Attendees (29): Nicola O Connor, Rebecca Gilmartin, Emma O Hagan, Colin Gilligan, Tom O Reilly, Paul Mc Donnell, Padraig Fallon, Deirdre O Hagan, Joseph O Hagan, Fiona Burns, Tina Duignan, Marie Mc Tiernan, Niamh Kenefick, Lorriaine Mc Hugh, Leah Cull, Jonathan Weekes, Ray Lowbridge, Assumpta Clancy, Liam Brennan, Michael Keavney, Carmel Fallon, Sean Fallon, Brenda Cull, Mark Elliott, Claire Campbell, Aoife Weissman, Dermot Lahiff, Clara Hewston, Shirley Hewston.

Online Attendees (3): Marie Leydon, Maeve Peoples, Siobhan Smyth

Apologies/nominations for committee: Peter Farell, Geraldine Rooney, Susan Clancy, Christine Keavney , Avril Murphy ,Cait Kearns, Winfred Branley Nealis

Nominations for new Committee members: Peter Farell, Geraldine Rooney, Susan Clancy, Christine Keavney , Avril Murphy , Winfred Branley Nealis, Siobhan Smyth, Paul Mc Donnell, Mark Elliott, Aoife Weissman, Lorraine Mc Hugh, Niamh Kenefick, Assumpta Clancy

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1. Welcome & Opening

The meeting was opened by **Nicola O'Connor**, outgoing Chairperson, who welcomed all attendees and thanked them for their continued support. A pause was observed in remembrance of all those who have died by suicide.

Nicola expressed gratitude to **Rebecca Gilmartin**, Counselling Coordinator, and outlined Rebecca's role, responsibilities, and the services provided by North West STOP (NWS).

Emma O Hagan, outgoing secretary, read out the minutes from the 2024 AGM and there was one amendment to be made which was highlighted by the treasurer Colin Gilligan:

Expenditure in 2023 was €172,236 (not €282,783, as highlighted in the AGM minutes). This typo was noted and changed.

- **Proposed: Tom O Reilly**
- **Seconded: Leah Cull**

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2. Treasurer's Report

Colin Gilligan, Treasurer, presented the financial report for the year.

Key Highlights

- **262 fundraisers and sponsorship sources**, with **no grant funding** received.
- Fundraising income was slightly down compared to 2023 but still described as *phenomenal*.
- Colin gave thanks to everyone who fundraised, whether raising €10 or €10,000, acknowledging that all efforts raise the profile of NWS.
- Expenses remain broadly consistent year-on-year.
- Counselling fees have risen due to increased demand rather than counsellor cost increases.

- A **30% projected increase in counselling demand** for the upcoming year.
- Costs increased by **€28,000** over the previous year.
- Thanks were extended to the Coggins for preparing the financial documents.

Approval of Treasurer's Report:

- **Proposed:** Padraig Fallon
- **Seconded:** Deirdre O'Hagan

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3. Counselling Coordinator's Report

Rebecca Gilmartin presented referral statistics and counselling figures for the year.
Client testimonials were read to illustrate the impact of the service. Presentation of these are attached.

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4. Chairperson's Address

Nicola reviewed counselling hours over the past five years, highlighting the importance of sustaining current funding streams.

Key Points

- Play therapy costs exceed general counselling and may require longer interventions.
- A new administrator has joined NWS through a WPEP placement (30 hours/week). Nicola noted that the role is proving highly beneficial, but **funding will be needed in 2026 to maintain administrative staffing**.
- NWS urgently needs a **permanent office manager/administrative staff member**, as volunteers (committee members) are currently covering these duties. Nicola thanked the full committee by name for their ongoing work.
- Nicola acknowledged the extensive fundraising efforts by the public and highlighted several key events and supporters.

Questions from the floor: None.

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5. Building & Funding Update

Nicola outlined the funding that has been secured and the plans for the development of the new building.

Highlights

- **€79,643 shortfall** remains to be covered under the LEADER programme.
- Nicola acknowledged all successful grants achieved.

- Thanks were extended to all funders and to staff within **Leitrim County Council** and **Leitrim Development Company** for their assistance.

Comment from the floor:

Deirdre O Hagan mentioned that if it were not for Nicola O Connor and all her work, none of these grants would have been received.

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6. Appointment of Officers

The list of attending Board Members was read.

Chairperson

- **Nicola O'Connor** stepped back as Chairperson.
- **Nominated: Tom O'Reilly**
- **Proposed:** Colin Gilligan
- **Seconded:** Rebecca Gilmartin

Vice Chairperson

- **Nominee:** Fiona Burns
- **Proposed:** Tom O'Reilly
- **Seconded:** Leah Cull
- **Elected**

Treasurer

- **Colin Gilligan** agreed to remain in position.

Vice Treasurer

- **Carmel Fallon** agreed to remain in position

Secretary

- **Outgoing:** Emma O'Hagan
- **Incoming Secretary: Rebecca Gilmartin volunteered to take on this role temporarily with the assistance of Claire Campbell and Emma O Hagan**
    - **Proposed:** Padraig Fallon
    - **Seconded:** Claire Campbell

PRO (Public Relations Officer)

- **Emma O'Hagan**
    - **Proposed:** Padraig Fallon

- **Seconded:** Nicola O'Connor

Nicola and others expressed thanks to **Deirdre O'Hagan** for her significant contribution to NWS, especially in counselling matters and organisational guidance.
Tom O'Reilly also thanked Deirdre for her continued support.

A special note was made acknowledging Emma O'Hagan's recent marriage and thanking her for returning to support NWS after her travels.

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7. Update from New Chairperson, Tom O Reilly:

Tom outlined key organisational needs and areas requiring development:

Staffing & Governance

- 2026 funding must secure administrative roles.
- NWS must continue meeting strict funding and compliance criteria.
- Importance of protecting the committee, volunteers, and staff was emphasised.

Committees to Be Formed

- **Fundraising Committee**
- **Marketing Committee**
- **Audit Committee**
- **Governance Committee**

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8. Closing

Nicola thanked everyone for their attendance and ongoing commitment to the organisation.