



wwetb

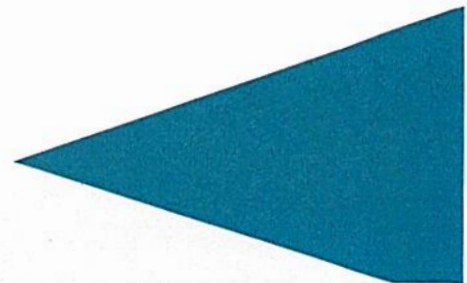
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Of Meeting Held 29th March 2022

*Held via MS Teams
Tuesday, 29th March 2022 at 4.00p.m.*



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board
Minutes of Meeting held 29th March 2022 at 4.00p.m.

Board Members in attendance: *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding), Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan, Deputy Chairperson, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Mr. Richard Byrnes, Ms. Margaret Darrer, Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Cllr. Cristiona Kiely, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Mr. Senan Lillis, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Suilleabháin, Cllr. Frank Quinlan, Ms. Mary Ryan, Mr. Pat Rath.*

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

Presentation made to the Board by Ms. Sarah Lavan, Adult Education Officer (AEO).

Apologies: *Ms. Kate Miskella.*

290322.01 WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed all present to the board meeting which was convened remotely through Microsoft Teams.

290322.02 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.

290322.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to the following on their bereavements:

~ *Cllr. Tom Cronin on the sudden death of his brother Mr. John Cronin;*

~ *Mr. Tom Corcoran on the death of his father Mr. Tom Corcoran.*

290322.04 CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations were extended to De La Salle College, Waterford and Gorey Community School on their recent sporting successes.

290322.05 MINUTES

The minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) meeting held on the **22nd February 2022** were adopted: Proposed Cllr. Garry Laffan; Seconded Cllr. Pat Nugent.

290322.06 FINANCE

Draft WWETB Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for year ending 2021 including associated documents: Letter of Representation, Chief Executive Confirmation of draft Financial Statements and Statement on Internal Control (SIC).

Relevant documents were furnished to the Board Members in advance and the Finance Officer gave a presentation: *'WWETB Annual Accounts 2021 Presentation'* explaining the various stages and approval processes involved. He explained the Financial Statements approval timeline and financial summary outlining the main 2021 Receipts and Payments to the members and subsequent analysis of these figures.

The closing balance as at 31st December 2021 was €13.2m and he provided a financial comparison of 2021 with 2020 including highlighting key points relating to Covid-19 supports. He indicated that as normal activities resume, higher spend levels are expected throughout the year.

The Accounts submission was concluded with a Service Plan 2021 comparison and the Finance Officer emphasised that the financial information was in draft format and subject to change post the C & AG audit. The Audit fieldwork is due to commence in May.

The Director of OSD read a document to the Board confirming approvals and recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee on the Statement on Internal Control and Finance Committee of the Annual Financial Statements 2021 following their meetings held on 23rd February and 23rd March 2022.

The Board adopted the WWETB Annual Financial Statements for year ended 31st December 2021 including the Statement on Internal Control and accompanying documents for signature of the Chairperson and Chief Executive: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; seconded Mr. Senan Lillis.

The Chairperson commended the Finance Officer and team, Director of OSD and the Audit and Risk and Finance Committees for their work.

290322.07 CORRESPONDENCE

The following was brought to the attention of the board and circulated. (Item 290322.17(a) also refers)

- (a) Correspondence from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media advising of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 enacted 22nd December 2021 (Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú) 2021, a achtaíodh ar 22 Nollaig 2021).
- (b) Annual Report 2021 on Public Sector Energy Efficiency Performance.

290322.08 GOVERNANCE (Item 290322.17(b) also refers)

(a) Training Course – Safe Pass administration:

Cllr. Pat Nugent (Finance Committee Member) was requested on behalf of the Finance Committee to seek clarity on courses organised by SOLAS and minimum numbers required for Safe Pass Courses to proceed.

The Director of OSD explained the query which arose at a meeting of the Finance Committee. One of the requirements of the one day Safe Pass Course is a minimum attendance of eight whereas fifteen is recommended. Due to seven participants (one less than the minimum) arriving on a particular day the course did not proceed as per their Code of Conduct. This was out of WWETB's control. It was queried by a member of the Finance Committee as to whether it was appropriate that the one day course did not go ahead with seven participants and whether SOLAS should re-consider the minimum number threshold.

The Chairperson opened the discussion to the board and Cllr. Pat Nugent proposed reducing the minimum attendance number to six. It was agreed to correspond with SOLAS for further clarification in this regard.

- (b) **Statement of Strategy (2018-2022) Implementation:** Strategy Implementation Plan – March 2022 was circulated to the Board. The Plan contained the five Strategic goals and priority items: *Provision of high quality education and training to our students and learners, Development of Organisation Services, Our People Working Together, Foster Lasting Partnerships and Collaborations, Effective Internal and External Communications*. The Director of OSD highlighted improvements and progression on various subjects such as:

- Outdoor Education and Training Centre – new state of the art facility;
- Restructuring of administrative functions and governance structure e.g. Directorate and Senior Management Teams, FET management group and forum and Principals/Deputy Principal groups;

- FET – new Colleges of the Future;
- Development of partnerships and collaborations;
- Communications and Marketing advances: Communications Officer, Steering Group, branding guidelines and Intranet.

Questions were invited and she acknowledged the substantial input and many positive achievements to date; preparation has commenced on the new Strategy Statement.

(c) **Waterford Training Centre:** In response to earlier query from Cllr. Tom Cronin the CE confirmed acquisition of a building with a view to providing enhancement to the existing Waterford Training Centre.

(d) **Apprenticeship: changes to Female Bursary - Scholarships**

The Director of FET (*ref. Section 24. of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013*) presented the following amendment of the current WWETB Bursary to the Board for consideration:

- *Remove the present limitation to post-primary schools under the patronage of WWETB only and open out to all schools and FET centres e.g. (Youthreach/CTCs).*
- *Remove the limitation of the six chosen crafts and open it out to all 25 craft apprenticeships.*
- *Timeframe to be, annually, January to December.*
- *Add one interview workshop with independent recruitment company.*
- *Remove the limitation on the number of approved scholarship places.*

Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan welcomed the initiative, along with Cllr. Cristiona Kiely who emphasised the importance of apprenticeship promotion and was supportive of female ambassadors visiting schools to highlight opportunities available.

A media event publicising the first female apprenticeship is due to take place the following day.

The recommended changes to the award of **Bursaries to Female Students** were adopted: Proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Cllr. Cristiona Kiely.

(e) **Audit and Risk Committee:** Audit and Risk Committee *Annual Report 2021 to WWETB* was circulated to the Board and noted.

(f) **Approval/Renewal of Leases:** The Board's approval was requested for a number of leases (Item 290322.08 refers).

290322.09 NOMINATIONS/MEMBERSHIP TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEE

Youthreach Committee: To alleviate difficulties experienced in securing quorums for meetings, Cllr. Pat Nugent nominated an additional member to the Youthreach Committee: *Cllr. Frank Quinlan* was appointed to the Youthreach Committee: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.

290322.10 PRESENTATIONS

(a) **COVID-19 Response Updates:** The CE reported that a number of members indicated their preference for an online board meeting on this occasion, due to the prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic. He invited the three Directors to give an overview of their areas.

Director of Schools

A further Delegation Order (under Section 16 of the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013) was issued to school principals which delegated authority to school principals to enable them manage schools from Wednesday March 23rd, 2022, to Friday April 1st, 2022, while the prevalence of Covid-19 is very high in the community. The Delegation Order was not activated by any school to date.

Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan asked if board of management members could be made aware if classes are being sent home. It was agreed to alert board of management members via the Area Committee email groups, but it was advised that should this occur that this notification would likely be after the event.

Director of Further Education and Training (FET)

There has been hesitancy and challenge in the return of learners to face to face learning. Covid Teams are maintaining hygiene standards and monitoring the situation.

Director of OSD

The Response Management Team (RMT) met 10th March and discussed the full return to the workplace which is scheduled for 19th April - staff may return in advance of that date if they wish. Where some staff remain apprehensive due to current high levels of Covid-19 in the community a message encouraging the usual protective precautions, including mask wearing has been conveyed. A 'Remote Working Policy' will be developed in due course and staff will be consulted during the development of this policy.

(b) **Ukraine – supports and access to education**

The CE advised that ETBs will co-ordinate and work with statutory bodies to assist and respond as required during the crisis in so far as possible. The Department of Education is working with the whole education sector to advance planning with regard to access to education for school-aged children and providing supports to their families and schools. The Director of Schools clarified that school places for Ukrainian children relates to all schools in an area and not solely ETB Schools. An FAQ document is currently awaited.

The following questions were received from Board Members and responded to:

- *Enrolment of Ukrainian students* and level of English – A small number of Ukrainian students have presented to date - mainly introduced through friends etc.
The level of English is good with teenagers in general.
- *Availability of school places* and capacity in some schools – Schools process all applications consistently in accordance with their Admissions Policies.

(c) **Presentation: *Language, Literacy and Access*** presented by Ms. Sarah Lavan, Adult Education Officer (AEO). The AEO outlined the content of the presentation which was shared with the Board and provided a brief background on the Literacy, Language and Access and Inclusion provision, along with the team involved within WWETB.

The Adult Literacy Provision comprises General Learning/themed Literacy/Health Literacy, Skills for Work, ICT Literacy, Family Learning and Access/Targeted Programmes. The Language Provision consists of the following and she gave brief details of each service:

- General ESOL (English for Speakers of Other languages);
- ESOL for work;
- EROC (Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre) – Adult Language and Orientation programme and School Provision for residents;
- Refugee Resettlement, Protected Persons.

The Access and Inclusion Officer supports FET programmes, services, centres and colleges in increasing access, transfer and progression for all members of the community including learners from under-represented groups, persons with a disability, individuals experiencing disadvantage, mature learners and learners from diverse and minority backgrounds. It also includes supporting the rollout of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to cater to the most diverse students and implementing Human Rights and Equality Public Sector Duty.

Arising from a QQI review 'Students feel very supported' but support is not standard across all programmes so ways are being examined of standardising learning support and looking at 'FETCH' (Further Education and Training Course Hub) in promoting what is on offer.

Statistics were set out for the last three years of beneficiaries by provision category (Adult Literacy Groups, ESOL, Refugee Resettlement, EROC) and broken down into the various regional providers and the AEO gave further details on attendances and numbers for the various programmes.

She stated that staff were very innovative and managed to keep contact with a lot of learners using a hybrid method for keeping in touch with learners. It is proving a struggle to encourage learners back to the classroom but lines of communication are open so are hopeful for a return to class.

The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) strategy which is a ten-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy which aims to ensure that every adult has the necessary literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy to fully engage in society and realise their potential. The AEO outlined the Adult Literacy for Life Targets including priorities and stages. Future Planning and various new programmes were also referred to such as the pilot Down Syndrome Ireland (DSI) Latch-on Programmes.

The AEO responded to question from Cllr. Fionntán O'Súilleabháin on the dramatic rise in provision evidenced in North Wexford which she explained was due to the new county division and the recruitment of an additional co-ordinator. This allows a dedicated co-ordinator cater for each of their particular areas.

A Ukrainian Response Team has been established within the FET team which has already met and are seeing learners referred from families. The team is supporting them through existing English language classes and they anticipate being able to meet the need in the current provision.

The Chairperson thanked the AEO and her team and the CE echoed his appreciation of the important work carried out by Sarah in this area since taking up her role.

A copy of the presentation is to be forwarded to the board after the meeting containing various website and video links referenced during the presentation.

290322.11 POLICIES (including Summary of updates)

The following policies were circulated and noted by the Board:

- (a) *Retirement Policy;*
- (b) *Garda Vetting Policy for Students of WWETB;*
- (c) *Treasury Management Policy;*
- (d) *IT Service Desk Policy and Procedure.*

290322.12 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports if not stated)

The following board of management reports were noted by the Board. (Item 290322.17(c) also refers)

- (a) Bunclody Vocational College report of meeting held 7th February 2022, 11th November and 2nd September 2021.
- (b) Kennedy College report of meeting held 17th January 2022.

- (c) St. Paul's Community College report of meeting held 2nd November to 7th March 2022.
- (d) Enniscorthy Community College report of meeting held 8th September 2021.

290322.13 CIRCULAR LETTERS – Department of Education (Item 290322.17(d) also refers).

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

- (a) 0015/2022: Revision of salaries of certain grades other than Teachers and SNAs employed by ETBs with effect from 1 February 2022.
- (b) 0014/2022: Prescribed material for Junior Cycle English.
- (c) 0013/2022: Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2024.
- (d) 0009/2022: Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) with effect from 1 February 2022.
- (e) 0008/2022: New Public Holiday from 2022.

290322.14 ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland)

ETBI Reserve Members Forum: Report from meeting held 16th February 2022 was circulated and Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan briefly referred to items including acknowledgement of a meeting request in relation to payment of travel expenses and fees paid to ETB board members for interviews.

290322.15 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education (Item 290322.17(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) Minister Foley invites applications from schools for funding to work together on Creative Projects.
- (b) Ministers Foley and Madigan welcome appointment of new Chief Executive Officer to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- (c) Minister Foley announces appointment of new Chief Executive of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG).
- (d) Minister Foley announces the commencement of arrangements in a number of pilot areas aimed at increasing the number of multi-denominational primary schools.
- (e) Minister Foley announces €32 million major expansion of the DEIS programme incorporating 310 new schools.
- (f) Minister Josepha Madigan praises school staff on International Women's Day.
- (g) Minister Foley announces the publication of Recommendations on Gender Balance in STEM Education.
- (h) Ministers Foley and Madigan announce establishment of a scheme to provide Irish Sign Language Support for children whose primary language is Irish Sign Language (ISL) and who are attending recognised schools.
- (i) Statement from the Department of Education on Storm Eunice - 17 February 2022.
- (j) Minister Foley establishes Steering Committee to develop new Action Plan on Bullying.
- (k) Minister Foley welcomes the appointment of Bernie McNally as the new Secretary General of the Department of Education.

290322.16 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 290322.17(f) also refers)

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

- (a) Minister Harris proposes Erasmus programme to create EU Scholarship Scheme for Ukrainian students.
- (b) Minister Harris announces second National Review of Gender Equality.
- (c) Minister Harris addresses the Teachers Union of Ireland conference.

- (d) Minister Collins launches National Sales Apprenticeship Programme.
- (e) Minister Harris signs regulations to improve student grant scheme.
- (f) Minister Harris and Collins announce roll out of free period products in further education and training sector.
- (g) National Skills Council holds extraordinary meeting with the OECD to discuss skills challenges facing Ireland.
- (h) Minister Harris launches new programme to upskill healthcare workers in dementia care.
- (i) Minister Collins launches the Education and Training Boards Ireland Strategic Framework for Outdoor Education and Training Centres.
- (j) Minister Harris encourages people who need help with reading to seek support on Ireland Reads day.
- (k) Minister Harris announces funding for two new climate action projects.
- (l) Technological university for South East aims to open 1 May, as Minister Harris announces its first chair.

290322.17 ADDENDUM

- (a) **Correspondence** (Item 290322.07 also refers)
 - (i) **South East Technological University:** Confirmation from the Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science of appointment of *Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive, WWETB* to the first Governing Body of the South East Technological University (in line with the provisions of the TU legislation, the term of office for the position is for a period of two years). The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson extended congratulations on his appointment. The CE confirmed discussions were held with the Chief Executive of Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board regarding executive membership of the Governing Body. He also confirmed that as agreed at the last board meeting, a request was forwarded to the Minister seeking increased representation on the governing body.
 - (ii) Correspondence from the President of **National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCPP)** seeking clarity on nominating criteria prior to nominating individuals. Relevant legislative information to be forwarded to the NPCPP President.
- (b) **Governance** (Item 290322.08(f) refers).

Approval/Renewal of Leases: The following leases were presented to the board for approval:

 - (i) **Riverstown Tramore:** additional accommodation adjacent to existing Youthreach premises (preliminarily approved at the last Board meeting), on a shell and core basis to be fit out from funding under the SOLAS 'Strategic Infrastructure Upgrade Fund' (SIUF) instead of Landlord refurbishing as previously considered. Lease to run concurrent with existing lease.
 - (ii) **Youthreach Subla:** Renewal of existing lease plus additional approx. 3,000 sq. ft of full fitted out premises and lift upstairs. Commencing 1 January 2023 for a period of 10 years.
 - (iii) **Old Convent, Tramore:** approval in principle to rent the Old Convent in Tramore on a shell and core basis – to be fit out using SIUF application. To revert at the May meeting when rent confirmation is agreed. Permission sought to proceed to engagement with the developer who had completed an Expression of Interest in response to a public advertisement.

The Board approved the above proposals to lease premises as outlined: Proposed Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan; Seconded Cllr. Cristiona Kiely.

- (c) **Board/Committee Reports** (including draft reports) (Item 290322.12 also refers)
The following board of management reports were noted by the board
- (i) Bridgetown College meetings held 16th February 2022 and 15th December 2021.
 - (ii) Creagh College meetings held from 23rd September 2021 to 24th March 2022.
 - (iii) Selskar College meetings held 11th January 2022 and 1st December 2021.
- (d) **Circular Letter: Department of Education** (Item 290322.13 also refers)
{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>}
Circular Letter 0016/2022: Employment of 3rd and 4th Year Undergraduate Student Teachers and application of the '5 Day Rule' was adopted, Proposed Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan; Seconded Cllr. Tom Cronin.
- (e) **Press releases: Department of Education** (Item 290322.15 also refers)
{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>}
The following press releases were noted by the Board:
- (i) Minister Foley announces grants for organisations delivering music education.
 - (ii) Minister Foley announces establishment of Regional Education and Language Teams for Ukraine.
 - (iii) Minister Foley announces establishment of National Policy Group for Lifelong Guidance.
 - (iv) Ministers Foley and Harris announce agreement between the Department of Education and CDET B to facilitate strategic capital investment in the schools and FET sector in North Dublin City.
 - (v) Chief Inspector's report 2016-2020, finds many positives in the quality of education provided for children and young people in schools, early learning and care settings, and other education settings in Ireland.
- (f) **Press releases: Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.** (Item 290322.16 also refers)
{available: https://www.gov.ie/en/search/?type=press_releases&organisation=department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science}
- (i) Ministers Harris and Collins launch new National Apprenticeship Alliance.
 - (ii) Minister Harris opens Green Skills Summit focusing on Ireland's transition to a green economy.
 - (iii) Ireland signs European statement condemning Russia against Ukraine - Minister Harris.

290322.18 AOB

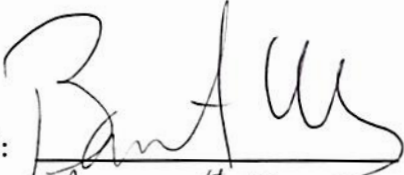
- (a) **Condolences:** The CE extended sympathy to the Wexford County Council Chief Executive Mr. Tom Enright on the death of his brother-in-law Mr. Liam Nolan.
- (b) **Congratulations:** The Chairperson extended best wishes to Mr. Tony Larkin (Director of Services and Deputy Chief Executive), Wexford County Council on his retirement and the CE acknowledged his excellent advice and support to WWETB over many years including in relation to several major joint projects.
- (c) **Teacher Allocation:**
The Director of Schools responded to query from Ms. Mary Ryan on expected timeframe for issue of teacher allocations in relation to the next academic year and advised that the Department of Education had indicated that allocations are imminent.

- (e) **Green Skills Summit:** Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan congratulated organisers of the recent SOLAS led National FET Green Skills Summit held 23rd March 2022. The CE and Director of FET thanked the Innovation and Development Manager as WWETB Lead on this summit and acknowledged the attendance of the Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science at the event and his subsequent visit to the Enniscorthy NZEB Training Centre.

290322.19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded and it is anticipated for the next meeting will be held in person in Waterford on **Tuesday, 10th May 2022.**

Signed:



Date:

May 10th 2022

Documents circulated:

Agenda

Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms

Minutes of WWETB meeting held 22nd February 2022

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2021

WWETB Draft Annual Financial Statements 2021 incl. SIC and assoc. documents: Letter of Representation, draft App. A Certificate of CE AFS Presentation

Correspondence re items: 290322.07 and 290322.17

Copy of Strategy Implementation Plan 2022

Policies and Summary: Retirement/Garda Vetting for Students of WWETB, Treasury Management, IT Service Desk Policy and Procedure.

ETBI Reserve Members Forum Report of meeting held 16th February 20.

For circulation following the meeting: Item 290322.10(c) Presentation