



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

KWETB Board Meeting

**Minutes of the Board of KWETB held on Tuesday 26th May 2026 at
10.30am**

**Venue: Online / Ar líne/online / KWETB Kildare Head Office, Chestnut
House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 FH6T.**

Present: Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Cllr. Rupert Heather, Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer, Cllr. John Snell, Cllr. Avril Cronin, Cllr. Brendan Wyse, Ms. Anne Ferris, Mr. Eamon O'Flaherty, Ms. Carol Nolan, Mr. John Cullen, Ms. Elaine Finnerty, and Mr. Stephen Horan.

In attendance: Dr. Deirdre Keyes, Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Mr. Joe Kelly, Mr. Ken Seery, Mr. Ken Scully, Ms. Ann Kinsella and Ms. Deirdre Wood.

Apologies: Cllr. Tom Fortune, Cllr. Louise Fenelon Gaskin, Cllr. David Trost, Cllr. Claire O'Rourke, Cllr. Nuala Killeen, Ms. Maria Barry and Ms. Lisa Campbell

Absent: Tom Russell

Introduction:

Once the required quorum was confirmed, the Chair, Cllr. Paul O'Brien welcomed all members of the Board and proceeded.

Minute ETB - No. 01
Declaration Conflicts of Interest

The Chair - Cllr. Paul O'Brien addressed Board Members and asked if there were any conflicts of interest and if so to declare.

No conflicts were declared by the Board Members.

Minute ETB – No. 02
Apologies, Sympathies & Congratulations Leithscéalta, Comhbhrón & Comhghairdeas

2.1 Resignation: The Board acknowledged Cllr Evie Sammon's recent resignation from the Board and acknowledged her previous work as a Board Member with KWETB.

2.2 Welcome: The Chair and Board extended a welcome to the newest member, Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer.

2.3 Apologies: Cllr. Tom Fortune, Cllr. Louise Fenelon Gaskin, Cllr. David Trost, Cllr. Claire O'Rourke, Cllr. Nuala Killeen, Ms. Maria Barry and Ms. Lisa Campbell.

2.4 Sympathies: Michael (Mick) Farrell of Castlebridge, Co. Wexford - Father of Principal Ruairi Farrell,
Greystones Community College.

Paul Coleman of Naas, Co. Kildare - Father of Deputy Principal Joy Coleman,
Coláiste Chraobh Abhann.

James (Jim) Agnew, Clane Co. Kildare - Husband of Patricia Dalton, FET Co-Ordinator,
Newbridge FETC.

Maurice McLoughlin, Rosnastrow - Teacher, colleague and member of staff at Shelton Abbey.

The Chair invited the Board to pause for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to those recently deceased.

Minute ETB - No. 03

The election of a Deputy Chairperson to the KWETB Board
Toghadh Leas – Chathaoirlighar Bhord BOOCDM

Following the resignation of Deputy Chair, Cllr. Evie Sammon, from the KWETB Board, the election of a new Deputy Chair was conducted. The Board was advised of the procedure for the election of the Deputy Chairperson, as set out in the ETB Act 2013, and nominations for the position were then invited from the floor.

Nominee: Cllr. Rupert Heather
Proposed: Cllr. John Snell
Seconded by: Cllr. Avril Cronin

Minute ETB - No. 04

Adopting the Minutes of previous meetings – signing by Chairperson
Glacadh le Miontuairiscí ó chruinnithe roimhe seo – síniú an Chathaoirligh

4.1. The minutes of Board Meeting Tuesday 24th March 2026 at 10.30am

Proposed by: Cllr. John Snell
Seconded by: Ms. Elaine Finnerty
And agreed.

Minute ETB – No. 05

Matters arising from the minutes
Nithe ag Síolrú ó na Miontuairiscí

5.1 No matters arising.

Minute ETB – No. 06

Chief Executive's Update
An Scéal is Déanaí ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach

The Chief Executive, Dr. Deirdre Keyes, welcomed the Board and provided an update on recent and forthcoming developments across KWETB.

Dr. Keyes updated the Board on the recent sod-turning ceremony at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann, Kilcoole, marking the commencement of the school's major extension project. The event was attended by representatives of the school community and the Executive and signified an important milestone in the progression of the development, which is scheduled to commence on site in the coming weeks.

The Board was also advised that the Blessington Community College redevelopment project has progressed to tender stage, with confirmation received from the Department of Education and Youth earlier in the week.

Dr. Keyes further informed the Board that Youthreach Leixlip/Celbridge had recently held its first graduation event in its new premises and welcomed the positive impact of the new facilities in supporting student progression and future opportunities.

The Board was advised that the KWETB recruitment campaign remains ongoing, with 100 of the 261 advertised posts for the upcoming academic year now filled. Dr. Keyes also noted that additional Posts of Responsibility had been allocated to schools to support Senior Cycle reform, with recruitment and interviews continuing into the next academic year. Reference was made to Circulars 0037/2026 and 0038/2026 regarding the establishment of Senior Cycle Redevelopment Co-ordinator roles and Level 1 and Level 2 Programme Co-ordinator posts to support students with additional needs. Dr. Keyes thanked Board members for their continued support in participating on interview panels.

It was further noted that a CPD and networking day for school administrators will take place in Head Office on the 15th June.

Dr. Keyes advised the Board that a new Reasonable Accommodation Policy had been developed by the Human Resources Department and approved by the Senior Management Team, with organisation-wide communication and rollout planned over the coming months. She further confirmed that the Protected Disclosures Policy had been reviewed by the Governance Team and approved by the Senior Management, with communication and information sessions to be rolled out across the organisation. The Board were also informed that the Protected Disclosures Policy was now published on the KWETB website.

Dr. Keyes highlighted that staff sanctioning by the Department of Education and Youth remains a significant issue for KWETB and advised that the matter has been ongoing for approximately six months. She noted that nine positions within OSD remain unfilled, creating an ongoing governance risk and placing considerable pressure on existing staff, particularly within the Procurement and Payroll teams. It was further noted that staff morale is currently low due to these pressures. The Board suggested that correspondence issue jointly from the Board and the Executive to the Department to highlight the seriousness of the situation and seek resolution. Dr. Keyes thanked the Board for its continued support and confirmed that no formal communication regarding a moratorium had been received from the Department.

The Executive further reported on FET and advised the Board that the AI Skills and Education Hub (AISE) in Kildare Town had recently been formally launched by Minister James Lawless. It was noted that the initiative is particularly significant given the increasing demand for AI-related courses and that the centre has already generated considerable interest from prospective learners.

The Board was informed that SOLAS had launched a Strategic Equipment Grant call and that KWETB had submitted an application for approximately €6 million, primarily focused on the CELTEC facility in Celbridge. It was noted that the funding would support the development of the facility through the provision of additional cutting-edge equipment, further strengthening its focus on innovation, sustainability and green technologies. The Board was advised that securing this funding would support the long-term strategic direction and development of the facility.

It was further brought to the Board's attention that KWETB had been selected to participate in an AI documentary to be featured on Microsoft channels in recognition of its AI-related courses and initiatives.

The Executive updated the Board on the recent Cuan Games held at Maynooth Community College, noting that the event was an inclusive sporting initiative which brought together students from special classes in secondary schools to participate in tailored athletic activities and challenges.

The Board was also updated in relation to the new special school in Monasterevin. The Executive advised that the existing primary school currently operating within the building will remain in place until the end of June, following which modification and fit-out works required for specialist learning spaces can commence. It was noted that these works are expected to take approximately 16–18 weeks, with the school planned to open for the 2026/2027 academic year.

<i>Minute ETB – No. 07</i>
Matters for approval, noting or adoption Cúrsí le faomhadh, le nótáil nó le glacadh

7.1 Adoption/Glacadh:

There were no matters for adoption on today's agenda.

7.2 Approval:

7.2a Draft Annual Report and Comprehensive Report to the Board

The Draft Annual Report and Draft Chairperson's Comprehensive Report had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting for review. The Board was advised that the Annual Report reflects the achievements of KWETB over the past year and is aligned with the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. It also includes a comprehensive governance report outlining the work of the Board and its Committees, together with compliance with regulatory requirements throughout the year.

The Executive further advised the Board that the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister for Education and Youth, was required under Sections 6.8 and 6.9 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, and that it accompanies the KWETB Annual Report for the year ending the 31st December 2025 and would require the Boards approval.

It was further noted that the report confirms that KWETB has adopted the 2024 Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs and that appropriate governance and internal control arrangements, including the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, are in place.

The report outlines the matters considered by the Chairperson in advance of signing.

Draft Annual Report 2025 and Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister

Proposed: Cllr. Avril Cornin
Seconded: Cllr Rupert Heather
Agreed

7.2.b Appointment of Community Representative, Cllr Tracey O'Dwyer to School Board of Management - Brannoxtown CNS

Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer was proposed as the Community Representative to the Board of Management of Brannoxtown Community National School.

Nominee: Cllr. Tracey O'Dwyer
Proposed: Cllr. Paul O'Brien
Seconded: Cllr. John Snell
Agreed

7.2.c POR Interview Board Nominees

Áine O'Sullivan, Director of OSD addressed the Board in relation to interview panels for Posts of Responsibility. She advised that, in circumstances where a Board member is unavailable to sit on interview panels, it is necessary to maintain a Board-approved panel of nominees from which representatives may be drawn. Ms. O'Sullivan confirmed that such a panel is currently in place and proposed the addition of Ann McLoughlin, Mary Dalton, and Catherine Doran to the approved list. Ms. McLoughlin was noted as a retired SOLAS Apprentice Manager and fully trained IPA interviewer, Ms. Dalton as a retired Principal with interview experience and fluency in Irish, and Ms. Doran as a retired APO with KWETB with 35 years' experience.

Proposed: Cllr. Avril Cornin
Seconded: Cllr John Snell
Agreed

7.3. Noting / Notáil:

7.3.a Audit and Risk Committee Report

Cllr. Rupert Heather verbally reported to the Board on behalf of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). He noted that the Committee's most recent report had been shared with Board Members in advance of the meeting and proceeded to read the report to the Board. The Chair thanked him for the comprehensive report and invited comments from Board members. No questions or queries were raised.

7.3.b Finance Committee Report

In the absence of a Finance Committee member to verbally present the report, the Chair, Cllr. Paul O'Brien advised the Board that the link to the latest Finance Committee Report had been made available for review in advance of the meeting. The Chair then provided a brief verbal synopsis of the report. The Board thanked the Chair for the update, with no queries arising.

7.3.c KWETB Boards of Management Minutes [1 min]

Mr. Ken Scully, KWETB Director of Schools, advised the Board that links to School Board of Management minutes are accessible via the link provided on the agenda page of the KWETB Board SharePoint. He further noted that minutes had been uploaded to the relevant school folders since the last Board meeting and confirmed that Board of Management minutes had been submitted and were up to date for the majority of schools with few due for submission.

Minute ETB – No. 08
Risk Management Report Tuairisc Bainistíochta Riosca

Ms. Áine O’Sullivan, Director of OSD, addressed the Board in relation to the KWETB Risk Management Report, which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting for review. She advised Senior Management Team held a meeting with IPB in April to review the risk management process and the KWETB Corporate Risk Register. During the quarterly SMT meeting, the Corporate Risk register was reviewed with an increased to 2 risk ratings.

Minute ETB – No. 09
Capital Programme Report Tuarascáil an gClár Caipitil

The Director of OSD, Mr. Joe Kelly, provided the Board with an update on a number of ongoing capital projects across KWETB schools and centres.

He advised that, in relation to Curragh Community College, the DEY had authorised the Design Team to issue the Letter of Acceptance to the contractor for the new school build and that receipt of the works programme is awaited. He further noted that remediation works to classrooms affected by roof leaks are being progressed by the Department, with the Garda Vetting process for contractors currently ongoing.

In respect of Coláiste Chraobh Abhann, Mr. Kelly confirmed that works on the major two-storey school extension are scheduled to commence on the 27th May 2026 and that a sod-turning ceremony took place on 15th May 2026 to mark the occasion.

The Board was also updated on the BIFE roofing upgrade and modular accommodation projects. Confirmation had been received from SOLAS regarding the scope of the roofing upgrade and a meeting between the Design Team, SOLAS and KWETB is being arranged to discuss next steps. In relation to the modular accommodation project, SOLAS has approved KWETB to proceed with the current architect and associated services, with statutory applications and tender documentation currently being prepared.

Mr. Kelly advised the Board that the new modular accommodation at St. Farnan’s Post-Primary School has now been handed over to the school and that the Design Team is currently finalising the Stage 2B report for the major new build project. It was further noted that the Department of Education and Youth had issued a response in relation to the Additional School Accommodation (ASA) application, confirming that the ASA application had been denied, it was noted that an escalation of same would be reviewed with the Principal.

In relation to the BIFE FET College Major Capital Programme, formerly known as the BIFE College of the Future project, the Board was advised that the Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA) will work in collaboration with KWETB, SOLAS and DFHERIS to progress procurement of the Design Team, with an introductory meeting due to take place in the coming weeks.

The Board also noted that refurbishment works at Craddockstown Special School have now been fully completed and that, following the relocation of Greystones Community College to its new school building, arrangements are underway for the removal of the prefab units from the rugby club site.

The Board thanked Mr. Joe Kelly, the Executive and the Capital Programme Management Team for their ongoing work in relation to current building and maintenance projects across KWETB. Board members

welcomed the positive progress reported in respect of Blessington Community College moving to tender stage and the commencement of the extension works at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann.

Members also queried the status of future projects identified under “Project Dargle” which have yet to progress and asked whether the Executive had any further updates. The Executive advised that there were no further updates at this time but noted that the Department of Education and Youth is currently considering Phase 2 of the National Development Plan, with a particular focus on special education expansion. This includes increasing autism and SEN school places, expanding special classes and special schools, and enhancing supports for children with autism and additional needs within mainstream education settings.

The Board raised a query regarding the modular units previously in place at Avondale Community College and whether they could be redeployed to other KWETB schools. The Executive confirmed that the units are owned by the Department of Education and Youth and arrangements are in place for their removal from site.

A Board member raised a further query in relation to St. Farnan’s Post-Primary School, expressing concern regarding accommodation capacity for the upcoming school year and querying whether school places and Transition Year numbers would be affected.

The Executive advised that the DEY had reviewed the underlying demographics and the number of students progressing from primary schools within the Prosperous/Clane SPA. It was noted that, while there had been increased demand for First Year places for September 2025, this demand was expected to lessen from 2026 onwards. The Executive further advised that, with greater numbers of Sixth Year students leaving compared to incoming students, enrolment numbers are expected to remain manageable. It was confirmed that students who had already been offered a Transition Year place would retain their place.

Minute ETB – No. 10
Finance Report Tuairisc Airgeadais

The Finance Report was linked to the meeting agenda via the Board member SharePoint page in advance of the Board meeting. The Executive confirmed that KWETB have expended 33% of their total budget, excluding capital, up to 30th April 2026 which is in line with expectations.

Minute ETB – No. 11
Correspondence for the Board Comhfhreagras – Don Bhord

The Chair noted that correspondence had been received by both the Chief Executive and the Chair of the KWETB Board regarding privacy concerns relating to a footpath leading to Greystones Community College and adjoining properties within the Hawkins Wood estate. It was noted that this is an Executive matter and that engagement with stakeholders is ongoing, with parties working towards a resolution.

Minute ETB – No. 12
Members Business / Questions



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Gnó/Ceisteanna na mBall

It was noted that no questions had been received in advance of the meeting; however, Board members raised queries in relation to the increasing costs associated with the running of schools. Members noted that schools had advised school boards of having to reduce expenditure in certain areas due to budgetary pressures and rising costs.

The Executive confirmed that this remains an ongoing risk and advised that the matter is linked to the cost of living allowance, with further communication required from the Department of Education and Youth.

Minute ETB – No. 13

Date of next meeting
Dáta an chéad chruinnithe eile

The Chair, Cllr. Paul O'Brien confirmed that the next board meeting will take place on Tuesday, 7th July 2026, at 10:30AM at that it would be held online only.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Cllr. Paul O'Brien

Chairperson of Kildare and Wicklow ETB

Signed pp by Cllr. Reupert Heather, Kildare and Wicklow ETB Deputy Chair.