

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Civic Offices, Blessington on 27<sup>th</sup> November 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  
Mr. Derek Cullen, Assistant Staff Officer

**Apologies:** Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer

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 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 and to confirm and sign minutes the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.**

Cllr. Vincent Blake proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 and this was seconded by Cllr. Jim Ruttle.

Cllr. Edward Timmins proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 and this was seconded by Cllr. Vincent Blake.

**2. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**3. To consider Disposal of land in Blessington to Gas Networks Ireland**

Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer, briefed members of the proposal to dispose of approximately 1 square meter of land at Beechdale in Blessington to Gas Networks Ireland for the purpose of retrospectively installing new District Regulation Installation unit. Members were provided with two maps highlighting the location of the land.

Gas Networks Ireland had applied to Wicklow County Council for the acquisition of land in Beechdale, Naas Road, Blessington for the sum of €500.00, together with any reasonable professional fees incurred, in order to proceed with the installation. Mr. Geraghty recommended that this area of

land be disposed of to Gas Networks Ireland for the sum of €500, plus any professional fees incurred and subject to no fence, structure or other appliances being placed within a horizontal distances of 400mm of the roadway edge.

Cllr. Jim Ruttle proposed the disposal of land in Blessington to Gas Networks Ireland and this was seconded by Cllr. Pat Doran. It was noted that the disposal of the land will go before the January meeting of Wicklow County Council for member's approval.

**4. To receive a briefing from Mark Devereaux, S.E.E. Housing & Corporate Estate regarding Part 8 Application for Housing Development in Carnew.**

Mr. Mark Devereaux, Senior Executive Engineer, and Mr. Damien Cussen, Quantity Surveyor, of the Housing Department, Wicklow County Council, informed the members of the Part 8 application for the new housing development in Carnew and copies of plans of the development were distributed to the councillors.

Members unanimously welcomed the fact that Wicklow County Council were back building houses in the Municipal District and the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Tommy Cullen noted that this is something members have been looking for with the housing shortage in area.

The following points and questions were raised by members in relation to the proposed development:

- There should not be any delay in the progression of this development as it is needed.
- Will there be back entrances into these properties?
- What level of heating can be retained in the event of a power outage?
- Is there sufficient space to securely and safely store bins?
- How are the houses once completed to be allocated, will there be priority given to people from the area that are in need of housing.
- What would happen the heating system in the event of a power outage.

Mr. Devereaux and Mr. Cussen informed the members of the following:

- There shouldn't be any delay once Wicklow County Council gets Part 8 approval in February 2019. It is hoped to be able to then proceed to stage 2 and to go to tender in June / July 2019 with work to commence in September 2019.
- Approval had just been received from the Department to progress with the development.
- The development is to be built to an extremely high standard and will be energy efficient.
- The average energy cost is €10 per week. The air to water heating pumps will ensure that the costs to the householder are kept to a minimum.

- It was noted that in the event of a power outage oil heating would also not operate but if the power does go, the development is in a town setting so it would not be an isolated outage.
- The Executive Architect, Mr. Andrew Macken, of the housing department in Wicklow County Council did a lot of work to ensure the best design on this development.
- There will be no back entrances to the properties but bin spaces have been allocated to the front of the properties. There is also room for coal bunkers if tenants do not use three bins.
- The houses will all be Nearly Zero – Energy Building standard (NZEB) rated.
- Housing officials visited local authority houses in Co. Carlow with similar energy heating and it is extremely efficient.

Cllr. Cullen welcomed the presentation and noted that was great to see that we were discussing building houses again, he also informed members that proposed development would be on the agenda for the February meeting for their formal consideration.

There was a discussion on the allocation of houses to people that are on the housing waiting list with members expressing concern over the allocation policy. The main items of concern were as follows

- What is the procedure of the allocation of houses to people with ASB histories as it seems some people with Anti Social Behaviour histories have been allocated houses in developments?
- Is it possible that this Municipal District have any future say in the allocation of houses to people?
- Are allocations still processed through a points system?
- Can this Municipal District request someone from the Housing department attend our next meeting to inform the councillors as to how allocations are done?

Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager, informed the members of the following:

- The allocation of houses is done centrally and is done in accordance with Wicklow County Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities.

The members agreed that the District Administrator request the attendance of a representative of the housing department in Wicklow County Council attend the December meeting to clarify the housing allocation process.

#### **Relet of house in Knockananna**

Cllr. Vincent Blake asked if he could raise an issue about a house in Knockananna. He stated that there was a fire in this house over one year ago but the house still has not been fixed up. He stated that

this property is currently lying idle and that he wanted to request a report from Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer but unfortunately Mr. Graham is not here. He asked is there a budget issue here and is this the reason why the house has not been renovated?

Declan Geraghty, District Engineer informed Cllr. Vincent Blake that the budget is not an issue. He added that the main problem is the organisation of labour etc and there may be an issues going forward because, increasingly the District Office is being asked to do relets when it was previously done centrally. Mr. Geraghty stated that he will check the status of this issue.

#### **5. To consider Roads Reports (national and non-national roads).**

Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer presented a report to the meeting on non national roads and copies of same were distributed to the members. Copies of the three year roads plan were also circulated to members.

Cllr. Timmins queried considering the lateness of the allocation from the Department for fixing flood damaged roads if the allocation would be spent by the end of the year. Cllr. Timmins also asked if work on footpaths in Baltinglass had been undertaken this year. Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer advised members that works had been undertaken on footpaths in Baltinglass and that work had been carried out to repair roads damaged by weather this year but a larger allocation would be required to carry out all the works that needed to be done.

Cllr. O' Neill expressed concern at the state of some of the bridges across the county especially Woodend Bridge, he noted that extra funding should be allocated to bridge maintenance as they would cost more in the long run if that had to be replaced.

Cllr. Cullen asked if Kilranelagh Lane could be included in next year's programme as it provides access to a very historical graveyard and next year is a very significant anniversary. He noted that the works should only cost approximately €25,000.

Cllr. Timmins welcomed the works that had been completed on Mill Street and Edward Street and noted that it was good to see small and medium sized projects are being completed.

Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager, advised members that changes can be made to the programme but there can be no change to the overall budget. If a project is brought forward from year three to year one another project will have to be deferred.

*Declan Geraghty, District Engineer, informed members the following:*

- That he hopes to see bridge repairs being funded over the next few years as there are 7 or 8 bridges that are currently under review for repairs.

- Regarding Edward Street, there is an application in for works on the footpaths and it is intended to do this work next year depending on the funding allocation.

### **National Roads Report**

Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer presented a report to the meeting on national roads and copies of same were distributed to the members.

Cllr. Edward Timmins presented a detailed report to members on the work of the N81 committee to members. Cllr. Edward Timmins then proposed that this Council supports the inclusion of the N81 development in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Jim Ruttle.

Cllr. Gerry O' Neill asked through the chair as to where this report is on display. Cllr. Edward Timmins stated that it is online while the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen stated that he also has a hard copy and he will bring it to the District Office to leave on display.

Cllr. Cullen proposed that the N81 committee should make a submission on the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to ensure that N81 is copper fastened in the strategy, he noted that he had been advised by the Chief Executive that having the N81 development in the strategy would be of tremendous help when it came to applying for funding for the road. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Doran who complimented all the work that had been done by the committee.

Members also noted the following points in relation to the N81

- The T.I.I has not been very co-operative with Wicklow County Council. They have stated that they will review this decision in 2027. We need this to be more immediate.
- Can we request a meeting with the Minister to discuss this issue?
- Members complimented the hard work of the N81 committee.
- Members asked for guidelines from the T.I.I on what is allowed in the vicinity of the 300 meters designation.
- People along this stretch are not selling property in a panic.

Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager, noted that the T.I.I has selected a preferred route and they have sterilised the area because they do not want building along the route that will disrupt the plans.

The Standing Orders were then suspended in order for Cllr. Gerry O' Neill to make a proposal regarding the removal/ reduction of the area that was to be sterilised. Cllr. O'Neill proposed that the

District Administrator would write to the T. I. I. asking for an urgent review of the area which was frozen for development in order to facilitate development of land and possible sale of land.

After a discussion of the merits of this proposal Cllr. O'Neill agreed to liaise with the District Manager to see if wording could be developed which would not undermine the case for the development of the N81.

Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager informed members that at present proposed developments are considered on a case by case basis and the TII have indicated that they will consider developments on the verge of the 300 meters.

Cllr. Cullen noted that if a motion was submitted it could be considered at the December meeting.

### **Hollywood and Donard Footpaths**

Cllr. Jim Ruttle asked for an update on the Hollywood and Donard footpaths. He added that funding has recently been allocated for rural regeneration. Sean Quirke, District Manager, informed the meeting that the CCSD department are managing this funding but he added that there are ongoing issues with the landowner in Hollywood, which could prove a stumbling block.

### **Blessington School Road**

Cllr. Jim Ruttle asked how Baltinglass Municipal District would proceed with taking in charge the road leading up to Blessington G.A.A as it is in very bad condition.

Declan Geraghty, District Engineer informed the members that this is a private road so we are unable to spend public money to repair. He added that the Council is unlikely to take it in charge as it would end up costing the council a lot of money as a liability.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen requested a report on this issue for the next meeting.

## **6. To discuss the Discretionary Fund 2019.**

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen suggested to the members that each Councillor has an equal amount of discretionary funding allocated. This was agreed unanimously.

Cllr. Tommy Cullen then proposed that any funding from the discretionary funding that has not been spent in 2018 can be carried forward to 2019. This was seconded by Cllr. Ruttle.

Cllr. Cullen also added that as last year there were 36 jobs highlighted by the 6 members it took up an undue amount of administrative time, he proposed that this year the members try to adhere to 3 items each. It was agreed that all members should submit their proposals to the District Engineer within the

next two weeks. The members agreed to the suggestion that the councillors' wish lists for works to be carried out using their discretionary funding be limited to three items where possible. This was proposed by Cllr. Timmins and seconded by Cllr. Ruttle.

Cllr. Timmins noted that if there is a job that is simple and straightforward the Council should consider it depending on funding.

Cllr. Jim Ruttle asked if there is any point of putting public lighting issues in because the E.S.B seems to be taking an extremely long time in attending reported faults. Sean Quirke, District Manager stated that there are a number of parties involved in repairing faults now, as opposed to previously when the E.S.B managed it solely. Cllr. Timmins noted that funding of €18,000 had been allocated for lights in Deerpark but they had not been installed.

Cllr. O'Neill asked if the District Engineer could provide guidance on projects which needed to be completed in the area and fitted in with the existing work plan.

#### **7. To consider distribution of funding to interested groups for Christmas Light Funding.**

Members were provided with details of applications received from groups for Christmas lights and members agreed to allocate the funding as follows.

<b>2018 Christmas Lights Allocation of Funding</b>	
<i>Shillelagh Christmas Tree &amp; Lighting Fund</i>	€500
<i>Coolboy &amp; District Tidy Towns</i>	€500
<i>Tinahely Illuminations Committee</i>	€1,500
<i>Kiltegan Tidy Towns</i>	€500
<i>Blessington &amp; District Forum</i>	€1,000
<i>Baltinglass Community Development</i>	€1,000
<i>Grangecon Tidy Towns</i>	€500
<i>Carnew Traders &amp; Friends</i>	€1,000
<i>Dunlavin &amp; District Forum</i>	€1,500
<i>Stratford Tidy Towns</i>	€500
<i>Rathdangan Community Council</i>	€500
<i>Valleymount &amp; Ballyknockan</i>	€800
<i>Donard</i>	€200
<i>Hollywood</i>	€500
<i>Lacken Tidy Towns</i>	€500
<b>Total</b>	<b>€11,000</b>

#### **8. To discuss the issue of Social Media comments about Councillors.**

Cllr. Doran informed the meeting that he would like this item removed from the agenda.

## **9. Correspondence**

Garvan Hickey, District Administrator informed the members that he had received correspondence from Hope Cottage Services who are a support service for families affected by substance misuse. He stated that Hope Cottage were looking to speak to the members at the next meeting to highlight their services. Members agreed to allocate 10 minutes at the Baltinglass Municipal District Council meeting in January 2019 to allow representatives from Hope Cottage offer a deputation.

## **10. Any Other Business.**

### **Burgage More Cemetery**

Cllr. Gerry O' Neill stated that there is currently a bad situation in Burgage More cemetery as some trees had been blown over in the recent bad weather. He asked the District Engineer if there is any emergency funding available to allow for the trees to be cut back so this doesn't happen in future. Cllr. O' Neill requested that the District Engineer get a quote to have the trees removed.

Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer, stated that work is planned to reduce the size of the trees on one side before the end of 2018, and next year to do the other side. To have the trees removed would cost a lot more money than just reducing the size.

### **Baltinglass Commemoration Ceremony & Heritage Day in Shillelagh**

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen expressed his appreciation to all the council staff involved in the organisation of the recent commemoration ceremony in Baltinglass. He stated that the memorial was an outstanding success. Cllr. Vincent Blake also wished to say well done on the Heritage Day in Shillelagh to all involved. These views were echoed by the other members.

Cllr. Gerry O' Neill suggested that future unveilings, such as the water tanker unveiling in Baltinglass recently, be done by members who have ties with the area rather than government Ministers. He added that he was critical of Minister Simon Harris TD taking time off his very important schedule to carry out such a ceremony. He stated that he would much prefer to see the hardworking local Cllrs. attending such events.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen asked if the District Administrator could liaise with the Fire Service to arrange the handover of the keys of the Water Tanker following the next Municipal District meeting. This was agreed by members.

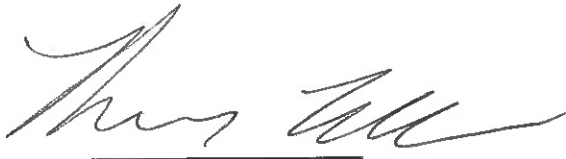
### **Next Meeting**

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen proposed that the next Baltinglass Municipal District meeting is held in Baltinglass library. Cllr. Edward Timmins asked if the meeting could be held on the



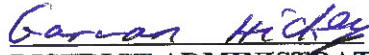
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 as he is unavailable on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December and this was agreed by the members.

Signed:



CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

18/12/2018

