

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING (HYBRID) OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024, COMMENCING 2.00 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLORS A. FLYNN KENNEDY CATHAOIRLEACH, T. ANNESLEY, M. BARRY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, M. CORRIGAN, A. CRONIN, S. CULLEN, E. DOYLE, G. DUNNE, A. FERRIS, P. FITZGERALD, T. FORTUNE, P. GLENNON, M. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, P. LEONARD, D. MITCHELL, J. MULLEN, M. MURPHY, D. O'BRIEN, P. O'BRIEN, R. O'CONNOR, G. O'NEILL, M. RYAN, L. SCOTT, J. SNELL, S. STOKES, E. TIMMINS, G. WALSH AND I. WINTERS (32)**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**MS. E. O'GORMAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
MS. L. GALLAGHER, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MS. B. KILKENNY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MS. L. EARLS, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MR. J. LANE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MR. M. NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MR. B. GLEESON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MS. D. KENNEDY, LAW AGENT  
MS. H. PURCELL, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR  
MS. T. O'BRIEN, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MS. L. HEALY, A/SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MS. S. NICHOLS, A/SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MS. E. O'DONOVAN, HEAD OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
MR. J. BOWES, SENIOR ENGINEER  
MR. F. KEOGH, SENIOR ENGINEER  
MR. M. FLYNN, SENIOR ENGINEER  
MS.H. FALLON, SENIOR ENGINEER  
MS. S. WALSH, SENIOR PLANNER  
MR. A. DEMPSEY, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER  
MS. E. BERMINGHAM, SENIOR EXECUTIVE PLANNER  
MS. M. CAMPBELL, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
MS. C. WRIGHT, ARCHIVIST  
MR. M. COSTELLO, CLIMATE ACTION CO-ORDINATOR  
MR. B. WILDES, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
MS. K. BOYLE, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
MR. D. PORTER, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

**MR. J. POWDERLEY, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**  
**MS. R. WOODS, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**  
**MS. E. BRESLIN, SENIOR STAFF OFFICER**  
**MR. G. MURPHY, IS TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER**  
**MS. T. BYRNE, ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER**

At the commencement of the meeting a roll call was taken. The Meetings Administrator advised of meetings etiquette for online meetings and that the press and some members of the public were also present.

### **Votes of Sympathy**

Elected Members passed a vote of sympathy to the families of the late Mr. Graham Larkin, Mr. Pa Curley, Mr. Paddy Manley, Mr. John (Jackie) Sillery, Mr. Josip Strok, Ms. Mollie Dempsey, Mr. Cathal Friel, Ms. Pamela McCormack, Mr. Pat Malone, Mr. Danny Dowling and Mr. Des Cullen. A minutes silence was observed for the deceased.

Ms. C. Wright, Archivist advised the Elected Members that we are celebrating 125 years of Wicklow County Council, first meeting taking place on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1899.

### **ITEM NO. 1**

**To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. S. Cullen, seconded by Cllr. R. O'Connor and agreed to confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### **ITEM NO. 2**

**To consider the disposal of 18 square metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow, R93 XE 12 by way of a one-year lease commencing 26th June 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. P. O'Brien and agreed to consider the disposal of 18 square metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow, R93 XE 12 by way of a one-year lease commencing 26th June 2024, as set out in statutory notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 3**

**To consider the disposal of 115 square metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Art McCormack and Tomas O’Leary of MosArt Ltd. by way of a one-year lease commencing 23rd May 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. S. Cullen, seconded by Cllr. G. Dunne and agreed to consider the disposal of 115 square metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Art McCormack and Tomas O’Leary of MosArt Ltd. by way of a one-year lease commencing 23rd May 2024, as set out in statutory notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 4**

**To consider the disposal of 176 sq. metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow known as The Science Laboratory, Clermont House, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Ms. Caoimhe Doyle, 128 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow by way of a one-year lease commencing 9th June 2024.**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. S. Stokes and agreed to consider the disposal of 176 sq. metres or thereabouts in the townland of Newrath, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow known as The Science Laboratory, Clermont House, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow to Ms. Caoimhe Doyle, 128 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow by way of a one-year lease commencing 9th June 2024, as set out in statutory notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 5**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0254HA or thereabouts in the townland of Abbeylands Td, Co. Wicklow comprised in Folio no. WW2384L Co. Wicklow being the property known as 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow by Transfer Order to Mr. Brendan McDonald (as LPR of Mary Maura McDonald) of 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property.**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. T. Annesley and agreed to consider the disposal of 0.0254HA or thereabouts in the townland of Abbeylands Td, Co. Wicklow comprised in Folio no. WW2384L Co. Wicklow being the property known as 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow by Transfer Order to Mr. Brendan McDonald (as LPR of Mary Maura McDonald) of 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property, as set out in statutory notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 6**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0254HA or thereabouts in the townland of Abbeylands Td, Co. Wicklow comprised in Folio no. WW2384L Co. Wicklow being the property known as 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow by Transfer Order to Mr. Brendan McDonald (as**

**LPR of Mary Maura McDonald) of 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property.**

Prior to discussing the disposal, Cllr. A. Flynn Kennedy excused herself from the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Behan, seconded by Cllr. A. Ferris and agreed to consider the disposal of 0.0254HA or thereabouts in the townland of Abbeylands Td, Co. Wicklow comprised in Folio no. WW2384L Co. Wicklow being the property known as 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow by Transfer Order to Mr. Brendan McDonald (as LPR of Mary Maura McDonald) of 16 Griffith Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property, as set out in statutory notice circulated.

Cllr. Flynn Kennedy was invited to rejoin the meeting which she duly did.

### **ITEM NO. 7**

**To note Annual Financial Statement 2023 and to approve by resolution (i) additional net expenditure in excess of budget in accordance with Section 104(7) of the Local Government Act 2001 and (ii) additional transfers to and from capital in excess of budget.**

Mr. B. Gleeson, Director of Services, gave an overview of the Annual Financial Statement 2023 as follows:

- The Council faced a number of economic challenges and uncertainties during 2023, including high inflation and energy costs and increased interest rates. However, I am pleased to report that despite these challenges the Council's overall financial position remained quite strong at the end of 2023.
- The total expenditure incurred in the revenue account after transfers was 150 million; an increase of 16 million on 2022. A revenue surplus of 341,000 was generated which reduced our overall revenue deficit to 598,000 at year end.
- Capital account expenditure including transfers was 131 million last year. The vast majority of this expenditure was under our housing programme and a full breakdown by programme group is outlined in Appendix 6 on page 42 of the report.
- Commercial rates collection increased from 88% to 91% last year, which is the highest collection rate Wicklow has ever achieved. Housing loans collection rate also increased significantly from 84% up to 90%. The housing rent collection dropped from 85 to 84%.
- A significant amount of expenditure occurred, a lot was achieved in 2023 and some of the key actions and deliverables are outlined on pages 7 and 8 of the financial review.

- While the AFS itself is just for noting by the members, under section 104(7) of the Local Government Act, approval of the members is sought for the net expenditure in excess of budget in the revenue account and for transfers to and from the capital account.
- Net expenditure in excess of budget, these amounts are outlined by division on page 4 of the AFS as well as in note 16 on page 26, and they are as follows: Housing and building, 1,602,782; roads transportation safety, 190,871; development management, 222,024; environmental services 1,478,204; recreation and amenity, 598,559; and finally, agricultural, education, health and welfare, 120,997.
- Approval by the members for transfers to and from capital is also requested.
- The most significant transfers from capital are rates revaluation provision, a funds rate income reductions following tribunal decisions and that was 2.2 million. Also, another amount is internal capital receipts to fund pre letting expenditure of approximately 278,000 under the housing division.

It was proposed by Cllr. V. Blake, seconded by Cllr. G. Walsh and agreed by all to approve:

- (i) additional net expenditure in excess of budget in accordance with Section 104(7) of the Local Government Act 2001 and;

It was proposed by Cllr. A. Ferris, seconded by Cllr. E. Timmins and agreed by all to approve:

- (ii) additional transfers to and from capital in excess of budget.

### **ITEM NO. 8**

#### **To adopt the Wicklow County Council Annual Report 2023 in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act 2001.**

Ms. H. Purcell advised that the Draft Annual Report was considered by the Elected Members at the April meeting. NOAC performance indicators for 2023 and the Annual Financial Statement along with a statement of internal financial control were now included.

It was proposed by Cllr. E. Timmins, seconded by Cllr. P. O'Brien and agreed by all to adopt the Wicklow County Council Annual Report 2023 in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act 2001.

## **ITEM NO. 9**

### **To consider the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report, April 2023**

Prior to discussing the Monthly Management Report, the Chief Executive paid tribute to Ms. B. Kilkenny, Director of Service, on her forthcoming retirement and thanked her for her dedicated service to Wicklow County Council.

The Elected Members joined in wishing Ms. Kilkenny well in her retirement.

The Elected Members were circulated with the Chief Executive Monthly Management Report, April 2024. Some of the issues raised included the following:

- Adaptation funding – flooding to road and footpaths caused by climate change.
- Arklow/Shillelagh Greenway.
- Lack of recreation facilities – Wicklow Town.
- Housing, Ballinalea, Ashford – lack of infrastructure.
- Extension of Arboretum, Kilquade – parking issues.
- Bray/Greystones cliff walk.
- Lack of a recycling centre, Greystones.
- Chapel Road pedestrian cycle infrastructure improvement.
- Bundle scheme – Rehills land, Bray.
- Dell site, Boghall Road.
- Community recognition fund.
- Community gardens.
- E-bolt scheme.
- Lack of road markings across the county.
- Boiler maintenance.
- Greystones Enterprise Hub.
- Coastal erosion.
- Bridge, Seapoint Court.
- Need for a second bridge over river Dargle.
- Signage, Seafront, Bray.
- Active travel.
- Proposed relief road.
- Public transport, West Wicklow.
- Park and Ride, West Wicklow.
- Support for new businesses.
- Public lighting, West Wicklow.
- '65' Bus Service.
- Recreational land, Blessington.
- Immigration policy.
- Disability policies.
- Small businesses, Arklow Main Street.
- Electricity outages, Aughrim.
- Poor state of rural roads.

- Town and village renewal funding.
- Rural planning.
- Kippure Lodge.
- Sewerage issues, Blessington.
- The Murrough, Wicklow Town.
- Fire Stations, Dunlavin and Baltinglass.
- Water Safety Information Boards.
- Brides Head masterplan.
- Street enhancement fund.
- Recreation audit.
- Coastal protection, Clogga.
- Assembly Hall, Wicklow

Elected Members raised questions which were responded to by the Chief Executive and the relevant Director of Services.

It was agreed a letter should issue to the Minister of Environment, Climate Action, Communications & Transport and the NTA expressing concern at the withdrawal of the 184 bus service and at the lack of capacity on the 65 bus service in Blessington.

**Time Extension:** It was proposed by Cllr. A. Flynn Kennedy, seconded by Cllr. P. O'Brien and agreed by all to extend the meeting to finish of business.

## **ITEM NO. 10**

### **Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence.

## **ITEM NO. 11**

### **Notice of Motions**

**Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. P. O'Brien (proposer), seconded by Cllr. J. Mullen (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024)**

*"To ask the Chief Executive the number of apprentices taken on in each of the years 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019; and if she will provide a disaggregated breakdown of their function in the local authority."*

### **Response**

Two apprentices were employed in the Information Systems department in 2019 and one accounting technician apprentice was employed in finance in 2020. No apprentices were employed in 2021, 2022 or 2023.

Wicklow County Council have committed to employing five apprentices as part of the Outdoor Workforce Plan agreed between management and unions. The H.R. department is currently in discussions with the KWETB in this regard.

Wicklow County Council is also at the final stages of the regional graduate recruitment programme and we anticipate up to 9 graduates will be employed over 10 skill set areas. This project is run in conjunction with Grad Ireland and the LGMA.

**Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. S. Stokes (proposer), seconded by Cllr. R. O'Connor (1<sup>st</sup> March 2024)**

*'That Wicklow County Council erect Lyme disease information and warning signage in public parks and playgrounds to advise of the dangers Lyme disease. Such signage should also outline the steps to take to minimise the risk of contracting this chronic condition'.*

**Response**

Lyme disease is an infection carried by infected ticks. Lyme disease can affect anyone but is commonest among hill-walkers, hikers, campers and others whose leisure activities or work takes place in heathland, light woodland and other grassy areas or brings them in contact with certain animals e.g. deer and sheep. Summer and autumn is the period when most cases occur.

Ticks are most likely to be found in the following areas:

- Shady and humid woodland clearings with grass
- Open grassland, parkland, fields and bushes
- Walking paths, especially those bordered by long grasses
- Wooded and forested areas
- Vegetation close to lakes and seaside beaches

According to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), Ireland's specialist service for the surveillance of communicable diseases, it is estimated that around 200 people have a positive blood test for Lyme disease each year.

Wicklow County Council raises awareness of Lyme's Disease through its website, which has been updated to include links to the HPSC website, and will run an awareness campaign during May 2024.

The HPSC has produced a Lyme and tick leaflet on [Protecting Yourself Against Tick Bites and Lyme Disease](#) to help raise awareness of Lyme disease and promote prevention methods.

Given the locations of the Council owned parks and playgrounds, it is felt that there is a very low risk of users contracting Lyme's disease in such locations and, as such, no signage is



required. Should the HSE decide to run a Public Health Campaign, the Council will, of course, liaise further with them on this matter.

Further information is available here:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/vectorborne/lymedisease/informationforthepublic/factsheetsforthegeneralpublic//>

It was proposed by Cllr. S. Stokes, seconded by Cllr. R. O'Connor and agreed by all to bring the motion back to the SPC.

**Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. A. Flynn Kennedy (proposer), seconded by Cllr. M. Corrigan (4<sup>th</sup> March 2024)**

*'That Wicklow County Council, in conjunction with Bray Municipal District examine fully the traffic congestion issues within Bray, both town centre as well as the entry and exit points of the District, and develop a plan to deal with the long term traffic congestion, taking into consideration new developments with current planning approved and / or submitted and the future development of the Fassaroe lands.'*

Response

The Bray Transport Study 2019 was developed to address current and future transport needs in Bray and its environs. The study considered future developments and set out infrastructure necessary to cater for the increased traffic arising. Key objectives included modal shift to bus and DART services. DART services will double in frequency under the DART + coastal proposed improvements. Dedicated bus and cycle lanes are proposed from Bray to the city centre under the Bus connects project, currently under consideration at An Bord Pleanála.

Many of the proposals to address traffic movements to and from Bray were contingent on progressing the M11/N11 improvement scheme. Regrettably funding for this scheme has not been available to progress improvements as anticipated in the Bray Transport Study. Efforts continue to seek funding for improvements on the M11/N11. It is proposed to undertake a new Local Area Plan for Bray commencing in 2024; it may be appropriate to review elements of the Bray Transport Study in conjunction with this work.

While the Bus Connects and the DART improvement works may have limited impact on the Town centre area, a traffic modelling report has been issued and the bus priority and decongestion scheme are available for consultation by members.

**Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. M. Murphy (proposer), seconded by Cllr. S. Stokes (4<sup>th</sup> March 2024)**

*'That Wicklow County Council will undertake an accessibility audit in all formats of all Polling Stations in each Municipal District before June's proposed Local Election.'*

*The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) has called on the Department of Housing to ensure that "appropriate measures" are taken to ensure that polling stations are fully accessible to*

*people with disabilities seeking to participate in upcoming elections and referendums, after a National Disability Authority found that 29 buildings, servicing 43 polling stations, were not accessible to wheelchair users at the last general election, while other issues included the availability of easy-to-read information on candidates and difficulties with the tactile voting template for the visually impaired. "The onus should not be on the person with the disability to try and find where they have to go to that is accessible, which maybe not in the same premises as where other family members vote'*

#### Response

The European Returning Officer Ms. Mary Delehanty has responsibility for the polling stations in the forthcoming elections.

She has confirmed that a full accessibility audit has been carried out in respect of all of the polling stations on our polling scheme in County Wicklow.

Ramps are available where required and secondary access doors and extra polling booths and rooms have been identified as necessary in two stations and these will be catered for in the forthcoming elections.

Works are carried out on schools and community halls all the time. Ms. Delehanty requests a safety report to be completed and notified to her in respect of each station before polling.

#### **Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. E. Timmins (proposer), seconded by Cllr. V. Blake (28<sup>th</sup> March 2024)**

*"We are calling on The Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin and The Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien to urgently engage with the providers of Short Term Lets' and Air B&B's throughout Ireland that are providing much needed support and accommodation to enhance The Tourism Industry that is so vital to our economy. What is required is a suspension of The Mandatory Registration Process for Short Term Lets' until adequate Consultation and Clarification is put in place in order to allay the fears, anxiety and misinformation that is bringing huge uncertainty to the providers of accommodation in this sector."*

It was proposed by Cllr. E. Timmins, Seconded by Cllr. V. Blake and agreed by all to write to the Minister for Tourism and to the Minister for Housing.

#### **Notice of motion in the name of Cllr. M. Kavanagh (proposer), seconded by Cllr. P. Leonard and supported by Cllr. J. Behan and Cllr. T. Fortune (2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024)**

*'Due to the very worrying increase in road fatalities throughout the country, this Council demands that the Government provides funding for the employment of a full time Road Safety Officer in every Local Authority in the country'.*

*If passed, that this motion be sent to every local authority'.*

#### Response

The role of Road Safety Officer with Wicklow County Council has always been a part time administrative role. This differs throughout the Country as some RSOs are a technical grade. To the best of my knowledge all RSOs are part time with the exception of a few counties Donegal, Mayo, Kildare and the Dublin Authorities. Some counties share a RSO.

The Department recently launched a pilot scheme with 4 counties for the appointment of a permanent RSO at an Executive Engineer grade. An announcement is expected that the scheme will be rolled out to all local authorities shortly.

Other Information in relation to the RSO role:

The duties of the post of the Road Safety Officer include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting and assisting in the implementation of the Government's Strategy on Road Safety Vision Zero.
- Initiating and promoting road safety campaigns and projects in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop a culture of proactive safe road use for all users.
- Promoting and assisting the implementation of a road safety plan for County Wicklow.
- Managing the Road Safety Working Together Committee for Wicklow and maintaining good working relations with An Garda Siochana and other stakeholders.
- Chairing quarterly meetings
- The RSWTC members include representatives from Wicklow County Council, the Road Safety Authority, the Gardaí, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
- The main objectives of the Road Safety Working Together Committee are:
- To oversee the preparation of a Road Safety Plan for County Wicklow in line with the Government's Strategy on Road Safety Vision Zero.
- Implementation of the Plan.
- Set, measure and realise targets for road safety, in accordance with the Road Safety Plan
- Report annually to the SPC on the outcomes achieved from the plan.
- To discuss road safety priorities and communicate good practice.
- To enhance the knowledge of all those on the Working Committee.
  
- Budget holder for the Annual Road Safety Budget of €1000
- Point of contact for public/Schools in relation to RS and liaising with MD in replying to the queries.
- Weighbridge – Recently reached agreement with a private company to allow use of their Weighbridge by AGS (WCC is obliged to provide this facility under legislation).
- School Warden Service – Assisting the MDs in the operation of a School Warden Service for County Wicklow (training, uniforms, substitute cover)
- Participating on Interview Boards for STWs
- Presentation of road safety data, plans, information to various meetings, when required.
- Deliver road safety messages via media and radio when required.
- Manage and maintain social media on Wicklow County Council's SM channels.

- Update of Website for Road Safety.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Kavanagh, seconded by Cllr. P. Leonard and agreed by all to write to the Minister for Transport and to the NTA and the motion to be circulated to every local authority.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

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**CLLR. PAUL O'BRIEN  
CATHAOIRLEACH  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**MS. HELEN PURCELL  
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/  
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**

**Confirmed at meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**