

Assembly Meeting - Minutes

10th April 2026, 12.00pm

Assembly House, Waterford



Tionól Réigiúnach
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional
Assembly

Presiding: Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness

Present: Cllr Dan Boyle, Cllr John Brennan, Mayor John Moran, Cllr Bridín Murphy, Cllr Sheila O'Callaghan.

Remote Attendance: Cllr Anthony Barry, Cllr Pip Breen, Cllr Alan Coleman, Cllr Michael Collins, Cllr Gillian Coughlan, Cllr Frankie Daly, Cllr Jim D'Arcy, Cllr Kay Dawson, Cllr Joe Kavinagh, Cllr Deirdre Kelly, Cllr Kieran McCarthy, Cllr Mairín McGrath, Cllr Norma Moriarty, Cllr Ken Murnane, Cllr Barbara-Anne Murphy, Cllr Tony O'Brien, Cllr Niall O'Callaghan, Cllr Bobby O'Connell, Cllr Thomas Phelan, Cllr Peggy Ryan, Cllr John Sheahan, Cllr Oliver Walsh, Cllr Ben Ward.

Apologies: Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy

Officials Present: David Kelly, Cormac Laphorne, Kevin Lynch, Enda Hogan, Ian Ludlow, Dominic Walsh, Naomi Flood, Lisa Slater, Denis Cotter, Omer Sunguroglu,

Remote Attendance: Marie Harnett, Michael Buckley, Oonagh Messette, Anna Sellars, Colm Walsh, Claire Breen, Maria Murphy, Sarah Davoren, Elayne McDonnell, Mary Molloy, Breda Curran, Eoin O'Connor, Lorraine Barron, Yvonne Cooney, Rose Power, Áine Whelan, Samantha Richardson.

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 13th March 2026

The Members adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 13th of March 2026, proposed by Cllr Sheila O'Callaghan and seconded by Cllr John Brennan.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Developing biofuel alternatives

Séan Finan, CEO of Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA), delivered a detailed presentation on the biomass, biogas/biomethane, biofuels, biochar, wood fuels & energy crop sectors in Ireland, highlighting its role in lobbying and knowledge transfer, as well as opportunities for renewable energy in the southern region.

A question-and-answer session followed the presentation, during which several Assembly Members raised questions on topics including forestry use, energy security, HVO fuel, planning challenges, engagement with community groups, and knowledge transfer to local authorities.

4. Regional Planning Update



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Assistant Director Kevin Lynch updated the members on the recent launch of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy review process, which included details on consultations, engagement with local authorities, workshops for members, and economic analysis of the southern region.

Cllr Dan Boyle raised a question in relation to the involvement of members in the workshops and consultation process, as well as to whether the Critical Infrastructure Bill would form part of the review process. Kevin confirmed that the members were welcome to make submissions through the workshops, and that the Bill would feature as part of the review.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Kevin and the Planning team for their work to date.

5. ERDF Regional Programme Update

Assistant Director Enda Hogan gave a brief update on the ERDF Regional Programme, including the Mid-Term review process of the Programme, and European Commission's approval of the revised Programme.

6. Europe Day Update

The Assembly's Communications Officer, Lisa Slater, provided information to members on upcoming plans for Europe Day, which included details on production of mini magazines for primary school students, 12 primary school visits, the launch of a national photo competition, and extensive media campaign.

7. Any Other Business

Director David Kelly gave a brief update on Circular Economy Act and the Assembly's role. This item was confirmed to be included in the May meeting.

Cllr Dan Boyle requested that the Assembly consider the option of including a provision for an emergency motion facility to be incorporated in Assembly Standing Orders, referencing the fuel protests blockades' effect on the day-to-day business of citizens and the economic impact of the blockades as an item that could have been debated under an emergency motion. Some Members voiced concerns around the proposed motion.

Director David Kelly confirmed that an amendment to the Standing Orders could be drafted for consideration by the members if required.

Senior Staff Officer, Ian Ludlow, provided a brief update on the proposed Eirgrid Celtic Interconnector site visit for members which was scheduled for 21st April.

Cllr Thomas Phelan requested that the Assembly make a submission to the National Transport Authority in relation to the withdrawal of certain bus routes. Director David Kelly confirmed that a motion would need to be submitted in advance and that this request could be included as part of the May agenda for consideration by the Members.



8. Date of Next Meeting

8th May 2026 at noon, at Assembly House, Waterford.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____



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Meeting Agenda

10th April 2026

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 13th March 2026
2. Matters Arising
3. Developing biofuel alternatives: Séan Finan CEO Irish Bioenergy Association
4. Regional Planning Update
5. ERDF Regional Programme Update
6. Europe Day Update
7. Any Other Business
8. Date of Next Meeting



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