



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Monday 29 March 2021 at 4:30pm via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT

Cllr Robert McDermott (Chairperson)
 Ms Maura Brophy
 Ms Molly Buckley
 Cllr John Carroll
 Cllr Clare Claffey
 Ms Mary Cotter-Bracken
 Mr Dave Cullen
 Ms Evelyn Dunne
 Cllr Caroline Dwane-Stanley

Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald
 Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
 Cllr Padraig Fleming
 Mr Shane Flesk
 Mr John Mollin
 Mr Frank Smith
 Cllr Mary Sweeney
 Mr Niall Tully

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive
 Ms Marie Bracken, Director OSD
 Ms Jean Keating, Corporate Governance

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS LOETB MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 22 February 2021 were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes and they were signed by the Chairperson.

Proposed: Molly Buckley
 Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. GOVERNANCE

Members received a copy of the Risk Register which was updated by the Risk Management Committee on the 15 February. Marie Bracken, Director of OSD, informed members that the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the updated Risk Register at their meeting on 26 March and received a presentation from Frank Walsh, Head of Corporate Services, on same. Members of the Audit and Risk Committee recommended the Risk Register to the Board for approval.

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Members approved the Risk Register.

Proposed: Frank Smith
Seconded: Molly Buckley

Conflict of Interest

As per Schedule 3, Paragraph 10, Section 3 of the (ETB) Act 2013 and the Agenda Notice, no conflicts of interest were declared.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

The CE presented the following report to members.

Schools Directorate

Schools

Schools with special classes re-opened for face-to-face teaching on 22 February. Leaving Certificate students and fifth years have now also returned while all other year groups are expected to return after the Easter holidays on 12 April. Schools are currently preparing for this final return and updating their Covid-19 Response plans accordingly.

The Minister has confirmed that Leaving Certificate 2021 examinations will proceed, and students will also have the alternative option of applying for grades accredited by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), to be known as SEC-Accredited Grades. Arrangements for Leaving Certificate Applied have also been confirmed. Schools are currently planning and supporting students in this process. Language Oral examinations and Music Practical examinations will take place in schools over the Easter break.

The Junior Cycle examinations will not take place this year. Consequently, as in 2020, alternative arrangements are now in place for assessment and reporting on the learning achievements of students concluding Junior Cycle in 2021.

Credit is due to our school leaders and all school staff for their enormous efforts in supporting students and for responding, often at short notice, as changes to school re-opening and examination arrangements are announced. School staff are working tirelessly to support students and parents at this time.

Training for all members of Boards of Management has taken place in March. Attendance and participation by board members is very much appreciated.

There are many excellent initiatives taking place across all schools in recent weeks including an excellent Clean Room workshop delivered by the FET team to TY and LCA students.

Music Generation

Musical Memories – the intergenerational song project with Care-home residents, Men's Shed Groups, and primary schools continues across Co. Laois online on Zoom.

St Patrick's Day Takeover – MG programmed a series of performances from families and Musician Educators on 17 March on Facebook Live.

Lockdown Live! Zoom Concerts series continues with Trumpet player Niall O'Sullivan performing this Thursday for our brass and wind students.

Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh delivered an Irish language song workshop to children in our schools singing programme as part of Seachtain na Gaelige on 11 March.

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Twinning with Williamson County – 2nd youth music gathering to take place with Laois' US sister County on Friday 26 March, after a very successful meet up on Friday 12 March with 15 young people from MG Laois and 15 young people from Franklin Highschool.

A new MG Laois programmes commenced in Camross NS on Tuesday 16 March.

MG Laois Harpers won places in a series of top positions in the recent prestigious Feis Cheoil competition.

Youth Services

Your Place Your Space 2021

The Department of Children Equality Disability and Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) allocated LOETB €233,653 for this Grant Scheme to administer to Tullamore Youth Project, Offaly Traveller Movement, and Youth work Ireland Laois. LOETB will conduct Performance and Oversight Reviews of each funded organisation, which will be completed by 30 April 2021. There will be a further two Performance and Oversight review meetings scheduled for later in 2021.

UBU Your Place Your Space 2021/New Greenfield Projects 2021

DCEDIY is making an annual budget of €120,000 available for six new services in a number of ETBs including LOETB. The purpose of this budget is to allow for the development of one new service to meet the needs of young people as identified in the Area Profile Needs Assessment and Service Requirement (APNASR) Tool.

The LOETB Coordination Group will review the APNASR data to identify the new service with which they wish to proceed. LOETB will submit the APNASR Tool to include the one "greenfield site" to DCEDIY for approval. Upon approval from the Department a "Call for Service Advertisement" will be made by LOETB.

Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2021

DCEDIY allocated LOETB €73,991 for this Grant Scheme to administer to successful Local Youth Club/Group applicants. The scheme supports voluntary youth club activities for young people, with priority given to young people between the ages of 10 and 21. LOETB will advertised this Grant Scheme at the end of April through local newspapers, LOETB website and LOETB Facebook page.

LGBTI+ Youth Service Grant Scheme 2021

DCEDIY allocated €5,000 to LOETB for this Grant Scheme to administer to successful applicants. The initiative is intended to provide for additional youth worker hours dedicated specifically to supporting young LGBTI+ people. Applications have been forwarded to all eligible Funded Organisations. Closing date for return of applications is 16 April 2021.

Youth Work Committee (YWC):

The first YWC meeting of 2021 took place on 9 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by Clare Claffey and was well attended.

FET Directorate

QQI Inaugural Review

QQI's Expert panel visit to LOETB will commence on 12 April. DFET and QA Manager currently conducting briefing sessions for all participants.

FET Strategic Performance Agreement

In preparation for new SPA ('21-'24), DFET and FMT holding consultation sessions with all management staff to identify priority sectors and strategic goals.

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NZEB/Retrofit provision

We are further developing facilities at Mount Lucas to provide 'end to end' NZEB and Retrofit programmes covering all aspects of provision from entry grade to site supervisor. We are exploring a project with the SEAI and the Irish Green Building Council to develop a bespoke programme for 33 contractors who have been awarded contracts under the Warmer Housing Scheme.

Expansion of Apprenticeship provision

LOETB is working with SOLAS to expand apprenticeship provision in Laois and Offaly. It is our intention to increase our Electrical apprenticeship provision in Tullamore and Plumbing in Mountrath before the end of 2021.

Enhancing FET Provision

The following FET projects are due for completion in 2021. These projects will further enhance our FET provision in Laois and Offaly improving our service to learners, increasing public awareness and accessibility:

- Birr FET Centre
- Portlaoise FET Information Centre
- Tullamore FET Information Centre
- Midland Skills Centre Employer Training Facility

LOETB Brand Awareness and Promotion

LOETB FET Services have begun the process of promoting LOETB FET as a single, distinguishable brand. Our Communications Officer is working with all staff to determine each centre/service's social media status, communications needs, and target audience(s). We are using the new FET Centre in Birr as a template for all FET Centres in terms of internal and external signage. These changes will be rolled out across the FET service in 2021/22 making our FET services more visible and recognisable as a single brand.

OSD Directorate**Human Resources**Recruitment

The following staff appointments have been made during the period February to March 2021:

- 1 x Programme Co-ordinator St Fergal's College, Rathdowney
- 1 x Adult Literacy Organiser
- 1 x Resource Teacher
- FET Tutor Panel
- Sub Teacher Panel
- 1 x Senior Staff Officer – Grade VI
- 2 x APII posts Portlaoise College (in appeal stage)

The following posts have been advertised

- 1 x APII post Tullamore College
- 2 Acting APII posts Tullamore College
- 2 x APII posts St Fergal's College
- 1 x Administrative Officer – Grade VII
- 3 x Assistant Staff Officer – Grade IV

We have started our teacher recruitment for September 2021 and have advertised 15 teaching posts.

Payroll/Personnel

Number of staff paid each pay run:

19/02/2021	€1,030,098.42	865 staff
05/03/2021	€1,058,117.02	866 staff
19/03/2021	€1,002,422.01	860 staff

Pensions

Since January 2021 we have had 1 member who retired. We have completed and submitted Oct 2020 increases for 222 retirees.

Corporate Services

Capital Projects and Buildings Works

Clonaslee College

Approval received from DoE to proceed to Tender for Works. Six tender responses received, currently being evaluated.

Oaklands Community College, Edenderry

A number of site meetings have been held to date. Various design options prepared by Design Team. A Stage 1 Report has been submitted to DoE. Stage 1 meeting with DoE arranged for the end of April 2021.

Portlaoise Head Office/FET Accommodation

Invitation sent to Consultants. Three responses received which are currently being evaluated.

Procurement

General Printed Matter (School journals and yearbooks)

Contracts awarded to four Framework members.

Provision of Tower Crane and CSCS Training

Contract awarded to NLCS Ltd.

Provision of Construction Skills, Deep Retrofit Training and NZEB Courses

Contract awarded to Mosart Ltd

Provision of Training Services in Engineering & Renewable Energy

Contract awarded to Metac Ltd.

Recruitment Agency Services

Thirteen responses received to Tender which are currently being evaluated.

Lean Training

Four responses received to Tender which are currently being evaluated.

ICT

Phone system test/reviews/orders /installs Abbeyleix FET Centre, Portlaoise College, and Banagher FET Centre.

Upgrade of Portlaoise College Wi-Fi to be installed over the Easter break.

ICT fit out Mount Lucas ongoing, Birr FET Centre has commenced.

Corporate Services

Brand identity guidelines nearing completion.

Risk register reviewed and updated.

Covid-19 Response Plan reviewed and now being updated.

Additional crime insurance now in place, and business interruption claim submitted to IPB.
DCS software now embedded for procurement team.

Finance

Monthly monitoring of expenditure continues with the 2020 Annual Financial Statements presented as a separate agenda item.

The Chairperson thanked the CE for his report and a short discussion took place thereafter.

A member queried the annual pension certificates which have not yet been issued and asked if there are any updates regarding same. The CE confirmed that this is a national issue in ETBs and other sections of the public sector as well. The CE informed members that Shared Services (ESBS) process our payroll now and that LOETB had raised the issue with ESBS regarding pension statements. It has now been decided to address the issue as a stand-alone project rather than as part of the overall payroll solution. A steering committee is now in place to progress the matter and the CE is a member of same. The CE informed members that LOETB give priority to staff that are nearing retirement and that the calculations are worked out manually at present. Other staff who make specific requests are also dealt with subsequently. Ms Bracken reiterated what the CE said and confirmed that staff will make themselves available and make every effort to help anyone who has a query.

A member asked the CE for an update regarding Birr FET Centre specifically re staffing and when the first classes will be advertised for the Centre. The CE informed members that LOETB have taken possession of the building as of 15 March and internal fit out works have commenced. In terms of the staffing, the Centre Manager will be Eileen Kenna-Quinn. The CE informed members that the full-time programmes will commence in the next academic year, with some part-time programmes being delivered before and over the summer period. Members thanked the CE for the update.

6. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE



26 March 2021

Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee in accordance with Section 7.37 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs for year ending 31/12/2020


The Audit and Risk Committee, at meetings on 20 February 2020, 27 March 2020, 13 July 2020, 7 September 2020 and 7 December 2020, examined and reviewed the following;

1. Minutes of the;
 - Audit and Risk Committee meetings from 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020
 - Finance Committee meetings from 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020
 - LOETB meetings from 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020
2. Reviewed Corporate Risk Register and recommended same to the Board at each meeting in 2020
3. Reviewed all Building and Capital Works and Procurement in 2020
4. Received training on the Code of Practice for the Governance of LOETB
5. Reviewed an Internal Audit Opinion Report by Mr. Michael Mullarkey, Director, Internal Audit Unit-ETBs, on Specialist Training Providers (STP) in LOETB

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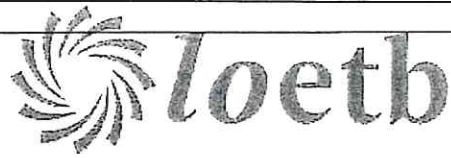
6. Reviewed the following correspondence from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General
- Report from C&AG on the presentation of LOETB 2018 accounts to the Houses of the Oireachtas
 - C & AG letter re: Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2018
7. Reviewed the following Internal Controls in LOETB
- Draft Statement of Internal Controls 2019
 - Report on controls in place in LOETB as at March 2020
 - Statement from Chief Executive for financial period January to December 2019
8. Conducted an Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control
9. Reviewed LOETB's Letter of Representation to the Comptroller and Auditor General and noted that the representations given in connection with the audit of the Annual Financial Statements for 2019 were true and accurate.
10. Reviewed the approved internal audit plan for LOETB for 2020
11. Reviewed LOETB's report on the Public Spending Code
12. Adopted the following Procedures;
- Operational Document for the Multi Supplier Framework Agreement for Contracted Training Services
 - Digital Communications
 - Process for ETB lease Outwards
 - Process for ETB lease Inwards
 - Force Majeure Procedure
 - Jury Service Procedure
 - Marriage Leave (Paid) Procedure
 - Marriage Leave (Unpaid) Procedure
 - Compassionate Leave Procedure
 - Recording Sick Leave Procedure
 - Unpaid Leave Procedure
 - Deduction Payments Procedure
 - Setting up a new employee Procedure
 - Recruitment and Selection Procedure
 - Staff Exit Procedure
 - Educational Tours and Field Trips
 - Volunteering and Work Experience
 - Protected Disclosures
13. Conference call with Martin Byrne, Senior Auditor at the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) to discuss the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for 2019
14. Reviewed LOETB's Covid19 Response Plan
15. Reviewed LOETB's response on the impact of Covid19 on LOETB's Control Environment
16. Completed an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee

Signed:



Martin Byrne
Chairperson of the Audit Committee

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26 March 2021

Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls in accordance with Section 7.8 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs as at 26 March, 2021

The Audit Committee, at meetings on 20 February 2020, 27 March 2020, 13 July 2020, 7 September 2020, 7 December 2020, 18 February 2021 and 26 March 2021 examined and reviewed the following:

1. Minutes of the:
 - Audit and Risk Committee meetings from 01/01/2020 to 18/2/2021
 - Finance Committee meetings from 01/01/2020 to 07/12/2020
 - LOETB meetings from 01/01/2020 to 08/12/2020

2. Internal and External Audit Reports issued in 2020 and to date in 2021;

Internal Audit Report – Mr. Michael Mullarkey, Director, Internal Audit Unit-ETBs;

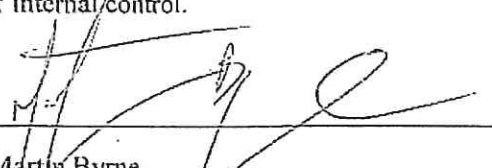
 - *Review of Contracted Training*
The IAU’s opinion was that the LOETB has an adequate system of control pertaining to Contracted Training

C & AG Correspondence:

- Report from C & AG on the presentation of LOETB 2019 accounts to the House of the Oireachtas
 - C & AG Letter re: Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2019
3. Risk Management; reviewed and monitored the Corporate Risk Register on a regular basis and recommended to the Board.
 4. Review of the System of Internal Controls in place in 2020 and to date in 2021.
 5. Confirmation by the Chief Executive that LOETB is operating an adequate and appropriate system of internal control.

The Audit Committee wish to report that there are no inconsistencies in the above documents and it is the Audit and Risk Committee’s understanding that the CE has operated an adequate and appropriate system of internal control.

Signed:



Martin Byrne,
Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee

Members noted the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Annual Review of effectiveness of internal controls.

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7. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE



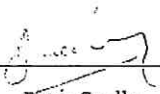
26 March 2021

Finance Committee's Annual Report for year ending 31 December 2020

The Finance Committee, at meetings on 20 February 2020, 27 March 2020, 13 July 2020, 7 September 2020 and 7 December 2020, examined and reviewed the following;

1. Reviewed and recommended the Service Plan 2020 to the Board
2. Received training on the Code of Practice for the Governance of LOETB
3. Reviewed the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2019
4. Reviewed and noted LOETB's Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control
5. Reviewed the Draft Statement on Internal Control and Letter of Representation which were recommended to the Board by the Audit and Risk Committee.
6. Considered and recommended the Annual Financial Statements 2019 to the Board
7. Reviewed and noted the Letter of Determination from the DES
8. Reviewed SOLAS funding for 2020
9. Proposed that the Board put an overdraft facility in place for one year
10. Recommended Bank Overdraft
11. Considered the monthly accounts and other financial reports in 2020
12. Reviewed all Building and Capital Works and Procurement in 2020
13. Reviewed all Leases in 2020
14. Approved the Annual Report of the Finance Committee
15. Recommended LOETB's Annual Report 2019 to the Board for approval
16. Reviewed the LOETB Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP) and Final MAPP for 2020
17. Completed an effectiveness evaluation of the Finance Committee

Signed:



 Peter Scully

Chairperson of the Finance Committee

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8. FINANCE

8.1 Annual Financial Statements 2020

Ms Bracken informed members that the Finance Committee reviewed the Working Papers and Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for 2020 in detail at a meeting on 26 March and recommended the adoption of same by the Board. Ms Bracken took members through the AFS highlighting areas of interest and pointing out that the accounts are completed on a cash basis and not accrual basis. Members were satisfied with the accounts as presented.

The Board adopted the AFS 2020.

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Caroline Dwane-Stanley

8.2 Statement on the System of Internal Controls

Ms Bracken explained that Statement on the System of Internal Controls is a statement on the internal control procedures that were in place in LOETB during 2020 and to date in 2021. Ms Bracken took members through each section of the Statement. The Audit and Risk Committee, at a meeting on 26 March, reviewed the draft Statement on System of Internal Controls and recommended that the Chairperson of the Board sign same. The Finance Committee, at a meeting on 26 March, also reviewed same.

Members approved the Statement on System of Internal Controls and the Chairperson signed same.

Proposed: John Carroll

Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

8.3 Letter of Representation

Members reviewed LOETB's Letter of Representation to the Comptroller and Auditor General. Ms Bracken explained to members that the format for the letter is laid down by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG). Ms Bracken informed members that The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Letter of Representation at their meeting on the 26 March and were satisfied that the representations presented are true and accurate. Members of the Audit and Risk Committee recommended that the Chairperson of the Board and the CE sign same. The Finance Committee, at their meeting on 26 March, also reviewed the Letter of Representation.

Members approved the Letter of Representation.

Proposed: Catherine Fitzgerald

Seconded: Molly Buckley

8.4 Bank Overdraft

LOETB's overdraft facility, per sanction received from the DoE, is due to expire in June 2021. The current overdraft facility is €4 million, and this will need to be extended for a further year.

Members of the Finance Committee, at a meeting on 26 March, accepted the CE's proposal that the Board should borrow an amount of up to €4 million for the purposes of carrying out the Board's functions and for this overdraft facility to be put in place for one year. The Finance Committee recommended that the Board accept the CE's proposal.

Members agreed in principle that the proposal should be accepted.

Proposed by: Evelyn Dunne

Seconded by: Clare Claffey

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9. CORRESPONDENCE

Item No	Correspondence From	Date / Ref No.	Details	
1.	Department of Education and Skills	CL 0015/2021	Update to the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme – Prioritisation of Funding	Noted by members
2.	Department of Education and Skills	CL 0016/2021	Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examination in 2023 and Leaving Certificate Examination in 2023	Noted by members

10. LICENCE AGREEMENTS, SPORTS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021

Ms Bracken informed members that LOETB made two applications under the Sports Capital Programme 2021 as follows;

- A grant for funding of €149,000 for an all-weather pitch for St. Fergal's College, Rathdowney, in conjunction with St. Brigid's Camogie club and Rathdowney GAA Club
- A grant for funding of €300,000 for a regional hockey pitch for Dunamase College new school build, in conjunction with Abbeyleix Hockley Club and Portlaoise Ladies Hockey Club

Ms Bracken explained that an ETB may only apply for funding jointly with a sports club or organisation. As part of the joint applications, a licence agreement for each application was prepared, setting out how the parties to the application will use the proposed facilities throughout the year. Ms Bracken informed members that no fees will be charged to these clubs for the use of the facilities should we be successful in receiving funding. Members welcomed this news.

11. ANNUAL REPORT 2020

11. Annual Report 2020

Members reviewed the draft LOETB Annual Report for 2020. The CE informed members that LOETB makes all efforts to have the Annual Report ready in line with the Annual Financial Statements each year. The CE took members through each section of the Annual Report and explained that the section on the Service Plan will correspond with the activity on our Service Plan each year going forward. The Service Plan (which includes the actions from our strategy statement) sets out our goals, priorities, actions, performance indicators, and targets for the year, and the Annual Report will report on performance back against planned activity. The CE informed members that the vast majority of the actions have been completed and met the targets specified. However, there are a limited number of activities that the completion dates have moved into Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2021, as a direct response to Covid-19.

Members adopted the Annual Report for 2020.

Proposed: Molly Buckley
 Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

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11.1. Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister

Ms Bracken informed members that as part of the Annual Report each year we must submit the Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister as part of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETB’s. The Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister is a confidential letter from the Chairperson of the Board to the Minister of Education. It sets out any significant financial development outside of the norm in 2020. Ms Bracken took members through each section of the Report and explained the financial developments in detail. The Statement on Internal Control is attached to the Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report as an appendix.

Members approved the Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister and the Chairperson and the CE signed same.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne
 Seconded: Caroline Dwane-Stanley

11.2. Register of Gifts/Donations 2020

In line with the Section 28.2 of the ETB Act 2013, LOETB is required to publish details of any gift received that exceed the amount specified by the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform. Members reviewed and noted the register of gifts/donations received in LOETB in 2020. As there were no gifts/donations over the value specified by the Minister, they will not be included in the Annual Report.

12. DRAFT POLICIES FOR ADOPTION

The following draft policies were circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members approved the draft policies as follows:

LOETB Policies

LOETB Procurement Policy 2021

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

School Policies

Oakland’s Community College, Leaving Certificate Applied Policy

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

Tullamore College, Distance Learning Policy

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

Tullamore College, Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

13. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The following minutes of the committees of the Board were circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members noted same.

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 7 December 2020

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14. APPOINTMENT TO BOM AT CLONASLEE COLLEGE

The CE informed members that he will consult with the Principal of Clonaslee College on her return next month, regarding the vacancy on the Board of Management at Clonaslee College.

15. ARCHIVING OLD VEC/LOETB MINUTE BOOKS

Ms Bracken informed members that she was approached by the Heritage Officer in Offaly Archives (which is the jointly managed archives service of Offaly County Library at Offaly County Council and Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society) regarding the archiving of the old Co. Offaly VEC minute books. Ms Bracken explained that the Co. Offaly VEC minute books are from 1930 up to 2013 and some of the older books are defragmenting at present in the Tullamore Administration Office. Offaly Archives have a facility in Axis Business Park in Tullamore, with a temperature-controlled room, where the minute books can be preserved and made available for research. Ms Bracken informed members that she will seek the same facility with Laois County Council for the archiving of the old Co. Laois VEC minute books. Members agreed to proceed with same.

Proposed: John Carroll
Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

16. LANGUAGE BURSARIES

Ms Bracken informed members that the Board has a reserved function in terms of scholarships and bursaries. A list of language bursary allocations for 2021 was circulated to members prior to the meeting with total expenditure of €31,500. The allocations are for LOETB schools and schools under the trusteeship of LOETB.

Members approved the allocations.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne
Seconded: Caroline Dwane-Stanley

17. UPDATE ON THE SALE OF THE LSU BUILDING, BANAGHER

Members were informed that the sale process of the LSU Building is progressing well and that a full report will be brought before the next meeting for Board consideration and approval.

18. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

A vote of sympathy was passed to:

- Maureen McNally Kelly on the passing of her mother Mary McNally

19. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

A vote of congratulations was passed to:

- The staff and students in all LOETB schools on the successful re-opening of schools
- Two Oakland's Community College Junior Cycle students have been recognised in the prestigious PDST National Poetry Awards 2021. Congratulations to Aimie Kerrigan whose poem "Fields of Hope" was 3rd and Saoirse Hoey whose piece "A Man's World" was Highly Commended.
- Well done to Oakland's Community College Past Pupil Barry Thompson who is studying Occupational Health & Safety in IT Sligo who has been named as a GAA Sports Scholarship recipient for the next academic year.
- Weronika Popko, a third Year Portlaoise College student who was crowned the 2021 Individual winner of the Leinster Junior Schools Debating competition on Thursday 18 March.

20. AOB**Vacancy on the Finance Committee**

The CE informed members that Cllr Neil Feighery has stepped down as a member of the Finance Committee and there is now a vacancy on the Committee. The Chairperson asked members for nominations for a replace Cllr Feighery on the Finance Committee. As no nominations were received, the Chairperson asked members to contact him should they be interested in the position.

Terms of Reference, Youth Work Committee

Ms Bracken informed members that there has been one change to the Terms of Reference of the Youth Work Committee (YWC). The membership of the YWC now lists the organisations that make up the Committee instead of the name of the individuals.

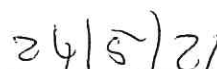
21. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 24 May 2021 at 4.30pm, via Microsoft Teams.

Signed: _____



Date: _____



Chairperson

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