



wwetb

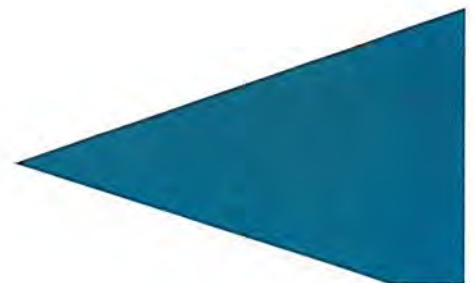
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Of Meeting Held 28th June 2022

*Held at the Ferrycarrig Hotel, Wexford
Tuesday, 28th June at 4.30p.m.*



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Minutes of Meeting held 28th June 2022 at 4.30p.m.

Board Members in attendance: *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding), Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan, Deputy Chairperson, Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Cllr. May Farrell, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Mr. Senan Lillis, Ms. Kate Miskella, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Suilleabháin, Cllr. Frank Quinlan, Mr. Pat Rath, Ms. Mary Ryan and Cllr. Aidan Browne (attended remotely on MS Teams).*

Also in attendance: *Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive; Dr. Karina Daly, Director of Organisation Support and Development (OSD); Ms. Eimear Ryan, Director of Schools, Mr. Owen O'Mahony, Finance Officer, Mr. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services Manager.*

Apologies: *Mr. Richard Byrnes, Cllr. Cristiona Kiely, Ms. Margaret Darrer, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Leonard Kelly.*

280622.01 INTRODUCTION/GENERAL

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies received were noted.

280622.02 CONFLICT OF INTEREST - DECLARATIONS

Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms were issued to the Board for their signatures 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.

280622.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to the following on their bereavements:

- ~ *Ms. Noreen Reilly on the death of her mother Mrs. Elizabeth Reilly;*
- ~ *The family of Mr. Fintan Hughes;*
- ~ *The family of Seán Carr, former student;*
- ~ *Mr. Eoin Nevin on the death of his wife Ms. Mary Nevins;*

280622.04 CONGRATULATIONS

The Chairperson extended congratulations to Cllr. Aidan Browne following his recent election as Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District.

280622.05 MINUTES

The minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) meeting held on the **10th May 2022** were adopted: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Ms. Kate Miskella.

280622.06 FINANCE

- (a) Finance Report:** A Finance Report and Financial Summary was circulated to the Board. The Finance Officer provided an overview of the figures under the main budget headings for month ended April 2022 as set out in the summary circulated. He explained the breakdown of funding and provided income and expenditure details for the period and confirmed the final closing bank balance was €11,407,807.

Audit of Annual Accounts: Audit fieldwork of the WWETB Financial Statements 2021 is complete and the next stage involves review of the findings report by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- (b) Renewal of Overdraft facilities:** Application to the Minister for Education for overdraft facilities to the 31st December 2023. The Finance Officer presented a proposal to the Board to seek overdraft facilities of €3m for the year 2023 (similar to previous years) and outlined the process and timeline involved in order to have such an arrangement available for the coming year.

The Board accepted and approved the proposal to seek overdraft facilities for the purposes of carrying out the Board's functions in respect of the amount of €3million to the 31st December 2023 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. Mary Farrell; Seconded Cllr. Pat Nugent.

(c) **Financial reporting and School Budgets – Boards of Managements**

Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan stated that as a school board of management (BoM) member, she noted difficulties experienced by BoM members with the comprehension of accounting information contained within financial templates and she agreed to raise the matter as requested with the Board, as it had been brought to her attention. Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan proposed that a member of the Finance Team would deliver a presentation at a future board of management meeting and this was seconded by Cllr. Mary Farrell who enquired as to BoM members responsibilities with regard to signing off on school financial matters. She acknowledged that members may require guidance in financial accounting matters but noted that a substantial portion of the allocation to date appears committed and sought clarity on spending discretion for board of management members.

The Finance Officer confirmed that each principal receives a Finance Pack which includes a summary financial table and a more detailed report/breakdown (this has been in place for several years). The most notable change following rollout of the P2P system is that when a school places an order, the value of that order is automatically taken off the budget rather than when the payment is made, thus reducing the budget figure instantly and providing an up-to-date balance remaining figure to a principal-secretary to the board.

The Finance Officer agreed that a training session would be helpful for understanding and analysis of financial reporting and would complement the on-line training sessions carried out at WWETB schools, offices and centres on the P2P procurement, budgeting and ordering system. The Director of OSD also acknowledged that more training would be advantageous to principals-boards of management members in clarifying and interpreting financial data. The CE clarified the distinction between financial oversight as a member of an education and training board and as a member of a school BoM and the Director of Schools referred to previous BoM training which included an element of financial guidance and briefly referred to members' duties as regards school budgeting and financial allocations.

It was agreed that training would be provided to principals and members of boards of management and this was welcomed by the board Members.

280622.07 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) SOLAS Funding: The Board was notified of confirmation of SOLAS 2022 FET Funding Allocation for WWETB in the amount of €70,073,746. The increased funding was welcomed.

280622.08 GOVERNANCE

The following committee reports were circulated to the Board and comments invited:

- (a) **Audit and Risk Committee:** Report to the Board (#3) of Audit and Risk meeting held 1st June 2022 was circulated to the Board. Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan reported that two representatives from the Office of the C & AG joined part of the meeting as invited. They were satisfied with the audit process and nothing of a concerning nature was reported to the committee in relation to the 2021 Audit of WWETB Financial Statements.

Compliance: There was request from the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) to highlight concerns to the Board in relation to the alignment of internal and public reporting on compliance matters and the rigid guidelines imposed.

The Director of OSD explained that the ARC members were of the view that within the Statement on Internal Control (SIC) there is an obligation to declare so called non-compliance with local threshold limits, even though EU compliant, which can lead to misinterpretation when reading published/public documents. However, it was suggested by the C&AG that the SIC may be expanded to include additional comments of clarification.

Prompt payments: The necessity for timely payment of invoices was emphasised.

The Board Chairperson confirmed her intention to attend future Finance and Audit and Risk Committee meetings, as discussed with the chairs of the committees.

(b) **Finance Committee:** Report to the Board of Finance Committee meeting held 25th May 2022 was circulated and Cllr. Pat Nugent gave a synopsis of the meeting to the Members.

(c) **Approval/Renewal of Leases and Updates:** Renewal of existing Licence Agreement for Cappoquin Adult Education Centre. The Corporate Services Manager outlined the area being licensed which is approximately 2,300 square feet. The Landlord has indicated he would seek a modest increase and this is under negotiation. The renewal, requiring approval in principle, is for a period of two years commencing in September 2022.

The Board approved the proposal to renew the existing Licence Agreement for *Cappoquin Adult Education Centres* outlined: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Tom Cronin.

The CS Manager provided further updates to the Board regarding leases previously approved at WWETB meeting held 29th March:

1. *Youthreach Subla* (additional 3,000 square feet was previously approved): Actual area was confirmed as **3,500 sq. ft.**
2. *Old Convent, Tramore:* The cost per square foot was presented to the Board and the CS Manager confirmed sanction sought from the Department of Education.

The commercially sensitive nature of property details was emphasised to the Board and in relation to the proposed development of the *Techniform Building* the CE advised of the future potential to develop more workshops, etc. in the space adjacent to the present Training Centre.

(d) **Service Plan 2022 – amendments** {Section 47 Education and Training Boards Act 2013}
The Director of OSD informed the Board that following submission of the Service Plan 2022 to the Department of Education, they made a request for the incorporation of amendments into the document following their review (and having regard to the Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreements in place) and consultation with other sections of the Department including the Gaeltacht Education Unit. A table of amendments under the headings of Statement of Services, Action, Performance Indicator and Target was circulated to the Members.

The Board adopted the *amended Service Plan 2022*: Proposed Cllr. Garry Laffan; Seconded Cllr Tom Cronin.

- (e) **Annual Report 2021** {Section S28 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013} and *Chairperson's Comprehensive Report* (Statement to the Minister for Education required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs paragraph 6.8 and 6.9 to accompany the annual report) were circulated to the Board.

The Director of OSD presented the Draft Annual Report 2021 for consideration to the Board. The Report outlined the activities across the organisation during 2021 including background, functions and an overview of services 2021. She further advised that development of the new Strategy Statement for 2023-2027 has commenced and that the Report covers progress during 2021 on the implementation of the current Strategy Statement goals and priorities (priorities as identified under the terms of the Performance Delivery Agreement between the Department of Education and WWETB). She gave an overview of the various sections in the Report and data which included:

- Governance structures of WWETB.
- Compliance and Board responsibilities.
- Memberships and meeting attendances.
- WWETB centre locations plus enrolment numbers for schools and further education and training (FET) beneficiaries and courses.
- Annual Financial Statement for year ended 31st December 2021 to be published following completion of the audit process.

She highlighted many areas of progress across Schools and Centres, FET, Buildings/Accommodation, Music Generation Programme, Staff Training and Procurement and invited questions.

The **WWETB Annual Report 2021** (and *Chairperson's Comprehensive Report* to the Minister for Education) was adopted: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.

- (f) **WWETB Strategy Development 2023-2027- Update**

The Director of OSD confirmed that all consultation has been completed and she thanked the Board Members for their input; more details to follow in September.

280622.09 NOMINATIONS/MEMBERSHIP TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEE

A number of vacancies were highlighted and the following appointments were made by the Board:

- **Gorey Community School:** *Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin and Mr. Pat Rath:*
Proposed Cllr. Mary Farrell; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.
- **Blackwater Community School:** *Cllr. Pat Nugent, Mr. Declan Doocey and Ms. Anna Long:*
Proposed Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan; Seconded Cllr. Tom Cronin.
- **Coláiste Abbáin:** The Chairperson invited nominations but none received. A number of names were suggested – Cllr. Garry Laffan to liaise with the CE in this regard.
- **Youthreach Committee:** *Ms. Kate Miskella:*
Proposed Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan; Seconded Cllr. Mary Farrell.

280622.10 INTERVIEW/SELECTION BOARDS

In order to ensure sufficient availability of interview board members willing to sit on future interview boards, the Board agreed to renewal of the following representatives eligible to serve on Interview Boards 2022 (in addition to the established list): **Principals/Deputy Principals/FET Management/SMT** - if Board members are unavailable, as per Circular: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Ms. Kate Miskella.

280622.11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

(a) COVID-19 Response Updates

The Director of Schools gave a brief update and the second sitting of the Leaving Certificate is currently taking place at two WWETB centres - St. Pauls Community College and Selskar College.

The Director of OSD advised that a Remote Working Policy for staff is being prepared and it is hoped that a Pilot Remote Working Policy will be available for the September Board meeting.

(b) REALT PRESENTATION

The CE introduced Mr. Senan Lillis, newly appointed REALT (Regional Education and Language Team) Co-Ordinator to the Board.

Mr. Senan Lillis began his presentation by outlining the main purpose of his remit as a REALT Co-Ordinator which is to locate school places and language classes for Ukrainian children. The numbers of students in Ireland from Ukraine stands at 7,200 as of 17th June with increased numbers anticipated towards the end of July/early August.

He explained the enrolment procedure and stages including the school transport application process. A multi-agency approach is taken and the WWETB Ukrainian Response Team meet regularly. The main theme of focus is on what is working well, what is the most common query and what are the emerging areas of concern.

He gave the numbers enrolled in schools as at June 14th 2022:

- Total number of children in schools: 622;
- 445 Primary and 177 secondary;
- Wexford has the 5th highest number of students and Waterford the 6th highest.

Some voluntary groups are providing language classes and he listed schools providing Summer Initiatives/Provision at second level across the region until the end of June. There are insufficient places to satisfy demand. He provided start, end dates and numbers of classes - 38 classes in operation across Wexford and 33 in Waterford.

He complimented the ESOL (English Speakers of other Languages) Team for its significant work carried out regarding assessments. He highlighted some obstacles and issues which he expects to be resolved while acknowledging the challenges ahead.

Cllr. Mary Farrell paid tribute to teachers in her area for their work and briefly outlined a number of queries. The REALT Co-Ordinator responded to a number of queries and stated that he has engaged with the Music Generation Programme Co-ordinator and Career Guidance Counsellor on relevant matters.

280622.12 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports if not stated)

The following board of management reports were noted by the Board.

- (a) Bridgetown College report of meeting held 25th May 2022 and 6th April 2022.
- (b) Bunclody Vocational College report of meeting held 26th April 2022.
- (c) Enniscorthy Community College held 8th February 2022

- (d) Selskar College held 8th June 2022.
- (e) St. Paul's Community College held 14th June 2022, 28th May 2022 and 7th March 2022.

280622.13 ETBI (EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS IRELAND)

- (a) **ETBI AGM and Delegate Nominations (Addendum Item 1 – 280622.18):**
Notice of ETBI Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022 scheduled for Wednesday 21st September 2022 was circulated to the Board and noted. The AGM will be a hybrid meeting with Board joining in ETBI and others joining remotely – further information to be issued by ETBI in due course. The following Delegate Nominations were made: *Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan, Ms. Kate Miskella, Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Mr. Senan Lillis and Ms. Mary Ryan.*
- (b) **ETBI Reserve Members Forum**
Report of ETBI Reserve Members Forum meeting held 18th May 2022 was circulated to the Board and Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan gave Members a brief update - the Annual Conference is scheduled to take place on the 28th-29th September 2022 in Tullow, Co. Carlow and there was no update on the issue of payment of ETB members for travel expenses and fees serving on Interview Boards.

280622.14 CIRCULAR LETTERS: Department of Education

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

- (a) 0039/2022: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Updated Working Arrangements For Staff Other Than Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in Education and Training Boards.
- (b) 0038/2022: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Updated Working Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools.
- (c) 0037/2022: Cost Limits for Primary School Buildings.
- (d) 0035/2022: Special Needs Assistant Allocation 2022/23.
- (e) 0034/2022: Cost Limits for Post-primary School Buildings.
- (f) 0033/2022: Permanent extension of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) to all school staff employed in recognised primary and post-primary schools.
- (g) 0032/2022: Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examinations in 2024 and the Leaving Certificate Examinations in 2024.

The following Circular Letters (**Addendum Item 2-280622.18**) were adopted: Proposed Ms. Mary Ryan; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.

- (h) 0046/2022: Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2022/2023 Special Education Component.
- (i) 0043/2022: Allocation of Assistant Principal Posts 2022/2023.
- (j) 0042/2022: Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2022 Implementation of Sectoral Bargaining Fund in the Primary Sector.
- (k) 0041/2022: Revision of Working Hours in ETBs: Implementation of the Independent Hours Body Recommendations in relation to the Haddington Road Agreement Hours for ETB Employees other than Teachers, SNAs and Tutors.
- (l) 0040/2022: COVID-19: Working Arrangements for Certain Higher Risk employees of Recognised Primary and Post Primary schools in the Free Education Scheme and of ETBs, Employed Using Grant Funding for the 2022/23 school year.

280622.15 AOB

Senior Management developments: The Board were informed of the following updates:

- *Senior Leadership appointments:*
Meánscoil San Níoclás – Principal: Mr. Seán Ó’Callanáin;
Kennedy College – Principal: Ms. Sarah Roche appointed and Deputy Principal interviews held 27th June;
Coláiste Abbáin – Interviews for DP scheduled for 29th June.
- *Special Class:* Provision remains an issue nationally. Three new Special Classes are due to open in Selskar College, Creagh College and Bridgetown College and it is hoped to open one in Coláiste Abbáin. The Director of Schools in response to a query confirmed that an extension to Kilnamanagh Community National School which includes a special education room, will shortly commence following the recent ‘turning of the sod’ at the school.
- *Director of FET:* The CE updated the Board on the FET Directorate appointment and an advertisement has been placed for an Acting Director of FET.

280622.16 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education

{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>}.

(Item 280622.17(b) also refers) The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted:

- (a) Ministers Foley and Madigan send best wishes to all students sitting 2022 State Examinations.
- (b) Minister Foley announces details of 24 organisations to benefit from participation in €100,000 Non-Mainstream Music Education Bursary Scheme.
- (c) Department of Education confirms 6,797 Ukrainian pupils currently enrolled in Irish schools.
- (d) Ministers Harris and Foley announce investment in 47 projects to help public understanding of STEM.
- (e) Statement from Minister Madigan.
- (f) Minister Foley invites views on the Action Plan on Bullying.
- (g) Minister Foley announces call for applications from schools for Arts-in-Education initiative: BLAST 2022.
- (h) Statement from Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion Josepha Madigan.
- (i) Department of Education confirms 5,843 Ukrainian pupils currently enrolled in Irish schools.
- (j) Minister Foley launches Report on the Review of Out-of-School Education Provision and outlines plan to implement its recommendations.
- (k) Minister Foley announces appointment of new Board of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta.

280622.17 PRESS RELEASES: Dept. of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science

{available: https://www.gov.ie/en/search/?type=press_releases&organisation=department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science}. {Item 280622.17(c) also refers}

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

- (a) Tánaiste and Minister Harris announce important earning changes to the Student Grant Scheme for third level students.
- (b) Minister Harris welcomes the adoption of European Council Recommendations on Individual Learning Accounts and Microcredentials.
- (c) OECD outlines skills opportunities and challenges at meeting with National Skills Council.
- (d) New third-level access support for autistic students and students with an intellectual disability announced by Minister Harris.
- (e) Ministers Harris and Foley announce investment in 47 projects to help public understanding of STEM.
- (f) Ministers Harris and Naughton announce new apprenticeship to attract next generation of commercial drivers.

- (g) Minister Harris publishes policy on the development of a unified third-level education system.
- (h) Ministers Harris and Collins announce over 10,500 free or heavily-subsidised courses for unemployed, self-employed or returners to work.
- (i) Minister Harris launches Impact 2030: Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy.
- (j) Minister Harris announces €53.7 million in research grants for projects on health and climate.

280622.17 ADDENDUM

- (a) See also Items 280622.13 and 28.06.14 above.
- (b) **PRESS RELEASE: Department of Education**
 {available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>}
 {280622.15 also refers} The following press release was noted by the Board:
 Ministers Foley and Ryan highlight energy retrofit improvements made at Donegal school under Pathfinder Programme.
- (c) **PRESS RELEASE: Dept. of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**
 {available: https://www.gov.ie/en/search/?type=press_releases&organisation=department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science} {280622.16 also refers} The following press release was noted by the Board:
 Minister Harris announces new measures to provide access to further and higher education for displaced Ukrainian students.

280622.19 AOB

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and members were invited to forward any feedback or comments on preferred length of meeting if they wished.

280622.19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded and the next meeting to be held **Tuesday, 13th September 2022** in Waterford.

Signed: *John O'Sullivan*
 Date: 13th Sept 22

- Documents circulated:**
- Agenda
 - Addendum
 - Minutes of WWETB meeting held 10th May 2022
 - Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms
 - Finance Report and Summary
 - Audit and Risk Committee Board Report
 - Finance Committee Board Report
 - Service Plan 2022 amendments - memo
 - Annual Report 2021, Chairperson's Comprehensive Report and SIC
 - ETBI Reserve Members Forum Report of meeting held 18th May 2022
 - ETBI AGM 21st September 2022 Save the date Notice