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Wicklow County Council

Ordinary Meeting

Monday 10th January 2022

CATHAOIRLEACH: Hi, all. Can you hear me? You are very welcome to the January meeting. We will kick off. We will do a roll call. Before that, I want to wish everyone a happy New Year. Welcome back. Hope you enjoyed your Christmas holidays. It is not long going by. So back into a New Year. I will hand over to Helen for a roll call.

HEAD OF FINANCE: Just to welcome everybody, the elected members, the members of the press and members of the public present. To ask all to ensure that mobile phones are switched to silent. If not to leave the online meeting without informing Cathaoirleach and myself. To have speakers keep cameras and mike phones off, when not for them to be on mute. Now we will take a roll call ...

[Registration Roll Call]

CLlr Sylvester Bourke and Cardinal Keith O'Brien are having issues, we will get them in a minute.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Before we go to votes of sympathy, members, to use the hand function button to make yourself available. I can only see 9 members in front of me. So it is important to use that function.

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OK. Votes of sympathy, please? Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Sympathy to Cllr Edward Timmins on the death of his father and to his daughter, Orla, and son and to the rest of the family as well. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Anybody else? Anybody else showing? No? OK. I will propose a vote of sympathy for the Flynn family, on the death of Pat Flynn, an uncle of Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, condole lenses to the family. Cardinal Keith O'Brien? Bryan sorry I had trouble coming in, can I pay tribute to Liam Kavanagh who passed away before Christmas. I want to thank all for being in touch. Liam was a Councillor, a TD and minister, and condolences to Margaret and to Rosemary both daughter and granddaughter and Rhianne. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, over to Helen.

HEAD OF FINANCE: We think of ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Did someone indicate?

CLLR CRONIN: Sorry, I know you may not have seen my hand.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Avril Cronin go ahead.

CLLR CRONIN: I would like to echo sympathies to the Timmins family. and also to the Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy family. To pass on sympathies, please to Billy Lee in Donavan, on the death of his brother, John, over the Christmas as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Edward Timmins?

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CLLR TIMMINS: I would like to have a word of sympathy for a young child, Patrick Burn, 6 years of age who passed away over the last few days, a relation of our colleague, Cllr. Vincent Blake.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Helen?

HEAD OF FINANCE: In addition to that, we, to the people, we think of former colleague, Peter Fielen, Eamon Moles and Piers Caldorsfield and to the Whelan family. And the McLachlan family and to Alexander G Flood, Dinny Dunne and Father Kavanagh.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, so a moment's silence to remember all who have passed.

Internal rest granted on them, oh, Lord, may they rest in peace.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two items before the full agenda. One is that I would like, with your support, to conclude the main agenda by 4.30pm to go to the notices of motion. I notice some have been there for a while. I would like to get those done today if possible. With your support we will try to go to notice of motion for 4.30pm. Secondly, I just want to welcome our newly appointed interim Chief Executive, Brian Gleeson as formerly the Head of Finance. No doubt that Brian will be doing a superb job as the Chief Executive. Always accessible in the past as the Head of Finance, I see that continuing as the Chief Executive, an exciting time to be the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council with important projects planned for County Wicklow. We have to speak of the likes of the Greenways, the housing plans, the count development

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plan, the funding for URDF and the town and outdoor recreational, so an exciting time for Brian to take the helm to wish him well in the new role. No doubt he will do a superb job. Brian, you very welcome. BRIAN: It is a great privilege to be appointed the interim Chief Executive for the Wicklow County Council. Looking forward to the challenge over the coming year to work with the members over the coming months. County Wicklow, as a counterparty has made a great progress. And in the meetings. Number of achievements underlined by Frank Curran. While the leadership has changed the staff, the initiatives in all of the projects are still here. We have a great team and management in place with a talented and committed outdoor and indoor staff, so confidence to continue with the progress we have made to date over the coming months. As the Cathaoirleach mentioned we have a number of exciting challenges and initiatives planned for the year, including the implementation of housing for all, county development plan, the URDF and the Greenway projects and the public lighting and LED programming. So, really looking forward to the challenges and to working with all of you on the projects and the initiatives. Also to take the opportunity to highlight the fact that Breeda McCarthy is taking over as the Acting Head of Finance as interim for me so I would like to wish her all the best of luck in that position. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Pat Fitzgerald would you like to come in?

CLLR FITZGERALD: Cllr Peter Bourke is having a difficulty getting into the system.

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CLLR BOURKE: I'm in now. It is OK.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Pat Fitzgerald can you remove the hand signal. Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Sorry, Cathaoirleach I was muted. A happy New Year to yourself and to all colleagues and staff. Do you have plans for an in-person meeting for the February meeting? The resulting difficulties from Omicron have clearly not put the pressure on the hospitalisation, people are triple vaccinated and I think it is essential to get back to normal as quickly as properly. Secondly, I am not happy with the Teams format. The Zoom you could see pretty much everybody if you scroll across. It is not satisfactory. We were not told why it was changed. We are operating Zoom for the Municipal District, it is fine. I think it is far more user friendly than the Microsoft Teams.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Joe Behan. The sooner we get back to a full chamber situation for my like, the better. We will assess that to speak to the Chief Executive and to Lorraine ... [inaudible] but it is guidelines from the relevant departments that we are working from. Cllr Joe Behan, I have discussed it numerous occasions, I don't like the format for myself as the Cathaoirleach but unfortunately, I have to continue as best as I can with it.

Even when I am speaking there is a bit of feedback, I don't know if you can hear that? But I suppose to answer your question, Cllr Joe Behan we are looking at that as soon as possible.

Cllr Gail Dunne?

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CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I agree with Cllr Joe Behan on the issue. To mark your card, really, to go forward with the county development plan. With so many, I think that we all received the county development plan. With so much work to be done, I think it will be impossible to do over a Zoom or a Teams meeting. I think that with all of the amendments, it will be impossible to do. So please to mark your card. I think it is something that musting looked into.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Is council aware you can get a full screen and see everybody on it?

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. I would like to move on if possible. Item 1. To confirm and to sign the minutes of the annual Budget held on the 29th November 2021. Who is that? Cllr John Snell? OK. Seconded? Cllr Pat Fitzgerald. OK.

Thank you. Item 2. To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting, Wicklow County Council held on Monday 6th of December 2021. Proposed? Cllr Gail Dunne, thank you. Seconded by? Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy. OK.

Item 3. To consider the disposal of 0.0933 hectares or 0.253 acres of Upper Dargal Road to Mr O'Bryan and O'Donnell as legal and personal representatives of Sheila Cavanagh deceased and to Mr Ryan and Noel Dawson as the legal representatives of Mr Michael Kavanagh deceased as previously circulated. Proposed by Cllr Joe Behan. Seconded by Councillor Anne Ferris.

OK.

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Item 4. To consider, sorry are all agreed?

[All speak at once]

Agreed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK.

Item 4 ... to consider the disposal of 9 square metres or thereabouts of the property comprised in WW2174F in the townland of Bally Nairn Wicklow County Council. Wicklow, County Wicklow by transfer order 2SB to 2 Gateway Walk. Proposed by Cllr John Snell. Seconded by? Councillor O'Brien. Item 5 to consider the disposal of 12 square metres of folio WW102002, entry 98, planned 59 Wicklow County Council in the townland of Shillelagh, to Mr Brian Dorne of Carnew Wicklow County Council, as previously circulated. To have a proposer and a seconder? Cllr John Mullen. Cllr. Vincent Blake. Thank you. All agreed? Agreed. Item 6. To note the local government statutory audit report to the elected members for the year ending 31st of December 2020 report attached we have Breeda McCarthy, firstly to wish you well in the new role as the Acting Head of Finance. This is the first part of business from the council meeting.

>>: Thank you. Thank you Cathaoirleach. Happy New Year to yourself and to the members and to my colleagues. And the report to the members for the year-end of 31st of December 2020 should be read with the audited financial statement, 2020, the report to the members in the audit AFS is unqualified, this are no adjustments to the statement 2020, from the draft statement

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approved by the members at the meeting 10th 6 May. And we presented the report on the of December. In the report it was acknowledged that the council made efforts to reduce the accumulated revenue debt standing at 176 million. Acknowledged that the council maintained a strong financial position, ensuring that council services were not impacted by financial uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 and happy to implement recommendations from the previous year to include the management debt system to put in place a new system for according development contribution system and a risk management system. So a positive support recognised by the audit committee in a difficult year. Thank you. If there are questions?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Any questions for Breeda? Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: One quick question, I see we have been getting a huge amount of money, from the [inaudible] department, something about 30 million in grants and money on rates as well. A question with the regards to White Town remediation, this is no clear picture with the regards to where the future of that project is. We were led to believe down the years that the department would re-imburse Wicklow County Council in terms of costs associated with that project. So, to look at the document itself, it is difficult to ascertain if we are still in that position or not. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Breeda?

>>: In relation to White Town we are at the stage to finalise costs involved and engaged with the department as regards recovery but it is noted by the local

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Government audit as an emphasis of matter. But not in the situation where we finalised the legal costs or the costs involved.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Members, before we go on to, sorry, Breege?

CLLR KILKENNY: Yes, Cathaoirleach to answer the question in relation to White Stone. From the outset, the department, and have given no reason to consider otherwise that they will be paying for White Stone, to date, they have been paying for the consultant fees, so, it is just the status that we are at in terms of where the remediation plan is, are waiting on study results and when they are back, we will have a clearer idea of what it costs. But to say to the members, we have the understanding that we have heard nothing to the contrary, that the department would not be funding this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Breege, thank you.

Item 7. To consider to Chief Executive monthly management report December 2021, and to note the Chief Executive's monthly management report for November 2021, I know we didn't get to it in the last meeting. It has been circulated. I will open it, actually, I will hand you over to Brian firstly before I open this up.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: [inaudible]

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you on mute?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you. Just to highlight a few issues before the detail of the report. We are delighted to receive funding of 350,000 Euros for the

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environmental impact study. Also the outdoor recreational projects we received under 900,000 under the scheme for the four projects, 450,000 for the Sugar Loaf walking route, another 198,000 for the grey cliff walk and 52,000 for the Samuel Bridge access improvement and had 45,000 for the tree study and walking group of Greystones and to flag the Abbey Grounds development in County Wicklow town, it was approved in the meeting in December, so work is to progress on that in the coming year. Also to great Greystones on winning the International Liveable Community Awards in December, and a well done to Councillor Mags Crean who spearheaded the application process and initiative with the Greystones town team members and the district manager, Michael Nicholson and his district staff. So well done to everyone on that, a great achievement. Also to flag the good news last week that the Blessington have received over a 1 ML euro funding for the URDF to the generation of the town centre and e hub and visitor centre for the forthcoming Blessington green way that compliments the funding received for the Green Way and for the master plan of the town, so fantastic news for the area. The other application, Reimagine South-West County Wicklow, was unsuccessful but sought feedback from the department in relation to the application and we plan to update and to revise the application based on the feedback and resubmit it when the next call for the URDF comes in place. So, I think it was the case with the Blessington application, refused the first time, we got feedback and resubmitted it and hopefully that is the case for the next application for the south-west one. And to acknowledge and to pay tribute to our outdoor workers and to the fire and service staff to work tirelessly in Storm

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Barra in December, clearing falling trees at all hours of the day and the night. So to recognise the great work that was done and the feedback from the members and from the public over the last few weeks, that they fully appreciated the work carried out by the staff.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to the Chief Executive again. For the report. To follow-up from what Brian said on the Greystones to County Wicklow proposed Green Way and the funding from TII is welcome. In relation to the further study carried out on the proposed route, are we looking at a coastal route rather than a full-blown Green Way? Considering the SSCs and the SSA is part of the 20-kilometre proposal so, the next study, what does it focus on and the time frame around the study, when is it likely to take place? How long is it likely to last? And the rental arrears figures are still up high, based on the figures from last year. Page 10 on the 65 gas and oil boilers replaced in 2021, with 28 new oil and gas heating systems in 28 houses, so, to relate that in conjunction with page 50 with the proposal that no new fossil fuel heating systems were to be installed in public buildings after 23 under the new plans, so, does that impact on the social housing retro fitting plan? I assume after 23, there will be no new gas/oil heating systems, in the housing stock? And to welcome on page 52, in relation to the video, on the dog fouling for social media purposes, is anyone else considering this an ongoing problem? Nationally? Are there fines? I say it in conjunction to look at page 55 and the bathing water monitoring programme, that we look at new official bathing

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designated areas for the county, and a recent report on the journal that suggests that dog fouling is the main cause of four swimming ban notices issued by Dublin City planning in 21, so an issue there over the poor water quality when taken and that dog thesis were frequently detected. In areas such as [inaudible] so it is an issue and to monitor such areas and I come from an area known as the Cove in Greystones where I received complaints there in relation to some dogs not being kept under control. By some dog owners, thank you. On.

CATHAOIRLEACH: John Mullen?

JOHN MULLEN: Thank you for that. These reports are of huge value to us on the ground. I welcome the funding streams you have managed to be successful in securing in November and December and blessed by them. But as I pointed out last week and last year, this is a funding imbalance in the county south-west County Wicklow, the most rural part of the county doesn't receive anything like the same public investment that other areas of the county receive through the URDF, the NTA and the broadband and the waste water upgrades. To admit that I contacted you last week as I was obviously disappointed about the failure of the programme and in fairness to you and to colleagues you came back to explain how the process worked and in fairness you and your colleagues put the project together last year, with a view to redressing the imbalance that clearly exists now in the funding portfolio for the county. I welcome and I accept that we will be putting that forward again. But on two areas that are really frustrating me as a councillor from here, is that we

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have been waiting on a waste water upgrade for villages in Tinahely and Dunlavin for the past 18 months. It was supposed to be 18 months, nothing from Irish Water. We have a special pot of money for this project, we are a most rural district yet no projects announced idea. The other one is the role of broadband which is poor. Although we are the most rural areas, the dates given to constituents and to the villagers at the moment are that of 2025 and 2026, which is unacceptable. I know we have a recruitment issue with the broadband officer there in the county but we have to revisit this urgently as it is not acceptable in the broadband roll out in the most rural of areas. Thank you again.

CLLR MITCHELL: The councillor made a submission as the management was going to anyway this should be locally based rather than national based fund and I very much support that concept, but I think that one of the things that needed in it, like the on shore benefit fund, it should be very much directed at those who can see the wind farm and at the immediate community around that much of the coast of County Wicklow will be covered by wind turbines and it is those people that need convincing this is a good idea and it is of benefit to the country and benefit to reducing climate change. So, I think it is important that it is seen by area what is being done so it can be related to the view people have of it. And the education, starting fairly early should show what this will be doing, there should be visitor centres, there should involve maybe

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visits out to it being constructed to involve the community this is part of the community rather than being imposed on the community. While I know it is a national decision, I think that we should be lobbying for something like that, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I'm just going to bring in some of the directors. First of all, I might ask Brian to comment on the Greystones to Wicklow proposal forever Greenway first of all and then I'll ask Joe to speak on rental arrears, oil burners for the moment.

Brian first of all.

BRIAN: Well, the EIS report will determine whether to go ahead with a Greenway or alternative route. That's the whole concept so, whatever results will come out of that will determine what will be the next steps. Gerry in relation to rent arrears, I might take that as there's an influence on finance, we're conscious of the rent arrears, it has been a difficult time during COVID-19 and restrictions as regards legal routes we can't take in that regard. But, just to note that the arrears have reduced down from the last Chief Executive report was at 3.1 million so now it is 2.9 million so it is going in the right direction but as I say we're conscious of that, and we are working between the finance and housing areas, we will be working on that area.

So maybe, yeah, if we get Joe in on the other areas on the gas boilers, please.

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JOE: Two things for Cllr Gerry Walsh, one is, the 2023 regulations for public buildings we're talking about local authority or social housing is in the heap on so that Reg doesn't apply across the difficulty is that, we can struggle at times to get heating up to the required are standard of the new heat pumps for older houses and therefore that's why we're using burners in those situations. You just won't get them up, it is on the construction and insulation and heat pumps won't get it up to that level that people require.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you.

JOE: Retrofit will be a programme for a good number of years, there's an amount of houses that have to be done with the amount of money we were given with 50 last year so this programme will be going on adjusted and amended for quite some time now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thanks Joe. Breege, can I bring you in on the Wastewater upgrades for Tinahely and villages like that.

BREEGE: Certainly Cathaoirleach, I received, CCed in on a letter from Irish Water that went to director Lowry, and I was CCed in it but just to say on that, that, Tinahely is the next project in terms of the current funding, so, that they're currently looking at estimates of spend on the Wastewater plant but Tinahely is number two, and in terms of both Rathdrum and Dunlavin, these are progressing via separate national programme and they will provide the necessary capacity. I'm reading from the letter, and for growth of the settlements and they're relating this to the greater Dublin area

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supply and they're saying this work has already commenced.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Breege, do you want to comment on the offshore wind farms and benefit fund of staying in Wicklow or more specifically what Cllr Derek Mitchell is saying, staying close to the coastline in terms of the people that are affected by the wind farms, do you want to comment on that.

BREEGE: Yes, I can comment on that. As Cllr Derek Mitchell is probably aware we're already written to the department to say that we consider that the money should be ring-fenced for local projects as far as I'm aware, I might get Jackie to get back in on that, I don't think we've any further information back on it. But we have certainly made our submission to say it is our considered opinion, that the money should be kept locally and ring-fenced for local projects.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Add my tuppence worth on that, it is imperative from a council we keep the pressure on this issue. There has been strong talk that you know there's going to be a central pot of money that would be distributed across the country not the county which would certainly concern me and I think we have to be very, very strong that if we're providing the wind farms in County Wicklow, that County Wicklow has the benefit of the Community Fund so I'd absolutely be very, very strong on making sure that we're, we're heard on that one.

OK. I want to bring in Cllr Lourda Scott first of all.

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CLLR SCOTT: Thank you Cathaoirleach and happy new year to everybody, just a couple of quick questions there.

Just one on the housing scheme in lot lane I notice it is stage one approval is expected, I'm wondering could we have an update when that is likely to come through because I know there's been, it is same statement the last couple of monthly reports. And the second question I have is I'm noting at the beginning of next month and February 1, the fixed charged penalty notices will double for motorists parking on footpath and cycle paths and bus lanes and parking on footpaths gets reported to me quite a lot in our district. And affects anybody trying to go along the footpath with mobility issues or buggies et cetera, and I was just wondering, will the council wardens enforce this new fixed penalty notice?

And I wonder could the council publish reports on the fixed charged penalty notices that have been given in the county as part of the Chief Executive's monthly report, thank you?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I'm just going to bring in Jackie before Cllr Tom Fortune, Jackie, are you there?

Jackie: Just Cllr Gerry Walsh raised a question on the dog fouling end of things and the water quality so two separate items there. Just to let you know that generally our litter wardens focus in more on education and prevention, it is very difficult to enforce dog fouling you have to be there at the time it happens or rely on members of the public signing statements that we can rely on in court so we tend

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to focus in on the education and signage and regular patrols in areas where dog Walkers would be. So, that's where our focus is going to be, we met with the dog wardens, and we're hoping to do a collaborative approach in housing estates around the county, possibly do one district a month and have education piece kind of a roadshow basically on control of dogs because apart from the fouling you mentioned there, the effect of control of dogs also, that's going to happen in 2022, obviously COVID protocols permitting. Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: One point is the clarification of what we're discussing previously about the wind farms.

I would suggest that we'll end up continuing to talk about this forever, and ever, unless we really engage and get our TDs involved because, they're the people that have the position to annoy the county based or country based so that's considered. And also, I would ask that in the regards to the breaches coals that area, can I ask, and I think Breege is aware of the become ground to this, if because there's four different entities involved in that Kilcoole and New Castle, that there would be some effort made to have it co-ordinated so that we end up with a positive outcome because what's happening at the moment is, it's like interprovincial rugby tournament it is getting passed from one to the other so I would ask that would be done, thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just ask, everyone to make sure you're on

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mute if you're not speaking, please because there's feedback when people are trying to speak. Cllr Sylvester Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you Cathaoirleach.

I just wanted to query that Cathaoirleach the upgrade of the water supply in barren Darrick is ongoing and we welcome that as you know there was a problem there last year, but we got notification by Irish Water they're going to run a separate sewerage connection between Red Cross and Barndarrig. We didn't ask for this or expect this it is a welcome surprise, but I want to know the rational national for linking the sewerage with Red Cross and Barndarrig.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. OK, I'm going to go back Joe first of all on Cllr Lourda Scott's housing in Lott Lane.

Joe. This is the little time frame between November I think the report on November we have stage one approval for Lott lane, stage one is effectively the department is agreeing the fees there will be a scheme there and also, more importantly for the full council, it needs to be effectively funding the feasibility studies up to each stage so we're now working on the detail design for that, which is roughly where you were had the preliminary meeting a couple of weeks ago.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you. Breege I might bring you in on the Cllr Tom Fortune's point on the breaches in Kilcoole and upgrade of the sewage connection from Red Cross to Barrendarrig.

BREEGE: Just to say I won't upgrade on the Barrendarrig already

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supply that's for water services so maybe I don't know who is acting at the moment for director Colm Lavery, they might come in on that one, in terms of the breaches, Cllr Tom Fortune so good news there for you, just before Christmas we co-ordinated an application to the OPW with respect to some works to be undertaken there as you know, as you eluded to there, there's four entities so, we are we need to and we are in constant contact with the National Parks of Wildlife Service so it actually has to be through them, about you what we've managed to do is make an application, say in that works would be that we're looking for funding for works to be done this year, and that we would be the co-ordinated party.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you for that. Helena, can I bring you in on that the upgrade from Red Cross to Barndarrig.

HELENA: Water supply has been completed and the sewerage issue between Red Cross and Barndarrig what I believe that to be is the current treatment plant in Red Cross is not currently in the ownership of Irish Water, so it is linked around the connection between that current treatment plant and ended that to Barndarrig.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you happy with that Cllr Sylvester Bourke?

CLLR BOURKE: We should bring it up with Irish Water because we were never flagged to us that there had been happening at our last clinic with them and it is a bit unsatisfactory when we ask for things,

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we don't get them and when we don't ask for something, we get it, so I'm not happy with the whole Irish Water approach to dealing with councillors, thank you.

HELENA: Just on that, there's negotiations between Irish Water and the landowners, that the current treatment plants sits on so it is negotiations between Irish Water and those landowners but certainly we will raise it with Irish Water at our next meeting with them and we would again advise all members that where there are issues, they are raised through the councillors' representative constant details to Irish Water and through their councillor clinics.

CLLR BOURKE: We will get questions, if there's a sewer line running for three kilometres between the villages everyone will want to get into it, is it a rising main and gravity feed and where can you tap into it

HELENA: Lag it through the counsellor's desk but I'll follow it up in the meantime from our end.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine Gallagher first of all and then Cllr John Snell.

LORRAINE: Getting back to the point raised by Cllr Derek Mitchell in relation to the Community Fund there's a comprehensive response within the Chief Executive response on page 37 there, in relation to that, and the preference is, outlined in the submission that the preferencing in County Wicklow any community benefit fund should

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be locally managed and we have been given examples of the local community model that model be used that is successfully operating over the last couple of years so there's a good comprehensive update in the report Cathaoirleach thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell.

MR GLEESON: There's no problem we send on a copy of the submission we made that to our TZs to push the topic as well. We take on board the suggestion from Cllr Tom Fortune in that regard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you OK. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Once again, look at comprehensive Chief Executive's Report, but, I want to bring up in regards to an issue that the previous Chief Executive was asked twice and unfortunately frank's no longer here as we know to answer the questions, and it is a simple query, while the Chief Executive's Report currently displays a lot of aspirational projects in regards to road networks, capital works and capital main tenants works, but we have an existing issue in Newtownmount Kennedy which affects the St Catherine's school there, it is a school for children with special needs, and I raised it in October and Chief Executive and a number of other councillors came in and said they had been assured it would be done by December and the Chief Executive indicated that it would be, the issue happened in the first quarter of 2021 and we're now into 2022. For an 800-metre stretch of road, to get these children from the main road Newtownmount Kennedy up to the school they

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have to commute an extra 8-10 kilometres a day including the teachers, I'm asking, and I know there's a lot of other public representatives here familiar with the situation I'm asking this would be put on the Chief Executive's Report going forward from today. Because twice I've raised it personally, in the Chief Executive's report over the last year, in the belief that something was going to happen. And I know Brian you've only come into the seat, and I want to wish you well and in regards as a former head of finance, you understand that the financial implications of this, obviously has to be taken seriously. But, all indications are, that the insurance company for New Castle hospital, that they will foot the bill the tendering supposedly went out a number of months ago for contractors to come in and rectify this problem, and this is all the information we're getting whether it is through the Municipal District offices in Greystones through our own county council buildings, but, in the meantime, we're putting out an awful lot of staff, parents, and most importantly children, who have disabilities and all sorts of you know they have to be stuck to a routine, and we're not allowing them to get on with their daily lives the way they should be.

So, I'm asking the Chief Executive to please put it, I don't expect you'll have a report to hand, maybe one of your directors of services will, but I definitely want to put on the Chief Executive's Report going forward please.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Helena can I bring you in there, or are you

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up to speed with this.

HELENA: Just information I just have in front of me now is those works, were scheduled to be completed by Christmas, and the district engineer in Greystones is looking after the matter and Cllr John Snell I will get update after the meeting and get back to you and again, if the works have not been completed testimony be included in the next CE report going forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I ask Helena you circulate your response to the Wicklow and Greystones councillors because we've been involved in this in some shape or form, if possible, but I concur with Cllr John Snell it is a matter of urgency.

CLLR WALSH: Cllr John Snell mentioned this at the meeting I updated from the time from the district engineer as you said they were supposed to be finished by December and this was raised at our Municipal District meeting on December 14th last, the update was the contract was, assigned to the project, was finishing off other works in the general Kilcoole area and commence works at kill Mullen lane in January, commence and complete in January, that was the update as December 14th so I assume the situation remains the same, thank you.

CLLR SNELL: Yeah, just to clarify, unfortunately the same thing happened that they told the meeting when they asked the meeting

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public representatives come in to be fair to them, they gave the same information that's been given today because that's what is given to them. I have that information. Unfortunately, what I'm saying is it is not being implemented so Cllr Gerry Walsh has given an update what he's been told but the reality is I'm going back to constituents on the basis of the similar information. And I've asked the question of the knot of a public representative and I'm asking the question of the Chief Executive and the directors of services, and I'm quite happy with the answer I've got so thanks Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. OK, so,

CLLR DERMOT O'BRIEN: San Remo facility as the Cold Weather Initiative is it operating if so how many beds are available for rough sleepers and the second in relation to fire service, I'm sure people maybe notice or paying attention to the crisis in the national ambulance service in terms of their staffing and capacity to respond to issues and I note, in the chief's report for November and December the number of assists our fire service are providing and providing to ambulance and Mehdi assists and is there a conversation happening or one needs to happen, maybe it is for the SPC, but I'm conscious if the national ambulance service is really struggling in terms of staff, are we is there a co-ordinated way to pick up the slack on that or to respond so that, I know just before new year's there was no crew available to serve Wicklow. So, when

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incidents like that are happening, I imagine that air fire service are stepping in the breach there but is there in that could be more co-ordinated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, I might bring you on the San Remo centre to give an update.

JOE: It is restricted and working Dermot but restricted at the moment. We got the exact numbers. OK, we have three beds available, on Friday, we had three beds available, working within COVID guidelines.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian do you want to take the fire service?

BRIAN: As of now, we're basically there's no issues across the Wicklow fire service at the moment. There's a small number of staff unavailable but it is not impacting hugely on the services being provided.

I don't know does Selena would you like to add anything to that.

Helena. In relation to ambulance assists, although there's a portion of Wicklow fire services work it is small in the overall incidents, so across 2021, there was 110 incidents where the fire service assisted HSE ambulance crews so again, maybe eight or nine per cent, low of the total callouts.

There is, these assists are usually for to assist in lifting of patients or moving a Casualty in a difficult position, gaining access, or assisting

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and providing the medical response. So again, while we do assist, it isn't taking up an awful lot of our mobilisation and callout times from Wicklow fire service point of view with numbers reduced for COVID, it looks like it is the Dublin areas mostly affected by fire and ambulance crews, we don't have issue across Wicklow at this point.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR O'BRIEN: I want to come in about the Red Cross treatment plant the proposed works, I have two questions, number one, will the works be carried out after these works that are going on at the moment, but I ask because there's an awful lot of people inconvenienced in Red Cross because of the water connected connection and we welcome that, are the residents of Red Cross going to put out again when the sewage works starts. I ask to look at the road gritting, we were issued with maps if you were to go by the maps at the moment, if you're leaving Red Cross you have to go to Rathdrum which is very inconvenient to the people in Red Cross and beyond so can I ask the roads around Ballycapple be gritted, I know it is not on the main route, but most residents are using Ballycapple to go to Jack White's and impractical to go Rathdrum when they're going to Brittas Bay so as once-off and gesture the roads be gritted while the works there are continuing between Red Cross and Barndarrig.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Miriam Murphy you had your hand up there.

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CLLR MURPHY: I'd like to wish everyone a happy new year, I'd like to highlight an issue I hope our two councillors' reps might bring back to the HSE, there is no ambulance service in Arklow of a Tuesday, this is highlighted in the Municipal District and we were to send a letter which is in progress, but I think it needs to be highlighted to investigate from Wicklow County Council, this has been on going and it has had serious consequences, in our community. I think it is something that seriously has to be looked into again. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I just wanted to - I want to wish Brian all the best anyway, and how glad we are to receive the one million here in Blessington. It is great news here, the same week, I got news from Irish Water that the upgrade on the wastewater treatment plant has started as well so, things are looking good here. I want to say well done to everyone involved, in the application so, successful application for the one million odd and I know it is I want to pay tribute to the council staff for the application. But I know that there will be projects within the town at the decision of the county council, to decide on where this money will be spent, and it is great news and we're doing well here. But I want to point out another, contradiction to a certain extent and that, about five weeks ago, we got £€100,000 here, it was the first plan for the town centre, and that's 100,000 to be spent on a consultancy report on what we want in the town or what's the best plan for the

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town. I think, look, we have the engineers, and we have the staff within Wicklow County Council and know what we need here in Blessington and what we need in other parts. I think it is the total waste of 100,000 to give to consultant to tell them for them to tell us what we know already.

And I'm wondering even at this stage, could we ever convince ministers that this 100,000 would be far better off spent if given to Wicklow County Council staff our engineers that can be spent in the town. I think it is ridiculous to be getting a million one day, to spend on projects in the town which we know we need and a couple of weeks ago, consultants would get 100,000 for telling us with we need. I want to wish Brian the best of luck on we are delighted the way things are going here. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Gerry, finally the last speaker, Cllr Lourda Scott, I will bring you back in there.

CLLR SCOTT: It was to get an answer on my questions, Cathaoirleach about the fixed charged penalty notice.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry I missed that. OK, so, I think Helena, I'll bring you in again on the road gritting and Red Cross treatment plant and ambulance service, maybe you'll answer those questions.

Helena: Cllr Paul O'Brien the Wastewater works at Red Cross are to follow the current water works so they will be after the existing works that have just been completed. Again, I will try and get some information from Irish water in relation to that as mentioned to Cllr

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Sylvester Bourke already. The road gritting. So, I understand there's a diversion now because of the works going on, and you're looking for possible road gritting at Ballycapple. I'll talk to the engineer if it is feasible to do winter main tenants along that route and come back to you after the meeting once I've spoken to the engineer and the other one, maybe on the fixed notices just again, just to flag that maybe the wardens will issue fixed charged penalty notices only in the areas where there is parking by laws so that's the main four towns. Generally fixed charge penalty notices would be issued by the Gardai, so outside the parking areas it would be by the Gardai.

And I don't think it is an issue to include how many fixed charged penalty notices are issued as part of the monthly but it would not be overall as it would not include the Garda notices.

>>: We can talk to the central managers, I don't see issues in getting statistics. But as Helena pointed out it is one element and we can provide whatever statistics we have ourselves. Cllr Lourda Scott, are you OK with that? Thank you. Brian, I may ask you to deal with the Cllr Gerry O'Neil on the Blessington in terms of town planning and so on.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The applications and the funding schemes are specific, the 100,000 allocated for the consultant report for the master plan of the town is ring-fenced, there is no point of reusing that money for something else, especially for internal works but the important thing is that the master plan

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ties in with the whole RDF funding in that the plan is developed and the implementation works are done by the 1 million euro provided by the URDF. So it does all link up. It is not a waste of money. I think it is work, there was great work put in to securing the funding. It will be put to good use. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. To add to the Red Cross treatment plant and to the upgrading from the Roddick to Barrindarrig. I suppose that this, really, the only thing to say, it is a farcical situation spending weeks to put down a water pipe to Barrindarrig and vice versa and now to put in a sewage pipe beside it. It is farcical, it is why the public are so annoyed and concerned about the lack of consultation in terms of one company knowing what another is doing. To me it is crazy. I want to put it on record it should not have happened and the inconvenience and the wasting of money on this point. Christine?

>>: On the subject of the master plan and the URDF funding for Blessington and obviously great news on both counts. But to explain, the master plan funding of 100,000, this amount was awarded pretty much to every county in the country. The idea is that we use this, the master planning process for Blessington as a demonstration project and a template and that we can build on that to the benefit of other areas within the county and indeed within the district. So, it will be, while it will focus on Blessington it will benefit the entire county. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Christine. That is everybody that indicated that they wanted to speak, covered. So to move on to item 8 to consider and to

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adopt the Wicklow County Council tree management policy. A report is attached we have Mary Cahill with us to give a presentation. Mary? MARY: I am here, Cathaoirleach. I will share my screen ...Can you see that?

We have the first page: Wicklow County Council Tree Management Policy.

MARY: I will go into my slide show.

OK.

Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Hopefully you can see that in slide show version, can you?

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think so. MARY: Thank you.

Has it moved on?

CATHAOIRLEACH: It has. MARY: Great. Thank you. I wanted to start off by acknowledging the work done by a number of groups and the input that they had in developing the Tree Policy.

The Members of the CABA SPC, Chaired by Councillor Rory O'Connor and the County Wicklow PPN, collaborating with Sophia Meeres, doing work with the Wicklow County Council PPN and the districts and to look the Municipal District, and what was required with the policy and our in-house climate action team and the work that they put into the policy. Before getting into the details of it, to say that before we started working on it, we looked at the neighbouring local authorities and the policies that they had and very few have tree policies. South Dublin and Dunlarey don't have tree policies, so the

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departments are defined to the management and to the maintenance of trees and to the individual departments (?) we expanded it and added in education, awareness and working with communities and expanding tree covering within the county and to look at the planning processes, how it can affect trees and other ways of increasing tree cover. Why do we need a tree policy to establish a consistent, practical and effective management practices through the local authority? So, instead of the five districts doing different work or having a different practice, that they are all consistent throughout the five Municipal Districts. Through development of the long protection and the development of resources, mostly trees on county council and within our control, so not to look at trees upland or on land not owned by the Wicklow County Council. And to promote an education and awareness of the trees, this is something that the environmental awareness officer has been doing for a number of years and engaging with groups and partnerships to enhance and to further cover the stability of the trees within the Wicklow County Council. The overview contains a number of chapters with an overview of trees, how we arrived at the tree cover we have. Why do we need to protect the trees? What benefits do we get from trees? We know there are many benefits. The social benefit to improve mental health and wellbeing. Economic benefits to attract tourists and outdoor activities and then we are aware of the environmental and the ecological benefits of the trees also. So, how to protect the trees? That is addressed in chapter 3. Looking at the pieces of legislation that are around the protection of trees and the felling licenses required and who is responsible for enforcing these pieces of legislation? A lot of the phone calls that we get in from the

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members of the public about trees being knocked down, it is outside of the control of Wicklow County Council.

It is mostly the Department of agriculture or the National Parks who have the control and who are the enforcers of the legislation when it comes to the protection of the trees.

Sophia Meeres did a critical analysis of the work carried out with uprooted trees and the current management of trees and highlighting issues and opportunities available to us, the last chapter looks at the visions, the goals and the actions, and part of that is the policies, the four protocols and the maintenance. The main crux is section 4.3. That is the action plan. There are 6 goals with a number of actions and in order to meet the goal. So the first is to compile a county tree inventory. In the next section I highlighted the substantial actions. And Wicklow would put this in place to meet the goals. to enhance tree management by agreeing and implementing a consistent council protocol. That is the protocols on how the Municipal Districts operate when it comes to the trees and there are four protocols in place. One of the protocols is the removal of trees, that is protocol 3. That is a listing of four scenarios where the trees can be removed. For example if they are diseased or dying. If the removal self-a part of planned re-development. So four scenarios give no-one that section.

So that is goal 4. We have to agree the protocols by adopting the policies and to implement them into the protocol. To manage mature trees in council

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ownership. To expand the native tree cover in Wicklow for biodiversity, and to look at the significant actions that we have to put in place to meet the goals, to establish the extent of tree, woodland and hedge cover throughout the county through the purchase of a digital survey. This action is already completed. We purchased Blue Sky Mapping in the autumn. It has a detailed data set that it was filmed by a company in March of 2020.

They were able to analyse the data from the survey and to produce a tree map of any tree greater than 3 metres in height. To share the information to parties that want it. UCD have a copy, Trinity requested it, so research students will have a use of it.

Following on from that, to evaluate the purchase or the development of a mobile tree management system.

That is linked to the GIS database. That could go on to a tablet perhaps already used by the staff in the Municipal Districts. It would help in saving the trees, that is the next [inaudible] (interruption here) ... we can continue to add to tree mapping that was recorded from the flyover in 2020. The protocols and the management. These are the 4 protocols I mentioned to be put in place by the Municipal Districts. That mobile app again, it would assist in applying the protocols. You can publish the planned pre-maintenance programmes and look at what programmes will be. Also to review them following on from that.

A significant action is to review, and amend the preplanning and planning and pots planning process to ensure that all trees, both existing and proposed are

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properly taken into the account within the process. For this we need greater input by the environment sections and in dealing with the developers, particularly as there are significant developments in hitting the site from dealing with them from day one to protect trees or hedgerows on the site. if there is, if they must be removed, that the trees or the hedgerows are put into another part of the site in place of them. And the third action there is to publish the planned pre-maintenance programmes at least 1 month in advance of planned work, to review the works to include reactive works and to carry out an ... sorry, to review the works a carried out that year and to look at that again at the end of each season. The last section that I looked at significant actions is the public awareness. We have a section on the website for climate action. To enhance that, to dedicate a section on trees on Wicklow.ie., to undertake the community engagement programme, including talks, workshops, the promotion of tree planting and participation of tree events and we have been doing this work for a number of years, with the climate action fund and we can work with grants in providing the grants for tree planting and there, to promote funding opportunities for the planting of woodlands both directly by the Wicklow County Council by communities and through the partnerships, including the climate action fund and the woodlands scheme, that we are presently working on. So, Cathaoirleach, I will hand back to you, and thank you.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mary. Thank you. To bring in Cllr Lourda Scott before opening it up. I know she has done a lot of work on the area. So, Cllr Lourda Scott?

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Sorry I will turn my camera off as my Wi-Fi is breaking up and down. Thank you, Mary. Mary has done a great job to outline the tree policy and delighted to be talking about in front of the council. It is a long time coming. In addition to what Mary outlined, the member of the public feel passionate about the trees in their area, that is shown in the submissions through to the county development plan ... (loss of internet connection).

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lourda Scott, are you there? We will come back to her in a few minutes. Members can you hear me.

CLLR SCOTT: I was thrown there. I was saying that the policy signals the council's commitment to look after and to enhance the natural resources. Mary went through the benefits of trees, unlike the public assets, the value of trees increases with time. So they must be protected. The policy allows for a coordinated approach across the Municipal District to manage the tree assets and to create a greater appreciation for the resource within the council, among the public and also, I hope among the elected reps and to echo the hard work into the policy by Mary and from the staff and the council staff's enthusiasm and commitment to get the policy off the ground. It is ground breaking, as not many other councils have policies like this. It took a lot of hard work to get this far. And to say on the SPC, we work as a team. Party politics put to one side

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and working with the PPN, it helped to shape the policy into the best policy it could be. And to wrap up to urge everyone to read it, to take note and to keep to hand of it as a reference document. It is a good read with a lovely section on the history and then also the actions that should be taken. I have no hesitation in recommending the policy.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Firstly, I will be clear on this myself, I am supportive of the tree management policy. I think it is a great initiative. There are a couple of things that I am concerned about. We need a tree, policy and management to ensure when housing estates are built that the correct trees are planted. I suppose, just to move on from that, we had a situation only a couple of weeks OK at Storm Barra at a housing estate, where a tree was held up by a J CB, until it was cut done, it was almost ready to fall on to a house. It turns out that the wrong types of trees are being planted on these housing estates. There are many trees, the roots are forcing up the roads, we are replacing draining, so there is a piece where the wrong type of tree is planted on housing estates. It is something that I didn't see on the policy that I think should be in it. The other part, the more serious part, is when Wicklow County Council take estates in charge, what is the legal responsibility and the legal situation if a tree falls on a house? The fact that we have taken an estate in charge, is it the responsibility of Wicklow County Council? So, there are some very, very serious issues to be addressed in the situation. As I say, this was only highlighted recently at our County Wicklow MD meeting.

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After that meeting, you know, there was quite a few concerns, concerned residents of different estates that are supportive of trees and the tree planting in their areas but not close to their houses. So I would ask that the committee have a look at that. As I think we need to tease out that policy a little further. Councillor Dermot O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you. To say this, this was a truly collaborative process. The journey of the policy to date. I think it is shown in, if people are a fly-on-the-wall at meetings, there are times when we say to present it to the next month meeting, and then a sense to give it more time so that we can have the substantive discussions to bring and to synthesise the contributions from all actions that Mary outlined that were involved in the process and there is a commitment to honour the destination of the policy, that is why all the work that went into it, the back and the forth, the generosity of starting with a piece of research and the commitment of the staff and the council toll go back and to respond, to reply, to dig up responses to technical questions, and I really think it give as basis, and to build on your point, Cathaoirleach, the challenge of a policy like this is to take responsibility and to be accountable for the decisions that we make about the trees within the county. It gives us a basis for that. Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: Just to thank you all on the teams, especially Mary and to Breege and Veteran and Jackie. And two persons that contributed, Sophia Meeres who is a powerhouse when it comes to trees and to those who supported and made valuable contributions to the tree policy. I take on board

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all that you said, Shay, this is a work in progress. The tree policy needs to be living, to be reviewed, yearly, and to change as we change directions in society, I suppose, there should be stuff in there about trees and I know a lot of work was done on the choosing of the right tree to go to the right place and also the maintenance plan. As Mary mentioned in other councils there are parks and committees, I think it is something that we should look at. If we don't have the resources for it financially within the council, to all put thinking caps on as to how to create resources. This is valuable, it is valuable across the whole county. We have beautiful parks, out near the water, in Avoca, and it was devastating with the trees that fell down over the storm in the last few weeks, and when a tree gets to a stage when it is dangerous, that is something to look at going forward. Overall it is a brilliant policy and everyone should read it thoroughly and input their comments on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Peter Bourke?

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you. I welcome the tree policy. It is positive and it is going to be positive for people to appreciate the trees within the society. And there is a concern, that is the number of trees that we are losing from the Ash Dieback disease. I as a land owner myself, I notice it and many others, who notice there are hundreds, if not thousands that are dying of decay, and despairing as to what to do and any council support that the council can give as to an aid package to change this, whatever needs to be done, it will be very welcome. And also there will be an issue with Dieback Ash of hedgerows on the road side. It is where the farmers and the landowners come into contact as

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the trees decay to be more hazardous, I believe there must be a policy to carefully remove the diseased plants with help from the council, rather than throwing it over to the land owner's responsibility. It was brought into the country by carelessness, you could blame the Department of Agriculture for, for allowing the wrong trees to be imported. So those are the issues that I would like to propose are kept on the agenda and to be reviewed by the Tree Policy Group.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you. I wanted to welcome the tree policy. To thank everybody involved. I know there were many contributors to it. It is great to see it materialise.

It is obviously a work in progress. It will need to be updated regularly. There are a lot of things about trees that have not been mentioned. For example, we have lost a devastating amount of natural hedgerows and trees due to the development of housing estates. And the problem with this is that not only does it deprive people of the benefits of wildlife and trees and everything that goes with it, mental health, physical health and wellbeing but the concreting of huge amounts of areas is leading to terrible flooding throughout the country as was seen a few weeks ago with the heavy rain falls, that are common now. The amount of concrete there, as opposed to what was there, is causing terrible problems and the floods recently were appalling. So Green Corridors are something that are a must.

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I'm not sure, I didn't read the whole thing through, I'm not sure if there are Green Corridors included within the policy, or not but there should be. People talk about replacing a tree that has been removed as if one will quickly replace the other and make up for it, all the rest of it. Sometimes people say if you plant 3 trees in the place of where one was taken but the reality is that it will take 30 years before that tree is doing the job it was meant to do, to purify the air and to rid the atmosphere of poisons so we have to think long and hard before removing trees. I would love to see a health check included where the trees known to be overhanging of major roads around the country areas are investigated before they come down ... we are seeing trees falling down when there is a big storm. We need a proper health check for suspect trees, and to finish by saying that all of what I wish to see is that as well as maybe putting it in the paper and all of this to notify people of the removal of trees, that firstly, trees should be only felled when it is absolutely necessary but that the councillors are made aware that trees are to be removed in a public area. There is not a lot of trees within the public realm, it is mainly towns, buildings and the removal of a tree can have a significant impact on the people that live there. It may be the only nature that they see. So I would like to see that included.

But, thank you, everybody, again, well done. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Can I thank Mary and Lourda, it took a lot of work. A comprehensive document. A couple of points with regards to our experience in

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the past in terms of removing dangerous trees, it has come back to the engineer often to support in removing the dangerous trees. And to the local people to do this kind of work, I would like that the resources are there to look after the dangerous trees. On another point as well.

In relation to the fact that where one-off houses will, and people who build rural houses, yes, it is a small amount of hedgerow removed where a rural house is built but in 99% of cases people replace the small amount of hedgerows being removed with a whole hedgerow right around their property. So where we may lose a small bit, we gain in terms of the one-off houses so just a point to the criticism of one-off houses to take issue with.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry O'Neil?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Yeah, I just want to echo every word you said earlier at the outset there, while I'm a great lover of trees it is a sin to see mature trees cut down in estates at the moment. But they have to go because, as you say they're tearing up footpaths, roads and in one estate here in Blessington the sewerage lines are being disturbed every year and they have to be redrilled by Irish Water. So, I think there should be, Mary and her team could consider maybe part of the planning on new estates that a certain type of tree would be only allowed because it is a sin to see the lovely trees cut down

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but there's nothing else you can do now. Another one there, I notice Coillte haven't been mentioned on the report and they're the biggest planter of trees in the county and, I still notice in rural parts here in west Wicklow where plantations have been the trees are planted year roadways still. I'd imagine that lesson would have been learnt a long time ago the trees are kept back from roadways because of the problems they cause with falling and whatever else you know so well done all right, but it should be something that should be considered with a planning application. I see in the UK reading up on this the use of artificial trees, very expensive lookalike trees but throughout the UK now and in new estates this is what they're doing, putting artificial trees in, but, you know with the proper experts in place, we can still plant trees but them be of the type that wouldn't, we don't get the damage that's been caused with the present type we use, thanks Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: Thanks chair and Mary and the team for working on what the presentation on what you've been presented with us today. I won't dwell too long because two of the points are well made one by Cllr Gerry O'Neill in relation to Coillte and the other one made by Cllr Vincent Blake in relation to what happens in rural areas. They're the two of the points I was going to make. The third point is the insurance company, and in Mary's presentation in the very beginning she opened it by showing the five groups that they

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consulted with. And there was no mention of insurance companies and I think you did refer to it yourself chair in relation to who is responsible. My own experience after working with timber all my life is if you ask discuss with the insurance companies it will fairly focus the mind and I think it is something that should be looked at and Mary and her team should look at talking to the insurance companies and in relation who is responsible and what those responsibilities are and what the consequences are, if action has not been taken in relation to mature trees. Just think insurance companies should be part of this. Thanks chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Mags Crean finally.

CLLR CREAN: Just to reiterate it is excellent document and excellent read so well done to the policy committee. I wanted to add two points supporting what Cllr Gerry O'Neill and yourself raised about the idea in the right tree in the right place in estates and mature trees, and on the point of maybe looking as you review the document priority planting of mature trees in areas that lost a lot of mature trees, thinking of the Greystones area in particular and Martin Allen said it is a living document, maybe to have a focus on hedgerows as a document is viewed over time. But other than that, it is excellent document and excellent read, great to see it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Mary, I'll bring you in and ask Breege to have a couple of words to finish up.

MARY: Just to say, Cathaoirleach with your query, when an estate is

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taken in charge trees are also taken in charge. So, they are under the control of the Municipal District, so any main tenants are done by the Municipal District. And at present they would get an Asherah report, and this is one of the things we want to put across the municipal districts they would receive a report before any trees are pruned or knocked if they're the wrong tree in the wrong place. We also, have a list of suitable trees that would be planted in estates or in the you are began areas, we would hope we wouldn't get to the situation you're talking about in Garden Village the wrong tree is in the wrong place.

Cllr Sylvester Bourke, we can discuss at the policy committee about the possibility of making a representation to the department about some kind of finance but, again, I keep coming back and want to reiterate this is a policy document about trees on land owned by Wicklow County Council in our control. So, the ash die back that would be in private land. It would be outside the policy, but it is something we can discuss at the policy committee.

And again, Cllr Mary Kavanagh, we didn't discuss green corridors it is something we can look at in the review. Again, you mentioned housing estates so yeah, when it is taken in charge, the trees are taken in charge. Health check for suspect trees you were referring to along the roadside again, that's in private land. But we could, it is part of the policy to do survey work of the condition of trees and that would be part of the tree management software hopefully that

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we would flag in advance if there is an issue with a tree and we could prune rather than fell the tree.

Yeah, Cllr Mary Kavanagh you also looked for councillors to be made aware removal of a tree in urban area, that's fine that could be done, because there would be a month's notice to the members of the public so that can be included to the members as well. Cllr Vincent Blake, you mentioned dangerous trees, I'm back to the same point they are trees on private property. I don't know what the road act says about that. And what control we would have.

Again, you have to take resources into consideration as well. We really would not have the resources to have a survey of all the trees along all the roadways in the county.

Cllr Gerry O'Neill and Cllr Pat Kennedy and Coillte, back to the lands not owned by us, it is perhaps something that could be to be collaborating with Coillte. And even research projects again with our third level institutions, but, working with Coillte is outside the remit of this policy. Cllr Pat Kennedy I'm not sure exactly what you're asking for with the insurance companies, if a tree is our responsible and, in our control, it is in our control so, again, perhaps it is something we can raise at our policy committee meetings.

Hedgerows to be included in the review, Cllr Mags Crean yes, we actually, it was discussed at our last meeting of our policy that when we do a review, we will look at hedgerows and how they could be included in the policy.

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We'll bring it another further step but yeah, we will review that. So, I hope that's everything answered.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Mary, well done on that. I will bring Breege in and then Brian in. Breege?

BREEGE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, once again I just wanted to thank everybody, but particularly the members of the climate action biodiversity SPC to put a huge amount of effort into this along with our own staff and as Cllr O'Brien said this is collaborative effort and probably one primary example of a lot of effective engagement, not just with the council members but with also the members of the PPN, so it did take longer than we thought it would do, but I still feel at the end of the day we have a very good and strong policy and as each of the members have stated, is that it is a dynamic policy and as part of the approval from the SPC, it will be reviewed on

ANNE: Newly basis but again there was a huge amount of effort put in. I want to thank my own staff with the amount of effort they put particularly as Mary Jim, Jackie and Deirdre Burns in particular, thanks very much Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian do you want a word.

MR GLEESON: In relation to insurance issue, we send the policy on IPP for reviews on it, obviously as pointed out any trees take noncharged are our responsibility so I suspect anything that happens in the open areas will be our responsibility but no harm sending it to IPP for further reviews and can give an industry review for private

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developments that will be the responsibility of developer but might give industry view in relation to that. Just to point out to the members, obviously, regarding that particular issue about planning and housing estates and main tenants and that, it is actually included on page 48 in the gold section, there's 2.4-2.7 addresses the issue of planning and review and amending planning processes to ensure trees existing proposed are taken into account properly and obviously the main tenants and care by developers in relation to trees and reviewing the taking in charge process to include trees. So, in fairness to the crew there, they have addressed that particular issue and included in in the report.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Breege did you want to come back in.

BREEGE: Yes, please on a point of clarification in terms of trees and the taking in charge, it is only since 2001, prior to that, it is the estates own responsibility so only since 2001, just a point of clarification and then just also, secondly, is that just in terms of the planning and process and the input and the effect on the resources as well we see this might be fairly dependent on the appointment of the biodiversity officer which we hope will be progressed during this year. It may be a shared service. But it is something that I'm chasing up with the department as well, but they are, it was clarified by TD Steve Matthews in a Dail question there, just at the end of last year, that biodiversity officers will be provided to local authorities, and I see them playing a strong role. At the moment we're dependent on

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our own gardener Tracy Synnott but that's not an arborist so we will be referring that on, so there's a bit

Contingency there in terms of the planning conditions that we're putting in place in the policy. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you all. Well done Mary and team for all the work you've done on that, and we'll stay in touch on it as well.

HELEN: Is it agreed by all?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed yeah. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number nine to receive update on tourism activities presentation attached, I think we have Fred and Christine, Fred are you with us?

FRED: Yes, I am very much Cathaoirleach and thank you everyone and happy new year to all. I'm going to share my screen. Let me know if you can see this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes, we do.

FRED: I'll try to be quick because I know you've plenty to do. So, in 2017 the county council did a marketing strategy for tourism in Wicklow for the period of 2018-2023, the key priorities that came out of this was to develop new accommodation, key towns as visitor hubs, a master plan for Glendalough, grow thematic experience, and market the county as under a narrative.

So, if you want over the next few slides, I will give update where we are according to that plan as we come to close to the end and especially with the COVID situation that we have had to endure,

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especially the enormous effect we've had in the tourism industry.

So, accommodation strategy the work group that was set up at the beginning commissioned, a document to help potential investors and developers. Obviously, accommodation has been so badly hit over the past two, three years, that, we're going to have to review this, but the key points that came out of the document was that the hostel and hybrid sector, we could do more accommodation of that type and the daily spent is below the national average and that's due to mostly to the disproportionate number of visitors in the day.

Obviously, we'll have to review this when the COVID situation eases up a bit and see where we are in terms of accommodation supply in the county.

The second key objective was to develop towns as visitor hubs. I'm going to put a few examples of what's been done, one of the main ones is the Abbey Grant Project we see 500,000 euro with the objective to be developed during 2022, but Part 8 was passed by the Municipal District on the 20th of December. And procurement of contractor has commenced with a view to completing the work this 2022, which gives a great new centre for Wicklow Town. Another good project that was launched in August is the Wicklow Heritage Trail. It is a good example of how the county council working with the Town Team and with the support of leader funding came up with a brilliant heritage trail in the town, great project there.

Outdoor spaces COVID has forced us to work on developing places in

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the outdoors for people to sit and enjoy. So, there was 200,000 given to Wicklow and Arklow to develop outdoor public seating spaces that's one of them on the left. The outdoor seating grant we managed here as well, where we distributed up to 400,000 euro to more than, about 130 businesses to develop their outdoor seating spaces. The Shopfront Scheme was 320,000 to enhance shopfronts in six towns or villages and then the recently grant that was given to the Bray seafront for outdoor performance space which is great enhancement of outdoor space in the county.

Glendalough masterplan I'm not going to dwell on this because you had a presentation on the plan, where are we now?

The draft report has been completed. There's enough road that's been identified to bring people from Lara to the upper lake via the monastic site. There are a few concerns there looked at and see if we can resolve the issues.

The plan to provide seating of the current visitor centre, additional car park to be created as well in Lara as the main starting point for Glendalough for toilets, signage and et cetera. The upper car park is proposed to have the access restricted during high season but, fully accessible of peak.

Provide better facilities at the upper lake with coffee docks to replace the food trucks and new toilets. Overall, we need a thousand spaces, for high season when there are on average 4,000 visitors per day to the site. We're looking at additional parking near

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Pier Gates with a Park and Ride there, and next step is the strategic environmental economic appraisal and consultation and that's about Glendalough. The next point was the thematic experiences the biggest selling point is the outdoors so the objective there is to help brand Wicklow or assure Wicklow that is the outdoor destination for the domestic and the international markets so with focus with the UK France, Germany and Nordics, COVID hasn't helped with that one as well but we managed to push allotted of the activities there, walking cycling in question trail running, and water-based sports. On the back of trying to develop Wicklow as an outdoor destination to the overseas market we brought equal trail in 2019, which was a tremendous success, we had to postpone 2020 but really managed to put the event in 2021, which again was a great success. The main objective that we're taking from this as well is to use the imagery we're producing for the event to showcase Wicklow as a fantastic playground to the international audience and for this, we used eco-trail network which has tremendous a lot of events throughout Europe and plenty more coming up in Asia and beyond. And then that also gives us a door to knock on at Tourism Ireland so we've developed good relationship with the French tourism on Ireland office Nordics as well, there's a Scotland eco trail planned for July and that would be a great option for us to Obviously, give us an update to give a bit of exposure through the UK market. This, we broad influencers on the back of this, Tourism Ireland

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France a few journalists to come over and we should get a big feature on one of the big trails running mag in France in February so good work has begun there. A focus that something we loved to love to give more focus is the golf, we have a great destination there, and we need to do more work on getting golf packages, and imagery, love to have an eco-trail equivalent for golf event in Wicklow that would give us an international exposure to we're going to work on that as well.

The other thematic experiences the Wicklow Naturally set up which the Wicklow County Council a couple of years ago, the tourism objective is to develop and promote Wicklow as food destination. October feast is one of the one this year as well and it is month-long event, related to food. It worked really well and this year, they've introduced food tours which for us would be great to have food itineraries and we just want to communicate as well, create photos and videos for social media another thematic experience is the film strategy, during the shooting of Disenchanted from our perspective the county council is working on a strategy at the moment and we're looking at opportunities to maximise the potential behind it, develop film itineraries and tours promotional campaigns can be defined campaigns on the production that are being shot in Wicklow, similar to what was done around Star Wars or game of thrones in the north. For information there was 75 movie applications received for 2022, well up from 2021.

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So, there's great potential behind the film strategy as well.

One of the experiences that we've developed that was launched a couple of years ago is the Wicklow Passport where we sold more than 2,500 passports and distributed around 10,000 the focus is on the domestic market that worked well in COVID this is now a strong infrastructure that can be tailored in any way and shapes so we will work with the trade to help them develop their own passport tours itineraries and stuff and work and use this as a tool to get people to move around the county. We've got five mobile displays that like you see the one on the left we'll move around the county and bring them beyond, we're talking about going to holiday shows when and if that happens. So that's the thematic experiences, common narratives are we see social media and website is where most of our exposure, we offer the stronger exposure with the website performing very well and very strong on search engines.

We hope that Facebook should reach 30,000. The monthly reach is around 40-50,000 people which is enormous. We should reach 9,000 likes on Instagram, Twitter is working well, TikTok is another beast, but we will probably feed that beast because it is working well. The various hashtags we use as we promote Wicklow on social media and others.

The Celtic Route Project is set up two or three years ago and marketing, a project that was set up with three counties in west Wales and Wexford Waterford and Wicklow in Ireland. It is a

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marketing campaign extensive marketing plan and that has been slow tremendously due to COVID but there's an extensive plan that is with a decent budget that is up, and it's been extended to 2023, so there's a lot of potential behind it. The focus there again, it is UK Ireland and some international markets for France as examples, it is mostly done in digital.

But, a lot of press trips, we had a journalist from one of the leading walking magazines in the UK to come and do three days, four days in the Wicklow Way in September and again in the new year we should have, in year we should have again decent features on a strong magazine. We currently working on developing thematic itineraries, so, focus on walking golf, food heritage et cetera and those will be featured on the marketing activity.

One of the key assets that was developed over the past two years is we have a strong database of imagery and videos, and it is all available on the website there that you have and the potential behind it still, I mean, we all have this to use, and it is lovely imagery, very strong images

Common narrative the county council invested in production of a couple of programmes, Ireland county by county was broadcast through the US and now that programme is fully available on YouTube. And invite you all to have a look at it, Ireland and Music was shot in 2021, but the RTE broadcast is being finalised at the moment and then that will go up to the US market as well for

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broadcast and then we can use this as well to push and help the destination.

Finally, on the common narrative which we received tremendous support from Fáilte Ireland, the task force was set up as quickly after COVID hit, that means we have a direct impact, interaction with and from Fáilte Ireland.

Through that, we were given extensive financial support for the promotion of the passport where we did PR and advertising and we developed promotional and video as well. We've received a bit of funding to help with, our 2022 project which will, will bring influencers and journalists to go along, experiences and itineraries around Wicklow to showcase the experiences on their, through their own platforms but we'll use whatever experience they've had to create blog entries on our website and then promote the content through our own social media, so I expect we're expecting extensive exposure through the activities there. Last but not least, and it was not part of the plan at the very beginning of sustainable tourism. We did have a presentation, a webinar to the trade early last year, we need to grow a sustainable eco-friendly experience as itineraries. We need to help to start or continue their journey towards sustainability, sustainable food work with Wicklow naturally to get sustainable food done and there are some initiatives that are being developed in Wicklow and we want to make sure we can share those experiences with other members to get them, to invite everyone to

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get on board.

The whole objective of this is to communicate around Wicklow and help Wicklow to become sustainable eco-friendly destination which is the key buzzword and the right thing to do anyway for the future. So, this is my presentation. And I'm open to, I'll turn myself off. No, I didn't, I thought I did, excuse me. I went too fast, so there you are that's the presentation. Open to questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Fred, thanks for that. Can you just take the slides down off the screen please?

FRED: I thought I this did I.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Lovely, thanks for that Fred, very comprehensive, I will open it up, members if you can be as quick as possible with your questions. Cllr Edward Timmins?

CLLR TIMMINS: Just briefly thanks Fred for that comprehensive presentation. I'd like to speak briefly on accommodation early on in the slide and one of the problems Wicklow has been that we can't get people to stay in the county to come on day trips and go back, they don't spend money or time here. I'm wondering, one area that solves that problem is Air BnBs, I know that a lot of them are repeated -they are coming under pressure, and they are being you know, been restricted in what they can do. I know there's a housing accommodation is the a big issue and the council can't just go ahead and build hotels, but we're missing out on a trick and Cllr Gail Dunne and myself are working on a park, it is something that can be done

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easily inexpensive and will bring the right type of tourist to the county and we need to get them here more than day trips from Dublin and I would appeal to the council to look into it, and work closely with Fred and myself and other councillors interested in putting Airs Park around the county.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I just want to say congratulations to Fred on a great presentation. Again as member of the committee I know how hard-working he is and the whole committee, there's been huge work done and it has been a difficult year, the eco-trail has tapped into something positive and to bring in what councillors from saying to get people to stay in Wicklow we have a huge opportunity to more regularise our catching as Cllr Paul O'Brien was saying, there's a huge opportunity there, it is sustainable, we already get an awful lot of wild camping out here and the mess that's created and council has to come in and clean it up. There's an opportunity there, for us to tap in, regularise it, and avail of it, and then keep the environment clean. So, that's just my point my fear is on that. I also feel, Fred you tapped into the whole of society is changing, you've tapped into the whole with the bloggers the influencers, we're getting young people out as well that's the mode of communication now and I have to congratulate you on that, you've done huge work, but exciting times ahead and again well done with all your work.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Avril Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: Thanks very much Cathaoirleach and thanks very much for Fred for the presentation. There's huge work being done in the county in relation to tourism. Just one area I would like to highlight maybe you could look at in the future in relation to some potential tourism we have over here for the future in west Wicklow with our hill forts at Kilrana Hill Fort there's potential there, and we see how Meath has benefited from their heritage that they have up there, and I think we certainly have a unique offering in west Wicklow that we could work with. And I hope in the future that you can work alongside the local community there to promote that area as potential tourism destination. I will agree with Cllr Paul O'Brien there about the park, it is something we could do here with west Wicklow, we have a huge issue at lack of accommodation. And I do think that with the Greenway coming in the future, that it is something we should be looking at along the west of the county. And just finally, I'm delighted to hear that the golf trail in plan there, as a fair-weather golfer myself I look forward to checking that out, so thank you very much Fred.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Martin Allen.

CLLR LEONARD: Thank you for that report, Fred it was very useful to hear it. Just some areas I think that might have been missed on it and considered going forward in the future. I think we're sitting on a really valuable asset that we all seem to bypass and that's our

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marine space, where people can come on yachts and bring their own accommodation and even up along the coast, Greystones harbour's up there, you mean we could be, enticing them to come to visit Arklow Harbour once it is dredged with the flood relief system is finished and the UK market, people with yachts and maritime visitors with Brexit and everything there's huge potential to be researched and looked at will, there are other areas bringing people to an area and providing accommodation, once there's enough accommodation is great but they want experiences and we have a lot to offer, but one thing that's overlooked in Wicklow is our craft sector and the whole artist sector a huge amount of people in back gardens, master craft people we could be tapping in to provide experiences and provide support to advertise themselves I know with COVID it is difficult on a lot of them but that's an area I would like to be looked at going forward if possible. And just in relation to the Wicklow laterally October Fest are there plans to be dispersed around the county and not to be in one specific county, is that going to be moved around from plan to plan.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, Fred for the presentation. Not to repeat what others said about accommodation. But it is an issue. I have people, even family, who often ask me where to stay in my home town of Bray. It is difficult to come up with a response for the type of family/friendly hotel and facilities that we see in other areas of the country. I wonder what we as a local authority can do to encourage the conditions for those types of developments. They would be

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useful. To Bray, there is no caravan park, it is something that lots of people ask. Tourists ask if there is one. They seem dismayed to find there is not. I wonder what we can do to, we can't build them ourselves but to encourage the conditions where others would contemplate building them? I would caution against air B and Bs. We don't want to encourage tourism as a loss of people within our own community being able to find somewhere to live or to rent. There are reasons for there being strict regulations around that sector. I think that is important. And just a question as well around data and how we collect it, do we have a way of collecting data on the tourist experience within Wicklow? Are we going by numbers? Or do we have a way of delving deeper into the tourist experience and to the response to the tourist experience within Wicklow? Thank you, Chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Finally, Cllr Gerry Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to the presentation to acknowledge the work as part of the County Wicklow tourism group to acknowledge the work carried out by Fred and by Wicklow Tourism following on from the 2017 marketing strategy plan. As Fred said the tourism industry has disproportionately impacted by COVID more so than any other and the work is done in Fred's report, particularly within the marketing, following on from the strategy plan, the Glandalough master plan, everything to promote Wicklow to the passports, it has all been covered in the report with regards to the County Wicklow heritage trail. So we are in a position to bounce back when tourism is recovering later into 2022 and to 23 that County Wicklow will be

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able to bounce back and to get the visitors to stay there. People want to know what they can see and more importantly what they can do and people are looking for the outdoor experience, which County Wicklow as a county is well positioned to offer. I agree with the other speakers on the accommodation piece. It is an area to focus on. Support from the local authority from perspective businesses in hotels and in accommodation providers, it is welcome. So, thank you again, Fred, keep up the good work. Thank you.

Thank you, Cllr Gerry Walsh. Fred, most of the questions were really around tourism, sorry, around accommodation in terms of tourism, which is difficult for you to answer but just from my own point of view I think you are doing fantastic work there, particularly around the eco trail. I think that the initiative for that has really brought County Wicklow forward in terms of a tourism destination. Tapping into markets that maybe we did not originally tap into. So a great credit is deserved it yourself and I know you were the one to initiate that eco trail and well done on that. So, I don't know if you can quickly go through some of the questions, if possible, to give an update? Thank you.

FRED: Look, on accommodation, the work group alliance can look into that but we have to wait for COVID to stabilise. If you remember, the Air B&Bs, from our perspective, it is a part of the offering. I do understand the potential of taking accommodation from the local residents as well, so, we are cautious but it is a part of an offer, the accommodation offering in Wicklow. The report states that the, that we lack those Budget accommodation in the counterparty as well. So maybe there is work to be done around that. The, I know, Paul, you

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have tried to do a bit of work on the County Wicklow town and again there were by-law issues, it would be great to have locations, on the east and on the west to attract, and there are a huge numbers of people coming in camper vans, which we are forcing them to go to caravan parks but it is a thing to have them on the [inaudible] there is a question about data collecting. And the October Fest, Cllr Peir Leonard, the October Fest is around the county. It is very much a combination of a variety of events that are being held by the businesses themselves and then put together and advertised and promoted over the month-long of October. So any event that is related to food, it could be featured on the October Fest, it is not in one place, it is all over the county. It is a calendar of events of food-related activities showcased around the county. The data collecting information, Cllr Erica Doyle, it is, look, the main data that we have is through the analytics on social media. But it is giving us ideas of the numbers of people connected but, on the ground, we have most of the feedback that we get is from the trade that comes back to us and that they let us know how it went so it may be an idea to set up some sort of feedback form to see if anyone wants to get feedback on what is happening. Cllr Peir Leonard mentioned also the marina space with the yacht. I would be more than happy to see if we can do anything to help to develop the destination to the yachting community, especially in the UK and France as well, the French are coming on that one. And the craft sector, again, there is tons of things that we could be doing, happy to talk to anyone about that one. To see if we can develop the destination as a craft destination in Wicklow. And I think that is, oh, no, sorry, West County Wicklow, the stretch of the N81 is amazing

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in terms of heritage. There are some places that are accessible. So rich in heritage. Blessington and the Ring Fort is one of the frustrations that I have had for the past year, where we have to find ways, where you are sitting on a goldmine up there, so how to access this or to make the access available to people to come and to visit? But that stretch, the heritage along that stretch is unbelievable. We did a tour, a bus tour in Southwick low all the way there. And there is so much to be developed and pushed so available to anyone within the local community to open up a visit to any of the Hill Forts up there and to the ancient sites that we have there. I am trying to look at the notes to see if there is anything ... look ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: You have covered everything, Fred. OK. Thank you, Fred, again. Before concluding to bring Brian in.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to Fred for a great presentation. Apart from the physical requirement of accommodation, we have seen the tourism and the products that are there to attract people to stay for 3 nights and the development of towns into the hubs is hugely important. And the example of Wicklow Town it is showing the funding schemes that we have, if they are the RDF, it is not just Ireland fundings but we have the abbey grounds, the heritage trail, the outdoor dining and the squares, Williamsburg, so, it may not be directly tourism funding but it shows the importance of the schemes and we will continue to push strongly for funding to secure funding to develop the towns and the villages.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Fred, I wish to conclude by saying thank you for all you have done. With continued success, you are doing a great job of promoting Wicklow in terms of a tourism destination, long may it continue. Thank you again.

FRED: Thank you very much.

Item 10 to receive an update on Shillelagh Green Way.

MARGARET: Is that OK, Cathaoirleach? Thank you. Good afternoon ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, it has gone, Margaret.

MARGARET: Good afternoon, Cathaoirleach and members, sorry about that. I wanted to talk through the scheme to give a brief introduction and background to the scheme Andreas and to the status as to where we are and a programme to completion. In terms of the introduction, there it has been evolving over the last considerable number of years, since 2007, the project has been worked on by the local communities and landowners, an element of the project is in consultation with the local landowners and stake holders, and we wish to thank them for the time and the ideas implemented to date. The project has been received well locally and beyond, with the recognition of the social and the economic benefits to be brought to Wicklow and to the settlements along the route.

In terms of, a new recreation tours and facility it provides a high-quality community for walking, cycling and recreation to showcase natural, man-made and cultural heritage of the area. To connect the villages and the communities along the way and to be accessible by the public transport at Arklow train

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station, to provide a local amenity, to attract visitors from near and far for recreation activities, bringing an economic benefit to the area.

In terms of business development, the development of the trail offers opportunities for businesses in the area in terms of generating additional businesses for the local shops and the public houses in the villages along the trail. To encourage the development of the new refreshment businesses. Boosting visitor numbers and income for visitor attractions and events within the area. Diversification of farms into the B and B. Small scale cycle hire, repair and sales businesses. Possible scope for the development of small-scale campsites and additional accommodation within the area. We have done economic analysis of this in March 21, to look at this, we can send the report but it gives a good indication over a ten-year period that the net present value of total net resources would be in the region of 27 million, excluding the capital costs of the project. But a good indication of the revenue that could be gathered from this. in terms of the description, the trail would be about, 38 kilometres in length to start from Shillelagh village south of county Wicklow, to follow the disused Woodenbridge Shillelagh Railway Line with modifications to the line where the developments have occurred or as required to lie adjacent to the banks of the Derry River, Aughrim River and Avoca River and run through villages, Tinahely and to Aughrim. And there from Woodenbridge to Arklow, it runs through Aughrim down to Shillelagh and there are photographs on the right-hand side of the Shillelagh Railway Line, so definitely opening up the heritage of the old railway line.

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The description in terms of, while there has been development on the railway line, the line was still intact in terms of the many engineering features that are there, including the three train stations, the two railway goods buildings and ten masonry bridges which traverse along the landscapes and the terrain. and the project, following extensive consultation and feedback from the landowners the route for the trial has been identified. 65 landowners who may wish to finalise, and after consultation we may have over 75% positive of the scheme. In terms of the design of the scheme, the consultants have completed, an Environmental Impact Assessment to conclude that the development does not have significant effects on the environment and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required. That is the route identified at the moment that you can see on the screen to include modifications to the railway line as discussed with the landowners as discussed on the existing railway line. The status, further to carrying out of the stage 1AA screening report, to consider the impacts of the Arklow recreational trail on the conservation objectives of the one European site, namely the Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation, it was determined that the stage two Natura impact statement to be taken. The NIS and planning documents are now being finalised and will be submitted to the An Bord Pleanála, under section 177AE of the planning and the development act. And the land access procedure will take place at the same time as the planning process. All the landowners of the scheme have been notified. In terms of the costings of the scheme we are talking about a high-level, about 20 million, subject to detail of design, the land costs and the land purchase of a scheme for this size. In terms

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of programme for completion, we intend to advertise in middle of 22, with the planning of the land access to have that in place by the end of 2022, with modifications and amendments on the detail and design complete and if goes well, to start construction in 2023, with an 18 to a 24-month programme, bringing completion to 2024. So, that is proposal of the scheme so at the end are existing photographs with regards to the structures and to see the bridges of the existing heritage features within it. So, that brings me to the end of the presentation. If you have any questions or comments?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Margaret for that.

I will open it up Cllr Miriam Murphy?

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to Margaret for the presentation. We are excited to see this, with the steps getting closer. I know we have a bit to go before it is a reality. But it is fantastic and the work that has gone into it from the committee. One or two things, Margaret. The accessibility of it, I am sure it will be of a high standard. Also, the signage as well, with large print and all within accessibility guidelines. Also wonder being the new policy of the public access and in relationship with the roads authority brought in before Christmas, will it affect the work? Do you know anything about that? Thank you, Margaret?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Miriam Murphy. John Mullen?

JOHN MULLEN: Thank you to Cathaoirleach and to Margaret. I know that you know I'm passionate about the project. Working on the project since 2007,

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when a couple of us worked with the landowners. If Tinahely worked to open up the land on this walk with agreement to move forward on the basis of land acquisition.

Over the 15 years there has been an unprecedented amount of public and one-to-one consultation with the landowners and to a number of people and to every member of the taskforce and the taskforce set up, it was members of the community in all points along the way from Arklow to Woodenbridge, to Aughrim, to Tinahely and to Shillelagh and the members of the community engaged with the landowners to the communities to finalise the route before us today, it is a magnificent achievement, not easy, considering we are talking about a glacial valley running from Woodenbridge to Shillelagh. A very historic one and tricky one to negotiate a route with over 65 landowners on it. I think that at this stage we have to proceed with the project at speed. The Government have provided the 63 million for the national green way work, it is proportion to the entire county, it could be a part of a national East Coast Greenway, hooking up to the West Waterford green way, so a key link in the network, it must proceed at speed at this stage. The committee and the landowners and the communities, there are over 95% buy in to the project. Unprecedented by the communities and before COVID there were meetings in all of the villages and the towns and the key recommendations from all was that it could not happen quick enough. It is the one thing to urge the council officials on this, I would like again to commend Margaret and the team who have never let the project drop. It is always high up on the radar, that they

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chipped away at with the consultants and with the taskforce, to proceed with the project as it is now, finalised, and I would like to thank you for that

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, John Mullen. Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, Fred for the presentation. Not to repeat what others said about accommodation. But it is an issue. I have people, even family, who often ask me where to stay in my home town of Bray. It is difficult to come up with a response for the type of family/friendly hotel and facilities that we see in other areas of the country. I wonder what we as a local authority can do to encourage the conditions for those types of developments. They would be useful. To Bray, there is no caravan park, it is something that lots of people ask. Tourists ask if there is one. They seem dismayed to find there is not. I wonder what we can do to, we can't build them ourselves but to encourage the conditions where others would contemplate building them? I would caution against air B and Bs. We don't want to encourage tourism as a loss of people within our own community being able to find somewhere to live or to rent. There are reasons for there being strict regulations around that sector. I think that is important. And just a question as well around data and how we collect it, do we have a way of collecting data on the tourist experience within Wicklow? Are we going by numbers? Or do we have a way of delving deeper into the tourist experience and to the response to the tourist experience within Wicklow? Thank you, Chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Finally, Cllr Gerry Walsh?

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CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to the presentation to acknowledge the work as part of the County Wicklow tourism group to acknowledge the work carried out by Fred and by Wicklow Tourism following on from the 2017 marketing strategy plan. As Fred said the tourism industry has disproportionately impacted by COVID more so than any other and the work is done in Fred's report, particularly within the marketing, following on from the strategy plan, the Glandalough master plan, everything to promote Wicklow to the passports, it has all been covered in the report with regards to the County Wicklow heritage trail. So we are in a position to bounce back when tourism is recovering later into 2022 and to 23 that County Wicklow will be able to bounce back and to get the visitors to stay there. People want to know what they can see and more importantly what they can do and people are looking for the outdoor experience, which County Wicklow as a county is well positioned to offer. I agree with the other speakers on the accommodation piece. It is an area to focus on. Support from the local authority from perspective businesses in hotels and in accommodation providers, it is welcome. So, thank you again, Fred, keep up the good work. Thank you.

Thank you, Cllr Gerry Walsh. Fred, most of the questions were really around tourism, sorry, around accommodation in terms of tourism, which is difficult for you to answer but just from my own point of view I think you are doing fantastic work there, particularly around the eco trail. I think that the initiative for that has really brought County Wicklow forward in terms of a tourism destination. Tapping into markets that maybe we did not originally tap into. So

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a great credit is deserved it yourself and I know you were the one to initiate that eco trail and well done on that. So, I don't know if you can quickly go through some of the questions, if possible, to give an update? Thank you.

FRED: Look, on accommodation, the work group alliance can look into that but we have to wait for COVID to stabilise. If you remember, the air B and Bs, from our perspective, it is a part of the offering. I do understand the potential of taking accommodation from the local residents as well, so, we are cautious but it is a part of an offer, the accommodation offering in Wicklow. The report states that the, that we lack those Budget accommodations in the county as well. So maybe there is work to be done around that. The, I know, Paul, you have tried to do a bit of work on the County Wicklow town and again there were by-law issues, it would be great to have locations, on the east and on the west to attract, and there are a huge numbers of people coming in campervans, which we are forcing them to go to caravan parks but it is a thing to have them on the [inaudible] there is a question about data collecting. And the October Fest, Cllr Peir Leonard, the October Fest is around the county. It is very much a combination of a variety of events that are being held by the businesses themselves and then put together and advertised and promoted over the month-long of October. So any event that is related to food, it could be featured on the October Fest, it is not in one place, it is all over the county. It is a calendar of events of food-related activities showcased around the county. The data collecting information, Cllr Erica Doyle, it is, look, the main data that we have is through the analytics on social media. But it is

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giving us ideas of the numbers of people connected but, on the ground, we have most of the feedback that we get is from the trade that comes back to us and that they let us know how it went so it may be an idea to set up some sort of feedback form to see if anyone wants to get feedback on what is happening. Cllr Peir Leonard mentioned also the marina space with the yacht. I would be more than happy to see if we can do anything to help to develop the destination to the yachting community, especially in the UK and France as well, the French are coming on that one. And the craft sector, again, there is tons of things that we could be doing, happy to talk to anyone about that one. To see if we can develop the destination as a craft destination in Wicklow. And I think that is, oh, no, sorry, West County Wicklow, the stretch of the N81 is amazing in terms of heritage. There are some places that are accessible. So rich in heritage. Blessington and the Ring Fort is one of the frustrations that I have had for the past year, where we have to find ways, where you are sitting on a goldmine up there, so how to access this or to make the access available to people to come and to visit? But that stretch, the heritage along that stretch is unbelievable. We did a tour, a bus tour in Southwick low all the way there. And there is so much to be developed and pushed so available to anyone within the local community to open up a visit to any of the Hill Forts up there and to the ancient sites that we have there. I am trying to look at the notes to see if there is anything ... look ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: You have covered everything, Fred. OK. Thank you, Fred, again. Before concluding to bring Brian in.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to Fred for a great presentation. Apart from the physical requirement of accommodation, we have seen the tourism and the products that are there to attract people to stay for 3 nights and the development of towns into the hubs is hugely important. And the example of Wicklow Town it is showing the funding schemes that we have, if they are the RDF, it is not just Ireland fundings but we have the abbey grounds, the heritage trail, the outdoor dining and the squares, Williamsburg, so, it may not be directly tourism funding but it shows the importance of the schemes and we will continue to push strongly for funding to secure funding to develop the towns and the villages.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Fred, I wish to conclude by saying thank you for all you have done. With continued success, you are doing a great job of promoting Wicklow in terms of a tourism destination, long may it continue. Thank you again. FRED: Thank you very much.

Item 10 to receive an update on Shillelagh Green Way. MARGARET: Is that OK, Cathaoirleach? Thank you. Good afternoon ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, it has gone, Margaret.

MARGARET: Good afternoon, Cathaoirleach and members, sorry about that. I wanted to talk through the scheme to give a brief introduction and background to the scheme Andreas and to the status as to where we are and a programme to completion. In terms of the introduction, there it has been evolving over the last considerable number of years, since 2007, the project has been worked on

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by the local communities and landowners, an element of the project is in consultation with the local landowners and stake holders, and we wish to thank them for the time and the ideas implemented to date. The project has been received well locally and beyond, with the recognition of the social and the economic benefits to be brought to Wicklow and to the settlements along the route.

In terms of, a new recreation tours and facility it provides a high-quality community for walking, cycling and recreation to showcase natural, man-made and cultural heritage of the area. To connect the villages and the communities along the way and to be accessible by the public transport at Arklow train station, to provide a local amenity, to attract visitors from near and far for recreation activities, bringing an economic benefit to the area.

In terms of business development, the development of the trail offers opportunities for businesses in the area in terms of generating additional businesses for the local shops and the public houses in the villages along the trail. To encourage the development of the new refreshment businesses. Boosting visitor numbers and income for visitor attractions and events within the area. Diversification of farms into the B and B. Small scale cycle hire, repair and sales businesses. Possible scope for the development of small-scale campsites and additional accommodation within the area. We have done economic analysis of this in March 21, to look at this, we can send the report but it gives a good indication over a ten-year period that the net present value of total net resources would be in the region of 27 million, excluding the

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Margaret for that.

I will open it up Cllr Miriam Murphy?

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to Margaret for the presentation. We are excited to see this, with the steps getting closer. I know

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we have a bit to go before it is a reality. But it is fantastic and the work that has gone into it from the committee. One or two things, Margaret. The accessibility of it, I am sure it will be of a high standard. Also, the signage as well, with large print and all within accessibility guidelines. Also wonder being the new policy of the public access and in relationship with the roads authority brought in before Christmas, will it affect the work? Do you know anything about that? Thank you, Margaret?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Miriam Murphy. John Mullen?

JOHN MULLEN: Thank you to Cathaoirleach and to Margaret. I know that you know I'm passionate about the project. Working on the project since 2007, when a couple of us worked with the landowners. If Tinahely worked to open up the land on this walk with agreement to move forward on the basis of land acquisition.

Over the 15 years there has been an unprecedented amount of public and one-to-one consultation with the landowners and to a number of people and to every member of the taskforce and the taskforce set up, it was members of the community in all points along the way from Arklow to Woodenbridge, to Aughrim, to Tinahely and to Shillelagh and the members of the community engaged with the landowners to the communities to finalise the route before us today, it is a magnificent achievement, not easy, considering we are talking about a glacial valley running from Woodenbridge to Shillelagh. A very historic one and tricky one to negotiate a route with over 65 landowners on it. I think that at this stage we have to proceed with the project at speed. The

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Government have provided the 63 million for the national green way work, it is proportion to the entire county, it could be a part of a national East Coast Greenway, hooking up to the West Waterford green way, so a key link in the network, it must proceed at speed at this stage. The committee and the landowners and the communities, there are over 95% buy in to the project. Unprecedented by the communities and before COVID there were meetings in all of the villages and the towns and the key recommendations from all was that it could not happen quick enough. It is the one thing to urge the council officials on this, I would like again to commend Margaret and the team who have never let the project drop. It is always high up on the radar, that they chipped away at with the consultants and with the taskforce, to proceed with the project as it is now, finalised, and I would like to thank you for that

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, John Mullen. Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vincent Blake are you there, can you hear us, we'll go on to Cllr Sylvester Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you. I just would like to welcome this, it is great to see we're making progress on this project at long last and I'm sure it helped greatly by the national template that's been agreed by Government for compensation for landowners to participate in this, I expect there won't be holdups, and this will move swiftly, and we look forward to its implementation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Vincent Blake are you there?

Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

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CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you. Yeah, just want to say this is really exciting project and I'm delighted to see it come to this stage. It is great to see so much co-operation between landowners and the community. I know the Tinahely railway walk which I walked last year, sorry I just lost everything on my screen, can anybody hear me.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Sorry. OK, everything went blank.

Yeah, and I know that the railway walk was similarly you know down to the co-operation of all the people in the area, the landowners and community and all that so this is really exciting. It reminds me of the west port Greenway with the railways and over the disused railway and I think it is going to be a great addition to the whole county and that area in particular. So well done everybody.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thanks, Cllr Vincent Blake, do you want to come in or are you OK? No OK. Margaret we'll go back to you there for a couple of minutes.

MARGARET: I suppose in relation to Cllr Murphy's queries, accessibility will be a huge part of it, we will be connecting into the train station and all the gradients will be such a 1-2%, now there might be a one section there might be moreen that, but essentially the whole focus is we went very low gradient and the surface would probably end up macadam surfaces so the code of practice that you mentioned, yeah that code of practice is great for projects, moving forward to have that there. But in terms I suppose we're at a very

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different stage of the process in terms of this particular project we're more advanced than that, the status of that, to we will be just moving forward as we stand now but thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. OK, members thanks for that.

Margaret, I suppose you'll keep us informed as we go through the stages, it is very important project for all of the counties so yeah keep us informed what is happening on that. OK. Thank you very much. Moving on to item 11, correspondents I'll just turn to Helen.

HELEN: Three items of correspondence I want to bring to members attention first is e-mail that you all received from the Department of The Taoiseach and Minister for European Affairs on the 21st of December, in relation to the setup of European Network for EU councillors. The European Union Committee of the regions has established a new European network of EU councillors, any local representative from all 27 members states can register to be part of the network so if you wish to do that it is open for you to do it.

Then, secondly, your forms on the reporting of political donations by elected members were circulated to all of the councillors last week. You have those forms and they're due back on the 31st of January 2022, they're the forms that you do every year on the reporting of political donations. And you also received a hard copy or should have today, of your ethical framework for Local Government service annual declaration form. This is the form which needs to be submitted on before 28th February, you submission of annual

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declaration form the prescribed annual declaration form in both English and Irish Code of Conduct for councillors, and also a copy of the circular LG2 of 2015 and notes on part 15 of the Local Government Act, 2021. That return as I say need to be made before the 28th of February 2022. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thanks Helen that's it. OK. Thank you.

Item number twelve. We're going on to notices of motion, so notice of motion number one, in the name of councillors, Cllr Mags Crean proposer and supported by Leonard, Behan, Fortune and O'Connor on 18th February, that Wicklow County Council establish an internal working group committed to advancing community well building beginning with increased priority on the inclusion of green and social clauses in procurement criteria for services and goods, so Helen for the response.

HELEN: Quite a long response on this. Under the programme for Government, and the climate Action Plan, Green Public Procurement GPP criteria must be used in all public procurement by 2023, as such the Government agreed that there will be a phased introduction of sustainable, that's green and social criteria, targeting priority products and services, as well as building appropriate green criteria in OPG frameworks and providing guidance and support to procurers, OGP and relevant departments are presently working to advise local authorities how best to incorporate sustainable public procurement in current procurement policies and practices. As such

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we must be guided by them. The EPA, Green Procurement Guidance for public sector was published on September 15, 2021, and is available on EPA website this supports the inclusion of sustainable and green practices in public sector procurement procedures, and is aimed primarily at public sector procurers at central and Government state's and public bodies it includes Irish GPP criteria for ten sectors developed based on common EU criteria, adapted to reflect the Irish market and procurement practices is the ten priorities are, one, road transportation, respect transport vehicles and services, two, indoor and outdoor lighting, three, ICT products and services, four, heating equipment, five, food and catering services, six, energy-related products, seven, cleaning products and services, eight, paper products and printing services, and nine, design, construction and management of office buildings and ten, textile products and services.

The Local Government strategic procurement centre, LGSPC, and local authority procurement officers, are also represented on a climate action regional office working group that is developing a green public procurement training programme for local sector objectives is to develop bespoke training programme to support the implementation of green procurement criteria in the in tendering process, request to procure training specialist is under development and it is expected that a contract will be awarded shortly. With training being rolled out with Local Government sector throughout

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this year, this training will form part of the actioning policy pillar of the Local Government local authority climate action training programme and will aim to reinforce the delivery of effective climate action through green public procurement. The training programme will encompass and support the implementation of the EPA guidelines and specifically developed for local authorities.

Moreover, the OGP commenced the updating of their frameworks, which is local authority we always look first to procuring in line with GPP requirements. In fact, Wicklow County Council has recently drawn down from the new office supplies framework which included green criteria in the award criteria. There are many other initiatives under way at national level to support the inclusion of GPP. Most of which the LGSPC is involved in. Including the development of online catalogue that includes all relevant policies and plans, the proposed inclusion of GPP in corporate procurement plans and tendering platform to reflect the inclusion of GPP in tender contract award. As further guidance and training is rolled out to local authorities over the coming months the following areas will be examined in relation to sustainable procurement. Updating of corporate procurement plan, procurement policies and procedures. Identifying green and strategic public procurement can be implemented EG in tender specific cases in selection and award criteria in contract delivery. The Wicklow County Council corporate procurement plan outlines goals in relation to sustainable procurement, however we are

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awaiting sector-wide guidance and agreed methodology before we report specific statistics in this area. Central Government are already required to report on the implementation of GPP in terms of the number and value of contracts which GPP criteria, and it is expected that this report will become more detailed and will include Local Government sector in due course. In relation to staff training the council's procurement officer, climate action officer and environmental awareness officer recently undertook green procurement training course in advance of the rollout of national guidance in area. Given that national guidance is now issued, and bespoke training is being developed for local authorities as well as lower national initiatives being implemented in this area, it is not considered necessary or advisable for separate internal working group to be established. I'll circulate that as well in hard copy.

CATHAOIRLEACH: What's the summary of that Helen?

HELEN: Chief Executive ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah. I want to bring in Cllr Mags Crean first of all, it is your motion, Cllr Mags Crean do you wanted to comment?

CLLR CREAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and Helen that's very detailed.

Yeah. I think what I'm proposing is slightly different and my compliment what you described there, because the motion that I have is about linking that sustainable procurement piece to a wider more strategic link as to how we as county council can play a role generating wealth locally, the community wealth building is a model

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so something I put a lot of time into looking at because strategically, even if we look at mission statement, and Wicklow County Council's statement is talked about social inclusion human rights sustainable development so community wealth building is trying to link sustainability procurement to that sustainable to economic development. Maybe it is something that economic enterprise policy committee could take, because I really think, what I'm asking members today is to support the fact that we start to look at this model and look at if sustainable procurement is becoming something that councils will play a major role in and it is a brilliant progressive approach to procurement but at the same time, we link this to a progressive approach to economic development. That other councils across the UK have done, Scotland are now looking at it, I know there are some crowns throughout Ireland starting to look at it and it is timely coming out of this pandemic, we've all been through to look at how do we generate more wealth locally and link what is going to start happening in terms of green and social clause approaches to procurement to something more strategic in our county. And I think we'll be progressive as a council to look at community wealth building at the same time that we start to roll out that training and bigger approach the OPG you mentioned in offering guidelines in relation to. My motion is not talking about sustainable procurement but linking to that community wealth building in the county so that's really what I'm asking members to support today.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you I'll hand you over to Brian for comment?

MR GLEESON: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, we might move on to motion four because that links in the answer for the community wealth so doesn't make sense to look at them in isolation. In relation to the procurement, yeah, as has been pointed out and answer from Helen there's a huge amount of work has been done to date on this and a huge emphasis from central Government on that and you can see that EPA has released the and published the guidelines in trying that. And the next step is, a specific training for the Local Government area, so it is important I suppose there's consistency, and at this links into the measurement against other local authorities there's consistency across the board and local authorities that we're measuring properly against each other, so I think it is important that we stick to the I suppose the framework that's in place and that's been rolled down from a national level down through the Local Government sector. So, I think I assume you're OK for us to in relation to that, you're happy enough the work has been done there. What I might suggest is has that's developed and the training has been rolled out to the local authorities we provide update to not only maybe the economic SPC but the climate action group as well on the progress that's been made in green procurement. Cllr Mags Crean are you happy with that

CLLR CREAN: Yes excellent work being done, I acknowledged the

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good work that Helen noted some of the stuff as well, if you were mapping in terms of generating wealth locally and suppliers and stuff but it is about the community wealth building piece I really would like to the members to respond to that and see can we link this sustainable procurement at county level to this idea of community wealth building so that's what I'm still asking but thanks Brian that's still welcome as well what you suggested.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Martin Allen followed by Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: I want to commend Cllr Mags Crean on this. This is the beginning of us starting to be aware of big projects in our own local communities for instance. We're, the full relief scheme and when you're looking at big projects like coming in and the RDF funding on the ground what I see as a local person, is you know, materials being imported from China lot of the paving and stuff like that, you see companies that are coming in from the outside in with no local input and when you compare that to the bridge built 200 years ago and flagstones on the quayside in Arklow that the local people manufactured themselves this is what we're talking about, it is when it spills out in the local community. So look I'm 100% supportive of mags motion, and I think, it is just beginning the conversation and looking at projects and developments and where the money is going and how much there's over, it is not just, monetary value, but also social value, sort of people's worth, the community people, crafts people, skilled crafts people and local

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community and the connection of all of it, the connection of everything. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: I just want to speak in relation to this, firstly I want to thank Cllr Mags Crean I saw the additional information on this, and Cllr Mags Crean was hugely generous in providing background information to it and opportunity I suppose to learn more. As Brian mentioned it is quite link today item number four and I'm not sure Cllr Mags Crean you'd know better than I, I would welcome the opportunity for us to look at in particular item four and community wealth and how we can build in this our own procurement, the opportunity to look at it and see if there's scope around it, so just from my own point of view, I'd like to support I don't know whether Cllr Mags Crean, I'm supporting number four more so than number one but the concept of looking at community wealth, thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I will bring in Lorraine Gallagher in next.

LORRAINE: Yeah, Cathaoirleach thank you and I wanted to come in because the Chief Executive there has mentioned the community wealth building and it is the item number four and that's seeks to maximise the use of local amenities, facilities and operations for local residents and business, and I think we're approaching a great window. This is the way to go and approach ago great window in

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relation to the review of the current local economic and community plan and this review process is commencing this year, there's a crossover between community cultural social development economic goals, so, just to be helpful, just we can move on and talk about motion number four now or, deal with it all in the review of the local economic and community plan and elected members can play a parliament in the this process and come back to them as we move through the process.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two more speakers looking to come in, Cllr Tom Fortune first of all.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you. Yeah, I fully support what Cllr Mags Crean is outlining and the distinct she's made when they came in to clarify. Because, if we reflect on the last number of years, for example there has been a big emphasis in recent times on centralising everything, and that's happened across various entities, apart from the local authority, the ETBs and everything else. So, I think that in its own way worked against what is outlined in these motions. So, I think the distinction that Cllr Mags Crean has emphasised is very important and I would fully support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR KAVANAGH: Yeah. I would like to fully support Mags on this as well, I think it is very visionary and would be typical of somebody who is working so closely in that field that she would have that kind of vision. It has so many benefits attached to it for communities. I

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think, Wicklow would be seen as a trailblazer to be honest. I think this is probably coming anyway. But it would be great to be there at the start, it would be a great example for other counties to follow, it is happening in other countries, it is working well in other countries. You know, we can run it side by side with the policy, you may need to tweak it to make it work, but it has great merit, and I will be supporting it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan and Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR BEHAN: Just support for this and motion number four and congratulate Cllr Mags Crean on magnificent work she's doing on this behind the scenes, she's done a huge amount on it and Cllr Mary Kavanagh very visionary stuff and something that we should all support thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Again I want to add more to both motions I think it is important to recognise there's intentional around wealth building change how we do things and looking at potential how we can sustainably, leverage existing resources or support local people to be involved and how wealth is circulated within a community and extracted from a community or whether our resources in terms of our funds are not sent elsewhere outside the boundaries of Wicklow and instead are used within those as much as possible to build wealth within our county so brilliant motion and fully support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: A lot of support for you there, are you happy to

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refer both motions to the relevant SPCs so they can feed into the economic plans going forward LECP and so on, is that what you wanted to achieve out of this.

CLLR CREAN: That would be the place for it to go, first what I'd like to see is support at a member's level for this exploring this model in the county?

So, and somebody needs to drive that, which is why the first idea of having a working group is linked then to the other motion that's about building expertise and capacity. So, I suppose I still would like, I don't know if we need a vote or something, is this a model that we as members want to explore for the county going forward?

LORRAINE: There's an advisory group, Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support, Chair of the Cultural Social Development SSC and the Chair of the Chief Office of the LCDC and myself, Christine Flood, you have the key players there in terms of the internal working group I would suggest it is best within that group, you who we're kicking off on the process opportune time to review objectives and goals and gets what Cllr Mags Crean is putting forward in relation to green procurement, community wealth, building all of that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK.

CLLR CREAN: Yeah, that sounds very good, Lorraine, if there's terms

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of references for that group though. I just, what I'm concerned about is it is actually named the community wealth building is named and strategic approach to it, that it isn't just an add - on, I think it is central to going forward economically so that's what I want to get members level support, if there's general support for it today and if that group is the most strategic place for it to be advanced then yes. I'd be happy to offer any support.

LORRAINE: To give that assurance, there's a lot that changed in the last six years since the local community plan was developed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You have that assurance Cllr Mags Crean. Brian just to finish off on that, I'm running out of time.

Brian, I support what Lorraine put forward, we have a framework in place with the LECP so no point in duplicating work elsewhere and we have the main people in there, so it makes sense to use the framework and review the whole area in that and move forward through that particular framework.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you. Cllr Mary Kavanagh are you happy we move on to the next one we're agreed. You're on mute.

CLLR CREAN: I'm happy with that response now.

CLLR KAVANAGH: I know, sorry, no I was going to say, it is a motion, and you know, I wouldn't have ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think Cllr Mags Crean is happy with the response to if everyone's happy we'll move on.

I don't want to keep going, we have other motions to get through.

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Are we happy to move on agreed?

CLLR CREAN: Can I hear what Cllr Mary Kavanagh was going to say?

CLLR KAVANAGH: The reason why she brought it here for a motion was to have everybody's input and have a vote on it. And I don't think there's anything wrong with having a vote on a motion, that's the idea of a motion.

LORRAINE: Motions are cause to action, and some can be agreed without debate and some there has to be a bit of debate. And this is where the discussion has gone today so it is not that it diminishes Cllr Mags Crean's motion in any way.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You're happy with the response from Lorraine and Brian of the format that it is going to take. I mean on everybody that is indicated to speak has spoken of it. In your support.

CLLR CREAN: I hear what Cllr Mary Kavanagh is saying so I suppose I feel because nobody has raised any objections there's an overall support for it?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah agreed.

CLLR CREAN: So strategically that's the best place to advance it.

CLLR FORTUNE: Can we note it there was overall support for it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's OK, that's agreed, it is agreed, yeah.

All right. Moving on, notice of motion in the name of Cllr Anne Ferris proposer and seconded by Cllr Paul O'Brien it is the policy of Wicklow County Council not to purchase goods or services produced or provided in whole or part as practical from illegally Occupied

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Territories and illegal settlers and any contract should cease as soon as allowed. I'll get a response from Helen first of all.

HELEN: The responsibility for procurement is an executive function and the Chief Executive is obliged to comply with statutory procurement legislation Department of Enterprise and trade advice neither Ireland or the EU have restricted measures in place in respect of Israel Ireland has given undertaking as part of its WTO membership to grant non-discriminatory access to its market in goods and services, and joined the Government procurement agreement, GPA expand its commitments with regard to market access. Under the current Irish and EU procurement regime suppliers in a country outside of the EU that has signed up to the World Trade Organisation's Government procurement agreement, GPA are eligible to submit tenders for Irish public sector contracts, a full list of members is available, and I'll send you a link to the website. The department previously indicated any move by a public authority to act outside of any agreement, may be seen to breach our international trade commitments and also may be seen as discriminatory in relation to goods and services. Otherwise legally saleable within the union. The law agent advised it would not be appropriate to interfere with contract law in the way proposed by the motion, and this would leave Wicklow County Council open to a specific performance court action and costs. Political assertions are not grounds to alter criteria in procurement process unless grounded

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in existing regulations it is arguable that objective eluding to trade sanction regarding other country's actions are outside the remit of the powers of the members and would be in unsubstantiated criteria that does not exist under procurement law. Based on the above advice it is determined that it is not possible to adopt the policy as set out in the motion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you. Cllr Anne Ferris do you want to respond to that, it is fairly clear.

CLLR FERRIS: I certainly do Cathaoirleach want to respond to that and thanks Helen for that reply. I would be grateful if you send out a copy of that. I tabled this motion Cathaoirleach because, it has in fact I don't know why Wicklow County Council is different from other county councils around the council it has been passed and adopted by a number of county councils around the country, including the Dublin councils so I don't know where we have a problem in getting advice from the law agent and think didn't get similar advice. I think Helen, you mentioned Israel in your very early in you rely automatic ply and certainly I want to put on record, I'm not anti-Israel but am against illegal takeover of a state of another state which is what is happening between Israel and Palestine, this motion is being supported by the Bray and district council of trade unions. I get what is being said and all that official information, but it doesn't frighten or scare me at all. Cathaoirleach, when I put down this motion back in July 2021, there was a piece in the local media, Bray

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People and Wicklow Times, outlining the work that a native of Enniskerry, Jenny Derbyshire carries out, she's member of NGO and travels very much on a regular basis over to the Israeli Occupied Territories to help children's cross boundaries to get to school. I think, hardly a day goes by without we read on social media or in the papers about different problems at different atrocities being counted, about schoolchildren being searched in person, their school bags searched and held up from going to school and from going to college, there is terrible problems going on there, and I certainly for one am not just going to put my head in the sand and ignore it. It should be highlighted; I understand what you're saying Helen and the response that we're getting but I think that this is an issue that has to be highlighted in every way possible. What's going on over there is disgraceful. And you know when you go back to the apartheid campaign in Ireland, that was supported by Irish people against South Africa back in the days, a long, long time ago, we certainly didn't have any problems then and we weren't I suppose I won't say threatened by the Government or whoever else we were going to break any laws on this. But I think it is dreadful that we request and cannot pass this motion for fear of repercussions, but I would like to know the members of this council, support what I have put in writing.

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CLLR BLAKE: I would assume it would have been past, to send a signal we stand with the people oppressed and who are unfairly treated by Israel, every single day of the week. I'm disappointed, Cathaoirleach, with the response but I understand it is the official response.

I welcome support on the motion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I very much support the motion and admire Councillor Anne Ferris for expressing herself and not backing down, whether you are given a vibe it is not wanted or someone does not want to hear what you have to say, to remind of it is something against the international law to develop illegal settlements, 250 illegal settlements in occupied territories, there are over 600,000 settlers, so it is important to send a message, as Councillor Anne Ferris said. I follow the news closely with what is happening in Palestine, there are people losing homes, people prevented from living their daily lives and as has been said, oppression is happening daily in the occupied territories, so I think it is important to send a message on this, Israel is considered an apartheid state, not just by me. It is described that they are perpetrating humanities. So it is important it is described. Thank you.

Cllr Edward Timmins?

CLLR TIMMINS: I oppose the motion for the simple reason I find it selective. It is selecting one country, no country is mentioned in the motion, it is selective on countries, there is lots of other things going on around the world.

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Innovations, happening in Europe in the last decade, which we all know about. Where are we going to stop? Do we check out every country in the world to see how they are doing, what they have done, their behaviour? I think it has gone way, way too far, being completely selective to pick one country. It is like a bandwagon, to be honest, I don't think that the council has to get on in what is happening in Palestine, will we look at what is happening in the Crimea, where will we stop in it is completely selective in its proposal.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: I want to be brief to put in with Councillor Anne Ferris for putting the motion forward. I share her frustration we may not be able to progress but for her suggestion, to maybe support the occupied territories bill that is being debated in the Houses, which may aim to do something similar as to what you were saying, Councillor Anne Ferris but not leaving us open to the repercussions that Helen outlined but well done. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell?

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I support it 100%. I think it is up to the members to bring forward any sort of motion that they want. As Cllr Edward Timmins says, it is selective. It is selective for a reason. And Councillor Anne Ferris articulated that very well.

You know, anyone else can come forward, down the line, if they want to bring up about what is happening in other countries but this is a very, very serious issue. As Irish people we understand, we have had persecution within our own

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country, within our own state. I think it is important that we support people who are going through this.

I think that Councillor Anne Ferris has outlined in regard to this motion, it has been passed in other councils. And what has been lost with regards to the legal opinion given to us, or forcing people's hands, I would like to see this, Cathaoirleach, I will certainly support it but I think that the motion should not be taken off the agenda but kept on the agenda for the next time you get to the motions that you have that information of the other local authorities that passed us and the legal advice that they are given, as irrespective of the legal advice or otherwise, I will be supporting this 100%. I commend Councillor Anne Ferris for bringing this. It has been on the agenda for a long time. So I don't think it is good enough to swipe it to one side to say, look, we have had this legal opinion. To me it is not good enough. Other local authorities have passed it, we are showing solidarity with people who need this support, they need to know that people are out there thinking and walking and trying to support them, the Irish people, for years and years and years, would have been in a similar position. We certainly would have been appreciative of our forefathers, or of the support that comes from all over the world. So I support it 100%. I would like to see it remain on the agenda.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two more members, Cllr Joe Behan follow #-D by Cllr Gerry O'Neil.

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach I don't have difficulty with the motion input and the vision, it is essentially a political issue and a political matter and

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we all, I think, are entitled to have views on it. My view would be that our experience in this country is that unless we have unit of purpose and we have a peace process that is supported by the international community there will be always strife. I personally favour a two-state solution to the Middle East, I think it is difficult enough to try to get agreement in that particular conflict without people from other countries, if you like, attempting to get involved and to give their views on it, and that's obviously what is going to happen here today. I personally would not be supporting that motion for that basic reason. That I think there is a really long history to this conflict, this is right and wrong on both sides, as there has been in this country and we have a lot of experience of that. I think on that basis it is something that I think we should leave to the people directly affected and to work out a solution that is definitely needed. Can I point out, that Councillor Anne Ferris made a comment as soon as Cllr Edward Timmins finished about him having his head in the sand. We have had discussions about people making personalised political comments and personal remarks when others are making contributions and Councillor Anne Ferris constantly points this out. So it is regrettable when Cllr Edward Timmins made a basic and a genuine and a reasonable point that he should be subjected to that kind of off the cuff comment under your breath, Councillor Anne Ferris, we should not engage in that behaviour, you certainly don't tolerate it of anyone else.

CLLR O'NEIL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I wanted to come in, to Councillor Anne Ferris to fully support this motion. I think it is, we have seen the

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slaughter in Palestine for a long, long time. It is about time that we did show some support for the people. And as someone mention earlier, the slaughter of children over the years has been huge, dreadful.

It is a pity, you know, when Cllr Gerry O'Neil, well, when we talked about the six occupied counties, that we didn't get that type of support in our own occupied Ireland, so I absolutely support it. One other little thing, I know when other councils may express a little concern about the motion and Palestine, because when I look at Ireland, our role in the wars, the Middle East, and the use of Shannon as a stop-off point for what happened in the Middle East, I, you know, I question thank the Labour Party and other parties there, who have shown their support for the stopover in Shannon. I also ask, even, my former colleagues that I spent 47 years as a Member of Sinn Fein, if Sinn Fein get their foot in the door now, would they have the guts to put a stop to the use of part of Ireland for the slaughter of people in the Middle East? Again, I would like to go back to commend Councillor Anne Ferris on this one. And I fully support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, a couple more looking to come I want to state where we are at. I didn't look for a Timex tension, so I can't vote on this, I Cameron past the time. Councillor Anne Ferris, I can leave this on the agenda to get more information on it, and we can discuss it again you are agreeable to that, I think it was suggested by Cllr John Snell we are happy to do that. There are obviously members giving opinions on both sides of this. So if everyone is happy enough.

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CLLR FERRIS: To just to ask to propose the motion, I know that my colleague wanted to come in but I ask it were on the agenda for the next meeting and if you ensure that we get to it. If the reply from Helen is circulated to all of the members and the legal advice, I will find out that Cllr John Snell mentioned and thank you for your assistance on that, Cllr John Snell, to find out about the other aspects of it. I'm sorry for delaying the meeting on it. As you said, Cllr John Snell, if this has been on the agenda since July, it has been a long time with all of that information behind it. I would appreciate that if it is put back on the agenda next time, and we can have a vote about it.

Cllr Edward Timmins, can I just say that I did mention ... I know ... I said it after you had spoken but I was not directing at you particularly, I just don't like people putting their heads in the sand. I would like to thank Cllr Joe Behan for pointing it out to the members as well, that I said that. But, Cathaoirleach, yes, I would like it on the agenda next month.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Derek Mitchell, you have a hand raised, are you OK with that?

CLLR MITCHELL: I will wait until next month. Members, I think that is everything concluded. Thank you for the support and for the time. Anyone on the protocol, to stay on the line there. Thank you all.

[All speak at once]

Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Stay safe. Goodbye.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Goodbye, folks.



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