

## **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Germaines, Baltinglass on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018, at 10.30 a.m.**

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

**In Attendance:** Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager  
Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer  
Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator  
Ms. Geraldine Jordan, Assistant Staff Officer  
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer  
Ms. Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tommy Cullen, opened the ordinary meeting.

### **1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 of the Municipal District of Baltinglass.**

Cllr. Pat Doran proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and this was seconded by Cllr. Jim Ruttle.

### **2. Matters Arising.**

Cllr Blake commented on the presentation by Mark Deveraux, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Department, WCC given at the November meeting on new housing proposals in the Baltinglass Municipal District, he highlighted the need to make sure water and sewerage facilities were adequate to cope with these new builds and indicated it should be put on the agenda for a meeting in early 2019. Cllr. Blake noted that issues in relation to water and sewage were not unique to Carnew but also affected other parts of the county such as Dunlavin and Blessington.

Cllr. Ruttle concurred with Cllr Blake's comments and highlighted the need for lighting on the footpath to the football pitch in Blessington. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer, responded that a report about this issue would be ready in early January 2018

Cllr. O'Neill, seconded Cllr Blake's request for water and sewerage to be put on the agenda. Cllr. O'Neill also suggested that the councillors should have a separate meeting to discuss the Blessington town development plan. Sean Quirke, District Manager, informed members that until the Regional Spatial Strategy was adopted, the development of town and area plans was on hold. Mr. Quirke then

outlined the hierarchy of the plans. It was agreed by all members to have a special meeting in the New Year to discuss town plans. Date for a special meeting to be agreed in January.

Cllr. Edward Timmins asked about if there any progress with the “timing” of pedestrian lights in Dunlavin, Declan Geraghty, DE, responded he had contacted the company and was waiting for them to do an inspection of the lights and to advise accordingly.

Declan Geraghty, DE, informed the meeting that the trees in the graveyard at Burgage were cut on one side and these on the other side would be completed early in the New Year.

### **3. Presentation**

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Cullen welcomed Mr. Billy Timmons, Dr Alan Hawkes (UCC), Dr James O’Driscoll (UCC) and Ms. Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer (WCC) to the meeting and highlighted the importance of the history and archaeology of ringforts in the Baltinglass Area and asked Mr. Billy Timmons to introduce Dr Alan Hawkes. Mr. Timmons thanked everyone for this opportunity to address the meeting and agreed with Cllr. Cullen regarding the importance of this project to the Baltinglass Municipal District, before introducing Dr. Hawkes.

Dr. Hawkes thanked everyone and began by highlighting the significant cluster of prehistoric monuments in the Baltinglass area. These sites are known as the Baltinglass Cluster with ringforts covering between 1 and 10 hectares in size. These sites appear to have been developed by the migration of various groups of political rivals and families over many generations. Of the five sites in the immediate vicinity of Baltinglass, Rathcloran is the most impressive. Geophysical investigation has discovered a causeway burnt out 6,000 years ago during the Neolithic period.

Spinnans is one of the largest contour ringforts from the same period which needs more investigation. Tinoran which dates from the Bronze Age and Cranderry also have had limited investigation. Tuckmill is the centre of a 3 fort cluster with Rathcloran to the South East and Shruhan which had an impressive stockade located to the south. Investigations at Shruhan have aged the site as approximately 4,000 years old, during the Bronze Age.

Works during 2017 included the excavation of 2 trenches at Rathcloran through the rampart structure. The passage tomb at Rathcloran was excavated in the 1930’s. Geophysical surveying of the interior of the fort was also carried out in 2017 and this identified the location of multiple individual dwellings within the fort.

Future studies will include the investigation of these dwellings as works to date have concentrated on the ramparts. The potential to draw tourists to the area is unique and down the line a local interpretive centre could assist in explaining the history of these ringforts and drawing tourists to the area. Such a project due to the fact that most of these sites are on private land would require a significant Buy-In from local landowners and states agencies such as the Local Authority.

Cllr. Cullen thanked Dr Hawkes for his informative and detailed presentation and asked what Wicklow County Council could do to assist in progression the development of this nationally significant area. Cllr. noted that Ringfort cluster was not only of significance for the Baltinglass area but was of national importance. Dr. Hawes agreed and pointed out that at present we had just a small glimpse into the history and culture of the sites.

Cllr. Timmons commended Dr Hawkes on his presentation and asked Ms. Burns for her observations on the potential for the site. Ms. Deirdre Burns indicated that there was an exciting project and there was an opportunity to develop it further. Ms. Burns also noted the potential for collaboration on the project similar to that which exists for Glendalough and that one of the next steps could be the potential development of a conservation management plan for the area. The development of conservation management plan could be done through Wicklow Heritage Forum, the Heritage Council and in partnership with Dr. Hawes.

Cllr. Ruttle thanked Dr. Hawes for the presentation and noted that the area has possibilities as a tourist attraction and he pointed out that conservation management plan should also explore the possibility of the development of an interpretative centre in the area.

Cllr. Cullen enquired how much it would take to complete study of the sites and present a report. Dr Hawkes indicated that he has potentially a further years funding from The Royal Irish Academy for investigation works and it was not possible at the moment to put an overall cost of completely excavating the sites. He noted that cost of a four week season of a trench investigation would be in excess of €10,000, due to permits and intensive labour involved. He suggested that a management plan would be a good path forward to develop this area. Ms. Deirdre Burns indicated that she would pursue funding options with various bodies. Mr. Billy Timmons in summing up highlighted that the area falls under the tourism promotion "Ireland's Ancient East" brand and could potentially benefit from rural regeneration funding. Mr. Timmons informed members that in the ringforts we have a project that, when developed, will be of national importance.

Cllr Ruttle also thanked Dr Hawkes and highlighted the need for a centre like the one in Newgrange to showcase the importance of the area for tourism. Cllr O'Neill agreed on the importance of this

project and asked if there was register of prehistoric sites. Ms. Burns informed the meeting of a website [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) which shows the ringforts and other similar sites.

#### **4. To consider Roads Reports (National and Non-National Roads)**

The National Roads report and Non-National Roads report were circulated to members.

Cllr. Cullen showed the meeting a petition from families who have relatives buried in Kilranalagh Graveyard, the petition is to have the access road upgraded to facilitate access to the graveyard. Dermot Graham, EE, highlighted that this road was included on the 2019 Roads Programme. Cllr Cullen indicated that a memorial mass would be held in the graveyard in April 2019 as it was believed it was to be the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the graveyard, even though some markers indicated the graveyard may be older.

Cllr Ruttle enquired in relation to bridge repairs in the Sally Gap area and Declan Geraghty, DE indicated that these had been done. He also highlighted that funding for footpath repair works was being carried forward into 2019. Cllr Ruttle enquired in relation to the report on the footpath at Hollywood. Declan Geraghty, DE, indicated that he was meeting landowners and the report should be available for the February meeting. Cllr Timmons indicated that he was anxious that carried over monies be spent. Cllr Blake enquired in relation to bridge works at Killabeg and Kevin Street in Tinahely. Dermot Graham, EE, highlighted that some stabilisation works had been completed at Killabeg in 2018 by the WCC Bridge Crew and that he hoped to start site preparation works in early 2019 on Kevin Street.

Cllr O'Neill raised the issue of speed limit reviews especially in relation to Deerpark, Shillelagh. Cllr Doran indicated that the issue at Deerpark was a series of bends after a long straight was causing difficulties. Dermot Graham, EE indicated that he would look at installing additional warning signs on the section of road. Cllr Doran also requested an update from the engineer in relation to the installation of a drain at Cranierin Graveyard which he raised previously. Dermot Graham, EE indicated that this would be completed in the first quarter 2019. There was a discussion on the state of the junctions in Carnew and the works required in the area.

Cllr Cullen thanked both engineers and their staff for the work undertaken in 2018.

#### **5. Discretionary Funding**

Cllr Timmins indicated it was his understanding the discretionary funding of €30,125 was available to each councillor. District Manager, Mr. Sean Quirke outlined the funding available in Baltinglass

Municipal District for 2019 this included €56,250 for footpaths (Asset Renewal Works), €180,750 for Discretionary funding (Public Realm Works) and €93,750 for IPB footpath works (Identified Risk Elimination Works). He also noted that, at the previous meeting, which councillors had agreed to minimise proposals to three items per councillor for public realm works under the discretionary funding. Cllr. Blake proposed the adoption of these budgets and Cllr. Ruttle seconded this. It was agreed that the €56,250 should be administered by the area engineers to improve foot paths in the Municipal District.

Cllr. Doran indicated he would fund warning signs on the Straight Mile (Deerpark, Shillelagh) and enquired in relation to progress on works at the 3 junctions in Carnew and public lighting on Coolattin Road. Cllr Timmons also enquired in relation to progress on public lighting in Baltinglass.

Cllr Cullen proposed making an allocation of €5,000 to the heritage officer to progress the development of a strategic for West Wicklow Ringforts. Cllr Timmons and Cllr. Ruttle agreed to match this funding. Cllr O'Neill proposed funding of €2,000 to the Tearmann Centre for the excellent work they do. Cllr Timmons agreed to allocate €2,400 to this.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Cullen requested that all members have their lists finalised for the January meeting.

#### **6. Protocol in relation to Official Openings in the BMD**

Cllr. Blake, noted the work previously undertaken by Ms. Dionne Dixon, the former District Administrator in relation to honouring the achievements of citizens from the district and the fact that their achievement of note should be recognised. He noted local citizens such as former Irish Rugby International Bernard Jackman who should receive recognition. Cllr O'Neill noted the retirement of Pat Moran of the ESB who had worked with the MD over the years as another suitable recipient.

Cllr O'Neill also enquired what the procedure was where a Minister attends official opening / unveiling functions within the MD. Cllr Ruttle also highlighted the issue regarding the development of a swimming pool for West Wicklow, where announcements were made to media outlets without the knowledge of the elected members who have been promoting this issue for some time.

Sean Quirke, District Manager, outlined the procedure in relation to official opening functions, whereby the Minister of the Government Department providing the funding has first call in relation to the opening. If the Minister does not want to take up the offer for opening they can nominate an alternative Minister / Junior Minister / TD, (usually local to the constituency) to represent them. Failing this the duty falls to the Cathaoirleach of the County Council and if this is not an option the duty falls finally to the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District. He also outlined that with limited

access to government ministers such occasions provided opportunities to highlight deficiencies such as the outdated fire station in Baltinglass and to lobby the relevant Minister and Department for funding for new facilities.

Cllr Cullen, enquired if a new date had been set for the function at the Fire Station. Cllr Timmons indicated that the previously scheduled opening which was cancelled with the Minister enroute was a fiasco, as was the visit by the Minister for Transport to the District without liaising with the local members. Sean Quirke, DM, noted the common factor in both situations was the lack of liaison with the Municipal District.

In relation to the development of a swimming pool, Sean Quirke, DM, noted that the CCSD Section of WCC were responsible for this project. Cllr Cullen asked that a representative of the CCSD section attend a MD meeting in early 2019 to update members in relation to this important issue for West Wicklow. It was agreed by members to invite the Director of Services, CCSD to a meeting of Baltinglass MD in early 2019. Cllr. Cullen noted that this would offer the opportunity for members to get a detailed briefing on projects being supported by the section and on proposed projects.

#### **7. Correspondence**

Mr. Garvan Hickey, DA, read through the correspondence received since the last meeting. These included confirmation that the District had been awarded €15,000 to develop WiFi at Baltinglass Courthouse under WiFi4EU Funding.

Correspondence was received from the Housing Section in relation to submissions relating to the Part 8 Planning for Housing in Carnew which is due in February. The Housing Section were looking for a Special Meeting in February to present the Part 8 and it was agreed to hold the meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

Also it was noted that €13,000 had been awarded to Baltinglass for Christmas Lights through Leader Funding.


#### **8. AOB**

Cllr. Blake noted that issues had been raised in relation to the area around the school in Knockananna with the Area Engineer. Cllr Blake also raised an issue in relation to trees near newly acquired council housing in Tinahely. Dermot Graham, EE, noted that he was aware of both issues and that he had advised the housing tenants to liaise with the Housing Section as the issues raise were outside the

control of the Area office. He also noted that significant works will continue in Knockananna in the New Year on footpaths.

The meeting was closed by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Cullen who wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

Signed:

  
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:

  
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

28/01/2019

