

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Blessington Civic Offices on 23rd September 2024 at 10.30am

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

In Attendance: Ms. Theresa O' Brien, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Christina Brophy, Clerical Officer
Ms. Ann Marie Butler, Clerical Officer via Zoom
Ms Catherine Byrne, Assistant Staff Officer via Zoom
Mr Pat Burke, Clerical Officer

Presentation re: Age Friendly and Disability Housing for Mountain

Ms. Aideen Klauer, Acting Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Section
Ms. Helene Fallon, Senior Engineer, Housing Section

Presentation from WCC Climate Action Team.

Ms. Julie Sammiller, Climate Action Team WCC
Mr. Mark Costello, Climate Action Team WCC

Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon opened the meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd July 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr. Stapleton, seconded by Cllr. Mulhall and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd July 2024.

2. Presentation to Baltinglass MD Olympians and Paralympian

The three Baltinglass Municipal District based Olympians and Paralympians were invited to the October Baltinglass MD meeting to receive a presentation from the elected Members, to commemorate and acknowledge their achievements of representing Ireland and the Municipal District at the recent Paris Olympics and Paralympics.

Unfortunately due to work and sporting commitments the Olympic Irish rugby sevens representatives, Ms Lucy Mulhall and Ms Erin King were unable to attend the presentation.

Irish Paralympian Ms Kate Kerr Horan attended on the day and was presented with a cheque by Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon to acknowledge her efforts at this year's Paralympic Games. The Members thanked Kate for coming into the Council offices for the presentation, they said that she was an inspiration to all young people in Wicklow as well as all of the people in the equestrian community in Wicklow. The Members expressed their honour to be in the presence of one of Ireland's greatest ever Paralympians

Kate expressed her gratitude and appreciation to all the elected members for their support and then shared a picture with the group of her competing at the recent Paralympic games.

3. Matters Arising

District Administrator Liam Cullen advised that following on from a query at the September meeting where a question was asked if the Fire Stations in Dunlavin and Baltinglass will be constructed simultaneously, Mr Cullen confirmed that the feedback he received from the Design Team is that they will be both built simultaneously.

4. To consider Part 8 for Age Friendly and Disability Housing for Mountain View, Blessington.

Ms. Aideen Klauer, Senior Executive Engineer Housing and Ms. Helena Fallon, Senior Engineer Housing gave a presentation on the Part 8 for Age Friendly and Disability Housing for Mountain View, Blessington.

Ms. Klauer explained that there is a demand and a requirement for this type of housing in Blessington. She advised that they have listened to and taken on board residents opinions which were received during the Part 8 Public Consultation. She explained that whilst disruption will be unavoidable during the construction phase they will have a complex construction management plan in place throughout the duration of the project. Obscured glazing will be installed to prevent overlooking to other properties to the East and West of

the development. All planning guidelines will be adhered to and they will do their utmost best to retain existing trees and hedgerows.

Cllr. O' Neill proposed confirmation of the Part 8 citing he is delighted that this project is almost at construction stage. Cllr. Stapleton seconded this proposal and it was unanimously supported by all the Members present

Cllr. Timmins said he supports this development, one reservation he has is the lack of communication with the residents in the estate as they feel they haven't been consulted, adequately throughout the development process.

Cllr. Mulhall reiterated all of the above and noted a lot of the residents there are elderly or have mobility issues so he too would be in favour of communicating with the residents and bringing them along on at every stage of the journey.

Cllr. Cronin stated it is fantastic to see this development taking off and she would love to see more developments like this across the whole district. She also encouraged more communication with the locals at each stage of the project.

Cllr. Glennon also welcomed this update and said he fully supports the development.

5. Presentation from members of the Wicklow County Council Climate Action Team.

Mr. Costello and Ms. Sammiller gave a presentation on projects currently being delivered by Wicklow County Council Climate Action Team. Ms Sammiller explained that the Community Climate Action Programme, of which County Wicklow has received an allocation of €646,000. This is a National Programme, She explained that there are 5 themes under the programme which groups can apply for funding from, they include Travel, Food & Waste, Shopping and Recycling, Community & Energy and Local Climate & Environmental Action.

There are currently 40 projects running for the whole county, 11 of which are projects within the Baltinglass MD District.

Mr. Costello explained that under the Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan there are 112 Actions for the entire county. There are lots of existing policies due be reviewed and updated this year and next.

The following plans were opened for Public consultation today Pre-Draft of the 2025 - 2030 Biodiversity Action Plan, Draft WCC Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy and Development Guidelines, Draft Wicklow Noise Action Plan 2025-2028, and there are Environmental awareness workshops ongoing throughout the county to coincide with the First WCC Climate Action Week that is taking place this year and its running from Monday 14th – Sunday 20th October.

The updated policies will consider lots of different areas like, Rainwater Management Plan, Flood basins and New housing developments to conform to green policies to name a few.

Mr. Costello also said they are looking at the possibility of introducing a pilot scheme for e-mobility bikes in Blessington along with community Notice boards.

Members Comments and Observations (Climate Action Team)

Cllr. Mulhall welcomed this programme and looks forward to the implementation, he would like to see these policies expedited and brought across the west of the county. He would like to ensure planned development landscaping is enforced and tree management is very important. Cllr. Mulhall also welcomes the idea of a community notice board and enquired into the alternative available for Glyphosate usage.

Mr. Byrne commented on the Wicklow County Council Tree Management Policy was in place and advised that there are over 1000 mature trees in the district and significant funding would be required to go alongside this policy to ensure effective implementation especially as the policy has been adopted.

Mr. Graham agreed with this statement adding that professional arborists are required in most cases brought to the Engineers attention and he pointed out there is a lack of funding available to deal with these situations. He also welcomed new policies for drainage and flooding and indicated that the increase in flooding is due to a number of factors in addition to Climate Change including changes in land management and usage over the past century.

Cllr. O' Neill asked where all this funding will come from for all these schemes.

6. Update on Baltinglass RRDF

Not Discussed

7. To Consider Roads Reports (National and Non-National Roads)

Mr. Byrne advised the members that the annual N81 verge trimming/drainage and litter pick up has been completed. Drainage works are due to start in the near future at Tinode on the N81. Cllr. Timmins welcomed the work on the N81 and complimented the District Engineer on ensuring that the N81 stayed open during works, he highlighted that local businesses suffered greatly on previous occasions when Carlow County Council closed a section of the N81 south of Baltinglass whilst carrying out similar works.

Mr Byrne informed the Members that there will be a new roundabout installed at the new housing development Aldborough Manor in Baltinglass as this was a condition of the planning permission. Mr. Byrne informed everyone that the works are estimated to start in 4-8 weeks time and the construction will take 4 -8 weeks to complete. He also stated that one lane will remain open at all times during construction.

Mr Graham updated members in relation to the delivery of projects on the Non-National Roads across the district.

Members Comments and Observations (National and Non-National roads)

Cllr. O'Neill asked what three LIS schemes were on the secondary list in the district. Mr. Byrne explained the LIS schemes are done Countywide in order of oldest to newest application.

Mr Graham in response to a query from Cllr Mulhall explained the difference between RI and RM Schemes.

Cllr. Timmins asked for an update on the tender for fixing street lights. Mr. Byrne informed him that a Killaree Lighting services were successful in the tender process and have been awarded the contract, the contract is due to be signed in the coming weeks

Cllr Stapleton enquired as to the progress of road safety measures and line markings in Carnew. He also asked if line markings could be done on the roads in Crossbridge (R747) and Tomacork Crossroads.

Cllr. Cronin asked for an update on the flood prevention measures at Slaney Mall in Baltinglass. Mr Graham advised that this Slaney Mall scheme is currently being handled by Wicklow County Council Environment section and funding is being sought by the Department to carry out the required flood prevention works.

Cllr Cronin asked for an update on Colbinstown Bridge.

Cllr Cronin queried if was possible to introduce traffic calming measures on the road outside the GAA pitch in Valleymount. The District Engineer explained that there are issues with site lines entering and exiting the GAA grounds due to an overgrown hedge on the GAA grounds property which is obstructing views of oncoming traffic, he felt the removal of the hedge by the GAA club would help improve the situation and is necessary.

Cllr. Cronin pointed out that the road at Griffinstown was recently resurfaced but road signs have not been put back in place yet.

Cllr. Glennon asked for an update on road safety scheme in Kiltegan village. Mr. Graham responded that they are working through a design and procurement process at present.

Cllr. O' Neill raised concerns about the state of the road surface on the ESB owned bridge at Knockieran highlighting that it is in poor state and badly needs to be resurfaced.

Mr. Byrne responded that the ESB are responsible for maintenance on these bridges and that there are ongoing discussions between Wicklow County Council and the ESB as to who is responsible for the maintenance of the surface on the bridge. Mr Byrne advise that Wicklow County Council are of the opinion that the maintenance of all ESB owned bridges falls under the remit of the ESB and explained that the Baltinglass Municipal District have not been allocated a budget to maintain the bridges

Cllr. O' Neill proposed that the ESB be invited to the next meeting, Cllr. Timmins seconded this proposal and it was agreed by all Members present.

Cllr Timmins said the Knockieran Bridge should be a landmark feature on the approach to Blessington. He also pointed out that if the CE was asked to make contact directly with the ESB the issue may be expedited and result to the issue found.

Ms. O' Brien said she will check with the CE and Legal Department before making contact with the ESB as she did not want a letter from the District to jeopardise any current negotiations with the ESB.

8. To consider nomination of one Baltinglass Elected Member on to the Wicklow Heritage Forum

Cllr. Cronin nominated Cllr. O' Neill to the Wicklow Heritage Forum, this was seconded by Cllr. Mulhall and unanimously agreed.

9. To consider the nomination of one Baltinglass Elected Member on to the Wicklow Local Sports Partnership Committee.

Cllr. Cronin nominated Cllr. Mulhall on to the Wicklow Local Sports Partnership Committee, this was seconded by Cllr. Timmins and was unanimously agreed.

10. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen informed the members that there will be a PPN workshop in St. Kevin's Hall Blessington on the 1st October, all Baltinglass Elected Members are invited to attend.

Mr. Cullen also brought to the members attention that Blessington Forum group had been in contact and are looking for funding for their Christmas lights campaign. They have applied for a Leader grant which will cover 75% of the cost and they need to raise the remaining 25% themselves. Contributions towards the cost of the installation and removal of the lights was also sought by the group

Cllr Glennon proposed to give €5,000 from the Members discretionary fund to the Blessington Christmas Lights campaign but this is subject to the Forum securing the Leader Grant in 2024, this proposal was seconded by Cllr Mulhall and agreed by the majority of the Members present

Cllr O'Neill expressed his concerns at Baltinglass Municipal District supporting the Blessington Forum, highlighting an incident that occurred earlier in the year where he alleges that members of the public were refused entry to a Forum meeting and that these members of the public were advised that the Gardaí would be called if they did not leave. Cllr Mulhall wanted it noted that no member of the Blessington Forum called or threatened to call the Gardaí.

Mr. Cullen made all the members aware that the applications for funding for Christmas lights are out now and the deadline for these applications is 11th October.

11. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Mulhall informed the Members that the Blessington Tidy Towns groups have received their bronze medal for their success in last year's competition.

12. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 21st October.

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

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

DRAFT