

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Meeting Held 14th July 2020

Held via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 14th July 2020 at 4.00p.m.

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Minutes of Meeting held 14th July 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. Pat Nugent, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Cllr. Mary Farrell, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Ms. Kate Miskella, Mr. Pat Rath, Ms. Mary Ryan, Ms. Finola Walsh.*

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. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services Manager.*

Apologies and/or unable to attend due to network issues: *Cllr. Breda Brennan, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Mr. Richard Byrnes, Mr. David Doyle, Mr. Larry O'Brien, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin.*

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

140720.01 WELCOME AND GENERAL

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the third on-line Board meeting and highlighted some meeting protocols and processes to the Board agreed, in relation to the recording of meeting, guidelines around holding board meetings remotely, media interactions and issue of Press Releases and guided by relevant sections of Standing Orders referred to.

140720.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms were issued and Board Members reminded to complete and return declarations (*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.

140720.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to Mr. John Connolly on the death of his father Mr. James Connolly.

140720.04 CONGRATULATIONS (140720.17(a) also refers)

Congratulations were extended to the following by the Board:

- (a) *Music Generation - Waterford Senior Traditional Ensemble:* correspondence from the National Director of Music Generation Ms. Rosaleen Molloy was brought to the attention of the Board which congratulated the Waterford Senior Traditional Ensemble who were selected to represent Music Generation, and all involved on their participation at the Annual Worldwide Conference hosted by the Ireland Funds held recently on-line.

The importance of funding for the success of the partnerships was emphasised by the CE and Director of OSD who both stressed how crucial future funding decisions would be for Music Generation Waterford and Wexford which is reliant on matched funding from both Waterford City and County Council and Wexford County Council. Board Members, especially members of those local authorities were encouraged to continue in their support of the Programme.

- (b) *Bridgetown College:* students Caitlin Lambert Dunne and Therese Keating on winning joint third place for their project in the Generation Apprenticeship Competition 2020.

- (c) *Michael Sweetman Educational Trust - Youthreach Subla Centre, Waterford students Joshua Morrissey and Lisa Maria Corcoran and Enniscorthy Vocational College students Aaron Larkin, Alejandro Fusteac and Ricardo Marcut on their nomination along with fellow learners who travelled to the European Parliament to represent Ireland nationally among students from the European Union.*

140720.05 MINUTES

The Minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board Meeting held on the 12th May 2020 were adopted: proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan.

140720.06 FINANCE

- (a) **Finance Report** (CE's Report page 41-42 refers): The Finance Manager provided a report on finances to the Board detailing a summary of Receipts and Payments plus cash balances as at 31st May 2020 indicating a cash surplus driven by the timing of tranche funding. In addition, he presented the following two items to the Board for consideration and adoption:
- (b) **Overdraft:** Application to the Minister for Education for overdraft facilities to the 31st December 2021. The Finance Manager outlined the procedure to the Board and proposal for consideration: *to borrow for the purposes of carrying out the Board's functions in the amount of €3million to the 31st December 2021.*

The Board accepted the proposal and to seek the consent of the Minister for Education (in accordance with CL 0066/2014 and Section 49 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013); Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.

- (c) **Deposit/Investment Proposal and Customer Mandate:** The Finance Manager gave an overview in relation to the management of negative interest rates charged on cash deposits and specified savings made to date. In order to reduce future potential negative interest and having consulted widely, the Finance Manager outlined details to the Board of a suitable alternative and requested approval of proposal to open a new investment account with the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) as presented, and signature of Customer Mandate.

"Following a proposal and consultation the Board approved an application to the National Treasury Management Agency for investment deposit facilities in accordance with the relevant regulations": Proposed Cllr. Joe Kelly, Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

140720.07 CORRESPONDENCE

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

- (a) **Waterford Institute of Technology** – Nominations to the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology. The CE listed previously recommended representatives including those in-situ and presented the following additional nominations for consideration and appointment by the Minister for Education to conclude membership of the Governing Body:

Academic Staff Representatives: Mr. Ray Ryan, Ms. Louise Walsh.

Non-Academic Staff Representatives: Mr. David Kane.

Business Representatives: Mr. Andy Crowley (IBEC).

Mr. Michael Quinn (Public Sector–Waterford City and County Council).

Ms. Anne Marie Caulfield (Waterford Chamber of Commerce).

Ms. Nora Widger (Communities/Church).

Ms. Imelda Buckley (Professional – ACCA).

- The Board recommended the above nominees for appointment to the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology {*Ref. Section 4(1)(c, d, g) of the Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act 1994*}; Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded Ms. Sandra Fogarty.
- (b) Letter of thanks from Senator John Cummins (a member of teaching staff at St. Paul's Community College) following his election to Seanad Éireann.
 - (c) **Publication of 2018 Annual Report:** Notification from the Department of Education and Skills to proceed with publication of WWETB Annual Report for the period ended 31st December 2018 {in accordance Section 28 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013}.

140720.08 GOVERNANCE

- (a) **Audit and Risk Committee:** The following minutes and reports circulated were noted:
 - (i) Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 11th March 2020;
 - (ii) Report to the Board dated 30th June 2020 from the Audit and Risk Committee following their meeting held 16th June 2020.

- (b) **Leases: Approval/Renewal of Leases** (Addendum Item 140720.16(a) also refers): The Corporate Services Manager presented a number of new and renewal leases to the Board for adoption. He explained the system for the lease approval process including Board and Department of Education and Skills obligations. The DES provided a checklist whereby Board approval is required before departmental sign-off. A summary of each lease which included location of the premises, term/lease duration, area and cost per square foot and the total annual cost per lease was outlined {Appendix 1}.

The Leases presented for premises at: *Bunclody Further Education and Training Centre, Gorey Youthreach, Tramore Youthreach and BTEI, Dungarvan Youthreach, Fablab Enniscorthy and Kilnamanagh Community National School* were adopted by the Board: Proposed Cllr. Mary Farrell; Seconded Ms. Finola Walsh.

- (c) **Memorandum of Understanding between Educate Together and Selskar College:** The CE reported on progress and updates to the Board since their approval of partnership negotiations with Educate Together for a new replacement school for Selskar College. He thanked the CEO of Educate Together and her colleagues for their ongoing commitment to the advancement of the process.
Having reviewed similar situations, the document presented, subject to the Board's support, would allow for the development of an Agreement for the provision of a new 1,000 student Designated Community College in Wexford Town - a democratically run school under the patronage of WWETB which would also provide for the participation of Educate Together in the Board of Management of the Community College.

The Director of Schools provided a general overview of the draft document to the Board as shared on-screen and acknowledged meetings held and support received from ETBI.

The 'Draft Memorandum of Understanding between WWETB and Educate Together' included the following information:

- A list of 13 Guiding Documents representative of WWETB/Educate Together/Selskar College including various national framework documents.
- Vision and Aims – built on the legacy of Selskar College (co-educational, multi-denominational school) and founded on the shared goals of Educate Together and WWETB.
- Articles of Management - an Advisory Group to agree the terms and wording of the Articles of Management.
- ETB Characteristic Spirit Statement and Educate Together Charter.

The CE and Director of Schools were thanked for their dedication and input to the process in furthering this project for a new school in Wexford Town. Queries were responded to relating to matters such as mechanisms to deal with issues should they arise. The background to the decision was discussed which followed meetings and exploration of various alternatives over the last number of years leading to a partnership approach resulting in the current Draft Memorandum of Understanding.

In relation to a timeline for the project including approval and progression to a site purchase, the CE referred to a communication from the Capital Appraisals Section of the Department of Education and Skills. This stated that they are in the process of acquiring a site with a view to a post-primary school catering for over 1,000 students together with a primary school building for the Educate Together primary school currently based in temporary accommodation subject to statutory provisions including planning permission. This would provide improved accommodation for Selskar College students as well as meeting future demographic demand in the area with the next steps to include commencement of the architectural planning process.

The requirement for a co-educational, multi-denominational school was supported by the Board and the Memorandum of Understanding between Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board and Educate Together was noted.

- (d) **ETBI Legal Opinion - Executive/Reserve Functions:** The CE gave a brief outline of senior counsel opinion received by ETBI and proposed holding a presentation at a future meeting to examine in more detail the overlap of executive and reserved functions as they relate to the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs and clarifications pertaining to board member roles.

140720.09 NOMINATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

Waterford College of Further Education: The Board appointed *Mr. Eugene Power* to the Board of Management of Waterford College of Further Education: Proposed Ms. Mary Ryan; Seconded Cllr. Leonard Kelly.

140720.10 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- (a) The **Chief Executive's Report** was circulated and some items referred to included:

Buildings – A brief update was provided on status of a number of major programmes and on-going building activities are continuing at schools and centres throughout Waterford and Wexford.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Wexford County Council and WWETB regarding *High Performance Building Alliance* and between the Designated Activity Company and the U.N. is ready for signing.

Recruitment – It was agreed to minimise additional on-line meetings held the day before interviews to reduce additional workload on Interview Board Members. This was formalised at a Senior Management/Covid-19 Response Team meeting.

- (b) **Local Youth Club Grant Scheme:** Minor amendments to grants listed at the last meeting were noted by the Board (with no change to actual overall grant allocation figure).
- (c) **Presentation: WWETB COVID-19 Response Management Team, Update 14/07/2020:**

The Director of OSD gave a presentation, shared on screen of a synopsis of impact to date and outline of future planning towards returning to the schools, training centres and the workplace.

 - A number of support structures were reviewed and highlighted. The guidance on re-opening including the most recent document received: ‘DES Interim Recommendations for Re-opening Schools and Educational Facilities’ was referenced and further instruction from DES is awaited before matters are progressed in order to keep in line with public health advice in a rapidly changing environment.
 - Planned (phased) re-opening of WWETB buildings and consultation with staff regarding return to the workplace – Survey sent to non-teaching staff and survey for issue to teaching staff in early August.
 - Risk assessments being carried out on each building, recommendations recorded and planning regarding cleaning, PPE supplies and induction taking place and considerations for Staff/Students/Learners including cleaning needs, logistical challenges, wellbeing, curricular challenges and learner assessment matters.

The Director of Schools and FET added further updates on issues around physical distancing rules, IT based solutions for learners and programmes in relation to coping and re-engaging. Following the presentation members of the Board asked questions and commented including from Cllr. Mary Farrell, Ms. Sandra Fogarty and Mr. Senan Lillis:

- Availability of physical space for educational purposes - use of community centres facilities.
- ‘Reconnecting with Schools’ Programme, DEIS webinars – information on useful ways to reconnect when school resumes.
- Procedures around working remotely in the case of an underlying condition for the different cohorts of employees was clarified.

Achievements to date were acknowledged, the executive were thanked for their on-going support for the schools and centres and were encouraged to continue their communications regarding the evolving health guidelines.

- (d) **Annual Report 2019:** The Director of OSD confirmed submission of the Annual Report by relevant deadline. A new checklist requests additional confirmations by the Chairperson and is currently being reviewed.

140720.11 POLICIES

The following Policies including a Summary of updates were circulated to the Board and noted.

- (a) *Treasury Policy;*
- (b) *Maternity Leave Policy;*
- (c) *Fraud Policy;*
- (d) *Adoptive Leave Policy;*
- (e) *Fixed Assets Policy;*
- (f) *Customer Charter–Ábhar Cairt Custaiméirí, Customer Action Plan and Complaints Procedure: (follows a wide consultative process and input).*

140720.12 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports) (140720.16 also refers)

- (a) The following Board of Management Reports of meetings were noted:
 - Meánscoil San Nioclás* 5/12/2019 and 25/6/2020.
 - St. Paul's Community College* 17/10/2019, 26/11/2019, 21/1/, 8/5/2020, 16/6/2020.
 - Bridgetown College* 20/5/2020 and 24/6/2020.
 - Waterford College of Further Education* 3/10/2019, 3/12/2019, 25/5/2020, 24/6/2020.
 - St. Declan's Community College* 2017 – 8/7/2020.
 - Youthreach Board of Management* Draft Report of meeting held 16/01/2020.
- (b) The following Committee reports were noted:
 - (i) *Waterford City and County Area Committee:* Draft Minutes of meeting held 24th April 2020 was circulated.
 - (ii) *Area Committees: Summary* dated 14th July 2020 of meeting topics and outcomes was circulated to the Board.

St. Declan's Community College. Kilmacthomas: The CE advised the meeting that issues have been identified of increased demand for school places over the last number of years resulting in a significant number of Section 29 Appeals for 'refusal to enrol' being received. The school layout is somewhat disjointed, constructed in three sections and difficulties exist for constructing additional extensions. The school is at full capacity and it has emerged, having considered other scenarios, that the most logical option is the construction of a new school. Projected numbers for the next few years justify such an approach and the Executive have commenced a strategic proposal for a new 1,000 pupil school for submission to the Department of Education and Skills.

This has been discussed and supported at school board of management level and Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan, Chair of the board, endorsed the proposal and shared various examples/observations as a board member of the school. The Director of Schools was also supportive of the plan with the current accommodation not satisfactory for the enrolment level. Cllr. Joe Kelly welcomed this development and thanked all involved.

The Board acknowledged that the school is over-subscribed and this provides the best strategic opportunity for the whole school community at St. Declan's Community College and its environs. The Board unanimously approved the proposal to progress plans for the provision of a new school.

140720.13 ETBI (Item 140720.16(c) also refers)

The following was brought to the attention of the Board and circulated for information:

- (a) *ETBI Brief No. 10/2020: Specialist Training Provider Contract Template.*

- (b) *ETBI Brief No. 14/2020*: ICT Update.
- (c) *ETBI Brief No. 15/2020*: Protocols around the reopening of Further Education and Training Centres 2020.
- (d) *ETBI Reserve Members Forum*: Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan gave a verbal update of ETBI Reserve Members Forum meeting held in June. Items discussed included a meeting with the Principal Officer of DES ETB Financial and Administrative Personnel in relation to payments to members of interview boards and the announcement of the appointment of Ms. Nessa White as Executive Director of Transformation in SOLAS and Mr. Paddy Lavelle as General Secretary of ETBI; Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan extended her congratulations to both appointees and wished them well in their new positions.
The Chairperson and Chief Executive on behalf of the Board and Staff congratulated Ms. White on her new role and thanked her for her huge contribution to the sector during her tenure. They also wished Mr. Lavelle well in his new role.

140720.14 CIRCULAR LETTERS: Department of Education and Skills (Item 140720.16(d) also refers) {Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/>}. The following Circular Letters were adopted; Proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan.

- (a) 0041/2020: Arrangements for Inspection and School Self- evaluation for the 2020/2021 School Year.
- (b) 0040/2020: Arrangements for the Inspection and School Self-Evaluation for the 2020/2021 School Year.
- (c) 0039/2020: Calculated Grades Aides 2020.
- (d) 0038/2020: Revision of Capitation Grant Rates for recognised Primary Schools in 2020 .
- (e) 0037/2020: Implementation of Calculated Grades Model for Leaving Certificate 2020.
- (f) 0036/2020: Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) – Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2020/2021 school year.

140720.15 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education and Skills (Item 140720.17(e) 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) 06 July, 2020 - Ministers Foley and Madigan welcome decision to extend Summer Provision eligibility to post-primary students with Down Syndrome.
- (b) 02 July, 2020 – Minister Josepha Madigan vows to be a strong advocate for educational equality and opportunity in her new role in Special Education and Inclusion.
- (c) 01 July, 2020 – Minister Foley welcomes publication of interim public health advice for re-opening schools.
- (d) 01 July, 2020 - Minister Harris urges students to apply for SUSI grants for the 2020/2021 academic year before priority closing date.
- (e) 25 June, 2020 – Minister McHugh announces Leaving Certificate Calculated Grades application process for out-of-school learners.
- (f) 12 June, 2020 – Government announces new Summer Provision 2020.
- (g) 08 June, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces opening of Calculated Grades Data Collection App for Schools.
- (h) 5 June, 2020 – Minister McHugh confirms Summer Programme to run for children with special educational needs and disadvantage

- (i) 29 May, 2020 – 60,035 Students register on Leaving Certificate Student Calculated Grades Portal.
- (j) 28 May, 2020 - Leaving Certificate Student Calculated Grades Portal Deadline extended as 59,859 register.
- (k) 28 May, 2020 - 58,821 Students register so far on Leaving Certificate Student Calculated Grades Portal.
- (l) 25, May, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces online registration for Leaving Certificate Calculated Grades opens on Tuesday 26 May.
- (m) 22 May, 2020 – Statement from the Department of Education and Skills.
- (n) 21 May, 2020 – Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh TD announces publication of guidance for schools on Calculated Grades.
- (o) 13 May, 2020 – Department of Education and Skills’ statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.

140720.16 ADDENDUM

- (a) **Governance** (Item 140720.08(b) also refers)
Leases - Approval/Renewal of Leases: Carrigfoyle Outdoor Education and Training Centre. The Corporate Services Manager and CE explained the background to the Board which included the submission of a number of Feasibility Studies to the Department of Education and Skills over a period of time for the provision of activities at the site and a request to lease the premises on Forth Mountain, Carrigfoyle near Wexford Town. Wexford County Council are developing the site to build a centre which WWETB would have the option to rent and deliver a high-class facility including the current services offered at Shielbaggan Outdoor Education and Training Centre. The cost of development would be repaid over a 20-year lease to Wexford County Council. Indications are that the cost of the lease would be funded by additional revenue generated by activities run by the Outdoor Education and Training Centre. He clarified that no funding is being requested from the Department of Education and Skills and the proposal is solely for permission to commence a lease, subject to the approval of the Department of Education and Skills

The Board adopted proposal to enter into a lease with Wexford County Council, subject to the approval of the Department of Education and Skills: Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded Cllr. Garry Laffan.

- (b) **Board/Committee Reports (including draft reports)** (140720.12 also refers)
 South Wexford Area Committee: Report of meeting held 3rd June 2020 was noted.
- (c) **ETBI** (Item 140720.13 also refers)
 The following was circulated for information:
 - (i) ETBI Brief No. 11/2020: Recommended approach to managed access of ETB workplaces.
 - (ii) ETBI Brief No. 12/2020: Leaving Cert/LCA/LCVP2020 update.
 - (iii) ETBI Brief No. 13/2020: Template statements on characteristic spirit and opting out of religious instruction for use in Community Schools’ Admissions Policies.
 - (iv) ETBI Brief No. 16/2020: Revised opting-out of Religious Instruction Statement for use in the Admissions Policies of Designated Community Colleges.

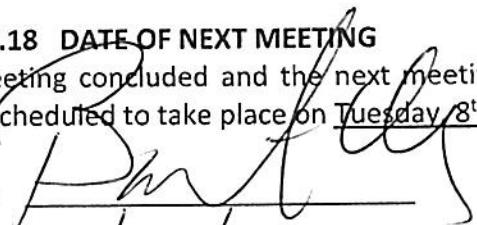
- (d) **Circular Letters: Department of Education and Skills** (Item 140720.14 also refers)
 {Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/>}
Circular Letter 043/2020: Scheme for Leave of Absence following Assault for Staff other than Teachers and Special Needs Assistants in Education and Training Board Workplaces was adopted: Proposed Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan
- (e) **Press Releases: Department of Education and Skills** (Item 140720.15 also refers)
 {Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/>}
 Press Release: *11 July, 2020* - Ministers Foley and Madigan welcome further widening of Summer Provision eligibility criteria for children entering primary school was brought to the attention of the Board.

14070.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Congratulations {140720.04 also refers} were extended to:
- (i) *Cllr. Leonard Kelly* on his election as Mayor of Wexford.
 - (ii) *Cllr. Garry Laffan* on his election as Vice Chairperson - Wexford County Council.
 - (iii) *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy* on her election as Chairperson – Enniscorthy Municipal District.
 - (iv) *Ms. Éadaoin Quinn*, Enniscorthy Vocational College – one of five Librarians (from across Ireland, U.K. and International Schools) to be included in the School Library Association Honours List for School Librarian of the Year Award 2020.
- (b) Following the newly established *Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science*, Minister Simon Harris, T.D. is due to launch the FET Strategy and ETB Chief Executives hope to meet with the Minister in the near future.
- (c) *Kilnamanagh Community National School*: In response to query it is envisaged that the Board of Management will commence in September.

140720.18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded and the next meeting of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board scheduled to take place on Tuesday 8th September 2020.

Signed: 

Date: 15/09/2020

Documents circulated - SharePoint

Agenda; Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms
Minutes of meeting held 12th May 2020
WIT list of proposed nominations
Audit and Risk Committee Report of meeting held 11/3 and 30/6/2020
Chief Executive’s Report
Policies including Summary: Treasury, Maternity Leave, Fraud, Adoptive Leave, Fixed Assets, Customer Charter incl. Customer Action Plan and Complaints Procedure
Waterford City & Co. Area Committee report of meeting held 24/4/2020
Area Committee Meetings: Summary 14/7/2020 of topics/outcomes
ETBI Briefs Nos. 10 – 16/2020; Addendum
South Wexford Area Committee meeting held 3/6/2020
Presentation – WWETB Covid-19 Response Management Team update