

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

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2024 IN COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, CITY HALL, WATERFORD.**

**Present**

Cllr. Joe Conway (Mayor)	Cllr. Cristiona Kiely
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Conor McGuinness
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Joanne Bailey	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. Jody Power	Cllr. Donal Barry
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Joe Kelly
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Mairead Tobin
Cllr. Stephanie Keating	Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. Seamus Ryan	Cllr. David Daniels
Cllr. Adam Wyse,	Cllr. Declan Doocey
Cllr. Declan Clune	
Cllr. Mary Roche	

Apologies: Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell, Cllr. Eamon Quinlan, Cllr. John O'Leary, Cllr. Ger Barron.

**Officials in Attendance**

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive  
Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing  
Mr. R. Walsh, SEO, Economic Development  
Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance  
Mr. P. Johnston, A/Director of Services, Corporate Services, IS, HR, Culture and Planning  
Mr. B. O'Kane, Management Accountant, Finance  
Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator  
Ms. A. Flynn, Corporate

**1. Annual Report 2023**

Annual Report 2023 proposed by Cllr. Cronin and seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan and agreed by all.

**2. Issuing of Polling Cards**

P. Johnston, A/DoS noted that in accordance with Article 55 of the Election Regulations 1995 it is a decision of the Elected Members to decide whether or not to publish Polling Information Cards and as this is normal practice with any election he recommended the issuing of Polling Information Cards to the Members.

Proposed by Cllr. Kelly and seconded by Cllr. Fitzgerald and agreed by all.

Cllr. Doocey enquired about postal votes for those who are unable to vote because of an illness or disability.

H. Dunphy, MA said applications for entry onto the postal voters list must be received before 11 May 2024.

Cllrs. S. Power, Murphy and Cronin noted that an application for a illness/disability postal vote must be accompanied by a medical certificate for which there is a charge. Cllr. Murphy requested a letter issue to GPs in this regard.

Cllr. Ryan asked if people on their annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes would be able to vote.

Cllr. Pratt enquired about residents in Nursing Homes and must they vote in the area where they are resident.

H. Dunphy, MA said she would revert with the full list of those who can apply for a postal/special vote.

### **3. Review Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024**

M. Walsh, CE said reviewing the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 gives the Members the opportunity to review their stewardship over the last five years which were an unusual five years in terms of Covid, the war in Ukraine and substantial cost increases. He said Waterford is positioned to be the economic driver of the South East. He noted the establishment of the South East Technological University, the €200m investment in the North Quays and in relation to housing said we are a leading Local Authority delivering on all tenures and in tackling vacancy and dereliction. We need to encourage development of our urban centres and be key drivers of rural growth referencing the €9m funding secured under the URDF, Cappoquin Regeneration Project, Tramore Public Realm, Portlaw Town Centre First and the Dungarvan & West Waterford Digital Hubs.

We need to ensure that Waterford City is identified in its role as the principal urban centre in the South East is enhanced and supported. He spoke about investment in heritage, active travel, the Cleanest City in Ireland accolade, the climate action rates support and the Waterford Cultural Quarter. Our work in urban and rural communities will improve facilities and quality of life, working in partnership with agencies and communities to prioritise initiatives that impact positively on the health and well-being of all.

He referenced our Ukrainian response, our Covid response and our Community Services such as SlainteCare, Healthy Communities and Age Friendly. We will continue to develop an attractive environment with good quality access to services to ensure a high quality of life attracting investment, economic activity, increased visitor number & a skilled workforce. He mentioned the Community Safety Partnership, business supports and rollout of National Broadband Plan. The council needs to be transparent and accountable in delivering public services and ensuring value for money. We will continue to improve our performance, development and growth. We will meet our commitments to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of both our customers and staff. He spoke about the council's financial performance and the growth in population and Waterford's many accolades.

He concluded by saying there have been phenomenal external forces such as Covid, the war in Ukraine and cost increases throughout the life of this council and despite these challenges we are in an extremely robust place from a financial perspective, have performed well relative to our peers and the growth in population and employment, combined with the high-level awards and numerous accolades are best evidence of the Council's stewardship.

Cllrs. Kelly, Roche, Ryan, Kiely, Pratt, Geoghegan, McGuinness, Hearne, Phelan and Wyse spoke to acknowledge the successes of the last 5 years and to pay tribute to M. Walsh, CE for his contribution and wished him well on his upcoming retirement.

#### **4. Airport Development Proposal**

M. Walsh, CE outlined the Airport Development Proposal. He said the cost is now €27 million and the majority shareholder has made a proposal that Devin Regional Investments will invest €12 million in the company to facilitate the extension of the runway. This is subject to matching Government investment of €12 million along with €3 million from the local authorities, €2.2 million from Waterford and €0.4 million from each of Kilkenny and Wexford. He outlined the key provisions of the agreement and recommended to the Members to accept the proposal as a once off opportunity to deliver a core piece of infrastructure for the region.

Cllrs. Griffin, J. Power, Kelly, Doocey, Phelan, Roche, Barry, Daniels and Kiely spoke in support of the proposal. Questions raised were addressed by M. Walsh, CE.

Proposed by Cllr. Griffin and seconded by Cllr. J. Power and agreed by all.

#### **5. Festival Grants**

R. Walsh, SEO asked that the Members approve the allocation to three festivals 50% of their funding sought in 2023 to assist in their events in 2024, the three festivals having failed to apply and were not allocated funding as part of the 2024 Festival & Events Funding. The three events are The Celtic Box Cup, Tramore Christmas Festival and the Vitamin Sea Fest.

Proposed by Cllr. O'Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan.

Cllr. Keating said she could not support this funding as she said Residents Associations who had missed deadlines were not treated similarly.

Cllrs. O'Sullivan, Geoghegan, Kiely, McGuinness, Phelan, Cronin, Nugent & Hearne spoke in support of the funding.

Cllrs. Pratt, Fitzgerald, Kelly, F. Quinlan and Ryan also said they supported the funding but asked if something could be done for those Residents Associations with genuine reasons for not applying within the deadline for funding. The question of the source of the funding was also raised.

Cllr. Wyse expressed concern around the setting of a precedence and suggested that where deadlines are missed going forward that a late application within a week of closing date be allocated 50% of the funding that was available.

R. Walsh, SEO said the funding for the three festivals will come from the Economic Development Budget.

I. Grimes, DoS said that the funding available for grants to Residents Association is fully expended with no further funding available within the Community Department.

M. Walsh, CE said this is something that we would aggressively not want to do in ordinary circumstances but this funding is vital to these festivals and that is the only reason .

Cllrs. Fitzgerald and Keating again called on the Executive to make funding available to those Resident Associations who had missed the deadline for applications.

Mayor called for a 15-minute extension to Standing Orders.  
Proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Pratt and agreed by all.

Festival Grants proposed by Cllr. O’Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan and agreed by a majority show of hands with 1 vote against and 1 abstention.

## 6. Notice of Motion

### Motion in the name of Cllr. Joe Conway

*The Preferred Transport Solution (PTS) has recently been announced for the N24 Waterford to Cahir Transport Corridor but no funding has been provided to progress the scheme to Phase 3 - Design and Environmental Evaluation and Phase 4 - Statutory Processes. In view of Road Safety concerns for all using the N24, the economic benefit to the South East Region and the fact that the PTS is in alignment with Government / national transport policy, this Council strongly requests the Minister for Transport, Mr Eamon Ryan to provide sufficient funding in 2024 to progress this scheme and a commitment for continued support for this scheme to completion of Stage 4”* **Reg. No. SPA/2024/244** (dated, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024)

Proposed by Cllr. Conway and seconded by Cllr. Kelly and agreed by all.

M. Walsh, CE requested that a Special Meeting of the Council be held online on Tuesday 7 May 2024 to facilitate the disposal of property at West Street, Lismore and the Old Railway Station, Kilmacthomas.

Proposed by Cllr. Phelan and seconded by Cllr. Cronin and agreed by all.

## 7. AOB

The Mayor thanked the Members for their co-operation during his term as Mayor. In the context of the five-year review and as a board member of Údarás na Gaeltachta he noted that Waterford has the only Gaeltacht which has seen a dramatic increase in population. He remembered the late Cllr. James Tobin and the late Cllr. Davy Daniels.

Cllr. Tobin, who is not seeking re-election in the Local Elections in June, said this was a very emotional day bringing to a close 25 years of public representation for the Tobin family. She paid tribute to her late parents. She thanked her family and friends, her colleagues and the executive and wished all the Councillors success in the upcoming Elections.

Tributes were paid by the Members to Cllr. Tobin.

Members also paid tribute to M. Walsh, CE and to Cllr. Joe Conway Mayor & Metropolitan Mayor Cllr. J. Power.

The Mayor thanked the Executive and all the staff and the support of the Corporate staff during his year.

M. Walsh, CE also extended his best wish wishes to Cllr. Tobin thanked the Mayor and the Members and wished all the Councillors success in the upcoming Elections.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor of Waterford City & County

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_