

**COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE
WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14th MARCH 2019 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC OFFICES, DUNGARVAN, CO. WATERFORD**

PRESENT

Cllr. John O'Leary (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Ray Murphy
Cllr. Breda Brennan	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Declan Clune	Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Cha O'Neill
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Michael J O'Ryan
Cllr. John Cummins	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr Jim Griffin	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Blaise Hannigan	Cllr. Seán Reinhardt
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Matt Shanahan
Cllr Joe Kelly	Cllr. James Tobin
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan	Cllr. Adam Wyse
Cllr. Sharon Carey	

APOLOGIES

Cllr. Declan Doocey
Cllr. Siobhan Whelan
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan
Mr. Michael Walsh, CE
Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development and Planning

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment Deputising for CE
Mr. K. Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS
Mr. B. O'Kane, A/Head of Finance
Mr. R. Walsh, Head of LEO
Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
Ms. A. Maher, A/Senior Staff Officer

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(a) Plenary Meeting held on 14th February, 2019 proposed by Cllr. Fitzgerald seconded by Cllr. Daniels

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. J. Murphy noted that this is last meeting for Marian O' Meara from the News and Star and wished her well on her retirement.

Deputy Mayor, Cllr. O'Leary, expressed his thanks on behalf of the council and wished her and her family well in the future.

Cllr. Daniels requested update on funding for Waterford Airport.

F. Galvin, A/CE outlined that the application has been submitted, councillors will be informed when details on decision have been issued.

Cllr. Mulligan stated that information on economic grants needs to be given to the local auctioneers and asked for update on byelaws in relation to noise nuisance in the city.

Cllr. Nugent requested copy of legal opinion issued to Chief Executive with regard to wind turbines.

R. Walsh, SEO will ensure information is circulated to auctioneers

F. Galvin, Deputy/CE outlined that issue of noise nuisance was discussed at recent meeting of the Environment SPC and byelaws need to be developed.

3. Planning

(a) Planning lists as circulated were noted.

Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill and seconded by Cllr. Nugent.

4. Land Disposal

Proposed by Cllr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr. Power.

Cllr. Kelly queried that rent on the Fat Angel Restaurant was abated for six years and asked if this was normal practice.

K. Kehoe, DoS explained that the people who have leased the premises have spent €70,000 to upgrade it and this investment is non-refundable as it is fixed in nature. Due to these improvements they are entitled to this relief.

Cllr. John O'Leary requested a suspension of standing orders to bring item 6 before item 5. This was proposed Cllr. Nugent and seconded by Cllr. Clune.

6. 3 Counties Blueway Feasibility Study – Presentation by Humphrey Murphy of ILC

R. Walsh, Head of LEO outlined that the council has been working with Wexford and Wicklow on a number of tourism items and the connections as coastal counties. There has been a significant improvement in the costal amenities so engaged with these consultants from ILC to undertake a sturdy to develop this market.

Presentation given by Humphrey Murphy who outlined that a Blueway is a collection of recreational opportunities on and near the water. It includes non-motorised water activities like canoeing, sailing and snorkelling which are integrated with activities and services on the banks of the water, these then impact on surrounding neighbourhoods and have benefits on the local economy. He outlined the benefits of being accredited as a Blueway location and subsequent promotion on a national website. The report that was conducted has identified 70 locations and a phased process would be undertaken to focus on access and improvements in the locations such as signage and parking. Funding has been agreed at €200,000 per county, 75% will come from Leader and the balance from each county council.

The councillors expressed their support for this initiative and welcomed the benefits it will bring to the county. Cllr. Griffin highlighted the benefits it would bring to small areas like Passage East and Dunmore and welcomed improvements to signage. Cllr. Hearne suggested the development of pontoons in areas to encourage fishing. Cllr. J. Murphy asked what emphasis was being put on inland waterways.

R. Walsh, LEO outlined that they are reviewing possible options for inland waterways, additional regeneration funding and connections to facilities such as Mount Congreve

Cllr. O'Sullivan welcomed the developments, highlighting the need to promote swimming and surfing and the need to provide facilities such as showers in areas. Also outlined the need to carry out risk assessments on areas to ensure they are safe if they are to be promoted.

Cllr. Mulligan outlined the need to work with other groups to promote the area and suggested linkages with the Southern Eastern Authority

Humphrey Murphy outlined that getting local and national recognition is important and all options will be looked at.

Project was proposed by Cllr. O'Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. Griffin.

5. Monthly Management Report

Cllr. John Pratt expressed his disappointment regarding the unsuccessful rural regeneration funding application for Cappoquin and asked if there are additional options for funding. Enquired if any progress can be made on extending the Greenway into West Waterford

Cllr. Wyse requested the finance section to revert with information on loans/overdraft over the past 5 years and how repayment will be made. Also asked for details on timescale for repayment on the North Quays project and how this will be impacted by the speed of the development.

Cllr. Reinhardt asked about the rebuilding homes scheme and in particular the process for confirming the availability of funding on the signing of contracts.

R. Walsh, LEO confirmed their disappointment also in relation to the Cappoquin application, they are currently reviewing feedback on the application and intend to reapply in April. He outlined that while an extension to the Greenway is not currently a priority they will consider reviewing the options.

F. Galvin Deputy CE advised that the council will be updated on the airport once information is available.

B. O'Kane A/Head of Financial will revert with financial information as requested.

I Grimes, DOS outlined that the council has currently utilised its allocation of funding for 2018 and awaits the 2019 allocation. It continues to assess applications which will be processed on receipt of funds.

Cllr. O'Sullivan outlined the recent issue of tree felling in the county and recommended that the council increase the number of trees given out to community groups during National Tree Week. She requested the council to consider the option of planting orchards in public areas.

Cllr. Cummins asked how the 8% rate of refusals on the Choice Base Letting Scheme (CBL) relates to former methods of allocation; also asked will the council be using CPO's across the county on vacant properties. In relation to Clarendon Court it had been confirmed that this would be re-advertised in Q1 2019 and asked for an update on its progress. He outlined that a number of HAP properties are non-compliant and asked how this affect the tenants who are tied into a contract for the property and is there an option for tenants to move to an alternative property.

Cllr. Clune enquired about the policies in place to deal with arrears on rates and loans. In relation to Housing Maintenance and Electrical contractors he enquired as to when the outstanding works would be completed.

F. Galvin, A/CE stated that a number of trees had to be removed due to health and safety issues and during national tree week the council will distribute over 300 saplings to community groups and will also plant 350 more mature trees in appropriate areas. He confirmed that he will look at the prospect of the proposal of an orchard.

I Grimes, DoS responded to the query in relation to CBL and explained that the 8% rate for CBL refusals compares with allocation refusal figures previously of 40%, so this is a good improvement in the allocations process. He outlined that 90% of all allocations will go on CBL in the future. The CPO process will roll this out year across all towns and villages. Clarendon Court is a priority and it is hoped to re-advertise in April. In regard to HAP Properties and non compliance most would relate to fire blankets and small items and some time must be given to the landlord to bring the property up to the correct standard and outlined that the tenant gets a copy of the inspection also. In the serious non compliant cases the Council would look at each case on a case by case basis and decide on best approach to be taken. In relation to housing maintenance and the electricians he outlined the need to comply with Health and Safety standards and the implementation has taken longer than expected. Tenders are due to issue and this will quickly resolve the outstanding maintenance requests.

B. O'Kane A/ Head of Finance explained that certain schemes were in place for example Mortgage To Rent and restructuring to tackle those mortgage arrears and also as a last available option repossessions. In relation to Rate Arrears they are considering what legal option is available to forcefully pursue monies.

I Grimes, DoS stated that in relation to current rents the Council use the policy of withdrawing all maintenance where the tenant is not in a payment plan or up to date with their rent and this measure is having an effect. Also, they are starting enforcement action against cases where appropriate.

Cllr. Clune asked how the financing of the current loan is currently being undertaken.

B. O'Kane, A/Head of Finance explained that income from items such as planning contributions and creditors are assisting in counter balancing the loan.

Cllr. Brennan supported the occurrence of re-inspection of non-compliant HAP properties and urged the housing section to continue with this. Enquired about the number of bankrupt properties being entered onto the vacant sites register. She informed the meeting that the 2nd birthday celebration of the Greenway is due to take place and asked the executive to issue details on the event to all members.

Cllr. Quinlan asked was there any changes due in relation to the equalisation fund /LPT and if there were changes would it impact our services. Ask if there is any indication that the Waterford would benefit from the Government fund of €10m for small airports.

R. Walsh, SEO stated that information on the Greenway celebrations will be provided to all members.

F. Galvin, Deputy CE will revert with figures on vacant sites register and will revert with details on the airport once available.

B. O'Kane, A/Head of Finance will revert to Cllr. Quinlan on his query.

Cllr. J. Murphy queried if the back log on processing of the disability grants is due to a staffing issue.

Cllr. Daniels outlined his concern in relation to the suitability of the location of the Waterford Integrated Homeless Service on Parnell Street and its proximity to the neighbouring school.

Cllr. O'Ryan highlighted his request for an ambassador to lead and co-ordinate the litter picking in the city & county similar to other counties, although Waterford is not following this practice he outlined that it would have a bigger impact.

I Grimes acknowledged backlog in processing of disability adaptation grants and that they are currently reviewing a solution to address the issue. With regard to the new Waterford Integrated Homeless Service the feedback on the use of the service has been very positive and the council and the HSE are currently arranging for a joint response to issue on the service. The organisations that have been providing this service for the last 30 years have never had an incident whereby the public are at risk.

F. Galvin, Deputy CE outlined that the matter of an Ambassador had been discussed at the Environment SPC and it was decided to remain with the current approach as it is achieving great results. The council currently supports over 80 different groups with community clean ups.

Cllr. Kelly enquired about the number of sites removed from the vacant sites register and how much was collected from the levy in 2018. He acknowledged the work undertaken to develop new housing units to address the homeless problem and to the work of the economic and enterprise development section.

Cllr. Griffin outlined need to support planning applications for the development of small holdings and camping facilities, he supported Cllr. O'Sullivan in proposal to plant additional trees across the county.

Cllr. Shanahan asked the council to consider getting secret shoppers so that we can review how we engage with visitors. He enquired as to how the Grantstown/Woodstown Viking site will be promoted. He informed the meeting that all members will be receiving an invitation from the HSE to an upcoming meeting on the Cardiac Cath Lab.

F. Galvin Deputy CE will revert on number of sites on vacant site register and reasons removed.

R. Walsh, LEO acknowledged that there is a change in policy regarding rural tourism and accommodation, there are planning issues for small holdings/camping that need to be adhered to and they are investigating options for their development in line with regulations.

Cllr. O' Neill asked for detail on the land banks owned by the council.

Cllr. Carey enquired about details on the commencement of the Dunmore East cliff walk and the Minaun walkway.

Cllr. Nugent enquired about the process of informing people about the progress of the category 2 & 3 grants, the council needs to inform applicants quickly if not successful as it is frustrating for all involved.

K. Kehoe, DoS will revert to the councillors with details on the land banks.

R. Walsh, LEO stated that there are no start dates for the outlined projects and the procurement process is commencing.

IGrimes, DoS outlined they will review the application process for the category 2&3 grants.

Cllr. Fitzgerald supported the policy on ceasing maintenance when a tenant is in arrears without a payment plan but stated there need to be consideration for particular cases of need.

Cllr. Mulligan requested details on house inspections carried out; the policy on bins on the Greenway; he commented that the figures in relation to the prosecution of littering and dog fouling are low and asked if the Environment SPC could review the option of prosecuting dog owners for not carrying dog fouling bags.

IGrimes, DoS outlined that the council had to implement a policy with regard to non-payment of rent but outlined that staff do look at individual cases on a compassionate grounds. He confirmed he will get figures on inspections.

F.Galvin, Deputy CE outlined that it is the council's policy not to put bins on the Greenway. He will refer the suggestion on dog fouling to the Environment SPC for discussion.

R. Walsh, LEO outlined that the council are looking at a charter for businesses whereby they will input into its development. He acknowledged the importance of the customer experience and that the aim is to use this information gathered from businesses to ensure higher standards.

6. Correspondence

Proposed by Cllr. Kelly and seconded by Cllr. Quinlan.

8. Notice of motions

1. Motion in the name of Cllr. Siobhan Whelan (Deferred from February meeting).

"I propose that the full Council of Waterford City and County Council sits at Coláiste na Rinne for our next Plenary meeting. To mark the centenary of the first Dáil, and to acknowledge Cathal Brugha Waterford's first TD who had a strong connection with An Rinn".

Motion dropped as Cllr. Whelan not present at meeting.

2. Motion in the name of Cllr. Joe Conway and Blaise Hannigan.

"That this Council affirms in principle that the Mayors of Waterford City & County Council should be the five recipients of the highest blocks of first preference votes, relative to quota, attained at the Local Elections".

K. Kehoe, DoS explained that it is a function of the AGM to elect the Mayor and as governed by legislation and therefore council cannot make such a change.

Cllr. Conway withdrew this motion at this stage.

3. Motion in the name of Cllrs. Joe Conway, Blaise Hannigan, Joe Kelly and Sean Reinhardt.

"That this Council recognises the selfless commitment of the Irish Defence Forces (Navy, Army and Air Corps) to the people of Ireland in defence of the nation and in the protection of the internal security of the State. In particular it acknowledges the role played by the Defence Forces in multinational peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, maritime security and fishery protection.

This Council in its support for the campaign for Respect and Loyalty calls on the Government to immediately take action to resolve the issues relating to the pay and conditions of service of Defence Force Members as they are seriously impacting retention and recruitment”.

Deferred to next meeting

Suspension of standing orders proposed by Cllr. O’Neill and seconded by Cllr. Carey to extend meeting to 7.35pm

4. Motion in the name of Cllr. Declan Doocey.

“That Waterford City and County Council write to the Department of Justice and Education to include driver theory/licence in the school curriculum as a subject for all students at Leaving Certification level”.

Motion dropped as Cllr. Doocey not present at meeting.

Suspension of standing orders proposed by Cllr. Brennan and seconded by Cllr. Kelly to extend meeting to 7.45pm

5. Motion in the name of Cllr. Matt Shanahan

“That Waterford City and county Council calls on Government to immediately abandon any decision to proceed to Phase 2 of the National Children’s Hospital. This, pending a new full site and project review by an international independent group of healthcare experts chosen from a panel politically approved by a cross party committee”.

A discussion on this motion took place with a number of Councillors giving their opinion on this. A vote then took place.

*In Favour – 16
Not in favour – 0
Abstaining - 4*

It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Minister for Health, Taoiseach office, HSE and details of motion to issue to other Local Authorities

6. Motion in the name of Cllr. Eamon Quinlan.

“That Waterford City and County Council request the Minister to change the valuation legislation/regulations to allow publicans have the option of being judged on an individual basis annually to assist in their adjustment to the new trading environment they face in light of recent legislation”.

Deferred to next meeting

9. AOB

Cllr. Griffin acknowledged that it is the second anniversary of Rescue 116 Helicopter crash.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____