

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Meeting Held 12th May 2020

Held via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 12th May 2020 at 4.00p.m.

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Minutes of Meeting held 12th May 2020 at 4.00p.m.

Board Members in attendance: *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding); Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan (Deputy Chairperson), Cllr. Breda Brennan, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Mr. Richard Byrnes, 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.*

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

Apologies - unable to attend due to technology/network issues: *Mr. David Doyle, Mr. Larry O'Brien, Cllr. Fiontán Ó'Súilleabháin, Ms. Finola Walsh.*

The meeting was conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions and advised to the Board. Board Members were given the option of submitting questions in advance on Agenda Items if desired, in addition to opportunities during the meeting.

120520.01 WELCOME AND GENERAL

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the second on-line meeting, highlighted some meeting protocols and advised that the meeting was being recorded. The Board Members were requested to complete Conflict of Interest Declaration forms and reminded of Guidelines as per Standing Orders on the holding of board meetings remotely and practices around media interactions and issue of press releases.

120520.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

120520.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to the following:

- *Mr. Dennis Breen on the death of his sister Ms. Bridget Breen;*
- *Mr. Michael Moriarty on the death of his mother Ms. Dorothy (Dot) Moriarty;*
- *Ms. Geraldine Sutton on the death of her sister Ms. Mary Kate O'Donohoe;*
- *Ms. Nicola McCarthy O'Hanlon on the death of her mother Mrs. Patricia McCarty;*
- *Ms. Mary Minchin on the death of her father Mr. James Minchin;*
- *Ms. Mairéad Flemming on the death of her father Mr. Tom Daly.*

120520.04 CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations were extended to:

- (a) *Cllr. John Cummins, a member of WWETB teaching staff on his election to Seanad Éireann.*
- (b) *Leaving Certificate/LC Applied: Students Kitty Falconer from Creagh College and Aoife White from Youthreach Enniscorthy on their contribution to an interview on RTE Radio 1 'Morning Ireland' programme together with the General Secretary of ETBI which looked at issues related to the Leaving Certificate during COVID-19.*

- (c) *County Wexford Student Enterprise Awards*, congratulations were extended to:
 - (i) *Bunclody Vocational College* on their success in the Junior Category for their project 'Decoration Sensation' – students Leah Hayes, Katherine McGlynn Green and teacher Ms. Sinéad Kinsella;
 - (ii) *Ms. Nessa Murphy, teacher at Coláiste Abbáin* on receipt of the Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year award.
- (d) *St. Paul's Community College*: on reaching the final of Generation Apprenticeship 2020 - Mobilising Together and the Board wished them well.

120520.05 MINUTES

- (a) The Minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board Meeting held on the *31st March 2020* were adopted: proposed Cllr. Joe Kelly; Seconded Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan.
- (b) *Matters Arising: Selskar College - Negotiations with Educate Together* around them partnering with WWETB in a new replacement school.
The CE updated the Board on partnership negotiations with Educate Together. Discussions were held with the newly appointed CEO of Educate Together Ms. Emer Nowlan and a Memorandum of Understanding is anticipated to be signed in advance of the July Board meeting. The priority of progressing the matter at this time was underlined to the Board.
- (c) Mr. Senan Lillis thanked school, centre staff and management for their tireless work, innovative teaching and online provision of resources and suggested that a letter of appreciation is forwarded from the Board in this regard. The CE confirmed that another communication would issue shortly, acknowledging all that has been achieved since the closure due to the pandemic.

120520.06 FINANCE

- (a) The Finance Manager gave a brief financial summary (set out on pages 42-43 of CE's Report) and details on Receipts and Payments to the end of March with the first two tranches of SOLAS funding and DES monthly receipts issued. He advised that a mid-year review will be conducted and spend will be monitored to identify savings and requirements in relation to COVID-19 will also be initiated.
- (b) An acknowledgement from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of receipt of the WWETB 2019 Annual Accounts (V15) has been received with the Audit planned to commence in September 2020.
- (c) A query on costs and funding in relation to planning for the re-opening of schools was responded to and the CE advised that indications are that the cost of re-opening may be significant. Potential costs and any savings made to be determined and analysed.

120520.07 CORRESPONDENCE

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

- (a) *Waterford Institute of Technology: Nominations to the Governing Body* of WIT {Section 4(1)(e) of the Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act 1994}. The Board recommended the appointment of students *Mr. John Fortune and Ms. Rhiannon Kavanagh* to the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology; Proposed Ms Mary Ryan; Seconded Cllr. Joe Kelly.

- (b) Irish Public Bodies Insurance – Notification of AGM held 1st May 2020 as issued to the Nominee appointed to participate on WWETB’s behalf. Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy confirmed her attendance at meeting, on-line.

120520.08 GOVERNANCE (Addendum Item 120520.16(a) also refers)

The following Audit and Risk and Finance Committee approved reports were noted:

- (a) *Audit and Risk Committee*: Report of Meeting held 18th December 2019.
- (b) *Finance Committee*: Report of Meeting held 19th February 2020.
- (c) **Annual Report 2019** {S28 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013}: The Annual Report 2019 sets out a brief overview of services and summary of some of WWETB’s activities, reflecting the previous Service Plan and realisation of goals and commitments as set out in the Strategy Statement 2018-2022. The CE reported increased numbers accessing the various programmes in schools and further education and training centres and many other positive developments which included the establishment of the first Community National School in the Waterford and Wexford ETB area.

He thanked the Director of OSD and all concerned on producing the report. The Chairperson welcomed the Report which provides a good introduction to some of the organisation’s services and achievements.

The Board adopted the Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board *Annual Report 2019*; Proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Ms. Sandra Fogarty.

120520.09 NOMINATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEES:

- (a) **Waterford College of Further Education** – Nomination to the Board of Management. The requirement and provision for an additional Board member was outlined to the Board. The Board appointed *Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan* to the Board of Management of Waterford College of Further Education; Proposed Cllr. Joe Kelly; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.
- (b) **Youth Work Committee** – The Board appointed *Ms. Majella Finnegan (Institute of Technology, Carlow)* to the Youth Work Committee: Proposed Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan; Seconded Mr. Senan Lillis.

120520.10 CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

- (a) **The Chief Executive’s Report** was circulated and accepted as read.
- (b) **PRESENTATION: WWETB COVID-19 Contingency Planning**: The presentation illustrated a brief outline of contingency planning in the area of Schools, Further Education and Training and Administrative Services and the presentation was shared on-screen - for circulation following the meeting. The CE provided a brief overview of planning, discussion and information exchange taking place at both national and local level through various channels including ETBI, WWETB management, various team and group meetings and regular communications with staff. The individual Directors gave updates and clarifications on their respective areas of Schools, FET and OSD. Some of the items highlighted included:

Schools

- General operating and planning procedures, supports and mechanisms were outlined by the Director of Schools; regular group and individual meetings taking place.
- Digital learning while challenging at times, is continuing remotely. On-going support and regular newsletters and information provided to teaching staff by various media and Education Co-ordinator.
- Wellbeing: Staff reminded of support available through the WWETB Employee Assistance Service.
- Calculated Grading for Leaving Certificate and Leaving Cert. Applied: Guidelines awaited from the Department of Education and Skills – some information issued by ETBI to date.
- Logistics and practical considerations for the new term in September remain including remote teaching, should it continue indefinitely.
- Teacher recruitment: Interviews commencing on-line 13th May 2020 and the Director of Schools extended her appreciation to all concerned on this development.

Further Education and Training

- The FET response and continuity was outlined by the Director of FET (additional details available in the CE's Report circulated and a list of construction courses included as previously requested).
- Remote teaching and learning continuing with training provided where necessary and early issue of various staff information and applicable guidance notes.
- Assessment management has proven time consuming and the inability of some students to fulfil and/or commence work placements was noted. Two colleges were complimented in particular on completion of internal verification/external authentication remotely. Learner queries were filtered through the Quality Assurance Section and the Director of FET thanked the Head of QA for facilitating this. Plans issued on alternative assessments at Level 5 and 6.
- Managers requested to focus on particular key/priority groups and job loss protocols. Significant difficulties exist with broadband and logistics of managing social distancing for learners and staff was highlighted. Useful published documents and guidelines currently available were referred to.

Organisation Support and Development

- Services operating effectively and the Director of OSD commended all staff on their flexibility and engagement with many positive developments ensuing. Thanks was extended to the IT and Digital Team for their on-going support including MS Teams set-up and transitioning to remote working; also to the Recruitment Team and Interview Board Chairpersons for facilitating the introduction of on-line recruitment.
- Music Generation: all schools contacted and many continuing with online tuition - performances on hold. An 'on-line programme' has been created for early years students.
- Communications/Marketing: Work on Branding guidelines continuing and a Media Skills training programme initiated.
- Responsibilities to students and learners remain a high priority. To support employee wellbeing a number of Policies and Procedures have been prioritised and access to the Employee Assistance Scheme notified to staff.

- The Senior Management Team was established as the 'Covid-19 Response Management Team' from the beginning of the public health crisis with frequent meetings taking place (first one on March 16th) and considerable resource materials and checklists compiled to date.

Questions and comments were invited and included:

- *Leaving Certificate students:* A general discussion took place as to how Leaving Certificate Students were coping with the crisis in general. Students were commended on their handling of the situation and examples of two WWETB students who took part in a radio interview discussing issues relating to the Leaving Certificate and COVID-19 and an Enniscorthy Vocational College student on winning a poetry competition were noted. Students were commended on their maturity and accounts of their experiences and struggles; all students were acknowledged during this difficult situation.
- *Youth Work Services:* Youth Work Services and Staff Led Projects were acknowledged for assisting young people at this time through various approaches such as group support, one to one, online and various other mechanisms explored and used to ensure young people are supported and provided with a forum for expression at this difficult time.
- *Leaving Certificate Applied:* Concern was raised at a recent Waterford City and County Area Committee meeting in relation to Leaving Certificate Applied students who have missed blocks of work due to the health crisis. The Board were assured that challenges and difficulties faced by LCA students were at the forefront of discussions at the relevant fora and at ETBI and national level where issues facing students were raised.
- *Students attending ASD Units:* Concerns expressed were addressed in relation to students attending ASD Units. It was reported that considerable activity and communication is taking place locally and the establishment of a Community of Learning for Special Education Needs Teachers is in place.

The Chairperson thanked the Executive on the informative Presentation and Teaching Staff for their work under such difficult circumstances.

- (c) **Post Leaving Certificate Programme, Gorey** (under the administration of Enniscorthy Vocational College): Preparations are progressing on this initiative which is a significant development for the area and viable premises have been identified. Four Post Leaving Certificate courses have been established and a number of meetings have taken place with representatives of the Enniscorthy Vocational College management team.
- (d) **STAR** (Supporting Traveller and Roma): A Proposal for a Bursary of €1,000 to encourage and reward educational achievement in STAR group of students was approved: Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; seconded Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan.

120520.11 POLICIES

The following Policies including a Summary of updates were circulated to the Board. The Director of OSD outlined particulars and the following Policies were noted by the Board:

- (a) *Energy Policy* (Framework to set objectives/improve energy performance in order to partner with SEAI).
- (b) *Annual Leave Policy.*
- (c) *Jury Service Policy.*
- (d) *Stress Management Policy.*

120520.12 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports)

The following Committee Reports were noted:

- (a) *Youth Work Committee*: Draft Minutes of meeting (1) and (2) held 7th May 2020.
- (b) *Waterford City and County Area Committee*: minutes of meeting held 24th January 2020.
- (c) *Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2020*: List of applicants including proposed allocations for the LYCGS in the Waterford and Wexford areas (total allocation: €108,660.36) was circulated to the Board and noted. The CE thanked the Youth Affairs team on their input and administration of the Scheme.

120520.13 ETBI (Addendum Item 120520.16(b) also refers)

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

- (a) *ETBI Brief No. 08/2020*: Draft Letters to Other Bodies involved in Designated Community Colleges and Joint-Patrons of Community Schools.
- (b) *ETBI Reserve Members Forum*: Report of a meeting held 12th February 2020 was circulated and Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan gave a brief update to the Board.
- (c) *Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 - Admission Statement/Policies*: Updates provided by ETBI as to how statements would be framed regarding characteristic spirit statements – religion education. The CE confirmed that correspondence has been communicated to relevant bodies involved at the three community schools of whom WWETB are patrons: Blackwater Community School, Lismore, Gorey Community School and Ramsgrange Community School but may have to be amended slightly pending new advice.

120520.14 CIRCULAR LETTERS: Department of Education and Skills (Addendum Item 120520.16(c) also refers), {available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>}.

The following Circular Letters were adopted; Proposed Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan; Seconded Cllr. Mary Farrell.

- (a) 0034/2020: Revision of Application of Additional Increments awarded in relation to New Entrants under the Public Services Stability Agreement 2018 – 2020.
- (b) 0033/2020: Revision of 2011 Entrant Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 March 2020 – Application of Additional Increments.
- (c) 0032/2020 :Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2019/2020 School Year €10m funding to issue to primary and post-primary schools.
- (d) 0031/2020 :Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2019/2020 School Year.
- (e) 0030/2020: Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2020/21 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- (f) 0029/2020: Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder).
- (g) 0027/2020: COVID-19: Temporary assignment arrangements for certain staff in the education and training sector.

120520.15 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education and Skills (Addendum Item 120520.16(d) also refers) {available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>}. The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted.

- (a) 01 May, 2020 - Department of Education and Skills' statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.
- (b) 29 April, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces revised arrangements for Junior Cycle 2020.
- (c) 27 April, 2020 - Minister Mitchell O'Connor highlights range of supports available to groups at risk of educational disadvantage in further and higher education during Covid-19.
- (d) 24 April, 2020 - Department of Education and Skills statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.
- (e) 24 April, 2020 - Ministers announce school transport arrangements.
- (f) 22 April, 2020 - Department of Education and Skills statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.
- (g) 22 April, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces ICT funding for Schools including €10 million top-up funding.
- (h) 17 April, 2020 - Department of Education and Skills statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.
- (i) 10 April, 2020 - Minister McHugh Announces Postponement of State Examinations.
- (j) 02 April, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces deferral of new allocation model for Special Needs Assistants.
- (k) 01 April, 2020 - Minister McHugh announces contingency plans for temporary assignment arrangements for education and training sector staff.

120520.16 ADDENDUM

(a) Governance (Item 120520.08 also refers)

The following documents were circulated and noted:

- (i) *Oversight Agreement* between the Department of Education and Skills and Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board 2020 setting out the terms of the relationship between the Department of Education and Skills and Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board.
- (ii) *Performance Delivery Agreement* between the Department of Education and Skills and Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board setting out the management and accountability framework between the Department of Education and Skills and Waterford and Wexford ETB.

(b) ETBI (Item 120520.13 also refers)

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

- (i) ETBI Brief No. 06/2020: Draft letters to Patron Partners in Designated Community Colleges and Community Schools.
- (ii) ETBI Brief No. 07/2020: Specialist Training Provider Contract Template.
- (iii) ETBI Brief No 09/2020: Statements on Characteristic Spirit Statement and Opting-out of Religious Instruction in Designated Community Colleges.

- (c) **Circular Letters: Department of Education and Skills (Item 120520.14 also refers)**
 {Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>}.
 (i) Circular Letter 0035/2020: Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examination in 2022 and Leaving Certificate Examination in 2022 was adopted; Proposed Ms. Mary Ryan; Seconded Ms. Sandra Fogarty.
- (d) **Press Releases: Department of Education and Skills (Item 120520.15 also refers)**
 {Available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/>} The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board.
 (i) 08 May, 2020: Minister announces postponement of 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations.
 (ii) 06 May, 2020: Department of Education and Skills' statement on stakeholder engagement in relation to the State Examinations.
 (iii) 06 May, 2020: Minister McHugh announces early payment of DEIS grants to support students at risk of educational disadvantage.

120520.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan complimented WWETB staff throughout the colleges/schools, centres and offices. The Chairperson seconded this and congratulated everyone for their efforts and acknowledged the supports which may be required in due course by staff and students on their return to the workplace. The CE thanked the Board for their support afforded to Principals at Board of Management level and acknowledged the rapid advancement of digital skill levels by staff during the pandemic. He wished students and learners well and extended his appreciation to all for their work and engagement at this challenging time.

120520.18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 14th July 2020 at 4.00p.m.

Signed: 

Date: 14/07/2020

Documents circulated:

*Agenda; Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms
 Minutes of meeting held 31st March 2020
 Audit and Risk Committee Report of meeting held 18/12/2019
 Finance Committee Report of meeting held 19/02/2020
 Local Youth Club Grant Scheme applicants and proposed allocations
 Annual Report 2019
 Chief Executive's Report
 Policies including Summary: Energy Policy, Annual Leave Policy,
 Jury Service and Stress Management Policy
 Youth Work Committee draft minutes x 2 held 07/05/2020
 Waterford City & Co. Area Committee report of meeting held 24/01/2020
 ETBI Briefs Nos. 06/2020 - 09/2020
 ETBI Reserve Members Forum Report of meeting held 12/02/2020
 Oversight Agreement between DES and WWETB
 Performance Delivery Agreement between DES and WWETB*