

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Civic Offices, Blessington on 25th May 2015 at 10.30am

Present: Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor Thomas Cullen
Councillor Pat Doran
Councillor Gerry O'Neill
Councillor James Ruttle
Councillor Edward Timmins

Also Present: Mr. Sean Quirke, Director of Services
Mr. Declan Geraghty, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Gail Walsh, District Administrator
Ms. Sorchá Walsh, Senior Planner
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield, Community Culture & Social Development

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th April 2015

Councillor Vincent Blake proposed confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th April 2015 and Councillor Thomas Cullen seconded the proposal.

2. To discuss zoning of Council lands at Burgage More, Blessington

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Sorchá Walsh, Senior Planner to the meeting. Ms. S. Walsh discussed the matter of shifting the zoning of lands at Burgage More from a planning point of view, referring to her report which was previously circulated to the Members.

The Members made the following comments:-

- The club are under pressure to find a home
- I am anxious that they be facilitated
- Any development would be going on the public sewerage mains so this would not have an environmental impact
- Until the water problem is resolved by Irish Water no housing can be built
- It is difficult for the soccer club to develop the area of land designated for open space
- I note that planning potential for some other use would not be ruled out
- On the industrial front I can't see that sort of development happening any time soon
- We need an area for people to pursue sport
- Can plans be costed
- Costings have already been done for filling the area to make it suitable and the cost is the problem

Mr. Sean Quirke advised the members that currently there is approximately 3.6ha for housing, 3.3ha for open space and 2.5ha for employment lands. If the housing lands are shifted to the area proposed for employment use this will mean a reduction of

housing land available. There is also the risk that if the employment land is moved to the area proposed for open space it might not get through the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and this area would be left with nothing on it. There is a logic to picking areas and zoning them a particular way and there are implications for proposals to shift the areas around.

The Members made the following comments:-

- If the areas are shifted around we could reduce the amount of land given for the soccer club and leave more land for housing
- The cost for the soccer club to make the existing land suitable for use is huge and they just don't have the funds for this
- Look at the number of people on the waiting list for housing in this area - The Council have invested in this land and funding is now becoming available to build social housing
- There are grants available and there is no reason that a long term lease cannot be given to the soccer club – this would give them a permanent home and an opportunity to raise funds
- Need to look at a compromise here
- Could there be a rebalance between housing and industrial
- Are there any other sites available in Blessington that would be suitable
- Would the club be interested in developing the land if they were given a 15 year lease
- Can we ask the club this and see what they say
- The club don't have the funding it's impossible
- Is there any possibility that the planners could look at this area again

Ms. S. Walsh clarified that the land for employment use would be for small enterprises / live work units. The live work units could comprise of a workshop on the ground floor and a domestic unit above it. This is the concept for the lands zoned for employment use and not necessarily big industrial type factory units.

Mr. S. Quirke advised that the Council do not own any other land in Blessington that could be used.

Ms. S. Walsh informed the Members that the environmental impacts that are referred to are not wastewater issues. There are two species of bird protected in this area and any development of land would risk disturbing their habitat. There is a buffer zone along the lake and then a secondary zone which has been zoned for open space. It is considered that open space use would be less intrusive than housing or employment use. The amenity of the lake needs to be kept and if development is brought right up to it this would impact on that. From a planning point of view the uses can move but any development here would need planning permission and it is considered that the use of these lands for any use other than open space would require a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

It was proposed by Councillor Cullen that the soccer club be written too and offered a long term lease. This was seconded by Councillor Doran.

Councillor O'Neill proposed that the proposal go through the County Council seeking the area in yellow for the soccer club. There was no seconder to this proposal.

Cllr. Cullen indicated that it was open to Cllr. O'Neill to bring a motion before the Council at any time. Cllr. Ruttle indicated that he would support this motion.

Mr. S. Quirke informed the Members that the letter regarding a lease would need to issue from Corporate Estate rather than from the Municipal District.

3. To consider Local Economic and Community Plan for County Wicklow

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Deirdre Whitfield to the meeting. Ms. D. Whitfield gave a presentation to the Members on the Local Economic and Community Plan.

The Members made the following comments:

- Forestry and agriculture are still 2 of the main employers in the County as well as tourism
- There are infrastructure deficits in the County – I don't see sufficient input re infrastructural development. There are medical and educational deficits
- Water Services has to be part of this statement
- What status does the report have on planning – would it have an impact on planning decisions
- I welcome the document, some goals are high level goals
- A link between employers and state bodies is an area where we are weak

Ms. D. Whitfield informed the Members that this is an integrated plan and input from the Municipal District areas is important. Submissions on the framework can be made up to the 19th June.

It was agreed by the Members to meet in Wicklow County Council on the 15th June at 11.00am to discuss this further.

4. To discuss speed limits

Mr. S. Quirke advised that this matter had been raised by Councillor Blake. He informed the Members that speed limits will be reviewed starting in September.

5. To consider Housing Report

The housing report was noted by the Members. A query was raised regarding the legal update on Glending. Mr. S. Quirke advised that as per the report summonses have been issued but we can check with housing to see if there is any further update on the matter.

6. Proposal to Extinguish Public Right of Way & Create New Public Right of Way

A report was circulated to the Members with the Agenda. Ms. G. Walsh informed the Members the closing date for submissions was the 18th May and no submissions had been received.

It was proposed by Councillor Ruttle and seconded by Councillor O'Neill and agreed to extinguish the existing public right of way from Kilbride Road to St Mary's School Grounds via Church of Ireland lands and to create a new public right of way here.

6. Correspondence

Ms. G. Walsh referred to correspondence circulated with the Agenda which was received from Co Wicklow Citizens Information Service expressing an interest in using the Jury Room of Baltinglass Courthouse one day a week.

The Members made the following comments:-

- No objection in principle to this but we need to cover our costs
- Concerned about the courthouse being leased out piecemeal as if someone wanted to lease out the whole building we would be tied up legally
- The use of courthouse by a secondary school should be pursued
- CIS should be encouraged as they provide an important service

Mr. D. Geraghty is to review costs of repairs and costs incurred with opening/closing building etc. The Members requested further details from CIS in respect of day and times that use would be required. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Discretionary Budget

Councillor O'Neill queried what was happening with this.

Mr. S. Quirke advised that it is up to the Members to submit a list of projects to Mr. D. Geraghty for costing and then a list of works can be agreed. Some Members have already been in discussions with Declan Geraghty/Ken Jones re same.

Municipal District Meeting

Councillor Timmins queried the possibility of having the next meeting in Dunlavin. This was discussed and it was agreed that as the meeting on the 22nd June is the annual meeting as well that it would be better to leave this until the July meeting and have the July meeting in Dunlavin.

This concluded the meeting.

Signed:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:


DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

27th July 2015