

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

# MINUTES

*Meeting Held 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.*

*Held via Microsoft Teams,  
Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 at 4.00p.m.*

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

### **Minutes of Meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 at 4.00p.m.**

**Board Members in attendance:** Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding); Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan (Deputy Chairperson), Cllr. Aidan Browne, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Cllr. Mary Farrell, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Susan Gallagher, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Mr. Senan Lillis, Ms. Kate Miskella, Cllr. Eddie Mulligan, Cllr. Pat Nugent, 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; Mr. Michael O'Brien, Innovation and Development Manager.

**Apologies:** Mr. Richard Byrnes, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin, Cllr. Frank Quinlan.

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

#### **230221.01 WELCOME AND GENERAL**

The Chairperson outlined relevant etiquette and protocols for the meeting to the Board at the outset, including confidentiality around issue of press-media releases and communications and requested that announcements made on matters during the meeting were strictly private and restricted from circulation until released by the Chief Executive/Chairperson of the Board.

#### **230221.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

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

#### **230221.03 CONDOLENCES**

The Board extended sympathy to the following on their bereavements as notified by the Chairperson:

*Mr. Paul Walsh on the death of his mother Mrs. Helen Walsh;*  
*Ms. Mary Ryan on the death of her father Mr. Michael Lyons;*  
*Ms. Sharon Slammon on the death of her mother Mrs. Carmel Slammon;*  
*Ms. Majella Doran on the death of her sister Ms. Joan Doyle;*  
*The family of Ms. Mary Houlihan;*  
*The family of Ms. Eileen Power;*  
*The family of Mr. James (Jimmy) Murphy;*  
*The Family of Mr. Robert Bowen.*

#### **230221.04 CONGRATULATIONS**

- (a) *Schools/Colleges:* Teachers, Support Staff and Learners for their on-going efforts and engagement with remote learning amid challenges posed by the current pandemic.
- (b) The *Mahoney Family* from Glynn Barntown, Wexford who were crowned winners of 'Ireland's Fittest Family 2021' and runners-up, the Cullen Family – one member of the family a former Coláiste Abbáin student.

#### **230221.05 MINUTES**

The Minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were adopted. Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded by Cllr. Eddie Mulligan.

#### **230221.06 FINANCE**

**Finance Report** (Ref. page 24 of CE's Report circulated): The Finance Manager advised that the draft Annual Financial Statement 2020 (V15) would be presented to the next Board meeting. Significant work has taken place on the 2021 budgeting process which forms part of the WWETB's Service Plan tabled for consideration/approval later in meeting.

**230221.07 CORRESPONDENCE** (230221.16 (1) also refers)

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

- (a) **Letter of Determination** in respect of year ending 31 December 2021. The Chairperson referred to the letter which sets out information on submission of the Service Plan and details of grant provision under the various programme headings. The CE drew the Board's attention to changes to funding administration of AEO posts and non-teaching staff posts in standalone PLC colleges for 2021 transferred from Department of Education (DoE) to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.
- (b) Sanction from National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of a **Special Class for students with ASD, Kennedy College** in line with current DoE criteria and to commence in the 2021/'22 school year was welcomed. The CE highlighted the importance of sufficient notice from NCSE of sanction to commence in order to facilitate adequate preparation and lead-in time for Special Class provision in schools.
- (c) **Correspondence from Waterford Area Partnership (WAP) Ltd.** to the Chairperson who advised that the content relates to a financial matter which she has referred to the Executive and invited the CE and Director of FET to comment.

The CE and Director of FET gave a brief outline of the matter which relates to legacy debt owing to WWETB and SOLAS. WWETB has sought information from WAP and is awaiting a response in this regard. SOLAS has requested that WWETB act on its behalf with regard to any monies owing to SOLAS from WAP. The DoE, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Internal Audit Unit ETB's, and Comptroller and Auditor General have all been notified of the status of the issue and the WWETB's executive will continue to seek resolution as soon as possible.

- (d) Request from Committee Secretariat, Committee of Public Accounts for information pertaining to instances of non-compliance with **Procurement Guidelines 2019**. Background to this item, which affects most ETBs, was provided by the CE and the relevant information supplied to the Committee Secretariat as requested. The term 'non-compliance with procurement guidelines' was clarified and the Board was made aware that WWETB continues to adhere to WWETB procurement policy.
- (e) Correspondence from **SOLAS** confirming approval in principle and funding for new developments: Further Education and Training Centre – Wexford Town and expanded Waterford Training Centre – *Units 218 and 219* IDA Industrial Park, Waterford (Addendum Item 230121.16 (2) refers). A short summary of the lease requests for approval were circulated.

The CE outlined details of the SOLAS correspondence confirming approvals and funding for the projects and he thanked the Director of FET Mr. Ken Whyte and Corporate Services Manager Mr. Fintan O'Reilly for their work on these developments. He gave further particulars on this positive news which will add to an enhanced learner experience in WWETB. The CE also provided an overview of the approval regulations and sequence from initial Board approval to SOLAS approval, Department of Education/Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and a final presentation to the Board again. A DoE property oversight meeting scheduled for Wednesday February 24th and the Board's approval in principle was requested.

The Director of FET gave further details on the two projects for development which will allow for a significant increase in apprenticeship and enhanced learner facilities. The positives were noted in respect of the Wexford Centre housing Apprenticeship, PLC Education, Adult and FE Programmes at the one campus as a 'FET College of the Future' and Waterford's uniqueness as apprenticeship space can be located for WIT.

The Board welcomed the news and the Chairperson reminded Members of the current embargo on the release of information at this stage as requested by the CE.

The Board approved in principle entering a ten-year lease on the following properties:

- **Allied Hub** Building in Wexford Town, Clonard Road, Whitemill Industrial Estate, Wexford: Proposed Cllr. Leonard Kelly; Seconded Cllr. Garry Laffan.
- **Units 218 and 219**, IDA Industrial Estate, Waterford Industrial Park, Cork Road Waterford: Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Eddie Mulligan

#### **230221.08 MEMBERSHIP TO WWETB, BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEE**

The Chairperson invited nominations to a number of vacant positions as laid out below. Recommendations from the Sub-Group meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 were notified to the Board. Information was circulated to Board Members consisting of nominations received and information on candidates.

The Board appointed the following nominees to the vacancies:

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

**Ms. Margaret Darrer**

Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

##### *Finance Committee*

**Mr. John Murphy**

Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Mary Farrell.

##### *Kennedy College*

**Cllr. Pat Barden**

Proposed: Cllr. Mary Farrell; Seconded Cllr. Leonard Kelly

##### *Bridgetown College*

The CE presented a recommendation from the Bridgetown Board of Management which suggested the re-designation of two Board of Management members, to then recruit replacement nominees to the subsequent vacancies:

Community Representative: **Cllr. Jim Moore** - to be re-designated as an *ETB Representative*;  
Parent Nominee: **Ms. Finola Walsh** - to be redesignated as an *ETB Representative*  
(upcoming expiration of term by September).

Proposed: Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

##### *Enniscorthy Vocational College*

Current vacancy on the Enniscorthy Vocational College Board of Management.

The Nominating Body Education and Training Board Schools National Parents' Association (ETBs NPA) is having difficulty recruiting a nominee for the position of Parent Representative to WWETB. The ETBs NPA has advised that it would welcome recommendations made to them and the Board was invited to submit the names of potential nominees to the CE's Office for forwarding to the ETB's NPA.

#### **230221.09 GOVERNANCE** (230221.16 (2) also refers)

- (a) **Finance Committee Annual Report 2020** was circulated. The Report was noted, which included recognition of staff for their work and assistance.
- (b) **Draft Service Plan 2021** (Section 47 Education and Training Boards Act 2013). The Draft Plan was circulated and submitted to the Board for consideration. The CE stated that adopted plans are submitted to the Department of Education by the 1<sup>st</sup> March. The draft report complements the Statement of Strategy 2018-2022 and contains strategic priorities for the coming year. The Director of OSD was invited to present the Plan to the Board.

The Director of OSD began her presentation to the Board (shared on screen) on the Draft Service Plan 2021. The Draft Plan included updates and details on implementations of the four phases of the Statement of Strategy: Planning, Review, Evaluation and Reporting. She reported significant progress and many positive developments to date, especially in the Information Technology area, despite the impact and limitations of Covid-19. The Directors and Managers were invited to give a general overview/update of their areas and services which are set out in the Plan circulated and included actions for the achievement of priorities plus indicators and targets for delivery. Some of the areas highlighted included:

#### **Schools**

- Embedding of digital skills where it enhances teaching and learning.
- Communities of Practice has continued to thrive.
- The continuation of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives.
- Significant infrastructural Projects underway throughout the area and various programmes and developments ongoing and planned.

#### **Further Education and Training (FET)**

- Professional Learning and Development opportunities for FET staff – a 60% uptake and Mr. Paul Fallon and Ms. Fran Kennedy were thanked in this regard.
- Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund – thanks to the Community Education AEO and Team for this work which will benefit additional community initiatives.
- Service to Business Unit to expand services and tributes were paid to Mr. Eamon McGettigan on his upcoming retirement.
- 1,460 devices provided to Learners and Staff to date – support acknowledged from SOLAS and DES.
- Appointment of Access and Disability Officer - Ms. Sarah Lavan.
- PLC Colleges to offer Skills to Compete and Apprenticeship Programmes and a number of new building developments to house various FET Programmes.
- NZeb Pilot Train the Trainer course.
- Access to third level places: Progression agreement in place with WIT and ITC.
- High Performance Building Alliance – Final adjustments to the Memorandum of Understanding is imminent establishing the NZEB Centre of Excellence in Enniscorthy.

#### **Organisation Support and Development (OSD)**

- Multidisciplinary Programmes: activities highlighted and planned over the coming year for a number of Programmes.
- Carrigfoyle OETC, Forth Mountain, Wexford: Partnership progressing with Wexford County Council. WWETB to manage the site and an incremental move of Shielbaggan OETC planned during 2021.
- Music Generation: Work with the local groups going from strength to strength;
- ICT Strategy: Major achievements in this area and developing the ICT Strategy 2021;
- HR Review: Positive undertaking for the team - challenges and significant operational work.
- Health and Safety: FET Centres undertaking Safety Audits and related training;
- Energy/Environment: Promotion of Energy Policy across the organisation and meeting targets with assistance from national organisations available to WWETB;
- Wellbeing Initiatives: a number of programmes implemented and exploration of others ongoing
- Intranet launch is imminent;
- Retirement Event: hope to host a joint 2020/2021 event.

The Chairperson thanked the Directors for their inputs and questions were invited; the draft Plan was welcomed by the Board.

The **Draft Service Plan 2021** was adopted by the Board: Proposed Cllr. Mary Farrell; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.

- (c) **Standing Orders – amendments:** Draft Standing Orders were circulated to the Board. The CE gave a background to the updates and explained how the amendments now assist in aligning the Standing Orders to the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs and allow for the changes to meetings brought about by Covid-19. The Director of OSD gave a summary of the changes, driven by the need to adapt to on-line meetings and clarity around remote attendance, listing amendments to the relevant sections of the Standing Orders.

The amendments to **WWETB Standing Orders** were noted by the Board: Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

### **230221.10 CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT**

The **Chief Executive’s Report** was circulated for information. Questions were invited and the CE and Directors gave an account for their respective areas on the current evolving position in relation to Coronavirus Covid-19.

#### Strategic Developments

- Retirement of the Assistant Training Manager for the ‘Services to Business Unit’ was announced and appreciation and best wishes were extended to Mr. McGettigan on his retirement.
- HR Department – the filling of a Senior administrative post is imminent.
- **Wexford Town Post Primary School** – Design Team has been appointed for this project. In response to a query, the Design Team make-up was provided for the 16-acre site in Wexford Town. The Board Members welcomed the news. The news will be formally announced on social media and confidentiality was requested until then.
- **St. Paul’s Community College, Waterford City:** Announcement of approval as a 1,000 pupil post-primary school. The CE met with the Board of Management who welcomed the development and the school is looking forward to the new facilities. Post-primary accommodation has become an issue in Waterford City and this is a huge opportunity for the school which has been developing well over the last few years. The news will be formally announced on social media and confidentiality was requested until then.

#### Schools

- The WWETB Covid-19 Response Plan and Policy remains in place for all schools and is updated regularly with national advice and subsequent school review of systems as they evolve and change.
- A phased return for school is expected and details were outlined of the return of students to school to date with Special Educational Needs attending Special classes.
- Staff update on ‘at risk’ category and changes to parental leave - Return to Work form updated.
- Recommendation awaited on the format of the State Examinations.

#### FET

- Accounting Technician one year ‘Accounting and Business Skills’ Programme commenced and introduction of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship at Waterford College of Further Education.
- Craft Apprenticeship training completed but completion of practical element awaited.
- The Television series ‘Eco Eye’ featured an item on ‘Radiation the Silent Killer’ - Enniscorthy Fablab worked with the developer to design parts of the ventilator to assist in the ventilation of radon gas in homes.

### **230221.11 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports if not stated) (230221.16 (3))**

- (a) The following Board of Management Reports were noted:
- Enniscorthy Vocational College held 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020;
  - St. Paul’s Community College held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020;
  - Kilnamanagh Community National School held 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

- (b) The Waterford City and County Area Committee Report of meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was noted.

#### **230221.12 Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)**

*ETBI Reserve Members Forum* – Report of meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 was circulated to the Board for information. Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan briefed the Board on the meeting:

- ETBI FET Director provided an update on Apprenticeships;
- The President updated the Forum on a meeting with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science;
- Interview Board Expenses – remuneration: the matter to be pursued further following disappointing response to ETBI as outlined in Ministerial correspondence.

Cllr. Mary Farrell thanked Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan for her representation on this matter and expressed her disappointment given the significant effort involved in being a member of an interview board and the unfair compensation for the preparation and work involved which is unsustainable. Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan and Mr. Senan Lillis concurred and considered that a time will come when regrettably experienced Interview Board members may not be in a position to serve on boards.

Following discussion it was unanimously agreed to write to the Minister appealing for an improvement in the payment of expenses to Interview Board Members to better reflect the expertise provided: Proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan; Seconded Cllr. Mary Farrell.

#### **230221.13 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. Lola O’Sullivan ; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

- (a) 0011/2021: Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder).
- (b) 0010/2021: Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2020.
- (c) 0009/2021: Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development For Special Education Teachers, 2021/2022.
- (d) 0008/2021: Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum (AS) for teachers working with Pupils on the AS in Special Schools, Special Classes or as Special Education Teachers in mainstream Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2021/2022.
- (e) 0004/2021: Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2023.
- (f) 0003/2021: Waiver of Abatement of Public Sector Pensions.
- (g) 0002/2021: Arrangements for Inspectorate Engagement with Post-Primary Schools And Centres for Education January – June 2021.
- (h) 0001/202: Arrangements for Inspectorate Engagement with Primary and Special Schools January - June 2021.

#### **230221.14 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education and Skills (230221.16 (4) 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) Statement from Minister for Education Norma Foley TD.
- (b) 12 February, 2021 – Statement from the Department of Education.
- (c) 11 February, 2021 - Statement from the Department of Education.
- (d) 11 February, 2021 – Minister Foley welcomes the commencement of the review of the School Transport Scheme.
- (e) 10 February, 2021 - Ministers Foley and Madigan welcome agreed plan of the return of in-person teaching and learning for children in Special Classes at Post-Primary schools on 22 February.
- (f) 08 February, 2021 – Safer Internet Day: Helping Students Manage Online Wellbeing.

- (g) 05 February, 2021 - Minister Foley announces a new phase of planning for the State Examinations to include both the provision of Leaving Certificate examinations and also exploring a corresponding non-examination process.
- (h) 02 February, 2021 – Further meeting held of subgroup of Advisory Group on planning for state examinations 2021.
- (i) 02 February, 2021 – Ministers Foley and Madigan congratulate students on receiving Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examination results today.
- (j) 01 February, 2021 - Ministers Foley and Madigan welcome agreed plan for return to in-school learning for children with special educational needs at primary level.
- (k) 29 January, 2021 – Further meeting held of subgroup of Advisory Group on planning for state examinations 2021.
- (l) 27 January, 2021 – Meeting held of subgroup of Advisory Group on planning for state examinations 2021.
- (m) 22 January, 2021 - Third meeting held of Advisory Group on planning for state examinations 2021.
- (n) 19 January, 2021 - Statement from the Department of Education.
- (o) 18, January, 2021 - Ministers Foley and Madigan commit to continued engagement with stakeholders to bring a phased return to in-school learning for children with special educational needs.
- (p) 14 January, 2021 - Statement from Ministers Foley and Madigan on planning for return of in-person learning at primary level.

**230221.15 PRESS RELEASES: 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](https://www.gov.ie/en/search/?type=press_releases&organisation=department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science)}

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

- (a) Ministers Harris and Collins confirm Brexit customs supports offered by Skillnet Ireland will continue this year - 15 February 2021.
- (b) Ministers Harris and Collins announce new skills programmes to support hospitality and tourism sector prepare for reopening - 12 February 2021;
- (c) Minister Harris marks International Day of Women and Girls in Science - 11 February 2021.
- (d) Minister Harris announces €193 million investment in five world-leading SFI Research Centres - 1 February 2021.
- (e) Minister Harris announces additional funding of €3.2 million to the Irish Research Council to benefit its early-career researchers - 29 January 2021.
- (f) Minister Harris reaffirms commitment to deliver Technological University for the South East as new regional advisory group meets - 28 January 2021.
- (g) Ministers Harris and Collins mark important milestones as number of women apprentices surpasses 1,000 - 25 January 2021.
- (h) Minister Harris launches new one-stop shop for people seeking to retrain or upskill - 18 January 2021.
- (i) Minister Harris confirms new group to examine student wellbeing and engagement - 14 January 2021.
- (j) Minister Harris congratulates winner of BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition - 8 January 2021.

**230221.16 ADDENDUM**

- (1) **Correspondence** (230221.07 also refers)  
 Co. Wexford Public Participation Network's Report – *'Let's Talk about Disability in County Wexford - Engagement, Participation and Representation'* was circulated for information. The CE confirmed that the executive are very willing to engage in this matter and a senior appointment has been recently recruited in this area. Mr. Pat Rath and team were congratulated on the publication of the Report.



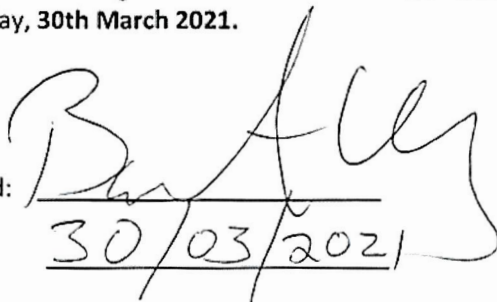
- (2) **Governance** (see 230221.09 above refers)  
Application to enter leases at the Allied Hub, Wexford and Units 218 and 219, IDA Industrial Estate, Waterford were adopted as per 230221.07(e) above.
- (3) **Board/Committee Reports** (including Draft Reports) (230221.11 also refers)  
The Bunclody Vocational College Board of Management Reports of meetings held 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were noted.
- (4) **Press Releases: Department of Education and Skills** (230221.14 also refers)  
{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/>} The following Press Release was brought to the attention of the Board and noted:  
17 February, 2021 - Minister Foley confirms Leaving Certificate 2021 written, coursework, oral and practical performance examinations will be held and a corresponding process of grades accredited by State Examinations Commission will be available to student.

#### 230221.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 30th March 2021.

Signed:

Date:

  
30/03/2021

#### **Documents circulated:**

Agenda  
Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms  
Minutes of WWETB meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Summary of request/information for approval of leases  
Nominations received to the board of WWETB and information  
Finance Committee Annual Report 2020  
Draft Service Plan 2021  
Standing Orders  
Chief Executive's Report  
ETBI Reserve Members Forum report of meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
Co. Wexford PPN Report