asking you and my fellow councillors to support my proposal in bestowing a life time achievement award and hosting a civic reception to honour the life of John Boorman and what he's achieved for our county in Wicklow. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Cullen. Cllr Irene Winters.

CLLR WINTERS: I'd like to second that motion. I know time is of the essence both for the civic reception and also here today. So, I won't go through it all today but to say that it is a lifetime, 50 years and every decade that there's been a film, a book, a contribution that has made a lasting impact on the film industry. I was just reading through things that had happened in his lifetime and I just thought, gosh, the people of West Wicklow would have loved if he had taken up over there because when he built the swimming pool in his current home, he allowed and taught all of the local children to swim in it as well. He gave his facilities basically to the local community. He's been a fantastic resident within Wicklow and a contributor to our culture and I would ask the members to support the civic reception for his lifetime achievement, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Winters. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I also want to support this. We are so fortunate to have the likes of John in our county and many other fine actors. Not only is the right thing to do but the goodwill it will generate for Wicklow County Council and Wicklow in itself and what we can advertise it around not just Wicklow County Council but around the world, this is a world-renowned director and I'm sure if he invites some of his actors they'll be here too. But again, it is the right thing to do. It's an added bonus then that we can generate some very goodwill. We have seen it a few months ago with Charlie Bird and the goodwill that generated, I would wholeheartedly support Cllr Cullen in that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Paul O'Brien. Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Fair play to Shay for bringing it forward and to yourself. Yes, he's had a huge impact on film in County Wicklow, 50 years is an amazing amount of time to have spent. He's an absolute gentleman of a man. He was a regular customer of ours in the shop we had in Bray. He was a huge supporter of local business and local people. It is a fantastic idea and wholeheartedly support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Melanie Corrigan. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Again, I'd like to support this. I was asked at the beginning of the meeting by two public representatives what this was about and who was it about and unfortunately, I didn't know. And again, I see now and it's been well explained by Cllr Winters in regards to the time constraints on this. So, therefore, that's why I want to thank you as Cathaoirleach for dispensing with the protocols that normally would be around something like this. I fully support it and I would hope that we would go back to when there are no time constraints that protocol would take over on events like this because I think that's so important rather than open chambers. But on this occasion, I fully understand and concur with the previous speakers.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Snell. Are we all in agreement? Helen, that the right thing to say?

HELEN PURCELL: Yes, the protocol is that the civic reception policy requires passing of a resolution by full Council. So, we have a proposer from Cllr Shay Cullen, seconded by Cllr Irene Winters. We were waiting for family to confirm. The date proposed, if the full council agrees and the full resolution is passed, is next Wednesday, 16th November, at 6.00 pm here in the Council Chamber. Is everyone in favour? Any dissent? [None]

CATHAOIRLEACH: No dissent. Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Cllr Shay Cullen for bringing that as well. Okay.

I hate to say this but I'm going to have to go for an extension of the meeting. Is that okay with everyone. I want to get to the Chief Executive's Report. Helen has serious correspondence, I won't say serious, I don't know what it is. We will go to Chief Executive's Report. Brian, can I bring you in, please?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Oh, we don't need an extension, right. What time is it? I apologise, we don't need an extension. Do I hear that sigh of relief! Thank you. Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Okay, thanks, Cathaoirleach. I will just be very quick. Just a few highlights in relation to what is happening. There was a recent announcement of the new leader programme for 2023 to 2027 and that had delivered.

At times, you would have had traffic problems, you would have had disruption to local residents and you also didn't have the best experience for the visitors because when the visitors got there, they found less than a joined-up story of what Wicklow has to offer. So, what the Masterplan looks to do is to enhance the natural built and cultural heritage to disperse the benefits and impacts of tourism, and to improve the visitor experience. To do all of that by working with the council, all of the other stakeholders, and the local community to deliver a plan that will see visitors spend more time in the area and most importantly, spend more money in the area and provide more economic benefit, and also to get more visitors to spread out and spend revenue across the whole of County Wicklow.

We went through a tender process. We had a group of consultants. They started work in 2020. Throughout COVID, they've continued to beaver away. We did some innovative online consultation when face-to-face consultation was not possible. We're nearing the end of the process where we're going back out for consultation on the Masterplan, and the environmental reports, and thanks once again. I will pass over to Dawson now. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mark.

DAWSON: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for inviting us to bring you up-to-date with where we are at the moment in the Masterplan. I have presented this twice before to the Council through the process. We're now at the stage of putting the final draft of the plan out to public consultation again. We're nearly at the end of the process, as you can see up on the slide at the moment.

So, just a few sort of brief headlines of where we are at the moment. As Mark has said, we started back in 2020, with surveys, research and consultations. We did the first draft and outline proposals back in February/March 2021. It went out for a wide consultation. We got very broad support for that, about 75% positive support but lots and lots of comments and lots of feedback and lots of detail, lots of ideas came out of that public consultation process.

So, we spent most of the rest of 2021 reviewing all of that, looking back and going out on the ground again, doing more surveys and more research, more talking to people. Towards the end of 2021, I came here to the council and we presented to the council and we then got broad support from yourselves to where we were heading to.

The steering group signed off on it in January of this year. And then that let us into a formal process called a Strategic Environmental Assessment, it is something required by European law for any plan, coupled with Environmental Impact Assessments. That has taken us through this year. Those have long now been completed. They came up with some issues that required some changes to the plan to fit in with the requirements under environmental legislation. We have the environmental

assessments and we're going into a formal public consultation process which will be starting at the end of this week.

We wanted to come here today to give you a bit of a briefing before it goes live into the public consultation to tell you what's in it and to tell you predominately how we're handling the public consultation and to get your input into that.

So, I have them in hard copy as well, if you can't see them. There are five of these boards which will be going up on the wicklow.ie website. It will be going as actual boards around libraries and council offices around the county. What these boards do is it will be replicated by what is online so people can choose to physically look at the board or they can go online and look at the detail. It sets out the principles of our strategy. Online, we will give full access to the physical documents and plan itself, which runs to something like 700-odd pages, including all of the appendices, plus the strategic environmental report, and the Natura documents. They will be available on website for people to look at in detail.

The first one sets out the overall strategy. You will remember, those of you here in previous conversations, we know that we're trying to disperse the flow of visitors much more evenly around the county. So, where there are hubs and clusters in Baltinglass, and Rathdrum, Avoca and Avondale in the south-east, and, obviously, Avondale has opened up this summer, a new and important tourism destination. The principle of what we're trying to do is encourage and develop tourism in those areas but on sustainable sites, so that they can cope with more people coming in and that in some way will also take some of the pressure off Glendalough and Laragh.

So, the next four boards really focus in on the physical proposals in Glendalough and Laragh, that's where all of the problems have been, where the congestion has been and where the difficulties and negative feedback from visitors and from the local community has been. So, most of our proposals, most of the hard physical proposals are in the Glendalough and Laragh area and that's why most of the specific proposals are there.

Some of which you know about at the moment, this summer there was a pilot scheme that the council ran in terms of a shuttle bus to encourage people to get out of their car in Laragh and travel by shuttle bus up in, that was very successful, it worked well. It avoided this summer the congestion problems we've had in other summers. It points the way forward to trying to encourage people to get out of their cars and spend more time in the area.

So, what these boards do is set out the issues in the area and then specific proposals as to how we're intending to deal with those. There's quite a lot of detail in these, but it is still a plan and as you should remember that, it is a strategy. We've identified potential areas for car parks in and around Laragh. These are potential areas. There are a number of them. There are more than we actually need to look at all of the options there. But it is part of a strategy to encourage the main visitor rival point to be in Laragh and people to move either by shuttle bus, bike or walking, up into the Glendalough valley itself at peak times. At off-peak times, this was something that came out of the feedback we got from local people, was that they wanted to be able to park as normal in the upper lake car park and the middle level car park when there is not a congestion issue.

So, we have set out a strategy, we have had that assessed environmentally and we're going out to this pedestrian of public consultation on to that. The boards will give the detail of that. I'm not intending to talk through the detail today, just to show you and indicate and the boards will be widely distributed.

So, where do we go with that after the presentation today? Toward the end of this week, the formal notices will be in the newspapers. The consultation website will go live this Friday. There will be public displays set up in the libraries and council offices and that runs right through until 18th January. There are public consultation meetings being held in the Baroca Centre in November. There will be online meetings as well in November and December. There will be every opportunity given, as we did the last time, for people to submit their views and opinions both electronically and in hard copy.

So, that's where we're going with the consultation. It runs right through until January now. We'll hopefully be seeing some of you as councillors at the public meetings but we're available for discussion and for comment and feedback at any stage through the process. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Dawson. Can I open it up to the floor? Any members want to come in? Cllr Cullen.

CLLR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks, Dawson. You're welcome back again, you said for the third time at this stage.

DAWSON: I think it is the third time.

CLLR CULLEN: First of all, it is great to see that things are moving along. The public in general are a little bit concerned about the length of time this has all taken. Unfortunately, we've been through a couple of tough years in terms of COVID. You spoke about the consultation which was difficult. But certainly, the final draft is very welcome. I suppose you were saying it is going on public display. Can we, as councillors or the public, make amendments to that final draft? I suppose that's important because there will, obviously, be aspects of that may not sit well with local people in the area. It is something I do think that we need further discussion on in terms of keeping the public involved in this right through the process.

You spoke about parking facilities and possible hubs around the county. Have these been identified as specific locations or are they sort of movable areas depending on availability of land in obviously the various areas? Because it's very difficult to maybe nail that particular point in terms of, you know, piece a land that you're identifying. Something I'd like to know a little bit more about.

The overall strategy for I suppose Laragh in that we're talking about park-and-ride type systems and, again, that is going to have a major disruption to the village of Laragh. Has that been taken into consideration in terms of traffic congestion in and around the Laragh area, let alone the valley of Glendalough? We need to be mindful in terms of the local people there. Obviously, we're all very enthusiastic about this plan. I think it will be fantastic for our county from a tourism point of view. We've made great strides in terms of tourism over the last number of years and I think this is very, very welcome. I look forward to the public meetings in the next number of weeks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, are you okay to take the questions in three?

DAWSON: Certainly.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Miriam Murphy, you have your hand up.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you for the presentation. My God, it's huge and a brilliant undertaking for all involved. I will just come and add, as a person with a disability, and I'm sure you have visited the Avondale project which was huge success, as someone who can use the facility fully from the gate, back out to the gate. I'm just enquiring again, on the public consultation, how disabled friendly is the website for those people with impairments, physical and otherwise? And also, on the product



itself, the environment, you know, with lighting, all of those issues need to be covered, large print, large signage, both inside and outside surroundings.

I'm sure Christine has this flagged, will there be a Changing Places facility in the visitors' centre in Glendalough? Also, for children with autism, will there be a quiet area assigned on any locations planned? We have a disability officer in the house and also a consultation with Laura O'Callan if you need more consultation on that, or contact myself, either. I know we will certainly be keeping an eye on it. Again, another tourism attraction which will be really welcome. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Murphy. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'd like to start by going back to the very beginning, which was the first presentation we had down in Druids almost two years ago. To be fair Dawson, I suppose, you were a bit like the rabbit in the headlights on that occasion because the one that came out loud and clear from that meeting was public consultation, engaging with the local community, and to be fair to you and your colleagues, I think you did take it on board. It was difficult at the time in regards to the COVID pandemic. We had spoken about trying to get literature out to the local community which is very important. I'm married to a native of Laragh and Glendalough who has parents buried in Laragh, has grandparents buried in the graveyard at Glendalough, so I know the importance of local community engagement.

To be fair, you have, as restrictions lifted, we had opportunities in regards to that. It was a very good well attended information night in the Glendalough Hotel, which was attended by members here and the officials. I know there's a group there who you are engaging with all of the time. That was an open invitation to everybody and that was so important for the local community.

At the end of the day, you know, I shared my concerns with regards to the lack of access, vehicular access to the upper car park. I know we were talking about a phased programme over many years. You're taking it on board for local community in regards for them to be able to get up to the upper car park in off-peak times because the reality is in peak times most locals don't go up there, they can't outside of their own gate and that's the truth. You did share one of the previous presentations that you gave. I said that, you know, you had to be very, very careful in regards to identifying which was the preferred options in regards to the car parks because, therefore, obviously, the value of the land then goes up, and you end up with people profiteering from what you're trying to do, which is make it accessible to all and keep your options open. Again, I commend you on doing that.

This is a great opportunity for investment into what is the jewel in County Wicklow from a tourist perspective, with regards to outlining the south-east, north and north-west. This is in our minute is pal district in the east, we would be looking at our share of visitors not to be taken away from east Wicklow, the Black Castle, Wicklow Gaol, Killmacurragh, Mount Usher Gardens, so please don't exclude us from any promotional events that you're holding in regards to getting people around the county, because we'd like to have our fair share as well.

I just wanted to say that initially from that first meeting, it was loud and clear everyone had a concern about how you were going to engage with the public. I want to thank you personally, Dawson and the rest of your colleagues, for taking all of that on board to say that you have done an excellent job to date. It's so important now that we're at the final hurdle, don't fall at the final hurdle. Re-engage again. As previous councillors have said, take on board whatever the public are saying. Thanks a million for your engagement to date.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, I have a couple of speakers, they might just repeat the questions. If you can keep statements to questions, it would be great. We have another presentation to get through. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: I will be brief. I will be brief. Dawson, as you know, I have been talking with you many times on this project, as has others. But tourism is hugely important to the county. I see that in Rathdrum now with the development of Avondale. I suppose the one thing I would like to see when the consultation is finished and we have tied this down fully and we know exactly what is happening here, is that we continue on to look at the dispersal of the tourists, because tourism is hugely important to the county and we disperse that around the county and we also provide the facilities for them to park around the county. I'd like to see probably a second phase to this Masterplan other than Glendalough that takes in places, where Cllr Snell has said, like Glenmalur and west Wicklow and we provide car parking spaces for those. It is important we have entry points with car parking on those as well. Thank you for all of the consultations you have done on this. It has been hugely important but hugely appreciated as well. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thanks to Mark and Dawson for the presentation. You know, the progress in has been made on the plan to date and the positive impact it's likely to have on our tourism product for county.

Just an observation really for one of the points there, one of the objectives of the plan, obviously, was to disperse visitors to other tourism destinations and more sustainable sites around the county and reducing the pressure on Glendalough, and extending as Mark said, extending the visitor stay and spend. Just again on that point, the accommodation. I know the tourism group carried out a toolkit on behalf of Wicklow County Council low county tourism there maybe two years ago. It did find a shortfall rather on our accommodation offering and particularly in certain types of accommodation. So, I think, I don't know whether Mark has any comments to make on the actual existing shortfall of accommodation in the county, which has been exacerbated in recent months due to the Ukrainian situation. So, that is a big challenge going forward, the availability of suitable accommodation to keep the visitors in the county and obviously extend the spend. Thank you.

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

CLLR LEONARD: Hi, Dawson. I did meet you very early on in the consultation and we discussed Arklow and the lack of Arklow having a product to sell. We've actually been working on a lot of projects in Arklow to tie in with this. I hope that the dispersal bit won't leave Arklow out. We have a craft and ecology centre gone in for funding into the Government for quite a substantial funding and it is actually in the first location of the Arklow to Shillelagh in the Arklow train station.

Also, we have since had the craft strategy which Wicklow County Partnership have done great work. Evelyn Murray has been spearheading that. I would love if you could tie in with them and the steering committee and, actually, Wicklow Craft Foundation which has been set up as well which will be the first, it is kind of the strategy is the first of its kind I think in the country but there's a real opportunity there to tie that in and create lovely sustainable outlets for all of the makers of County Wicklow. Thanks a million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Leonard. Cllr Patsy Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the presentation. Just, like some of my colleagues have mentioned there, it's important to quote from the dispersal of the benefit

throughout the county, when this matter was first mentioned, the previous Chief Executive omitted to include the west and we brought it to his attention and he assured us that West Wicklow would be included in it going forward. And I got the same commitment from the current Chief Executive. It is just important that it be dispersed throughout the county. I would say 40% of traffic going to Glendalough goes through the villages of Hollywood and valley mount. It is obviously important that they are facilitated as well. I wouldn't like West Wicklow to be forgotten about. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Glennon. Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Dawson, for your presentation. It's nice to see the amount of work that's been going on in the background there. I brought up at a previous meeting if you would consider applying for UNESCO World Heritage status. I notice that recently a couple of very important sites in Ireland have been nominated, the Giants Causeway, Skellig Michael and Brú na Bóinne in Meath. I want to know did you make any application for Glendalough. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Kavanagh. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thanks for the presentation. A couple of questions there around the environmental piece. I just see one of the objectives which I very much welcome which is to set up targets for improvements in biodiversity. I'm wondering, has there been a baseline survey or analysis done of the current biodiversity because it is important to maintain what we have while welcoming in additional visitors as well.

And the second question I was going to have which actually Cllr Murphy has asked, will there be provision for conflict changing Places facilities? Just to echo Cllr Murphy's point, the piece on accessibility would be really, really important, I know for many families. It is one of the major complaints they have, the lack of truly accessible facilities for them to visit.

The third question was I really welcome talk of the shuttle buses. I was just wondering is there any consideration of expanding the shuttle buses sort of beyond Laragh and to actually allow people, say, for ourselves in the Greystones district, where you have no choice to get a car to go to Glendalough, but to have a shuttle bus in peak times or link in with the proposed new park and rights on the N11 during the peak period.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Dawson, I know there's a few questions there for you. Thank you.

DAWSON: I will try to link the questions together to speed up the answers. They very much, councillors, there is lots of very interesting questions within that. I will do my very best to answer them.

First of all, right at the very start with Cllr Cullen in terms of impact on Laragh and traffic there really is an impact on Laragh and traffic. How are we trying to resolve in? It links a bit to what Cllr Snell said as well. We have identified areas of potential car parking in and around Laragh but we're very conscious we don't want to -- it is quite possible that maybe the council that is purchasing these and developing these in the future could be one of the other state bodies. We're very careful not to get into a situation where we're inflating prices for the public to be able to buy. So, we have more showing than we need, so it is not like we need to get all of these sites and we're in a captive position. There are also variations within that and combinations. So, we have been trying to indicate the principle of what we're doing but at the same time not stymieing commercial

negotiations that may go on with individual landowners. It is a fine balance, as I said, to try to do that.

One of the areas we are looking at, this is quite important one, is that the majority, yes, quite a few cars come over the hill from Hollywood and some come up from Rathdrum, but the majority come in on the Roundwood roads into Laragh. We are looking at the eastern area, to try and get people out of their cars before they get into Laragh and before they cause the congestion within the site. If we can get that car park going and links to that, we think it will make a big difference to car congestion within Laragh itself.

Sol a link into that, the shuttle buses, right at the end there, but yes, we are proposing a shuttle bus within the valley but we have three other routes for shuttle buses proposed to run as pilots. They're more in turn to deal with the upland car parks, so there's a lot of small car parks and they get congested. So, what we're trying to do is get shuttle bus routes where people may park down in Laragh or in other valley car parks and be able to drop off and then walk down to their cars at the end of the day. It has worked in other areas. We have identified three potential routes for that within Wicklow. So quite a lot in the longer term, the longer-term strategy for dealing more with buses and trains as well in terms of access.

So, a pick up on the accessibility issues. It is a very important issue. We're designing visitor facilities now we always, for example, put in Changing Places toilets. We have built a number of them. They are essential. There would be-changing Places toilet. We have had a lot of very detailed negotiations with the National Park and Wildlife Services and OPW, in making the trails around the monastic site accessible to people. They are not at the moment. There are sensitivities, both archaeological sensitivities and heritage sensitivities to that, but we have finally taken the best part of a year where we finally got an agreement with the statutory bodies as to how we might make the routes more accessible for people with disabilities. It is a very conscious effort in the plan. It is one of those areas you can do more, so we welcome further suggestions or insight that. But accessibility for everybody is a key part of the proposals.

Picking up again some of the few things that came out of the consultation. Two areas which I think Cllr Snell mentioned, there was a lot of feedback at the consultation stage about accessibility to places like the upper car park during the off-peak times and stuff. Our initial plan that we put forward was to close the upper lake car park completely. We've gone from that. We are saying we will close it at peak times, except for the shuttle buses and potentially also people who hold blue badges and with accessible transport. At off-peak times, those car parks would remain open for people to be used so there is not a congestion problem at peak times. We've taken that from the consultation.

We also have one other aspect that came out of the local consultation was, access and car park into the graveyard and particularly the modern area of the graveyard for local people to gather. We've been talking to OPW, National Parks and Wildlife Service about that and we think we have identified an area that could be used for that. We have tried to pick up on specific local issues as they've been raised with us.

There are answers to some of the questions about dispersal and the fair share, we were talking to our economist who in the background is working out the economic value of that plan.

€5.3 million to projects in Wicklow in respect of rural development, so that's good news. Just a highlight as well that last Thursday, so Beyond the Trees in Avondale was recognised as the first age-friendly tourist destination in the country and I'm told possibly in Europe and the world, that's to be

clarified, but definitely in the country anyway. I know a few of the councillors were there for that and just to say as part of Wicklow County Council's own age-friendly programme, we worked closely with Coillte and Age Friendly Ireland and the Older People's Council to do on this particular initiative. I'd like to say well done to everyone involved in relation to that.

Finally, just to highlight that Wicklow Sports and Recreational Partnership received €186,000 for local projects recently including an allocation to Rathdrum to develop it as an active community and also towards Wicklow travellers' group and for volunteer training and education and a number of sports including disability projects. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Can I bring Cllr Rory O'Connor?

CLLR O'CONNOR: Just two questions, I will try to keep it quick.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

CLLR O'CONNOR: My first one is, has the council been approached about doing modular homes for Ukrainians within the council? I've been seen it has been popping up all over the country. I was wondering if we had been approached at all.

My second question is actually completely different. It's to do with the shared island unit. Some councillors might have seen that funding was announced for County Councils to do collaborative work together. It doesn't matter why in Ireland they're from, but work together. For example, in Dublin, they got funding for, I believe, like, a biodiversity project another council up north. I was just wondering did the council try to apply for this money? Has there been co-ordination with any council up north trying to do some sort of projects around tourism or biodiversity, that's seems a theme with a lot of the funding going towards? That's all, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. What an example of way to ask questions. If everyone else can bear that in mind. Cllr Joe Behan. That didn't happen, it is just because you're next on the agenda! [Laughter]

CLLR BEHAN: I was waiting for it! Cathaoirleach, first of all, can I apologise to you and the Chief Executive, I did not intend to come across aggressively but I know it happens and I apologise for that. It is because I'm passionate about the situations that we're discussing. I've gone outside, done some breathing exercises and hopefully I will do better this time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Very good, Cllr Behan. Thank you.

CLLR BEHAN: Two items. First of all, we had a meeting with the minister for transport Eamonn Ryan last Friday week. I think we all paid tribute to the fact that he actually came, he listened, he engaged in discussions and so on. But I have to say the result from my point of view was very unsatisfactory, particularly with regard to the N11/M11, the fact he has paused funding and effectively on the day, I think colleagues from West Wicklow were very, very effective in putting across their case for the N81. I think he listened and he seemed to indicate that he's going to take that maybe more seriously than the department has in the past, which I think we all would welcome.

But effectively I think anybody who was here at the meeting or watched it online would agree with me, that he basically kicked it all back to TII. He said he wasn't going to get involved in the intricacies of decision making when it comes to the funding that he is allocated to TII. So, I don't we should leave it at that. I want to propose that our next steps should be that we seek a meeting with TII. I have no difficulty in proposing that yourself, Cathaoirleach, and a number of members of the council might seek to go on a deputation to meet the Chief Executive of TII and the officials dealing with Wicklow to pursue the questions of the N81. Obviously, the question of the M11/N11 and other issues such as rural roads, et cetera, that may or may not affect councillors around the county. If that doesn't pay off, I think we'll have to look for the Chief Executive of TII to be invited to a meeting

here in this Chamber. But I'm quite happy to propose that we seek a deputation to discuss the issues. Because effectively the minister said to us on the day we very to take it up with TII. Rather than let the thing drop, I think we need to keep the pressure up. That's the first one. I want to make that as a proposal, Cathaoirleach.

The second one, again, it is just really again to bring to everybody's attention, you know, something quite serious I think has happened with regard to our development plan in the last two weeks. I'm not talking about the application for a judicial review by two major developers in this country. I'm talking about the fact that we as a body democratically voted on two particular amendments to our development plan. One which would ease the situation regarding rural housing for some local applicants who have caring responsibilities or are in the caring professions. The second one was that we agreed as a council that we would prohibit the selling on of apartment developments to vulture funds or private investment institutions. Now, the planning regulator and the minister had an opportunity to tell us, to give us a direction that we should take those two items out of the plan. That did not happen. So, as I read, Cathaoirleach, and I hope the rest of us are in agreement with this, those two amendments stand. They are now part of our development plan. What concerned me in the last week or so was that the minister sent a second letter asking the Chief Executive to take legal advice on our decisions but he didn't actually put it in the direction to the council. The Chief Executive responded by telling us he is going to seek legal advice on it.

So, are we going to be back in a situation where our will democratically expressed at two council meetings will be undermined by legal advice yet again? When the minister had an opportunity, if we had a problem with what we were doing, he could have done it by giving us a direction and we could have argued it out. So, Cathaoirleach, I'm not asking anybody to comment on it. I'm just making the point that we should stand firm, when we make a decision on rural planning or on planning policy generally. The minister has not told us to change it. It is part of our plan. What concerned me is when I looked for clarification from one of the staff here, planning staff, I basically was referred to the Chief Executive and the director of planning. It seems to me there's a bit of a reluctance to accept the reality that our decision should stand, it's in the plan now and I hope all planning decisions made from here on in will reflect what our will was expressed on that last day, Cathaoirleach. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Behan. Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Thanks, Chairman. I want to focus one major issue. I brought it up here before of I will continue to raise it at every opportunity, that's the RRDF funding for Baltinglass. I would like to get the latest situation. Things are moving a bit slower than I'd hoped. I know we've been in consultation with the department on the tender, the fact that the tender was way above what the original funding was allocated for it. But I'm really, really anxious that this doesn't get bogged down in bureaucracy, that it is moved on. I know there's going to be works done in the park which is a very, very minor, I think it is less than 7% or 8% of the total expenditure and hopefully that will happen very, very soon. But the major project itself, the library, the main town, the main streets in the town that something really needs to be advanced on that and we have confidence that it's happening. I would just urge the Chief Executive and his team to push the department and internally here to try and move this project on and make this project happen because it's really disappointing that we're three years later and not a shove has touched the ground in Baltinglass. Allied to that, I know there's an application for a foot bridge and the travel scheme, a known application has been prepared for probably the most dangerous bridge in county in terms of people walking over, pedestrians walking over a busy bridge over the River Slaney. I would ask it is given priority. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Timmins. Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks to the Chief Executive for the report. Just a query, Cathaoirleach, in an around the housing piece and, in particular, on the HAP situation. Again, looking at the figures, it's obviously that we're dependent on HAP to address a lot of our housing issues and our tenancy list. I was privy to a debate there on national radio, I think it was last Thursday morning. A representative from the auction years association, I think, raised the points in the case where the tenant's portion of HAP goes unpaid, then the landlord does not receive the HAP payment due in total. I'm just wondering and looking at the figures there with the notice to quit in relation to landlords selling, that figure is on the rise. I wonder, you know, firstly, is that accurate, the commentary there in relation to the situation around the unpaid HAP? If it is, is that leading to or has that had a bearing on the increase in landlords leaving the local indigenous market? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr John Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: I'd like to echo what Cllr Timmins said in relation to Baltinglass bridge and also echoing what Cllr Joe Behan said. I did feel that the minister last week was open, in particular to the absolute dreadfully dangerous situation in Baltinglass with the lack of a pedestrian bridge. I'm presuming that we're putting in the inroads to get that in. I think he was almost echoing that's what we should do. The main point I have is in relation -- it came up earlier -- with regard the Glendalough project, about how to disperse tourism throughout the country. One of the major projects we've been trying to do to achieve that is the Arklow/Shillelagh Greenway, with respect, I have been involved in this since 2006 when we first opened the tin Healy walk. It's 16 years now we've been working on this project in conjunction with Wicklow County Council. We reached a stage where we were nearly going to go for planning and we accepted a deal that the department had made with the IFA in relation to just ensuring additional independent reports to be done on the route. Since then, we've had staff changes and stuff like that. I accept that. But at the same time there was an initial nine-month delay expected before we lodged the documents for planning on that project. Those nine months have come and gone. I see in the report that the role will be appointed in the very few future, followed by the independent agronomist is appointed, his or her details will be communicated to the planners. As we've seen in recent media reports, significant businesses in both districts, there's two municipal districts, the south and the west, involved in this project, they went public with their belief that the project has effectively stalled. I have to admit I do kind of agree with them.

The money, the national money that's allocated for greenways is there at the moment. It's €360 million-plus. Our project will run in the region of €30 million, with land purchase being an option. It is essential we move at speed now. We have had to up-to-date some of the ecological surveys on this project at least twice, I'm hearing some of them might be updated for the third time. Now I know there are issues on various sections of the Greenway, but at this stage the public need to know what the options are, the best way to do that is through the planning process. We have a situation where the public are ringing me and other elected representatives wanting to know the status of this project, is it gone? We spent a huge amount of money to get it to this stage. I'm urging you, Chief Executive, to really put the pressure on to ensure we get planning documents in and the website up and running with the maps that the public need to know because the public feel that this project is lingering, stalling, and failing at the moment. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Mullen. Chief Executive, a few questions there.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thanks. In relation to modular homes. Every Local Authority has been asked to look at potential sites. It will be examined by the OPW. If there's any sites that are deemed appropriate, that will be communicated back to Wicklow County Council. There hasn't been any that have been identified as appropriate thus far. If that changes over the next couple of months, we will

obviously notify the councillors. OPW said there will be a communication process put in place. So, as soon as we hear anything on that, we will obviously communicate it to the members.

In relation to Cllr Behan's proposal, in relation to TII, absolutely. We can go with that. Hopefully I think Leonora Earls had a meeting with TII. I think they will probably be open to that option. Obviously, the back-up plan of calling in the Chief Executive to the council or whatever, that would be as an alternative but I believe that a delegation party to meet with TII on the matter will be accepted and we can push on the N11 issue in that regard.

In relation to the development plan, I know you didn't really ask a question but I suppose it is a statement. The minister has asked us to satisfy ourselves that the matter is not ultra vires. I'm seeking legal advice on the matter and, obviously, we will communicate with everyone on that basis. At the moment it is in the county development plan. Like everything else, the rural planning issue, there are new guidelines coming out from the department I think early next year at some stage. We will have to wait and see what comes from that.

In relation to the RRDF, Cllr Timmins, we have received alternative options back from ARUP, the consultants in relation to public realm section of the project. We're awaiting further reports back from the architects in relation to the library. We hope to have that very shortly. When we do, we will submit a paper to the department and looking for a meeting straightaway in relation to that to try and progress the matter.

In relation to the Arklow/Shillelagh Greenway, I will put on record, this is not dead by any means. It is progressing albeit slowly. I suppose, the background to this is that there was a new code for Greenway that was introduced in January. We had a certain amount of progress on the project. Following the introduction of the Greenway or -- sorry -- this new code, I suppose we had to take a few steps backwards in order to go forwards. We had a meeting with the local IFA branch on it and agreed a process going forward as part of that. It's in the code, it is the appointment of an agronomist. Rest assured that this project is still going ahead and we are working towards that.

I might hand over to the HAP question to Joe.

ADMINISTRATION: I will check that and I will get back to you. I don't want to give you inaccurate information on that point.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive and thank you, Joe. Cllr John Snell.

JOE: I don't want to give inaccurate information on that point.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We have had presentation for the master plan to Glendalough, I felt it important bring it up at the time. But to make the Chief Executive aware, it is still our responsibility. Obviously, Glendalough as it stands in conjunction with the partners, the OPW, et cetera but it has been brought to my attention, we invested money through the local authority regards to the toilet facilities in Glendalough, it was part of the tender, that upkeep of the toilet facilities, to look after that. Unfortunately, it has been brought to my attention it is not what you deem acceptable. So, if we can look at that. I don't want Wicklow County Council to be seen to be letting down the side, when obviously, they tendered out that contract. Just to make sure that is properly kept under review. I suppose, Cathaoirleach, in regard to sporting organisations and I know you are a huge boxing fan yourself and would have had dealing with over the years with regards your love of the sport. But can I say with regards to any sporting organisation, I feel that they work better when the local authority is involved and given assistance and a helping hand. On that regard, I want to thank Wicklow County Council and to thank the Municipal District in particular, for a local sporting organisation that was struggling a couple years ago for a hope, rat knew boxing club assisted by Wicklow County Council and the Municipal District in the availing and use of the hall in County Wicklow Town. To give great joy to express to the members that we have an all-Ireland champion,



Adam Sinner, who was successful at the weekend. I attended a boxing tournament in Arklow, a 3-day event, to see the facilities down there, it is a joy to see. The Director of the community and cultural development section is sitting here today. He commissioned a sport and a recreational audit for the County Wicklow Municipal District, I would appeal today to all sporting organisations, whether they be from Bocking, rugby, volleyball, tennis, whatever it is, that they all engage in this, I think it's the way forward. When I think, Chief Executive, you did mention in regards to the success of the community investor's investment fund, nearly 120,000 euro, spread out over four organisations, it was most welcome for the community centres involved and also Minister Humphreys distributing 2,000 Euros to 400 men sheds throughout Ireland, 14 of which are in the county that play a huge role with regards to senior citizens and indeed to make a commitment to fund women sheds and we have one in Rethrew and in Blessington and there are plans for more. So, it is easy to knock all the time but when good stuff is happening out there, it is very important to make the members aware that the council are playing their part and indeed our ministers, by funding local organisations. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Cllr John Snell.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I know that John has brought up the Greenway, and the Shillelagh Greenway, and the CEO gave commitment to the progression but as 15 years, it is a long, long time to be still there and working on. Even so, 15 years waiting for lights to be repaired in Upper Balare and in Shillelagh, it is long in regard to that aspect. 15 years to wait 3 lights to be repaired is crazy. I have been on to the situation for a number of years in the past. And it is unacceptable. 3 lights, that they could not be repaired. The second thing is in relation to the grants. Just seeing on page 9 and 10 of your report, that the 2.3 million, only 1 million spent to date and we are heading for the back end of the year. It is approved or waiting to be drawn down? But certainly, out of 2.3 million, 1 million only spent and with our social housing programme, with that money that is spent, and particularly as people are crying out for new doors, windows, so there is money that is not spent and we are heading to the back end of the year, so I think we need answers on it. Hopefully there will be answers for it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: And to ...

>> Many people may want to open their homes as you have done yourself, Cathaoirleach, given what is happening at the moment out there. I wondered what is the protocol for inspecting homes, does the council have a say or not? Can we have clarity for those considering who may be considering offering homes to help people. The community grants given. I am delighted for the communities that got them. The community centres, there are five in county County Wicklow. Looking through the list, there were many to other counties, Wexford, and neighbouring counties that seemed to have double or treble the number of successful applicants getting 25,000 each, did we do something wrong in County Wicklow, why did we only get five grants and the final thing to ask, you mentioned the Chief Executive, in the report, there that the [inaudible] scheme, to provide up to 50,000 Euros to properties that need a little bit of rejuvenation to make them liveable. I really think it is a good scheme. Given we have dereliction in towns and villages, should we not be doing something to promote that as a solution for many people who may have housing issues and to help them out. I think that is one to be promoted by the County Council. I don't think anyone knows about it. I think we should latch on to it to promote it as much as possible.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Bourke. Grace McManus.

CLLR MCMANUS: A small request for the Chief Executive but it could have a big impact. When there are severe weather warnings, I am not just talking a snow or a storm but yellow, orange, weather warnings can elected members get email about the referral processes for those who need a cold weather bed. We discussed it in the Municipal District level earlier in the year, the members agree it will be useful. I know that the council are getting in contact with the homeless services but there may be roof sleepers we know that are not linked in or maybe not aware that the bad weather is

coming so good for us to play an active role to ensure that the most vulnerable have a way in to a cold weather bed when needed. In particular, concerned with the increasing number of those because of climate change and I just think it will add an extra layer of improved communication and to help members to be proactive to look after those sleeping rough. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Derek Mitchell?

CLLR MITCHELL: Just, sorry, I was not present for the meeting with the Minister for Transport last Friday. But I was not available.

The suggestion of Cllr Joe Behan to meet the TII is a very good one. I think that they must be put on the spot as to what on Earth is happening. The minister, I don't think from what I hear, gave clear answers at all. The other aspect that the minister did not give clarity, not only is he cancelling the N11 but he does not seem to produce a plan for the railway to make it work properly.

I think we should write to the NTA to ask what they are doing about that.

I wrote a paper in 2018 about making it work, part of that has got into, it seems the Dart Plus Coastal Plan, that the NTA said that they would consult with the public this year on that plan. Now it is getting late to consult with the public this year. We should ask when the consultation is to be. It was stated by the NTA, definitively, it would be this year, it has not started yet. Also, south of Greystones, there are rumours of improvement in service of a shuttle or something to County Wicklow Town. But my paper provided, as Cllr Winters was asking for, for three direct trains at rush hour of 8 carriages.

There seems no, we don't know where that is. I think there should be a plan. Particularly in view of the problems with the N11. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Derek Mitchell. Chief Executive?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thanks. In relation to that, the shuttle service was raised at the meeting, and the majority of the members were very supportive of that proposal. Also, the recent Pathfinder Project we got approval for and we are meeting with the department shortly in relation to that matter. It does include, I suppose, the improvement of rail services, with the development of travel measures to get people to the train stations but obviously we need a better train service provided and that is pushed and our point made when we do meet the department in relation to the Pathfinder Project. We can do our part but we need Irish Rail to do their part. The severe weather warnings, is that an email you are looking for, Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: Yes, but to include then where we send people sleeping rough for cold weather beds. It is a homeless specific weather warning initiative.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Joe, can you come in on that?

JOE: We normally deal with that with the local people but we will look into it.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you. Cllr Sylvester Bourke questioned inspecting homes in relation to the Ukraine situation? We have done fantastic works; Grainne O'Neill has done great work. And pledges matched with Ukraine families and working on the shared accommodation. It is expected that a new pledge system will be launched shortly. Probably a little towards the end of the month and a new IT system to be developed across all of the Local Authorities. We have been doing inspections in relation to the homes. And the new system will be for single vacant premises, not for shared accommodation. That will stay with the Irish Red Cross, looking after in collecting the applications for shared accommodation. This is for vacant properties. So, the same system as before, we take it in, evaluate it, inspect the home and then allocate to Ukrainian families. I think there are a couple of housing questions to hand over to Joe.

JOE: The second one, there is no cause of concern. The profile is to date, to point out that the windows and the doors programme is not included for our own local authority. That is the second one, the 800,000. The normal expenditure, the maintenance and relay Budget across all or most areas is fairly used, so not concern in that regard. And I think that all relets across all funding is 100% at this stage, maybe more in some cases! The fund for, the private sector control, we are not aware of systematic issues, however these things are slow and come into the end of the year. We will look in the week but we have not a systematic issue, there are applications that are read as they come in [sic] if there is a particular application, posing a problem, we always look at it. But it is not systemic there.

And we recent received in getting funding for a vacant sight officer there are issues, and we concentrate on the CPOs we have 12 or 13 successful participants, and going to resource-heavy processes and concentrating on affordable purchases with the council's scheme in Green Hills, there are two schemes at [inaudible] that we are talking about, one is a refurbished site and one is a vacant property, that we will advertise relatively near in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Leonora?

>> We asked NRVO to investigate that problem so will follow up with the 3 lights and I will keep in contact with you on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Leonora.

>> As you know, councillor, when we apply for grants, we have a very good record. In that case, the community applied for the grants. We had no part in it. Few applications were made from Wicklow, we don't know why that was but we have no part in it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. Everyone's questions been answered? Thank you.

Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy?

CLLR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I wanted to welcome the 5.3 million received under the LEDO [sic] programme, a huge boost for the county, it goes into every small community, yes it covers enterprise business but a huge boost for Wicklow. I wanted to welcome it, it is probably one of the biggest funding streams that we will get and to acknowledge the work that goes on from the Wicklow County Council partnership and from our own Director Mike Nicholson and the staff upstairs in relation to the delivery and to the LCDC Board. It is a huge amount of money. Very welcome, and it will do a huge amount of work. Looking back over the 25 years, to see the money coming from this area and it must be acknowledged.

CLLR LEONARD: To agree with Pat, nobody knows the work that goes on in the background within this department. Just a few questions. In relation to, going back to transport. I suppose, to ask, to what level is there a plan for electric rail? The feasibility studies, with the rail electrification to come down to Wicklow and it was proposed that we should look at it coming down to Arklow and not just Wicklow. So, to propose that, that it can be looked at as part of all of the same thing. In relation to two other things, the Coast Hal Protection, the OBW is in the throes of doing the next stage of the rail protection thing and the detached barriers along the coast but that leaves Arklow and [inaudible] Boxing Day short and I wonder is there a further funding to put in coastal protection. Down to as far as Arklow. And from the CRM, we were given a review of the councillor's portal to check our own reps that we put in. I find lately, I don't know if it is a resource issue, I know lots of the staff are under pressure but I just find it is difficult to, I'm chasing reps all the time and I don't know if the other members experience the same thing. It is to avoid repeating myself sending emails to be great to get the system up and running so that we can access it ourselves.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive for the report. It seems to me every month, the report is a roller-coaster of the reality of what it means to be a councillor. There is good. There is good, positive but weaknesses and strengths and elements to shed a light on. To ask about the housing section. The numbers are stark. By my calculation in terms of child homelessness we have a homeless child for every single day of the year up to the point that the report was written, and the notes are off the charts. There are alarm bells, it is difficult to celebrate the millions and millions of euros going into tourism and leisure-based activities and wherever else, when across the county there are people really, really suffering. So, the question, what is the barrier to removing the boarded-up houses? In particular in Bray? They are there ... I would love to know the cost to put boards up on houses and what is that ongoing? But also, to know what is the barrier to removing them. Again, people are looking at them as they suffer. If it is central Government that's at issue, it is something that we should know and to lobby to change in that regard. Also, a question around the Place Finders [sic] is that no longer a lone role? Is it integrated and is it a loss that we will have to suffer the impact from, considering the volume of people that we present. And the last one, a recent experience where a member, a constituent from Wicklow could not source their HAP accommodation in the county but lucky enough to source it in the neighbouring county but they were rejected as a person was not in full-time employment or education, so that seems a discrimination, so, can we look at Local Authorities blocking that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: A follow-up question on the CEO's response and the RRDF from Baltinglass, to have a revised option from after ARUP on the town plan. What is that option? Is it a slimmed back version of the original application? Or is there detail here, after the meeting? And secondly, you are waiting for ARUP for an option on the library, do you know when they will be back with that option on the library change?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: We approved a process for the Enniskillen pedestrian scheme we are waiting for estimations that are needed. Daily, the situation is getting worse, the work that must be done. Is it that we can get the conservation engineer's report to get the work done. It will be a fantastic opportunity to get the village improved. Basically, everything is hanging on the report. I would like support on getting it done. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Melanie Corrigan. The Chief Executive?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will answer the ones that I can, passing on the ones I can't. In a follow-up to Cllr Edward Timmins, to RRDF, there are a number of costs involved. There is a slimmed down version, maybe leaving some elements out. There is not just one option. But a number of options to discuss with the department. In relation to the library, that we have gone back to the consultants, that is not ARUP, ARUP are dealing with the public elements, it is an architect group looking after the library one. I don't have the name. We have put on them the urgency in relation to the matter. When we get it back, we are putting a consolidated report into the environment and seeking a meeting as soon as possible, councillor.

In relation to the CRM system, I think, look, we will take it on board and investigate it and see if there are issues in that record and report back to you. If I can hand over to Joe in relation to the housing inquiries? Or part 8 from Cllr Melanie Corrigan if Lorraine wants to take that?

>> I myself and Cllr Melanie Corrigan had a conversation before the meeting. This part of an overall project in relation to Enniskerry town and village, the proposal to carry on works on the square. There was a structure report carried out by an architect, who recommended that a conservation, conservation engineer have a look at the monument of the clock and so we move on that Cllr

Melanie Corrigan, and I will keep you updated. Just in relation to Cllr Peir Leonard, I will have a look into your reps to see if there is any bottleneck and come back to you. Thank you.

JOE: Councillor, I will start with the good news. The solution to some of the homeless issues, and one of the issues with the re-let's, with the success of the housing delivery programme, that is a different criterion ... [inaudible] but we can deliver well in excess of the target. About 360, a third of which in Bray, to create a solution for some of the homelessness and create more re-let's. Simple as that. We trying to extend the spend by looking at the houses to get those with minimal work to get people into them as quickly as possible. But there are some that need more money. And the Bray funding is under pressure from the word go as we targeted the leasing down near the Dart for downsizing and for freeing up the 3-beds. That put pressure on the relets in Bray. So, there are units. We have ream, maybe it has not gone in yet but furnished the Manchester a detailed account on the issues and the monies required to move this ahead. So, it is partly a success but there are units that again we will concentrate on in the short-term with next year's money to start spending that, November, December, January but by April we will be in trouble again but trying to target those as quickly to get it back in. But they are expensive and some of you know, that we get a house from first or a second move. But we have not seen it for a while. The other question, I will talk to you about in the context of the follow-up case. We cannot discuss the case. We need to get details in and that does not sound right, I think there was a veto on some of those. You may talk to Teresa on that particular case.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone happy with the answers?

>> I wanted to come back on Cllr Peir Leonard. In relation to the electrics of rails, to be delivered through the strategy. There is also the Dart Coastal Plus, which is looking at that programme to, as far as Greystones but understanding that there after they are looking past Greystones, we just don't have a time frame. We can raise both this and Cllr Derek Mitchell's inquiries and keep the pressure on with the NTA there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We have had presentation for the masterplan to Glendalough, I felt it important bring it up at the time. But to make the Chief Executive aware, it is still our responsibility. Obviously, Glendalough as it stands in conjunction with the partners, the OPW, et cetera but it has been brought to my attention, we invested money through the local authority regards to the toilet facilities in Glendalough, it was part of the tender, that upkeep of the toilet facilities, to look after that. Unfortunately, it has been brought to my attention it is not what you deem acceptable. So, if we can look at that. I don't want Wicklow County Council to be seen to be letting down the side, when obviously, they tendered out that contract. Just to make sure that is properly kept under review. I suppose, Cathaoirleach, in regard to sporting organisations and I know you are a huge boxing fan yourself and would have had dealing with over the years with regards your love of the sport. But can I say with regards to any sporting organisation, I feel that they work better when the local authority is involved and given assistance and a helping hand. On that regard, I want to thank Wicklow County Council and to thank the Municipal District in particular, for a local sporting organisation that was struggling a couple years ago for a hope, rat knew boxing club assisted by Wicklow County Council and the Municipal District in the availing and use of the hall in County Wicklow Town. To give great joy to express to the members that we have an all-Ireland champion, Adam Sinner, who was successful at the weekend. I attended a boxing tournament in Arklow, a 3-day event, to see the facilities down there, it is a joy to see. The Director of the community and cultural development section is sitting here today. He commissioned a sport and a recreational audit for the County Wicklow Municipal District, I would appeal today to all sporting organisations, whether they be from Bocking, rugby, volleyball, tennis, whatever it is, that they all engage in this, I think it's the way forward. When I think, Chief Executive, you did mention in regards to the success of the community investor's investment fund, nearly 120,000 euro, spread out over four

organisations, it was most welcome for the community centres involved and also Minister Humphreys distributing 2,000 Euros to 400 men sheds throughout Ireland, 14 of which are in the county that play a huge role with regards to senior citizens and indeed to make a commitment to fund women sheds and we have one in Rethrew and in Blessington and there are plans for more. So, it is easy to knock all the time but when good stuff is happening out there, it is very important to make the members aware that the council are playing their part and indeed our ministers, by funding local organisations. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

Thank you, Cllr John Snell.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I know that John has brought up the Greenway, and the Shillelagh Greenway, and the CEO gave commitment to the progression but as 15 years, it is a long, long time to be still there and working on. Even so, 15 years waiting for lights to be repaired in Upper Balare and in Shillelagh, it is long in regard to that aspect. 15 years to wait 3 lights to be repaired is crazy. I have been on to the situation for a number of years in the past. And it is unacceptable. 3 lights, that they could not be repaired. The second thing is in relation to the grants. Just seeing on page 9 and 10 of your report, that the 2.3 million, only 1 million spent to treat and we are heading for the back end of the year. It is approved or waiting to be drawn down? But certainly, out of 2.3 million, 1 million only spent and with our social housing programme, with that money that is spent, and particularly as people are crying out for new doors, windows, so there is money that is not spent and we are heading to the back end of the year, so I think we need answers on it. Hopefully there will be answers for it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: And to ...

>> Many people may want to open their homes as you have done yourself, Cathaoirleach, given what is happening at the moment out there. I wondered what is the protocol for inspecting homes, does the down have a say or not? Can we have clarity for those considering who may be considering offering homes to help people. The community grants given. I am delighted for the communities that got them. The community centres, there are five in county County Wicklow. Looking through the list, there were many to other counties, Wexford, and neighbouring counties that seemed to have double or treble the number of successful applicants getting 25,000 each, did we do something wrong in County Wicklow, why did we only get five grants and the final thing to ask, you mentioned the Chief Executive, in the report, there that the [inaudible] scheme, to provide up to 50,000 Euros to properties that need a little bit of rejuvenation to make them liveable. I really think it is a good scheme. Given we have dereliction in towns and villages, should we not be doing something to promote that as a solution for many people who may have housing issues and to help them out. I think that is one to be promoted by the County Council. I don't think anyone knows about it. I think we should latch on to it to promote it as much as possible.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Bourke. Grace McManus.

CLLR MCMANUS: A small request for the Chief Executive but it could have a big impact. When there are severe weather warnings, I am not just talking a snow or a storm but yellow, orange, weather warnings can elected members get email about the referral processes for those who need a cold weather bed. We discussed it in the Municipal District level earlier in the year, the members agree it will be useful. I know that the council are getting in contact with the homeless services but there may be roof sleepers we know that are not linked in or maybe not aware that the bad weather is coming so good for us to play an active role to ensure that the most vulnerable have a way in to a cold weather bed when needed. In particular, concerned with the increasing number of those

because of climate change and I just think it will add an extra layer of improved communication and to help members to be proactive to look after those sleeping rough. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Derek Mitchell?

CLLR MITCHELL: Just, sorry, I was not present for the meeting with the Minister for Transport last Friday. But I was not available.

The suggestion of Cllr Joe Behan to meet the TII is a very good one. I think that they must be put on the spot as to what on Earth is happening. The minister, I don't think from what I hear, gave clear answers at all. The other aspect that the minister did not give clarity, not only is he cancelling the N11 but he does not seem to produce a plan for the railway to make it work properly.

I think we should write to the NTA to ask what they are doing about that.

I wrote a paper in 2018 about making it work, part of that has got into, it seems the Dart Plus Coastal Plan, that the NTA said that they would consult with the public this year on that plan. Now it is getting late to consult with the public this year. We should ask when the consultation is to be. It was stated by the NTA, definitively, it would be this year, it has not started yet. Also, south of Greystones, there are rumours of improvement in service of a shuttle or something to County Wicklow Town. But my paper provided, as Cllr Winters was asking for, for three direct trains at rush hour of 8 carriages.

There seems no, we don't know where that is. I think there should be a plan. Particularly in view of the problems with the N11. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Derek Mitchell. Chief Executive?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thanks. In relation to that, the shuttle service was raised at the meeting, and the majority of the members were very supportive of that proposal. Also, the recent Pathfinder Project we got approval for and we are meeting with the department shortly in relation to that matter. It does include, I suppose, the improvement of rail services, with the development of travel measures to get people to the train stations but obviously we need a better train service provided and that is pushed and our point made when we do meet the department in relation to the Pathfinder Project. We can do our part but we need Irish Rail to do their part. The severe weather warnings, is that an email you are looking for, Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: Yes, but to include then where we send people sleeping rough for cold weather beds. It is a homeless specific weather warning initiative.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Joe, can you come in on that?

JOE: We normally deal with that with the local people but we will look into it.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you. Cllr Sylvester Bourke questioned inspecting homes in relation to the Ukraine situation? We have done fantastic works; Grainne O'Neill has done great work. And pledges matched with Ukraine families and working on the shared accommodation. It is expected that a new pledge system will be launched shortly. Probably a little towards the end of the month and a new IT system to be developed across all of the Local Authorities. We have been doing inspections in relation to the homes. And the new system will be for single vacant premises, not for shared accommodation. That will stay with the Irish Red Cross, looking after in collecting the applications for shared accommodation. This is for vacant properties. So, the same system as before, we take it

in, evaluate it, inspect the home and then allocate to Ukrainian families. I think there are a couple of housing questions to hand over to Joe.

JOE: The second one, there is no cause of concern. The profile is to date, to point out that the windows and the doors programme is not included for our own local authority. That is the second one, the 800,000. The normal expenditure, the maintenance and relay Budget across all or most areas is fairly used, so not concern in that regard. And I think that all relets across all funding is 100% at this stage, maybe more in some cases! The fund for, the private sector control, we are not aware of systematic issues, however these things are slow and come into the end of the year. We will look in the week but we have not a systematic issue, there are applications that are read as they come in [sic] if there is a particular application, posing a problem, we always look at it. But it is not systemic there.

And we recent received in getting funding for a vacant sight officer there are issues, and we concentrate on the CPOs we have 12 or 13 successful participants, and going to resource-heavy processes and concentrating on affordable purchases with the council's scheme in Green Hills, there are two schemes at [inaudible] that we are talking about, one is a refurbished site and one is a vacant property, that we will advertise relatively near in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Leonora?

>> We asked NRVO to investigate that problem so will follow up with the 3 lights and I will keep in contact with you on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Leonora.

>> As you know, councillor, when we apply for grants, we have a very good record. In that case, the community applied for the grants. We had no part in it. Few applications were made from Wicklow, we don't know why that was but we have no part in it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. Everyone's questions been answered? Thank you.

Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy?

CLLR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I wanted to welcome the 5.3 million received under the LEDO [sic] programme, a huge boost for the county, it goes into every small community, yes it covers enterprise business but a huge boost for Wicklow. I wanted to welcome it, it is probably one of the biggest funding streams that we will get and to acknowledge the work that goes on from the Wicklow County Council partnership and from our own Director Mike Nicholson and the staff upstairs in relation to the delivery and to the LCDC Board. It is a huge amount of money. Very welcome, and it will do a huge amount of work. Looking back over the 25 years, to see the money coming from this area and it must be acknowledged.

CLLR LEONARD: To agree with Pat, nobody knows the work that goes on in the background within this department. Just a few questions. In relation to, going back to transport. I suppose, to ask, to what level is there a plan for electric rail? The feasibility studies, with the rail electrification to come down to Wicklow and it was proposed that we should look at it coming down to Arklow and not just Wicklow. So, to propose that, that it can be looked at as part of all of the same thing. In relation to two other things, the Coast Hal Protection, the OBW is in the throes of doing the next stage of the rail protection thing and the detached barriers along the coast but that leaves Arklow and [inaudible] Boxing Day short and I wonder is there a further funding to put in coastal protection. Down to as far as Arklow. And from the CRM, we were given a review of the councillor's portal to check our own



reps that we put in. I find lately, I don't know if it is a resource issue, I know lots of the staff are under pressure but I just find it is difficult to, I'm chasing reps all the time and I don't know if the other members experience the same thing. It is to avoid repeating myself sending emails to be great to get the system up and running so that we can access it ourselves.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive for the report. It seeks me every month, the report it is a roller-coaster of the reality of what it means to be a councillor. There is good. There is good, positive but weaknesses and strengths and elements to shed a light on. To ask about the housing section. The numbers are stark. By my calculation in terms of child homelessness we have a homeless child for every single day of the year up to the point that the report was written, and the notes are off the charts. There are alarm bells, it is difficult to celebrate the millions and millions of euros going into tourism and leisure-based activities and wherever else, when across the county there are people really, really suffering. So, the question, what is the barrier to removing the boarded-up houses? In particular in Bray? They are there ... I would love to know the cost to put boards up on houses and what is that ongoing? But also, to know what is the barrier to removing them. Again, people are looking at them as they suffer. If it is central Government that's at issue, it is something that we should know and to lobby to change in that regard. Also, a question around the Place Finders [sic] is that no longer a lone role? Is it integrated and is it a loss that we will have to suffer the impact from, considering the volume of people that we present. And the last one, a recent experience where a member, a constituent from Wicklow could not source their HAP accommodation in the county but lucky enough to source it in the neighbouring county but they were rejected as a person was not in full-time employment or education, so that seems a discrimination, so, can we look at Local Authorities blocking that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: A follow-up question on the CEO's response and the RRDF from Baltinglass, to have a revised option from after ARUP on the town plan. What is that option? Is it a slimmed back version of the original application? Or is there detail here, after the meeting? And secondly, you are waiting for ARUP for an option on the library, do you know when they will be back with that option on the library change?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: We approved a process for the Enniskillen pedestrian scheme we are waiting for estimations that are needed. Daily, the situation is getting work, the work that must be done. Is it that we can get the conservation engineer's report to get the work done. It will be a fantastic opportunity to get the village improved. Basically, everything is hanging on the report. I would like support on getting it done. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Melanie Corrigan. The Chief Executive?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will answer the ones that I can, passing on the ones I can't. In a follow-up to Cllr Edward Timmins, to RRDF, there are a number of costs involved. There is a slimmed down version, maybe leaving some elements out. There is not just one option. But a number of options to discuss with the department. In relation to the library, that we have gone back to the consultants, that is not ARUP, ARUP are dealing with the public elements, it is an architect group looking after the library one. I don't have the name. We have put on them the urgency in

relation to the matter. When we get it back, we are putting a consolidated report into the environment and seeking a meeting as soon as possible, councillor.

In relation to the CRM system, I think, look, we will take it on board and investigate it and see if there are issues in that record and report back to you. if I can hand over to Joe in relation to the housing inquiries? Or part 8 from Cllr Melanie Corrigan if Lorraine wants to take that?

>> I myself and Cllr Melanie Corrigan had a conversation before the meeting. This part of an overall project in relation to Ennis Cary town and village, the proposal to carry on works on the square. There was a structure report carried out by an architect, who recommended that a conservation, conservation engineer have a look at the monument of the clock and so we move on that Cllr Melanie Corrigan, and I will keep you updated. Just in relation to Cllr Peir Leonard, I will have a look into your reps to see if there is any bottleneck and come back to you. Thank you.

JOE: Councillor, I will start with the good news. The solution to some of the homeless issues, and one of the issues with the re-let's, with the success of the housing delivery programme, that is a different criterion ... [inaudible] but we can deliver well in excess of the target. About 360, a third of which in Bray, to create a solution for some of the homelessness and create more re-lets. Simple as that. We trying to extend the spend by looking at the houses to get those with minimal work to get people into them as quickly as possible. But there are some that need more money. And the Bray funding is under pressure from the word go as we targeted the leasing down near the Dart for downsizing and for freeing up the 3-beds. That put pressure on the relets in Bray. So, there are units. We have ream, maybe it has not gone in yet but furnished the Manchester a detailed account on the issues and the monies required to move this ahead. So, it is partly a success but there are units that again we will concentrate on in the short-term with next year's money to start spending that, November, December, January but by April we will be in trouble again but trying to target those as quickly to get it back in. But they are expensive and some of you know, that we get a house from first or a second move. But we have not seen it for a while. The other question, I will talk to you about in the context of the follow-up case. We cannot discuss the case. We need to get details in and that does not sound right, I think there was a veto on some of those. You may talk to Teresa on that particular case.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone happy with the answers?

>> I wanted to come back on Cllr Peir Leonard. In relation to the electrics of rails, to be delivered through the strategy. There is also the Dart Coastal Plus, which is looking at that programme to, as far as Greystones but understanding that there after they are looking past Greystones, we just don't have a time frame. We can raise both this and Cllr Derek Mitchell's inquiries and keep the pressure on with the NTA there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Breege Kilkenny.

BREEGE KILKENNY: We lost a lot of staff over the last while, so on that basis, we now have a new executive engineer in place, so part of his duties, he'll be tasked to look at that particular issue to assist. I know you had a couple of projects and we were trying to get those moved off the ground. But basically, Mark wasn't able to handle it on his own. We'll keep you updated on that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Rory O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: A quick one, Cathaoirleach. Many counties across Ireland, not just bordering counties, got money out of that for the Local Authority funding. I was wondering, did we apply for that funding?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I will have to look into that, councillor. Can I come back to you directly on that? Thanks.

HELEN PURCELL: Just to note the circulation of two circulars, LGO5 2022, which related to allowances and expenses of elected members, was changes to travel and subs rates and also clarification on the LRA, particularly in relation to telephone and advertising expenses.

LGO6 2022, which was related to the allowances and expenses for elected men's also clarification certain matters relating to home office expenses under the LRA.

Also, to note, a letter received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, relating to the Electoral Reform Act, to note the circulation of CPG and protocol minutes to date. The CPG minutes of the 13th June and 7th March and protocol minutes of the other meetings.

We are having a public JPC meeting this Thursday at 7.00 pm in the Little Bray Family Resource Centre. Really, it would be appreciated if some of the elected members, particularly the local ones, could attend. Attendance has been very poor in recent times.

The budget meeting is a 10.00 am on 8th November. It was agreed at the AGM.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. Notice of Motion and that's in the name of ...

HELEN PURCELL: There's a Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr Erika Doyle, seconded by Cllr Miriam Murphy. Is Cllr Doyle with us?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Doyle, are you online? No. We'll have to leave that.

Members, can I just say thank you very much for helping me get through this meeting. I really appreciate it. Safe home everyone. Corporate policy meeting is next. Thank you.

(5.03 pm)