

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Civic Offices, Blessington on 25th March 2019, at 10.30 a.m.

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

In Attendance: Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager
Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, A/Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Councillor Pat Doran

- 1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 25th February 2019.**

Cllr. Blake proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 25th February 2019 and this was seconded by Cllr. Timmins.

2. Matters Arising

Credit Union

Cllr. O'Neill enquired if there had been an update from Blessington Credit Union following the Baltinglass Municipal District meeting in February. Mr Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, read through correspondence he had received from Blessington Credit Union regarding the issue with tenants. Cllr. O'Neill expressed his dismay at this response and proposed writing to the League of Credit Unions and attaching the response received. Cllr.

Cullen agreed with Cllr. O'Neill and that the letter from BMD to Blessington Credit Union be included and this was agreed by all members.

Allotments in Blessington

Cllr. Timmins enquired if there was an update on a site being identified for use for allotments. Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, advised the members that a request had been made by Blessington District Forum for land at Burgage and two projects were proposed to Housing for development on the land under their remit in the town. Cllr. Cullen noted that there was a responsibility on Local Authorities to facilitate the need for allotments with legislation going back to 1915 and that The Blessington Allotment Committee would need to make a submission to Baltinglass Municipal District, he also proposed that they be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting in April. This was agreed by all members.

Cllr. O'Neill noted that there are around thirty people interested in taking allotments. Cllr. Cullen proposed that Baltinglass Municipal District formally write to the Housing section looking for approximately one and a half acres for the development of a community allotment scheme in the town. Cllr. Cullen noted that this could be developed as a model for other areas. Mr. Declan Geraghty noted that there may be access issues at present to the land at Burgage which would take time to address and the letter should include the land at Carrig Glen by the Scouts hall as a possible alternative site. This was proposed was by Cllr. Timmins and seconded by Cllr. Cullen.

Tearmann Community Garden

Cllr. Timmins enquired about the discretionary expenditure which had been allocated to Tearmann Community Garden. Mr. Garvan Hickey advised the members that he had met with representatives of the Gardens recently and they were currently being set up on Agresso as a supplier, they have also submitted an e mail outlining how the funding is to be used. Mr. Hickey informed members that some of the funding may be used to lever LEADER funding and it is hoped to transfer the funding to the group by the end of April.

LIS Schemes

Cllr. Ruttle enquired if there had been an update on LIS Schemes in Baltinglass MD and Mr. Declan Geraghty, District Engineer, advised the members that the list of projects would be finalised at the District Engineer's meeting the following day.

3. To discuss submission to Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly on N81

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cullen informed the members that the motion which had been agreed at previous meeting had been submitted to the Eastern and Mid Regional Authority and that he was awaiting a further update which was due in early May. Amendments to the strategy are out on public display at the moment. Cllr. Cullen advised members that the final strategy is due to be adopted in May; a strong case has been put forward for the development of the N81. Cllr. Cullen also noted that the once the strategy is adopted it has to go to the Minister for his approval and the Minister can overrule any recommendation in the strategy.

Cllr. O'Neill pointed out that the N81 is the only route out of Dublin that was not a dual carriage way and noted that a lot of cyclists use it during the summer months. He queried if the development of the N81 does not go ahead would there be the possibility of making it safer by introducing cycling lanes.

Cllr. Cullen noted that if this decision does not go ahead that they would need a plan B put in place. He suggested the following:

1. An extension of the Luas from Saggart to Blessington (Park & Ride)
2. Funds be made available to eradicate all acute bends as far as Baltinglass

Cllr. Ruttle made the point that people cannot move forward from a farming/housing point of view because of this delay. Development along the N81 is effectively paralysed until the route is finalised.

Cllr. Timmins noted that the lack of development of the N81 was affecting not only Wicklow but also Carlow and Kildare. Cllr. Timmins proposed that support for inclusion of the development of the N81 should be sought from the Roads sections in Carlow and Kildare and also from the Councillors in the respective areas.

Cllr. Cullen advised the members he would have an update before the next meeting.

4. To discuss Housing developments in Baltinglass, Blessington, Carnew and Dunlavin.

The District Administrator, Mr. Garvan Hickey, gave an overview of the housing developments within the Baltinglass Municipal District. He informed the members that both Baltinglass and Carnew Part 8 applications have been approved and that the contractor is due on site in Whitehall, Baltinglass imminently. He also noted that planning permission has been granted for sewerage works in Blessington and that preliminary site works are being undertaken for a scheme in Burgage, these would include site investigations, a pre-planning feasibility study and an archaeological assessment. The funding for this scheme has not yet been agreed to date. In Dunlavin four Part V units are being delivered as part of a large development currently under construction but there are no plans for the delivery of own-build Local Authority units.

Cllr. Timmins raised concerns over the slow progress of the scheme for Burgage and noted that it needs to be moved on as a matter of urgency. Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager, advised the members that preliminary site works take time. Cllr. Ruttle and Cllr. Blake both agreed on the need to progress with this scheme. Cllr. Blake noted that the Department should take account of the areas that had been granted planning permission and prioritise funding for these projects as there is huge demand for housing across the Municipal District.

Cllr. Cullen noted that a lot of social housing developments are now being done with approved housing bodies in partnership with the County Council and that some housing bodies can be very selective in their selection of tenants. Cllr. Cullen pointed out that it was important that the Housing Allocations Officer for the County Council should have an input into the selection of these tenants based on the waiting list for their area. Cllr. Cullen also noted that there should be a clause in the tenancy agreements of tenants in approved housing

bodies' houses that gave them an opportunity to purchase the property similar to that available to local authority tenants under the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

Cllr. O'Neill questioned the allocation of houses in the Blessington and Dunlavin areas and is concerned that houses are being held for tenants in Glending. He also queried the number of houses that are lying empty in West Wicklow. Mr. Sean Quirke, District Manager, replied that the difficulty lies with re-housing people when re-furbishments are ongoing and he did not accept that houses are being held unnecessarily. He also stated that the numbers of houses lying empty is very low in West Wicklow.

Mr. Garvan Hickey informed members that a request had been received from the Housing Section to give a presentation at the April meeting on a proposed Part 8 for Shillelagh. This was proposed by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Cullen and agreed by members. Cllr. Cullen also noted that a future meeting the MD should receive a presentation on dealing with anti social behaviour.

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. He advised the members surface dressing works would begin in the Tinahely area in June/July, Blessington tar macadam works are being finalised and recycling works are being tendered at present. Footpath works in Blessington and Tinahely are now complete for 2018.

Cllr. Timmins questioned the road improvement works at Tournant, Dunlavin and Mr. Declan Geraghty informed him that the whole road was to be included in improvement works.

Cllr. Blake questioned why Wicklow is not benefitting from the CLÁR programme and Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer, explained the CLÁR programme is based on the decline in population and only benefits certain areas such as Knockananna and Ballinacor. Cllr. Blake asked if the District Administrator could check if there was any possibility of

having the CLÁR area extended in the county. This was seconded by Cllr. Cullen who noted that there was a need to make rural areas more attractive for young people to live and this should be taken into account in the planning process.

Cllr. Timmins noted that there were no road markings at the junction in the village of Rathdangan and Mr Dermot Graham added that they would be looked at in April 2019.

Cllr. Blake raised the issue of white lining on regional roads not being very visible especially at this time of year and questioned if additional funding could be sought for this. Mr. Declan Geraghty explained that white lining is included in a resurfacing contract and it costs approximately €1 per metre to white line a road. Cllr. Blake enquired if it could be done separately from the resurfacing works and if discretionary funding could be used to fund it. Mr. Geraghty advised that it this could be done.

Cllr. O'Neill enquired if ESB were responsible for maintaining the surface of bridges and noted that Knockieran Bridge is very dangerous at present. Mr. Declan Geraghty advised the members that he had previously been in contact with the Engineer from ESB and his stance on this issue was that Wicklow County Council are responsible for maintaining the surface of bridge although his understanding is that it is ESB's responsibility to maintain the structure of the bridge .

Following a discussion on this matter it was agreed by all members that a letter be sent to Michael Quinlan, Engineer at ESB, proposing resurfacing works on the bridge and asking ESB to contribute towards costs. This was proposed by Cllr. Ruttle and seconded by Cllr. O'Neill.

6. To discuss location and installation of litter bins in Carnew and other towns/villages in Baltinglass Municipal District.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cullen informed the members that a letter had been received from Scoil Aodán Naofa in Carnew from students enquiring if litter bins could be reinstated on the Main Street in Carnew and asked the Mr. Declan Geraghty for his advise on this issue. The District Administrator, Mr. Garvan Hickey, read out the letter. Mr. Dermot Graham,

Executive Engineer, outlined the reasons why bins were removed from the Main Street, Carnew some years previously with the main reason being that bins were being used to dispose of domestic waste.

The concerns of Carnew tidy towns in relation to the previous bins were noted and Cllr. Cullen proposed that in consultation with the tidy towns it may be possible to pilot the reintroduction of secure bins.

Cllr. Blake noted that it was important that the views of the residents in the town are taken into account and the good work in the school in terms of environmental awareness needs to be supported and encouraged.

After some discussion it was agreed that a letter to the students of Scoil Aodán Naofa would be written, acknowledging their request and advice would be sought from the Environment Department on this issue. All members were in unanimous agreement on this.

7. To discuss the Funding Applications received.

District Administrator, Mr. Garvan Hickey, read correspondence that had been received from West Wicklow Festival requesting funding of €5,000 to deliver the 2019 Festival. This letter was circulated to all members following the February meeting.

Cllr. Cullen noted that there was funding of €4,000 available through the Festival Fund but that an application for funding had also been received from Coollattin Canadian Connection. Cllr. Ruttle expressed his support of the West Wicklow Festival and suggested that each get funding of €2,000.

Mr. Garvan Hickey read the application received from Coollattin Canadian Connection. Cllr. Blake offered his support to this group as he considers it to be beneficial to the local area by promoting tourism and has a lot of local support.

District Manager, Mr. Sean Quirke, advised the members on funding that was available. The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cullen noted that €5,000 was available from the Economic Development

Fund and that this could be divided out at the next meeting in April. Cllr. Ruttle proposed that funding of €2,000 each from the Festival Fund be given to West Wicklow Festival and to Coollattin Canadian Connection. This was seconded by Cllr. Blake.

8. To discuss the proposed Community CCTV project for Blessington Town.

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, gave the members an overview of the proposed Community CCTV project for Blessington Town. This project has been drafted in conjunction with the Blessington Town Team and An Garda Síochána and has been approved by the Chief Superintendent. He advised the members that an application for funding to the Department of Justice and Equality was to be submitted this week and an advertisement placed in the Wicklow People. This proposal would then go on public display in Baltinglass Municipal District offices and in the local Garda Station in Blessington.

Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns over the location of some of the cameras, more so in relation to the cameras located at the entrance to Glending Estate and at the entrance to Oak Drive. He felt that cameras would be better placed outside the town in more rural locations and questioned why these locations were not discussed with the members. He suggested a special meeting be held to discuss this project in more depth to raise any concerns that the members may have.

Cllr. Timmins questioned who had made the final decision on this project and under whose authority were the locations for cameras decided? Mr. Garvan Hickey explained that this project had been discussed at Blessington Town Team meetings and all members had been invited. Blessington Forum had secured the services of J&N Security Consultants to advise on the technical issues and advise on the project. Mr. Hickey also advised members that this was a community CCTV project and would be going out for public consultation and there was a tight timeframe for submitting an application to the Garda Commissioner for his approval and a funding application to the Department of Justice and Equality. Members were also informed that this project was similar in nature to the one going ahead in Arklow and the one advertised for public consultation recently in Greystones. The Chief Executive had committed that Blessington would be the next town to apply for the funding from the Department and following them Greystones would apply.

After some discussion Cllr. Cullen proposed a Special Meeting be held on Monday 1st April in County Buildings, Wicklow at 12.00 pm before this project goes on public display in order for members to raise any concerns they may have and to invite members of An Gardaí to attend and address the meeting. All members were in unanimous agreement. Advertising of the project and applications to be put on hold until after the special meeting.

9. Correspondence

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, referred to an email that was received on 22nd March from Dunlavin & District Forum regarding outstanding issues. He advised members that the repair of the lights at the playground are being held up at present as access to repair the lights is being hindered by the ground conditions in the surrounding field and hopefully this will be resolved in May. He also informed members that works at the graveyard in Dunlavin are scheduled to begin in May and the issue with the water container has been rectified. Directional signs at market house have been put in place. At present there is no budget available to recruit a general operative solely for Dunlavin town.

10. Any Other Business

Cllr. Timmins informed the members that an alleged illegal halting site was located at Rathsallagh and that this site is now being occupied by three caravans. Mr. Sean Quirke advised members that this was private land and had been reported to the Planning Section who are now investigating the issue.

Cllr. Timmins also queried if the wall in Rathdangan graveyard was to be plastered. Mr. Dermot Graham informed the members that there was no budget in place to cover these costs but he would enquire with the Environment Section.

Cllr. Blake informed the members of the relocation of the recycling centre in Tinahely. A new location is being sought through Part 8 and talks will take place this week to develop this project.

A discussion took place regarding the members concerns over the use of drones in the Wicklow area. These drones are being used to search backyards and properties and are seen as a threat to personal and property security.

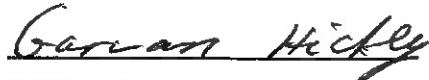
There being no other business, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tommy Cullen concluded the meeting.

Signed:



CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

15/04/2019