

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass

held in the Civic Offices, Blessington on 27th June 2016 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor Tommy Cullen
Councillor Pat Doran
Councillor Gerry O'Neill
Councillor Jim Ruttle
Councillor Edward Timmins

In attendance: Mr. Sean Quirke, Director of Services
Mr. Declan Geraghty, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Ms. Máire Halvey, District Administrator

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Edward Timmins, opened the Ordinary Meeting.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 23rd May 2016.

Councillor Gerry O'Neill proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass held on 23rd May 2016 and Councillor Jim Ruttle seconded the proposal

2. Roads Reports

The national and non-national roads were presented to the meeting. Councillor Tommy Cullen paid tribute to Mr. Declan Geraghty and the works and signage works that were being carried out. Councillor Vincent Blake enquired if all the works were done and Mr. Geraghty stated that at Stratford on Slaney, bridge works were required to raise the level of the road and that funding of €30,000.00 for works had Lughnaskeagh had be transferred to Scalp. Councillor Pat Doran thanked the engineers for the great work done on putting in a footpath out the Primary Care Centre in Carnew and enquired if there might be any funding for more footpaths on the Coolattin Road and the Aughtim Road. Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer, advised that works would be done re. improvement of the locations. Councillor Vincent Blake enquired about the new speed limit proposal and what stage it was at. Mr. Sean Quirke, Director of Services, advised that it would be the end of the year before the proposals would be back to the full Council for consideration and that it would then go on public display. Councillor Blake enquired if the criteria had changed and if there were new regulations. Mr. Quirke advised that the regulations were for consistency Councillor Jim Ruttle enquired if the proposals were still open for submission. Councillor Blake enquired if Mr. Declan of Brien, Executive Engineer could attend a meeting of the municipal district to give an update of the areas being considered. It was agreed that when the report on the proposals was ready, Mr. O'Brien would be invited to either the September or October Meeting. The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Edward Timmins, enquired when the N8 road surfacing works would be done, would it be September when the

traffic lights are in place? Mr. Sean Quirke advised that the engineer had been out to look at the junction. Councillor Tommy Cullen enquired if there could be a trial of the lights before a final decision is made. Mr. Sean Quirke advised that the lights will have sensors in the road and that temporary traffic lights wouldn't have that. Councillor Cullen enquired what would happen with the pedestrian lights. Mr. Declan Geraghty and Mr. Dermot Graham advised that pedestrian would cross closed to the junction on demand. Councillor Cullen enquired if the lights had been taken into account in the new town plan. Mr. Declan Geraghty advised that they had and that it was the same contractor. Mr. Sean Quirke advised that the sequence can be altered. Councillor Cullen enquired if school times had been taken into account and Mr. Geraghty stated that the lights will react to queues. Mr. Sean Quirke stated that the objective is that anyone can approach the junction safely. Councillor Cullen enquired if a meeting could be arranged if there are any problems and he was advised it could.

3. Housing Rents

The members discussed the recent rent review with some of the following comments being made - some tenants had been notified of dramatic increases in rent up to 200%. Councillor Cullen enquired if the scheme allowed a maximum of 11% in any single year and requested that the housing section of Wicklow County Council be written requesting that any rent increase of more than 11 % be reviewed by the Director of Services for Housing and Corporate Estate. Councillor Gerry O'Neill stated that he would agree with Councillor Cullen and that some cases he had brought to the attention of the housing department had worked out well on appeal. Councillor Jim Ruttle stated that housing staff have worked hard on the rent review but there were still huge increases. Councillor Cullen stated that private housing rents wouldn't be allowed to be increased by these amounts, that an increase of more than 10% would be in front of the Private Residential Tenancies Board. Councillor Edward Timmins stated that we should be careful what we wished for. Councillor Cullen stated that local authority rents were on a par with private rents. Councillor O'Neill stated that he agreed with the Cathaoirleach. Councillor Pat Doran stated that rents had been increased by €50.00 if forms hadn't been returned and then tenants had returned the forms for assessment. Councillor Cullen stated that this argument had been going on twenty years ago and that an 11% increase is significant and some tenants have had a 200% increase in one year. Councillor Timmins stated that there was danger of inequality where someone started working. Councillor Cullen stated that it was too sharp a shock to triple someone's rent.

The members agreed that the matter of rent increases be referred for discussion at the next meeting of the full council and that the relevant Director of Services be requested to furnish a report for same.

4. Tourism Projects

A tourist index or tourist trail brochure for West Wicklow was discussed and it was agreed to contact Ms. Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer and County Wicklow Tourism to see if they could attend the next meeting to provide some information on what might be done in this regard and to avoid duplication.

Councillor Blake and Councillor Doran spoke of a visit by approximately 30 Canadians to Carnew and Environs in early August and enquired about the possibility of providing a contribution

towards costs. Councillor Blake is to request that further information regarding the visit be forwarded to Ms. Máire Halvey.

5. Correspondence

A letter was received from Coolboy Tidy Towns but the members agreed that funding of tidy towns had been done in 2015 as part of the Discretionary Fund but that this funding was being used for other causes in 2016.

6. Any Other Business

(i) Request for Deputation

Councillor Jim Ruttle stated that the Glending Residents Group had been in contact and requested a deputation to the July meeting. This was agreed. The Members also requested that Ms. Kiara Kavanagh, Tenant Liaison Officer, Wicklow County Council, be requested to attend the meeting.

(ii) County Development Plan

Councillor Edward Timmins stated that they weren't going to agree to submissions made by An Taisce and proposed that they be deleted entirely and that nothing should go in that would make it harder for anyone to get planning.

(iii) Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 25th July 2016 in Civic Offices, Blessington at 10.30 a.m.

Signed: Edward Timmins

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: Máire Halvey

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: 27th July 2016