

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District held in Blessington Civic Offices on 22nd July 2024 at 10.30am

Present: Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Gerry O'Neill
Councillor Jason Mulhall
Councillor Peter Stapleton

In Attendance: Ms Marc Devereux, Acting District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Mr. Aidan Dempsey, Chief Fire Officer
Ms. Christina Brophy, Clerical Officer

Apologies: Councillor Edward Timmins.

Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon opened the meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present, he also conveyed his apologies on behalf of Cllr. Timmins, not attending.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 24th June 2024.

Cllr. O' Neill requested that the minutes be amended to read as follows, "Cllr O'Neill expressed his frustration and annoyance that the position of Cathaoirleach was not being rotated fairly in a similar way to previous years". It was unanimously agreed to amend the minutes as per Cllr O'Neill's request

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 24th June 2024. were proposed by Cllr. O' Neill and seconded by Cllr. Stapleton and unanimously agreed by all members present

2. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District dated 24th June 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Stapleton and unanimously agreed by all members to confirm and sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting dated 24th June 2024.

3. Matters Arising.

Cllr. O' Neill asked why the Palestinian flag has been removed from outside the building. Mr. Cullen responded that Palestinian flag had been removed temporarily to facilitate the flying of the pride flag as the month of June was Pride month. Cllr. O' Neill asked for the Palestinian flag to be reinstated as soon as possible.

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Mr. Devereux said he would check with corporate services regarding the protocol of re-instating the Palestinian flag.

4. To consider Roads Reports (National and non-national roads)

The District Engineers updated the members on the Baltinglass Municipal District national and non-national roads reports, both of which were circulated to the members prior to the meeting.

Members Comments and Observations

Mr. Graham informed the members that Carlow County Council will be closing a section of the N81 from Baltinglass to Rathvilly from Weds 24th July – 16th August from 8am – 6pm to facilitate surface dressing.

Cllr. O' Neill requested an update from Mr. Byrne in relation to the walkway to Glending on the relief road as residents from Deerpark are anxious to have fencing installed on the boundary of the walkway. Mr Byrne advised that this area and walkway has not yet been taken in charge by Wicklow County Council

Mr. Graham stated that there is a three year Roads Improvement programme in place, this is the last year of the plan, works will be tendered for this year's programme within the coming weeks.

The members raised concerns regarding drainage issues and flooding on local roads, Mr. Graham said the issue with drainage relates mainly to the run-off of water from private lands. Mr. Byrne agreed saying that this is a major issue. He explained that the law regarding this matter is quite clear, landowners must accept water from roads but they cannot discharge water onto a public road.

Cllr. Cronin requested an update on safe routes to school in relation to Dunlavin. Mr. Byrne advised that Morrissey's will be on site within two weeks to commence the surfacing.

Cllr. Mulhall asked if it is planned to upgrade the road markings in the town square as part of the planned road marking works to be carried out in the town, he also asked if the road heading down towards Dunne's Stores could be included in this programme, he also highlighted the need for the marking of the yellow boxes at Ulster Bank and Dunne's Stores to be freshened up. ??

Cllr. Mulhall also said there's an issue with drainage on Main Street and down the Naas Road. Mr. Byrne informed him that the drains will be looked at once the hedge cutting has been completed.

Cllr. Glennon asked if the Whitesands Bridge could be considered for upgrade works. Mr. Byrne stated this has to be requested through TII and that he has a meeting with them later this week in which he will raise this issue

5. To receive a presentation from Aidan Dempsey, Chief Fire Officer on the proposed construction of new Fire Stations at Dunlavin and Baltinglass.

Mr. Dempsey informed the members that the proposed upgrade projects for Baltinglass and Dunlavin Fire Stations has been a slow process but advised they have now reached a significant point and that they are both on a priority list to proceed with.

Consultants have been appointed and given a standard briefing on the buildings which will include a training yard and tower. Mr. Dempsey said that firefighters have been involved in discussions and have given their own opinions to architects. As a result of this the drawings were amended and plans are ready to go to Part 8.

Mr. Dempsey stated the old fire stations are not up to standard but the new stations will be built to a modern standard and presented the members with a visual display of both stations. The location

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for the Baltinglass station will be on a new site near Whitehall and the Dunlavin station will possibly be on Church Road.

The new stations will also include Female and Wheelchair friendly bathrooms.

Cllr. O' Neill thanked Mr. Dempsey for the presentation and queried the costings to complete the stations, he enquired if the stations would be constructed simultaneously or individually. Cost ?? Mr. Dempsey advised that the construction of both stations will be carried out in the most cost effective way, most likely by constructing the two in the same time period. He informed the members that the tender process will commence after the part 8 process

Cllr. Cronin said female storage rooms are badly needed in the stations and it was great to see the firefighters having an input into the design process.

6. Update on Baltinglass RRDF

Mr. Byrne informed the members that Baltinglass crew are currently working in the Baltinglass Town Park advising that work is progressing well. Uisce Eireann are also in the park carrying out work, they are making a water connection, this work should be finished in the coming weeks. Once completed work can commence on surfacing the path around the park.

A tender process took place for the construction of a new playground, a contract has been awarded a new playground will be constructed in the coming months. The old playground has been removed.

In relation to the Town Centre, the crews have gone off site as they do not have detailed design plans to finish off the scheme.

It was noted that Cllr. Timmins has already raised this issue with the Chief Executive.

Cllr. O' Neill remarked that everything moves too slowly in Baltinglass and presently it has been left in limbo. He also said there should be a united effort to move the Baltinglass project on. Cllr. O' Neill also stated that Mill Street and Edward Street in Baltinglass have been taken over by individuals to accommodate refugees. Mr. Devereux said he will raise the lack of progress on the Baltinglass RRDF project with the Chief executive.

Mr. Byrne also informed the members that a new pedestrian crossing at the Dutchmans corner is currently being installed which will include ramp and flashing lights, work on the crossing is expected to be completed next week.

7. To discuss and review speed limits in Baltinglass MD.

Mr. Byrne informed the members that there is a proposal from the Department of Transport to implement a default limit of 60kmp on all local roads. This will be brought before the members for discussion at the September Ordinary meeting of the full council. The implementation of the new default limit is expected to come into place in the coming months. Cllr. Stapleton queried the practicality of this change and questioned the need to change from current 80kmp on local roads. Cllr. Cronin suggested that it is driver behaviour that needs to change, more so than the speed limits. Cllr. O' Neill stated he is happy with this proposal as he had previously petitioned for lower speed limits on local roads throughout the District.

Mr. Graham stated that there would be an engineering input in to any proposed changes.

8. Election of Baltinglass Elected Members to committees.

- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC):
Cllr. Mulhall was proposed by Cllr. Glennon and seconded by Cllr. Stapleton.
Cllr. Mulhall nominated.
- Wicklow Tourism Alliance:
Cllr. Glennon was proposed by Cllr. Cronin and seconded by Cllr Stapleton.
Cllr. Glennon was nominated.
- Disability and Inclusion Steering Committee:
Cllr. Mulhall was proposed by Cllr. Glennon and seconded by Cllr. Cronin.
Cllr. Mulhall nominated.

9. Correspondence.

Mr. Cullen informed the members that he has received a response back from Dublin Bus regarding the issues raised with them relating to the current inadequacies with the Dublin/Blessington bus service, he advised that representatives from Dublin Bus are willing to meet with the Baltinglass elected members. Mr. Cullen said that he has proposed dates to them and he is waiting to hear back from them with a confirmed date for the meeting.

Cllr. O' Neill said this issue has been going on too long and is become very serious. People are being left behind and can't get home from work or school.

Cllr. Glennon advised that he had raised the issue of the problematic Dublin/Blessington bus service at the full council meeting in May but has yet to hear back from Wicklow County Council officials regarding the matter. Mr Marc Devereux said he would enquire from the meetings administrator if a response has been received back from Dublin Bus. Cllr Glennon thanked Mr Devereux and reiterated the importance getting a swift response on this matter

10. AOB

Cllr. O' Neill wants to bring to the attention of the CEO of Wicklow County Council the lack of housing and the need for more emergency accommodation in Blessington, he said he personally knows of five families who have been evicted this week from the Avon Ri. Mr. Devereux advised that these families should present themselves to the housing department in Wicklow Town, that this is the most effective way of dealing with the problem.

Cllr. Mulhall raised a query about a new housing development on the Kilmalum Road, the query related to who would has responsibility for the nearby roads and services, pointing out that the houses are in Kildare and the footpaths are in Wicklow. Mr. Byrne said he will have a look at that file.

Mr. Cullen made the members aware of an email that was sent to the District Administrator and elected members shortly before the meeting, it related to a complaint regarding a planning/construction issue at the private residence of 1 Orchard Court.

The resident of 1 Orchard Court, Mr. Hanlon was present at the meeting. Cllr. O' Neill proposed a suspension of standing orders to allow Mr Hanlon to speak and state his case. Despite members concerns of setting a precedent of allowing members in the public gallery to speak on individual and personal issues, Cllr O'Neill's proposal was seconded by Cllr. Mulhall and unanimously agreed by all members. Mr. Hanlon outlined his complaint to the members. Cllr. O' Neill thanked Mr. Hanlon and advised his fellow elected members that this matter should be taken seriously as it is a dangerous structure bordering the footpath on the inner relief road. Mr. Byrne made it clear as this was an

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official complaint regarding planning he would not be commenting on it as he does not have all the facts.

Ms Susan Rossiter from Blessington Forum's Christmas lights committee was in attendance in the public gallery, she requested to address the meeting with a view to seeking support for Blessington Christmas lights campaign.

A further suspension of standing orders was requested to accommodate this request. The suspension of standing orders was proposed by Cllr. Stapleton and seconded by Cllr. Mulhall and agreed by all members present.

On behalf of the committee, Ms Rossiter asked for support for the Christmas Tree Lights campaign. She requested financial support

Cllr. Glennon made the members aware of two girls from the district that will be representing Ireland at the Olympics in Paris, in the 7 a side Rugby. They are Lucy Mulhall from Tinahely and Erin King from Blessington. He suggested showing support for these two Olympians by donating from the Councillors discretionary funds.

It was proposed by Cllr. Stapleton and seconded by Cllr. Mulhall that each Councillor donate €600 to each Olympian. This was unanimously agreed by all members.

Mr. Cullen reminded the members that the Annual Tinahely Show was coming up on the Bank Holiday Weekend. Wicklow County Council would have a Marquee there showing services from Wicklow.

11. Date of next meeting

The next Baltinglass Municipal District ordinary meeting will be held on the 23rd September 2024 at 10:30am directly after the Policing meeting which will be at 9:30am.

There being no other business, Cllr. Glennon, concluded the meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR