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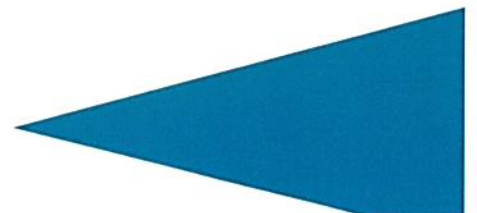
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Of Meeting Held 28th March 2023

*Held at the Brandon House Hotel, New Ross Co. Wexford, Y34 KR62.
Tuesday, 28th March 2023 at 4.30p.m.*



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Minutes of Meeting held 28th March 2023 at 4.30p.m.

Board Members in attendance: Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy, Chairperson presided, Ms. Kate Miskella, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Mr. Richard Byrnes, Mr. Pat Rath, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Mr. Senan Lillis, Cllr. Frank Quinlan, Ms. Mary Ryan. Attended remotely: Cllr. Garry Laffan, Cllr. Leonard Kelly.

Also in attendance: Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive (CE), Dr. Karina Daly, Director of Organisation Support and Development (OSD), Ms. Eimear Ryan, Director of Schools, Mr. Owen O'Mahony, Head of Finance, Mr. Michael O'Brien, Innovation and Development (I & D) Manager, Ms. Sandra Murphy, HR Manager – Operations. Mr. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services (CS) Manager (attended remotely).

Apologies: Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan, Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Mary Farrell, Cllr. Cristiona Kiely, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin, Mr. Alan O'Gorman, Director of Further Education and Training (Acting).

280323.01 INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy presided, welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies received were noted as listed above.

280323.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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.

280323.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to the following:

- Ms. Tina Woods on the death of her father Mr Maurice Foran;
- Mr. Danny Pullman on the death of his wife Ms. Niamh O'Connor;
- Ms. Katherine Atkinson on the death of her mother Ms. Joan Elizabeth Atkinson;
- The family of Ms. Dolores Hartley, former VTOS Co-ordinator, City of Waterford VEC;
- Ms. Sinéad Redmond on the death of her sister Ms. Paula Carton;
- Ms. Eleanor Howlin on the death of her father Mr. Noel Howlin;
- The family of Ms. Miryam Winters.

280323.04 CONGRATULATIONS

The Board extended congratulations to *Bridgetown College* on their successful annual Daffodil Day fundraiser held in aid of The Irish Cancer Society.

280323.05 MINUTES

The minutes of WWETB meeting held on the 28th February 2023 were adopted: Proposed Mr. Senan Lillis; Seconded Cllr. Pat Nugent.

Matters arising: The Chairperson informed the Members of item to follow during the meeting for Board consideration (item 280323.13 refers).

280323.06 FINANCE

(a) **Draft Annual Financial Statements 2022.** The following documentation was furnished to the Board: *Draft WWETB Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for year ending 31st December 2022, Appendix A: Certificate of CEO and Letter of Representation.* A presentation titled 'The WWETB AFS Annual Accounts 2022' was also circulated in advance to the Board.

The AFS document contained a Statement of Board Responsibilities, **Statement on Internal Control**, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) Audit Report (to be inserted following completion of report from the C&AG), Operating Statement, Statement of Current Assets and Current Liabilities and Notes to the Financial Statements.

The Finance Manager outlined the process and timeline involved as per the presentation and the approval and recommendation steps, from the Audit and Risk Committee review of the Statement on Internal Control (meetings held 15th February and 22nd March 2023) to the Finance Committee review of the annual accounts (meeting held 22nd March 2023) prior to submission to the Board for a recommendation and due for submission to the C&AG by the statutory date of 1st April. The audit of 2022 accounts is scheduled to take place in May 2023.

He proceeded with a financial summary and breakdown of the Receipts and Payments under the programme headings of Schools and Head Office, Further Education and Training, Youth Services, Agencies and Self-Financing and Capital Project. The opening cash balance was €13.2m, Receipts totalled €135m and Payments of €132.1m apportioned between Staff Pay, Non-Pay, Allowances and Grants and Capital. He also highlighted the following key points:

- Surplus - Cost of Living Grant 2022 provision of €615,000 was ringfenced for schools to assist with rising running costs.
- Covid-19 related grants for the safe return to education and use for PPE in 2022.
- In conclusion, the main drivers of the closing balance of €16m related to advanced capital funding, amounts repayable to SOLAS and higher school budget balances.
- The Draft Financial Statement submitted to the Board indicates positive growth.

The Chairperson thanked the Finance Manager and team for their work on behalf of the Board members. He responded to a query from Cllr. Pat Nugent regarding staffing numbers.

The WWETB Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022 were adopted, including signature of relevant accompanying statements by the Chairperson and Chief Executive; Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Mr. Senan Lillis.

The CE extended his appreciation to the Finance Manager and Director of OSD for their work. For clarity, the CE and Finance Manager emphasised that while figures may indicate a 'surplus' on a particular date, no excess funding is available as there is a designated claim and tight regulation on all funding.

- (b) **Statement on Internal Control:** The Finance-Manager confirmed review and approval of the Statement on Internal Control by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meetings held on 15th February and 22nd March 2023.

The Board adopted and approved signature of the Statement on Internal Control: Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

280323.07 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) **Department of Education Letter of Assurance** regarding internal control and audit arrangements for ESBS-ETB Payroll Shared Services (ESBS) was circulated to the Board for information. The CE gave a brief overview and the WWETB migration is scheduled for the end of 2023. He advised the Board of the challenges that may arise during the transition, as would be normal of any project of this scale.

280323.08 GOVERNANCE

- (a) **Audit and Risk Committee:** Reports to the Board of meetings held 15th February 2023 and 7th December 2022 were circulated at the last board meeting and the Audit and Risk Committee subsequently met on 22nd March 2023 and recommended an updated amendment to the wording to the Statement on Internal Control as advised by the Department of Education in their Letter of Assurance dated 1st March 2023 regarding the provision of payroll shared services {item 280323.07(a) above also refers}.
- (b) **Finance Committee:** Report to the Board of meeting held 22nd March 2023 was circulated to the Board.

- (c) **Approval/Renewal of Leases and Updates:** *Adult Education Centre, Railway Square, Waterford.* The Corporate Services Manager presented particulars of a lease extension to the Board for consideration. He outlined rationale and negotiations to extend the lease by three years (with a six month option to quit after two years). He advised of agreed increase to lease cost of 9%.
The Board adopted renewal of the lease : Proposed Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.
- (d) **Nominations/Membership to Boards of Management – Kennedy College.** *Mr. John Barron,* Parents' Nominee was appointed by the Board to the Kennedy College Board of Management: Proposed Ms. Mary Ryan; Seconded Mr. Senan Lillis.
- (e) **Risk Management:** Risk Management is comprehended within the report of the ARC.
- (f) **Strategy Statement 2023-2027:** The Strategy Statement 2023-2027 was circulated to the Board in advance and the Director of OSD delivered a presentation: '*WWETB Strategy Statement – WWETB Board Meeting, March 2023*'. The planning and development timeline included focus groups, workshops and board presentations. The vision, mission and six strategic goals were referred to with a brief overview on each.

It is hoped to launch the strategy in May with an implementation plan to be put in place before engagement with schools and centres. Questions were invited and Mr. Pat Rath complimented the Director of OSD on the document especially on the sustainability and environmental aspect of it. Mr. Senan Lillis extended his congratulations also and appealed for advancement of the delivery of guidance services and supports.

The CE extended his appreciation to the Director of OSD, contributors to the strategy and to the Board of WWETB for their support. He referred to the evolution and progression from the last Strategic Statement to the current document which is both achievable and engaging in its priorities and noted that the original Mission and Vision of the organisation as agreed for the 2018-2022 Strategic Statement remained in place having been discussed throughout the Workshops.

The Strategy Statement 2023-2027 was adopted by the Board: Proposed Mr. Pat Rath; Seconded Mr. Senan Lillis. The Chairperson thanked the Director of OSD and all involved .

280323.09 PRESENTATIONS

COVID-19 Response Update: No updates were reported; the number of items of note are decreasing and the Covid-19 Response Management Team/Senior Management Team group continue to meet regularly.

280323.10 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including Draft Report

The following Board of Management (including draft reports) were noted by the Board:

- (a) - *Bridgetown College reports of meetings held 2nd March 2023 and 16th November 2022.*
- *Kennedy College report of meeting held 31st January 2023.*
Plus additional not listed on agenda:
- *Creagh College held February 23rd 2023, 19th December 2022 and 1st December 2022.*
- *Dungarvan College-Coláiste Dhún Garbhán held 21st March 2023 and 8th February 2023.*

280323.11 ETBI (Education and Training Board's Ireland)

- (a) *ETBI Brief 02/2023:* Updating the Patrons' Register to reflect the fact that Designated Community Colleges are 'multi denominational' was circulated and noted.
- (b) *ETBI Reserve Members Forum:* Reports of meetings held on the 22nd March 2023 and 21st February 2023 were circulated to the Board. Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan gave a brief summary which included:
- o The passing of Cllr. Gerry Maguire;
 - o Interview Board rates: Review being conducted by Mr. Paschal Donohoe, T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform.

- FET Adult Guidance Presentation by ETBI FET Guidance & Recruitment Officer Ms. Rosario Molloy Curran.

280323.12 CIRCULAR LETTERS: Department of Education (DoE)

{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>} The following Department of Education Circular Letters were brought to the attention of the Board and adopted: Proposed: Ms. Mary Ryan; seconded Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan.

- (a) 0017/2023: Primary Curriculum Framework.
- (b) 0016/2023: Policy on Gaeltacht Education - Invitation to Primary schools in Gaeltacht language planning areas to consider joining the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme.
- (c) 0015/2023: Amendments to Junior Cycle Irish T1 and T2 specifications and assessment arrangements for Classroom-Based Assessments 1 and 2.
- (d) 0014/2023: Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism).
- (e) 0013/2023: Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development For Special Education Teachers, 2023/2024.
- (f) 0012/2023: 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, 2023/2024.

280323.13 SERVICE PLAN 2023

Service Plan 2023: Following the adoption of the Service Plan 2023 at the last Board meeting the Director of OSD informed the Committee of notification from the Department of Education requesting an addition to the Service Plan. The following sentence has been included in the Service Plan - **'Ensure full compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017'**.

The Board adopted the amendment as outlined: Proposed Cllr. Aidan Browne; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

280323.14 PRESS RELEASES - Department of Education

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

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

- (a) Minister Foley launches new Primary Curriculum Framework.
- (b) Minister Foley announces appointment of new Chairperson of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG).
- (c) Minister Foley announces details of Scoping Inquiry to shape Government's response to revelations of historical sexual abuse in schools run by religious orders.
- (d) Department of Education confirms 14,931 Ukrainian pupils currently enrolled in Irish schools.
- (e) 40 STEM projects get more than €6 million to inspire public engagement - Ministers Harris and Foley.
- (f) Minister Foley and Minister O'Gorman launch STEM Education Implementation Plan to 2026
- (g) Minister Foley announces the establishment of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Programme Delivery Board and deferral of planned move of Paper One in Leaving Certificate English and Irish Examinations.
- (h) Minister Foley welcomes €60 million in education measures as part of Government cost of living package.

280323.15 PRESS RELEASES - Department 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}

The following Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted:

- (a) Minister Harris announces €1 million for projects to address literacy and digital literacy needs.
- (b) Submit your ideas on the Statement of Strategy of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science - Ministers Harris and Collins.
- (c) Minister Harris welcomes news that Active Consent staff training has been rolled out across Further Education and Training Sector.
- (d) Ministers Harris and Fleming announce more than €2 million funding for six research teams to tackle UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- (e) 3,000th female apprentice milestone reached as Minister Harris launches new campaign to encourage more to register this International Women's Day.
- (f) National Science Advice Forum and Government Science Advisor decision welcomed by Minister Harris.
- (g) It is never too late to learn to read - Minister Harris.

280323.16 AOB - REALT UPDATE

The REALT Co-ordinator Mr. Senan Lillis gave the following update on the Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT) as of 24th March 2023. 15,198 Ukrainian students are enrolled in Irish Schools and he gave the age profile. The total number of students enrolled in Waterford and Wexford schools was 1,137 broken down as follows:

<i>Nos. enrolled</i>	<i>Wexford nos. enrolled</i>
268 Primary	493 Primary
<u>147</u> Post-Primary	<u>229</u> Post-Primary
415	722

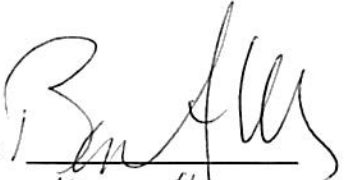
He listed a number of issues such as capacity, particularly in Waterford City and Tramore. In Waterford County for example 18 students and parents have moved to the area but there is no school capacity nearby. Transport and special needs provision are an issue and he gave an example. He responded to a query from Cllr. Pat Nugent on school places for Syrian Programme Refugees in Waterford, in addition the Director of Schools gave a brief status update on numbers in school from Clonea EROC (Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre); she also noted the issue of special needs.

The REALT Co-ordinator informed the Board that he will be leaving the position and interviews are currently in progress. The CE expressed his appreciation and acknowledged Mr. Lillis' contribution during his time as REALT Co-ordinator and the Innovation and Development (I&D) Manager, on behalf of the Ukrainian Response Group, conveyed his appreciation for the invaluable information and support.

The I&D Manager expressed his concern regarding hotel accommodation arrangements for Ukrainian people and due to a shortage of spaces in urban areas and families moving to rural areas, transport becomes an issue.

280323.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded with the next meeting scheduled to take place **Tuesday, 9th May 2023.**

Signed: 
Date: May 9th 2023

Documents circulated:

- Agenda
- Minutes of WWETB meeting held 28th February 2023
- Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms
- AFS and associated documentation
- Letter of Assurance from DoE
- Strategy Statement 2023 - 2027
- Finance Committee Report: 22.03.23
- ETBI Brief 02/2023
- ETBI Reserve Members Forum Reports of meetings held:
22nd March and 21st February 2023