

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

# MINUTES

*Meeting Held 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

*Held via Microsoft Teams,  
Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 4.00p.m.*

## **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board**

### **Minutes of Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 4.00p.m.**

**Board Members in attendance:** Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding); Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan (Deputy Chairperson), Cllr. Joe Kelly, Mr. Senan Lillis, Cllr. Eddie Mulligan, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Ms. Kate Miskella, Ms. Mary Ryan, Ms. Finola Walsh, Mr. Richard Byrnes.

**Also in attendance:** Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive; Dr. Karina Daly, Director of Organisation Support and Development; Mr. Owen O'Mahony, Finance Manager; Ms. Eimear Ryan, Director of Schools; Mr. Ken Whyte, Director of Further Education and Training; Mr. Michael O'Brien, Innovation and Development Manager; Mr. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services Manager.

**Apologies (including those unable to attend due to technology-network issues/conflicting meetings):**

Cllr. Aidan Browne, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Mr. Pat Rath, Mr. Larry O'Brien, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin, Cllr. Mary Farrell.

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*The meeting was conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions and advised to the Board in advance.*

#### **150920.01 WELCOME AND GENERAL**

It was agreed to commence the meeting with a presentation on how Covid-19 is impacting and being managed within WWETB while a quorum was being formed.

#### **150920.02 PRESENTATION: COVID-19 Planning Update 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

The CE gave a summary of the present position (further details covered in the presentation and CE's Report) to the Board. The WWETB Covid-19 Response Management Team continue to meet and a WWETB Covid-19 Response Plan has been implemented across the organisation, he thanked the members of the RMT for their work in centrally managing the process. He paid tribute to all involved for their input to the successful re-opening of schools and centres to date and to the various management bodies and the stakeholders, both internal and external, for their support and contribution to this process including the Chairperson and Members of the Board.

The three Directors Ms. Eimear Ryan, Mr. Ken Whyte and Dr. Karina Daly each gave an overview and updates of their respective areas of Schools, FET and OSD during the presentation. Some of the matters highlighted included:

##### Re-opening of WWETB Schools

Resources and Guides available (Irish and English) on the Department of Education and Skills' website. School Covid-19 Policy and Response Plan details the policies and practices to meet the Government 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', includes planning and preparing (e.g. induction procedures, layout, contact logs) and control measures to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19. Additional funding has been made available to schools and Digital Technology support to schools is on-going.

Challenges include supporting high risk staff and students and contingency planning for various scenarios including 'Physical Distancing' guidelines and utilisation of available classroom space.

##### Managing the COVID Crisis in WWETB FET Facilities

Similar to Schools - Response Plan supported by guidance notes and adapted for each centre.

A Covid Managers Group (one for each FET Facility) has been created and meet regularly and learning developing from return to work and learning.

Challenges include the protection of staff, students, and learners by FET Covid-19 Managers. Blended Learning while successful in some of the programmes is proving challenging in some areas.

*A quorum was confirmed during the presentation and a brief reminder given and agreed of meeting protocols in relation to recording of the meeting, confidentiality and the issue of press releases.*

#### Organisation Support and Development: Covid-19 Crisis

Focused on a number of areas including procurement of PPE in bulk, ensuring consistency across the organisation and the provision of face masks for students/learners. Risk Assessments of buildings and specific requirements such as temporary toilet facilities, storage and outdoor furniture in place. Training/Induction and on-line wellbeing sessions made available to staff.

Challenges include the supply and cost of PPE supplies and maintaining adequate and consistent cleaning standards across buildings. Ensuring no erosion of progress for programmes such as Music Generation.

Appreciation was extended to staff for their support and the Chairperson thanked the Directors and Chief Executive for Presentation.

Questions were invited and were responded to by the executive. The Director of Schools outlined measures introduced and confirmed additional financial allocation and enhanced supervision budget in response to a query from Mr. Senan Lillis on social distancing – additional cleaning and impact on Teacher Allocation. In addition, students can view classes on their devices in overflow areas on a rotating basis if necessary. In response to Ms. Mary Ryan's query on availability of budget for live streaming to overflow areas it was confirmed that an enhanced budget allocation for ICT is in place. A delay exists with procurement of devices due to a global supply issue however the necessity to direct students to overflow areas is not widespread so far and where necessary is being managed satisfactorily. The CE and Director of Schools met with principals and deputy principals to confirm their schools' preparation for 'return to school'.

#### **150920.03 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms were circulated to the Board for signature and return *{in order to fulfil requirements as set out in CL0002/2019 Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards}*. No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### **150920.04 CONDOLENCES**

The Board extended sympathy to the following:

*Ms. Bridget Morrissey on the death of her mother Ms. Eleanor Morrissey;*

*Ms. Mairead Dunne on the death of her brother Mr. Laurence (Larry) Dunne;*

*Ms. Bernie Connolly on the death of her son Mr. Eddie Connolly;*

*Ms. Mary Ryan on the death of her mother Ms. Anna Lyons;*

*The family of Mr. Jimmy Curtis (Former Member of Co. Wexford VEC and Coláiste Abbáin Board of Management).*

#### **150920.05 CONGRATULATIONS**

*Back to School:* The CE thanked all involved including staff, parents/guardians, students, Boards of Management and Board Members for their support and to all involved in ensuring a safe return to school/learning and the organisation of our executive functions.

## **150920.06 MINUTES**

The Minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were adopted: proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Ms. Kate Miskella.

## **150920.07 FINANCE** (Item 150920.15(a) also refers):

- (a) **Finance Report:** The Finance Manager provided a Summary of WWETB's financial situation as at the end of July 2020, indicating opening and closing balances including Receipts and Payments. He explained key figures and relevant funding balances (Ref. pages 32-33 CE's Report).
- (b) **National Treasury Management Agency** – Confirmation received following Board approval in July of activation of NTMA account facilities which enables WWETB to negate interest rate charges on bank account deposits.
- (c) **Overdraft application:** The Finance Manager highlighted the importance of overdraft facilities being in place in order to carry out the functions of the Board and confirmed sanction received, as requested, from the Department of Education and Skills for an overdraft facility in the amount of €3,000,000 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The Board adopted the proposal to borrow following receipt of the consent of the Minister for Education and Skills; Proposed Mr. Senan Lillis; Seconded Ms. Finola Walsh.

## **150920.08 CORRESPONDENCE** (Item 150920.15(b) also refers)

The following correspondence was brought to the attention of the Board and noted:

*Waterford Institute of Technology Nominations to the Governing Body:* Initial Departmental acknowledgement dated 27<sup>th</sup> July and confirmation from the Minister for Education and Skills dated 09 September 2020 of appointments and re-appointments of ordinary members to the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology {Ref. Section 4(1)(a) – (g) of the Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act 1994} including term of office for the members appointed which will be five years or until Technological University (TU) designation is achieved by the Technological University South East of Ireland (TUSEI) Consortium and one year for student representatives from date of appointment or until TU designation is achieved by the TUSEI Consortium.

### **Six appointed under Section 4(1)(a) and (b) - ETB Representatives**

*Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan - WWETB Representative*

*Cllr. Barbara Ann Murphy – WWETB Representative*

*Cllr. Garry Laffan – WWETB Representative*

*Cllr. Kieran Bourke – Tipperary ETB Representative*

*Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh – Kilkenny/Carlow ETB Representative*

*(Ms. Mary Ryan – WWETB Representative, in-situ)*

### **Section 4. (1)(c) Academic Staff Representatives**

*Mr. Ray Ryan*

*Ms. Louise Walsh*

### **Section 4(1) (d) Non-Academic Staff Representative**

*Mr. David Kane*

#### **Section 4(1) (e) Student Representatives**

*Mr. John Fortune*

*Ms. Rhiannon Kavanagh*

#### **Section 4(1) (f) ICTU Representative**

*Mr. Michael Fitzpatrick*

#### **Section 4(1)(g) Business Representatives**

*Mr. Andy Crowley*

*IBEC*

*Mr. Michael Quinn*

*Waterford City and County Council*

*Ms. Anne Marie Caulfield*

*Waterford Chamber of Commerce*

*Ms. Nora Widger*

*Communities/Church*

*Ms. Imelda Buckley*

*Professional – ACCA*

#### **150920.09 GOVERNANCE**

The following Audit and Risk Committee documents were circulated and noted:

- (a) (i) Audit and Risk Committee confirmed minutes of meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> June.
- (ii) Report of meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The CE referred to the first item on Report relating to correspondence received by the Audit and Risk Chairperson and some elected members of the Board of WWETB and gave details of the item which pertains to a legacy funding issue as set out in the Audit and Risk Committee Report circulated. The Director of FET has supplied relevant information to the Audit and Risk Committee who are dealing with the matter.
- (b) **Resignations of WWETB Members:** *Cllr. Breda Brennan* (Waterford City and County Council Representative) and *Mr. David Doyle* (Parent Representative) following his end of term were noted. The vacancies will be filled by nominations from relevant organisations {Ref. Section 37 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013}.

#### **150920.10 MEMBERSHIPS TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND WWETB COMMITTEES**

Vacancies to be filled on a number of Boards and Committees following the above resignations.

#### **150920.11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- (a) The Chief Executive's Report was circulated for information and some items highlighted included:
  - **Replacement School Selskar College:** The CE gave the Board an update on the current position and progress of the project since the noting of the Memorandum of Understanding between Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board and Educate Together and acknowledged the work which preceded this. The Department of Education and Skills has purchased a 16-acre site (subject to planning permission) in the Clonard area of Wexford. The site offers ample space for the provision of the post primary school, a primary school, SEN Units, a playing pitch and provision to expand/extend if necessary. A map of the location was viewed on screen and the outline of the site described including options for entrance location.
  - **Gorey PLCs:** Enrolment for courses progressing.

- **ETB Schools Admission Policies:** The CE confirmed that the ETB schools admission policies have been approved including the three community schools' admission policies agreed and he thanked the Director of Schools and all the school principals in this regard. He also thanked the other patrons of the community schools of which WWETB are joint patrons.
  - **Waterford City and County Development Plan:** A preliminary submission has been made with a view to engagement with Waterford City and County Council in due course.
- (b) **Presentation:** Update on WWETB COVID-19 Response Management Plan (150920.02 refers).
- (c) **Annual Report Update 2019/Chairpersons Report/DES:** Checklist under review/finalisation.

**150920.12 ETBI** (Item 150920.15(c) also refers)

The following were brought to the attention of the Board for information:

- (a) ETBI Brief No. 17/2020: Communications Guidelines in relation to the Dept. of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
- (b) ETBI Brief No. 18/2020: Template Statement on Opting-Out of Religious Instruction in CNSs. The Director of Schools gave brief details on this item.
- (c) ETBI Brief No. 19/2020: Implementation Guidelines for Public Health Measures in ETB Further Education and Training Institutions (FET).
- (d) ETBI Brief No. 20/2020: ICT Update – HEAnet Membership.
- (e) ETBI Reserve Members Forum – Report of meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 was circulated and Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan confirmed the next meeting of the Forum to take place with the new General Secretary.

**150920.13 CIRCULAR LETTERS: Department of Education and Skills**

{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>}. The following Circular Letters were adopted; Proposed Cllr. Garry Laffan; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

- (a) 0059/2020: Provisional Results of Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied 2020.
- (b) 0058/2020: Home Tuition Grant Scheme in respect of Maternity Related Absences.
- (c) 0057/2020: Home Tuition Grant Scheme for children who do not have a school place.
- (d) 0056/2020: Cycle to Work Scheme.
- (e) 0055/2020: Cycle to Work Scheme for ETB Employees.
- (f) 0054/2020: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for certain employees of recognised Primary and Post Primary schools in the Free Education Scheme and of ETBs employed using grant funding.
- (g) 0053/2020: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Additional Supervision Arrangements for the 2020/21 School Year.
- (h) 0052/2020: Revision of Capitation Grant Rates for Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Free Education Scheme.
- (i) 0050/2020: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for staff other than Teachers and SNAs who are employed by ETBs.
- (j) 0049/2020: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
- (k) 0048/2020: Acting-Up Arrangements and Acting-Up Allowances for All Staff other than persons employed as Teachers and Special Needs Assistants in Education & Training Boards.



- (l) 0047/2020: Revised arrangements applying to starting pay for all staff other than persons employed as teachers and SNAs in Education and Training Boards.
- (m) 0046/2020: COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school.
- (n) 0045/2020: COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school.
- (o) 0044/2020: Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2020/2021 – Special Education Component.

**150920.14 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education and Skills** (Item 150920.15(d) also refers) {available:<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>}.

The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted.

- (a) 07 September, 2020 - Minister Foley congratulates over 60,000 students who will receive Leaving Certificate results today.
- (b) 01 September, 2020 – Minister Foley announces details of Calculated Grades model for Leaving Cert. 2020 and Minister Harris confirms the provision of 1,250 additional places in certain high-demand programmes in higher education institutions.
- (c) 26 August, 2020 - Minister Foley announces postponed 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations to commence on 16 November 2020.
- (d) 21 August, 2020 – Minister Foley provides further update ahead of the reopening of schools.
- (e) 14 August, 2020 - Minister Foley provides update on Reopening Our Schools: The Roadmap for the Full Return to School.
- (f) 07 August, 2020 - Update on Reopening Our Schools: The Roadmap for the Full Return to School.
- (g) 05 August, 2020 - Ministers Foley and Madigan confirm continuation of the pilot School Inclusion Model for the forthcoming school year.
- (h) 30 July, 2020 - Statement on Procurement Process from the Department of Education and Skills and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
- (i) 29 July, 2020 - Minister Foley welcomes positive response of Minister van Engelshoven to registration of Irish students to Higher Education Institutions in the Netherlands.
- (j) 27 July, 2020 - Government approves over €375 million support package and publishes Roadmap to enable safe return of schools.
- (k) 21 July, 2020 – Minister Foley announces Leaving Certificate Calculated Grades to issue to students directly through the Student Calculated Grades portal on 7 September.
- (l) 16 July, 2020 - Minister Foley announces next steps for this year's Leaving Certificate students.
- (m) 16 July, 2020 – Ministers Harris and Collins launch Further Education Strategy for next five years.

**150920.15 ADDENDUM**

- (a) **Finance** (Item 150920.07(c) also refers):  
*Overdraft Facility Application:* Sanction of the Minister for Education and Skills for an Overdraft Facility in the amount of €3,000,000 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The proposal to borrow was accepted as outlined and adopted by the Board following the consent of the Minister for Education and Skills; Proposed Mr. Senan Lillis; Seconded Ms. Finola Walsh. {in accordance with Circular Letter 0066/2014 and Section S49 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013}.

(b) **Correspondence** (150920.08 also refers):

Sanction from the Department of Education and Skills for the re-location of the Outdoor Education and Training Centre to Forth Mountain, Co. Wexford on receipt of Letter of Undertaking.

The CE provided a summary of the proposal/business case and summarised details of the sanction to the Board. This major development involves the relocation of Shielbaggan OETC to this alternative natural amenity and is ideally suited to enhance significantly the delivery of a range of outdoor activities currently offered at Shielbaggan Outdoor Education and Training Centre. In addition, it has the potential to attract an increased number of clients and visitors from a much wider area and provide a boost for the South East Area and surrounding counties.

The project involves partnering with Wexford County Council who are funding the capital development of the amenity with WWETB leasing the property and managing the activities at the centre. Following consultation and revised business cases, the sanction has been received from the Department of Education and Skills subject to the signature of an Undertaking, (relating to deficits or losses occurring mainly), by the Chairperson and Chief Executive. He invited Mr. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services Manager to present an overview to the Board.

The Corporate Services Manager outlined the proposed project to the Board and explained the current delivery process of activities. He highlighted the advantages of the proposed new site which included the majority of activities taking place at one location, reduced travel time and distance for clients, efficient delivery of increased sessions per day and closer access to an urban centre.

He expressed confidence that this will be a viable and exciting development and believes this proposed centre will deliver more than education for Wexford and the wider South East community, due to the increased client base including the addition of off-season activities and will become a major asset for WWETB. It is also intended to include a Climbing Wall with the current activities which should prove an added attraction due to the inclusion of Sport Climbing as an Olympic sport.

Cllr. Leonard Kelly welcomed the development of this amenity in such a spectacular natural location and thanked all involved on this exciting and positive project. Mr. Senan Lillis echoed Cllr. Kelly's remarks and suggested that in due course the appropriate marking/recognition of a past tragic event involving a young person who lost their life at this location, would be considered.

The Chairperson and CE agreed to sign the Undertaking and the CE and Chairperson thanked the Corporate Services Manager for his work and dedication to this project over many years.

(c) **ETBI** (Item 150920.12 also refers)

- (i) ETBI Annual General Meeting 2020: Notice and Delegate Information of ETBI Annual General Meeting to be held on-line on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 from 2.00p.m. – 3.30p.m. was circulated to the Board. The CE confirmed ETBI's invitation to nominate up to 26 Delegates of whom five shall be Voting Delegates and invited nominations:



- 5 voting delegates:**
1. *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy*
  2. *Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan*
  3. *Cllr. Garry Laffan*
  4. *Mr. Richard Byrnes*
  5. *Ms. Kate Miskella*

It was agreed to nominate Substitute Voting Delegates:

6. *Mr. Senan Lillis*
7. *(one) To be confirmed from Cllrs. Mary Farrell/  
Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin/Pat Nugent.*

The Board approved the attendance of the above Voting Delegates and the remaining (Non-Voting) Delegates as selected and when confirmed.

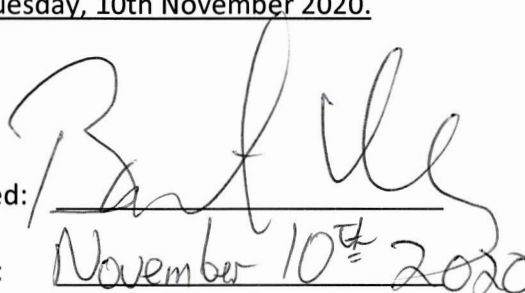
- (ii) *ETBI Brief 21/2020: Statement on Opting out of Religious Instruction for use in Admission Policies in Non-Designated Schools.*
- (d) **Press Releases: Department of Education and Skills** (Item 150920.14 also refers):  
{Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/>}. The following Press Release was brought to the attention of the Board:  
*14 September, 2020 - Calculated Grades Appeal Process opens at 9am Monday 14 September until 5pm Wednesday 16 September.*

**150920.16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 10th November 2020.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

  
November 10<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Documents circulated:**

*Agenda  
Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms  
Minutes of meeting held 14/07/2020  
Appendix 1 re Premises/Leases  
Audit and Risk Committee: Report to Board of meeting held 09/09/2020  
Audit and Risk Committee: Minutes of meeting held 16/06/2020  
Chief Executive's Report;  
ETBI Briefs Nos. 17-20/2020  
ETBI Notification and Information re ETBI AGM  
Addendum  
ETBI Reserve Members Forum Report dated 10/06/2020*