

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held Monday 14th October 2024
in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. Pip Breen, Cathaoirleach.**Councillors:**

Barden	Pat	Kehoe	Pat	O'Rourke	John (Online)
Boland	Nicky	Kelly	Leonard	Ó Súilleabháin	Fionntán
Browne	Aidan	Kenny	Donal (online)	Owens	Jackser
Byrne	Cathal	Laffan	Garry (online)	Shannon	Raymond
Codd	Jim	Lawlor	George	Sheehan	Michael
Donohoe	Anthony	McDonald	Darragh	Staples	Frank
Dwyer	John	McDonald	Lisa	Staples	Robbie
Farrell	Mary (online)	Murphy	Barbara- Anne	Sullivan	Joe
Fleming	John	Murphy	Bridín	Walsh	Catherine Biddy
Forde	Tom	Murphy	Marty	Walsh	Oliver
Kavanagh	Paddy (online)	O'Brien	Aoife Rose		

Officials:

Ms. A. Byrne, A/Director of Services
 Mr. M. Drea, County Secretary
 Ms. C. Godkin, Director of Services
 Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services
 Ms. L. Hore, Director of Services
 Mr. S. Howell, A/Director of Services
 Ms. L. Lacey, Head of Finance
 Mr. E. Taaffe, Chief Executive

Apologies: There were no apologies recorded

Votes of sympathy:

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to:

- The family of Johnnie Doyle, Water Services Inspector
- The family of Thomas St. Ledger, brother of Sue Kent, Community Department.
- The family of Kathleen Whelan, mother of James Whelan, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads Section
- The family of Tommy Kavanagh, former employee of Wexford County Council.
- The family of Andrew Hall.
- The family of John Foley.
- The family of Mary Coughlan.
- The family of Patrick (Pakie) O'Neill.

Congratulations:

Cllr. J. Codd congratulated the committee of Camross Hall on its 100th anniversary.

Cllr. J. Codd congratulated the organisers of the Rathangan Country Fair.

Cllr. J. Codd congratulated Philip Quirke on his book of poetry being published.

Cllr. P. Breen congratulated the 17 Wexford food producers who won 32 awards at the 2024 Blas na hÉireann Awards.

Cllr. M. Sheehan congratulated the organisers of the Eugene O'Neill Festival.

Cllr. P. Barden congratulated St. Abbans, Adamstown on winning the U16 Roinn 4 Hurling County Final.

Cllr. P. Barden congratulated Rathgarogue Cushinstown on winning the New Ross District Junior 'B' Hurling Championship Final.

Cllr. P. Barden congratulated Rathgarogue Cushinstown on winning the Junior B Ladies Football County Final.

Cllr. T. Forde congratulated Liam Bates on the release of his song Blazing Sky.

Cllr. C. Byrne congratulated Wexford GAA on the official opening of the refurbished Chadwicks Wexford Park.

Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin congratulated Tirlán who officially opened its newly refurbished FarmLife branch in Inch, Co. Wexford.

Cllr. G. Laffan congratulated Glynn Barntown on winning the Senior Camogie County Final.

Cllr. M. Farrell congratulated Sheila Forsey who made history at this year's Eugene O'Neill International Festival of Theatre as she became the first female playwright to be featured.

Cllr. J. Sullivan congratulated Castletown on reaching the Junior and Senior Football County Finals.

Cllr. P. Kehoe congratulated Baile Dubh Tíre on winning the Intermediate Ladies Football County Final.

1. Presentation - LEADER - Mr. Tom Bermingham

Mr. Tom Bermingham, WLD gave a presentation to the Members outlining:

- The background to the scheme.
- Summary of LEADER in Wexford 2016 – 2023.
- Budget allocation for LEADER 2023 – 2027 broken down across three themes.

- Local development strategy.
- Community grant rates and amounts.
- Enterprise grant rates and amounts.
- Ineligible sectors and activities.
- Application process, programme rollout, and community call calendar.

Mr. Bermingham answered all questions posed following his presentation. Cathaoirleach P. Breen thanked Mr. Bermingham for a very informative presentation.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 County Council Meeting 9th September, 2024

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Carthy, seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the County Council Meeting on 9th September, 2024.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. A. Browne and Cllr. J. Owens raised concerns that a motion which proposed that a school warden be hired for St. Aidan's school appeared to be disregarded. Cllr.'s P. Kehoe and C. Byrne also spoke in favour of reinstating a school warden. There was a lengthy discussion on the issue with Mr. E. Taaffe committing to a review once the new arrangements are bedded in and reverting to a Municipal District meeting on the matter.

Cllr. T. Forde enquired if Wexford County Council has received a response to the letter sent to the Minister in relation to a commitment reported in the local media to provide funding to It's Good to Talk counselling service.

Cllr. T. Forde expressed a view that a new model for dealing with homelessness needs to be considered considering the expenditure incurred on B&B type emergency accommodation.

Cllr. A.R. O'Brien enquired when the Local Community Safety Partnership will be up and running.

Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin asked that the bus stop for the new school in Gorey be located on the same side as the school, not across the road, a suggestion supported by Cllr. P. Breen.

2.2 Corporate Policy Group / Budget Working Group 7th October, 2024

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. A.R. O'Brien the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group / Budget Working Group on 7th October, 2024.

2.3 County Council Meeting 13th May, 2024 - Amendment

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to confirm the amended Minutes of the County Council Meeting on 13th May, 2024.

3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001:

3.1 Intention to dispose of property at 1 Centenary Place, Gorey, Co. Wexford

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to dispose of property at 1 Centenary Place, Gorey, Co. Wexford, in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

3.2 Intention to transfer a portion of land at Beechview Estate, Newbawn, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to transfer a portion of land at Beechview Estate, Newbawn, Co. Wexford, in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

3.3 Intention to transfer a portion of land at Ashgrove, Fethard, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to transfer a portion of land at Ashgrove, Fethard, Co. Wexford, in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

3.4 Intention to dispose of property at 20 John Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to dispose of property at 20 John Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford, in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

3.5 Intention to transfer a portion of land at Lambstown, Killurin, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to transfer a portion of land at Lambstown, Killurin, Co. Wexford, in accordance with the terms set out in the S.183 Notice as circulated.

4. Draft Taking In Charge - For Approval

Ms. L. Hore outlined the purpose of the draft Taking in Charge policy and why it is needed. Cllr. B.A. Murphy raised concerns about legacy estates which have already applied to be taken in charge. Ms. L. Hore advised that there are 117 taking in charge applications in the system, and these will have to be dealt with through a programme on a phased basis as some will be exceptionally expensive to remediate. Cllr.'s T. Forde, G. Carthy, G. Lawlor, L. Kelly, L. McDonald, C. Byrne, M. Sheehan, and J. Codd all raised concerns in relation to the legacy applications.

Ms. L. Hore committed to circulating a list of schemes on hand and estimated costs of taking in charge, where such estimates are available. Cllr. R. Staples requested a list of the six estates Uisce Éireann have committed to funding, and the timeline for the works.

Mr. E. Taaffe outlined the importance of adopting a new policy as the previous policy is outdated. Mr. Taaffe emphasised that there is no lack of willingness to take estates in charge but there is a lack of resources, with funding currently coming from Wexford County Council's roads and footpaths programme.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Kelly, seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe, the Council resolved to adopt the Draft Taking in Charge policy, on a show of hands with twenty-five voting in favour.

5. Local Property Tax 2025 - Local Adjustment Factor (LAF) Decision

Ms. L. Lacey gave a presentation outlining the various financial scenarios depending on what decision the Council may reach. There was a lengthy discussion and Ms. Lacey answered all questions from the floor.

Cllr.'s P. Barden, T. Forde, P. Kavanagh, J. Owens, F. Ó Súilleabháin, and J. Codd spoke against any change in the baseline local adjustment factor.

Cllr.'s P. Breen, G. Lawlor, P. Kehoe, J. Sullivan, M. Sheehan, B.A. Murphy, and O. Walsh all indicated their support for maintaining the Local Adjustment Factor of 15%.

Cllr. T. Forde proposed a 0% LAF and this was seconded by Cllr. J. Owens.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy proposed a 15% LAF for 5 years and this was seconded by Cllr. O. Walsh.

The Cathaoirleach advised that there would be a roll call vote on Cllr. T. Forde's proposal. The outcome was the motion for 0% LAF fell with 11 in favour and 23 against. The voting was as follows:

Barden, Pat	F	Forde, Tom	F	Murphy, Marty	F
Boland, Nicky	F	Kavanagh, Paddy	F	O'Brien, Aoife Rose	F
Breen, Pip	A	Kehoe, Pat	A	O'Rourke, John	A
Browne, Aidan	A	Kelly, Leonard	A	Ó Súilleabháin, Fionntán	F
Byrne, Cathal	A	Kenny, Donal	A	Owens, Jackser	F
Carthy, Ger	A	Laffan, Garry	A	Shannon, Raymond	F
Codd, Jim	F	Lawlor, George	A	Sheehan, Michael	A
Donohoe, Anthony	A	McDonald, Darragh	A	Staples, Frank	A
Dwyer, John	F	McDonald, Lisa	A	Staples, Robbie	A
Farrell, Mary	A	Murphy, Barbara-Anne	A	Sullivan, Joe	A
Fleming, John	A	Murphy, Bridín	A	Walsh, Catherine Bidy	A
				Walsh, Oliver	A

The Cathaoirleach advised that there would be a roll call vote on Cllr. B.A. Murphy's proposal. The outcome was the motion for 15% LAF for 5 years was carried with 23 in favour and 11 against. The voting was as follows:

Barden, Pat	A	Forde, Tom	A	Murphy, Marty	A
Boland, Nicky	A	Kavanagh, Paddy	A	O'Brien, Aoife Rose	A
Breen, Pip	F	Kehoe, Pat	F	O'Rourke, John	F
Browne, Aidan	F	Kelly, Leonard	F	Ó Súilleabháin, Fionntán	A
Byrne, Cathal	F	Kenny, Donal	F	Owens, Jackser	A
Carthy, Ger	F	Laffan, Garry	F	Shannon, Raymond	A
Codd, Jim	A	Lawlor, George	F	Sheehan, Michael	F
Donohoe, Anthony	F	McDonald, Darragh	F	Staples, Frank	F
Dwyer, John	A	McDonald, Lisa	F	Staples, Robbie	F
Farrell, Mary	F	Murphy, Barbara-Anne	F	Sullivan, Joe	F
Fleming, John	F	Murphy, Bridín	F	Walsh, Catherine Bidy	F
				Walsh, Oliver	F

6. Borrowing Requirements

In accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001, on the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly, the Council resolved to approve borrowing for land acquisition in the amount of €20m, with a repayment period not to exceed 25 years, as per the memo circulated by Ms. L. Lacey.

7. Approval in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended)

In accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001, on the proposal of Cllr. L. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. F. Staples, the Council resolved to approve a temporary overdraft accommodation for the 2025 financial year of €15m, as per the memo circulated by Ms. L. Lacey.

8. Appointment of Audit Committee 2024 - 2029

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy the Council resolved to appoint the following nominees to the Wexford County Council Audit Committee 2024 – 2029:

- Ms. Kathleen Codd Nolan (Former Councillor)
- Ms. Sinead Doyle (Accountant)
- Mr. Brain Stenson (Accounting & Financial Reporting Manager, SETU)

9. Corporate Plan 2025 - 2029 Update

Ms. A. Byrne provided the Members with an update on the progress to date in drafting the new Corporate Plan. Ms. Byrne advised that the community consultation phase has been completed and forty-three responses were received. Strategic objectives are currently being drafted and the intention is to bring a draft document to the Members in November for consideration.

10. Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024 – Mid-year review report

Ms. A. Byrne provided the Members with a mid-year review report on the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024, which was noted by the members.

11. Invitation - European Forum at Abbaye aux Dames in Caen - 30th / 31st October

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen, the Members resolved to send a delegation to the European Forum at Abbaye aux Dames in Caen on 30th and 31st October.

12. Invitation for delegation to attend Remembrance Event to mark the sinking of the SS St. Patrick on Saturday 9th November, 2024

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Donohoe, seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan, the Members resolved to send a delegation to attend a remembrance event on the Stena Nordica to mark the sinking of the SS St. Patrick on Saturday 9th November, 2024.

13. St. Patrick's Day Delegations 2025

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. A. Donohoe, the Members resolved to send delegations to the following destinations for St. Patrick's Day 2025:

- Savannah, Georgia, USA
- New York, USA
- Hartford, Connecticut, USA
- Coetentin, Normandy, France

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at this point.

14. Chief Executives Report

The Chief Executive and members of the Management Team responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- Is Wexford County Council bound by specifications set out by the Minister in relation to XL Bullies? Is there confusion as to what an XL Bully is?
- Disappointment expressed at length it took to get information in relation to emergency B&B funding.
- Will all expenditure on emergency B&B accommodation be recouped from the Department?
- Request for traffic survey on the N80.
- Has new development land been identified by Wexford County Council?
- Update on masterplan for Killeens.
- Status of Ramsgrange wastewater scheme.
- Update on Trinity Wharf.
- Request for assistance in relation to new facilities for Slaney Search and Rescue, including pontoon which was deferred due to flood scheme.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming the Council resolved to suspend standing orders.

Cllr.'s J. Owens and A. Browne left the meeting at this point.

- Request that Wexford County Council express our serious dissatisfaction with funding for the Ramsgrange Wastewater scheme being transferred from Wexford County Council to Uisce Éireann.
- Request that the contact details for the Heritage Officer be circulated.
- Is Wexford County Council considering a Biodiversity Officer?
- Update on Courtown beach nourishment scheme.
- Request that Wexford County Council assist Courtown Coastguard with a site for their base.
- Request that the wall of Slade Harbour be replastered.
- Update on Murphy Flood's site.
- Update on junction works at Courthoyle and Newbawn.
- Request that planned works on Aughnaclaur and Little Cullenstown bridges be deferred to allow farmers complete their harvest.
- Is there a budget for installation of cctv cameras for illegal dumping?
- Request for illegal dumping warning signs.
- Frustration expressed at the time taken to respond to some queries on the portal.
- Query raised if Wexford County Council is keeping in contact with those approved for HAP but don't secure a property.
- Query raised if Wexford County Council is keeping in contact with those who present as homeless but disappear off our radar.
- Timeline for SPC's to be established.
- Update on site in Taghmon.
- Has Wexford County Council any plans for felling of ash trees afflicted by ash dieback?

- Complaints of poor mobile network coverage on Newline Road.
- Congratulations to all who won awards at the great food taste awards.
- Query in relation to funding for development of John St. grain store.

Cllr.'s F. Staples, C. Byrne, B. Murphy, J. Dwyer, R. Staples, and C. Walsh left the meeting at this point.

- Enquiry if correspondence has been received in relation to funding of bus shelters.
- Changes to housing grant thresholds welcomed and queried if new thresholds could be applied immediately.
- Update on affordable housing proposal for New Ross.
- Query if New Ross Search and Rescue could place a second boat on the marina without charge.
- Clarification to be sought from the ETB in relation to the role of Councillors who are ETB staff members and elected to the board.
- Request that road markings be refreshed, and additional funding be provided for rural roads.
- Attention drawn to a historic social media post by the newly appointed President of the Chamber of Commerce which referenced officials and politicians as cowboys.

15. Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 -2029

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming, the Council resolved to approve that the Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 -2029 go out to public consultation.

16. Minutes of CPG

16.1 Minutes of CPG Meeting 7th October, 2024

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of CPG Meeting 7th October, 2024.

17. Minutes of Meetings (for Noting):

17.1 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 10th July, 2024

17.2 Borough District of Wexford Meeting – 15th July, 2024

17.3 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 16th July, 2024

17.4 Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 16th July, 2024

17.5 Two Special Meetings of Enniscorthy Municipal District 3rd September, 2024

The Members noted the minutes, as circulated.

18. Correspondence and Communications

18.1 Letter from Office of Minister Malcolm Noonan TD re: motion Japanese knotweed dated 11th September, 2024

18.2 Letters from Leitrim County Council dated 6th September, 2024 re: motions.

18.3 Letter from Disability Federation of Ireland dated 20th September, 2024

18.4 Letters from Roscommon County Council dated 2nd September, 2024 re: motions.

18.5 Letters from Sligo County Council dated 16th September, 2024 re: motions

18.6 Letter to Councillors from NOAC dated 20th September, 2024

The Members noted the correspondence, as circulated.

19. Councillor's Conferences and Training

19.1 List of Conferences /Training - List Attached

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. O. Walsh, the Council resolved to approve the following training courses and conference.

Training:

17th & 18th October – LAMA Autumn Training Seminar – Newgrange Hotel, Navan, Co. Meath – Cost €170.

Conference:

22nd, 23rd & 24th November – Celtic Conferences – “Corporate Governance” – Clonakilty, Co. Cork – Cost €130

19.2 Councillors Conference Report

- Cllr. M. Sheehan - Threshold Conference “Changing Our Housing System” - 5th September, 2024
- Report from Fron-goch, Wales - 4th – 6th September, 2024
- Report on Delegation to Danville September, 2024

The Members noted the reports.

20. Notices of Motion

20.1 Cllr. Fiontán Ó Súilleabháin

“Wexford County Council acknowledges the increased construction-related costs over recent times, and calls on the Department for Social Protection, and/or other relevant agencies, to increase the Housing Adaptation Grants cap from 30K to 35K. as well as increasing the allocations for the HOP and Mobility Aids Grant to take account of these extra costs”.

This motion wasn't moved.

20.2 Cllr. John Fleming

"I am calling on Wexford County Council to erect speed feed back signs (and other safety measures where necessary) to slow down traffic outside all our primary Schools in the County to help protect our children."

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Fleming, seconded by Cllr. R. Shannon, the motion was carried.

20.3 Cllr. Marty Murphy

“Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Science and Innovation to make a final determination on a new Pharmacy Program for South East Technology University before November 1st so that the new University course may be available to CAO applicants next year”.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Barden, the motion was carried.

20.4 Cllr Aoife Rose O'Brien & Cllr. Tom Forde

“We ask that this council to form a sub-committee for Mental Health, to support calls for, and to work towards the goal of securing dedicated mental health beds for Wexford and 24/7 care”.

On the proposal of Cllr. A.R. O'Brien, seconded by Cllr. T. Forde, the motion was carried.

20.5 Cllr. Michael Sheehan

“That this Council calls on the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to open and fund new applications for Family Resource Centres in County Wexford as part of Budget 2025.”

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. R. Shannon, the motion was carried.

20.6 Cllr. Leonard Kelly

“Wexford County Council ask that the Minister for Finance immediately consider a reduced rate of VAT for cafés and restaurants, a rate that will be relating to turnover”

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Kelly, seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan, the motion was carried.

20.7 Cllr. Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin

“This council heartily commends all who contributed to the huge success of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2024. It notes the profits made by vintners and will engage with the Vintners Association to establish a Community Benefits Fund to assist a local mental health charity or other worthy local cause for Fleadh Cheoil 2025.”

On the proposal of Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin, seconded by Cllr. A.R. O'Brien, the motion was carried.

20.8 Cllr. Aoife Rose O'Brien

“I ask this council to develop emergency accommodation units specifically for women/families that provide a safe environment for those who present as homeless. We note the absence of such specific accommodation for women and ask that the council plan

for such accommodation and explore the possibility of this being achieved in conjunction with other housing bodies.”

On the proposal of Cllr. A.R. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. T. Forde, the motion was carried.

20.9 Cllr. Tom Forde

"Using the 'Killarney Cup Project' as a model, I ask that Wexford County Council work to develop a 'Wexford Cup Project' as a pilot programme in the Wexford District."

*The County Kerry town went through about 23,000 cups a week – more than a million a year. Killarney, working with Kerry County Council, Killarney Chamber of Tourism & Commerce & Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, became the first town in Ireland to phase out single-use coffee cups. If you want a takeaway coffee from a cafe or hotel, you must bring your own cup or pay a €2 deposit for a reusable cup that is returned when the cup is given back.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin, the motion was carried.

Cllr. M. Farrell left the meeting at this point.

21. Any Other Business

Cllr. P. Kehoe commended Wexford County Council on the work carried out on the Murphy Flood’s site.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Daingithe ar an

lá de Samhain, 2024.

Cllr. Pip Breen
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary