

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Hollywood Community Centre, Hollywood on 23rd November 2020, at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon
Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor John Mullen
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Edward Timmins
Councillor Gerry O'Neill

In Attendance: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager
Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer
Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer
Mr. Declan Marnane, Housing & Corporate Section
Ms. Caroline Fox, Community, Cultural and Social Development

Cathaoirleach Glennon opened the Baltinglass Municipal District Ordinary meeting and reminded members of the time restrictions on meetings in line with Covid 19 regulations.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 19th October 2020.

Cllr. Timmins proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 19th October 2020 and this was seconded by Cllr. Cronin.

2. To confirm and sign minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 19th October 2020.

Cllr. Blake proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 19th October 2020 and Cllr. O'Neill seconded these.

3. Matters Arising.

Cllr. Cronin asked why the issue of a site for Blessington Allotments Campaign was not on the agenda as was proposed at the last meeting. She noted a short term lease on council land was sought by the group and noted that during these exceptional times they should receive as much support as possible. Cllr. O'Neill advised that a site at Knockieran had been one option but with the announcement of additional funding for Blessington Greenway this may need to be reconsidered. He also noted that a site at Oak Drive was up for negotiation and Cllr. Glennon advised that the land at Oak Drive should be offered as an option as land at Knockieran was not suitable. Ms. Kilkenny advised members that she would meet with the Chairman of Blessington Allotment Campaign shortly and noted that the Knockieran site is now off the cards due to additional funding for the Blessington Greenway. She added that the site at Oak Drive is an option but other sites are also being assessed and every effort will be made to support this request. It was proposed that the District Administrator should formally offer the Blessington Allotments Campaign the site on Oak Drive. Cllr. O'Neill proposed that the term of the lease should be for five years.

Cllr. Mullen advised the meeting that a report of vandalism at Tearmann Gardens in Baltinglass had been reported recently at a Baltinglass Policing meeting and proposed writing to the Superintendent in Baltinglass to get an update. Members agreed that the District Administrator should get in touch with the Gardai in Baltinglass to ensure that they were aware of the anti social behaviour. Members noted the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers involved in Tearmann Gardens.

Cllr. Cronin questioned if a spokesperson from National Broadband Ireland was due to attend a meeting and Mr. Hickey advised that with the level 5 restrictions on movement and meetings in place at present, it was not possible for a person to attend the meeting. Cllr. Glennon proposed that National Broadband should be invited to a meeting early in the New Year and could possibly attend a meeting via Zoom. Cllr. Cronin seconded this proposal and it was agreed by members.

4. Correspondence

Mr. Hickey advised members that three pieces of correspondence had been received. The first was an email received on the 10th November raising concerns over dog fouling, rubbish in

Baltinglass and anti social behaviour and drug use in Baltinglass Town Park. The e mail was circulated to members. Mr. Hickey advised that he had replied to the e mail and noted that the Gardaí should be notified of any drug use or anti social behaviour in Baltinglass Park. Mr. Hickey also noted that the Baltinglass Tidy Towns and Municipal District staff have done a tremendous amount of work in partnership over the last year to ensure Baltinglass was kept tidy. Mr. Hickey noted that erected extra signage to deter dog fouling across the MD had been put in place but irresponsible dog owners just ignored the signs. Cllr. Blake questioned if there was a need to contact the Drugs Task Force regarding drug use in Baltinglass and run prevention courses in the town. Cllr. Blake noted that the East Coast Regional Drugs Taskforce covers the South and East of the county does not include west Wicklow and asked if links to the Drugs Task Force in Naas need to be strengthened. Cllr. O'Neill advised that he has been involved with the South Western Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force in Naas but hadn't attended a meeting lately but will update once Covid regulations ease. Cllr. Cronin informed the meeting that alot of the activities of the SWRDTF including the HALO project have been moved online.

The second email was in relation to the state of the road surface in the Coolafancy area. Mr. Hickey stated separate to the correspondence he had met with members of the Pure Mile last week and they had agreed to work together to submit a Town & Village Renewal Scheme application in the New Year to address some of the concerns raised by residents in the area.

Mr. Hickey advised that an email had been received from Baltiglass Branching Out seeking support for an Aldi supermarket in Baltinglass. A copy of email and report had been distributed to members prior to meeting. Cllr. Timmins asked to be excused from this discussion and absented himself from the meeting due to a possible conflict of interest. Cllr. O'Neill advised that he fully supported Aldi and noted that competition is needed in Baltinglass town but raised concerns over issues with developments in the town. He noted that Baltinglass town is in limbo and asked if a Town Development Plan could be devised separate to the County Development Plan. Cllr. Mullen questioned the guidelines on proposals to promote a certain type of business as a particular business was named in the correspondence. Cllr. Mullen also noted that there are a number of businesses operating in Baltinglass providing an excellent service to the community. Ms. Kilkenny advised members that Wicklow County Council could not promote the development of one business in Baltinglass over another, it is open to all business to submit and application for a development should they wish to do so, all applications will be assessed in line with proper planning procedures. Ms. Kilkenny continued that the County Development Plan

needs to be adopted first before any Town Plans are developed and workshops are being scheduled with members to discuss the draft County Development Plan. Ms. Kilkenny noted that due to its population Baltinglass is included in the County Development Plan and this offers an opportunity to progress the development of the town. Ms. Kilkenny suggested that if members or the Baltinglass Reaching Out Committee wished they could making representations to the planning department regarding commercial retail development in the town and stressed that these cannot be for specific named businesses but in relation to land use. Cllr. O'Neill queried that if the County Development Plan is currently under consideration for 2021 would it be possible to consider a separate Town Plan for Baltinglass. Ms. Kilkenny advised members that if a request is made for a separate Town Plan for Baltinglass was agreed it would be put on hold until the County Development Plan has been adopted. She added that this could be considered for the future. Ms. Kilkenny noted that Baltinglass Municipal District is fully supportive of commercial and retail businesses development across the Municipal District. It was agreed that a response be drafted to Baltinglass Branching Out acknowledging receipt of their request and in support of any valid commercial business coming to Baltinglass town.

5. To receive an update from a representative of the Housing Section on

- I. Social Housing Developments in Baltinglass Municipal District**
- II. Burgage site and PPP Bundle 3**
- III. Affordable Housing Scheme**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Declan Marnane, Senior Engineer from the Housing Section of Wicklow County Council. Mr. Marnane updated members on progress of the following developments within the district.

- Burgage More, Blessington – 74 houses
- Rathcorran, Baltinglass – 56 units
- Fairgreen, Dunlavin – 40 houses
- Bramble Hill, Tinahely – up to 5 units
- Coolattin Oaks, Carnew – 22 units
- Lugduff, Tinahely – 20 units
- Site in Shillelagh – Irish Water upgrade of waste water treatment system required before development will proceed.

Ms. Kilkenny asked when the PPP bundle 3 in Burgage More, Blessington would be completed and Mr. Marnane replied by 2024. Mr. Marnane informed members that the Part V for Burgage More should be developed in late 2021. Cllr. Blake noted that the development in Rathcorran in Baltinglass was through a housing body and asked if there has been any change in their policy for purchase. Mr. Marnane advised that these developments are owned and operated by housing association bodies and that recommendations for allocations will be made through Wicklow County Council, these properties are not covered under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. He added that these developments have been purchased outright by housing bodies. Cllr. Glennon asked that this is made clear to tenants so that there is no confusion or difficulties later on and tenants of social housing owned by Approved Housing Bodies do not feel discriminated against compared to tenants in social housing owned by Wicklow County Council.

Cllr. Timmins raised concerns over affordable housing and noted that there is an emphasis on social housing but added that a lot of people are at their limits finding affordable housing but don't qualify for social housing. Mr. Marnane advised that at present housing build costs for a two bed in the district is approximately €225,000 and €265,000 for a three bed and that it was not possible to build affordable housing in the Baltinglass Municipal District area with the possible exception of Blessington. There was a detailed discussion on affordable housing in Baltinglass Municipal District and the differences in the cost of housing across the district.

Cllr. Cronin thanked Mr. Marnane for his presentation and noted that the housing development in Dunlavin had been delayed due to the pandemic. She advised that a number of tenants were presently in private rented accommodation and asked if communication could be made with them to advise them that a housing agency will be maintaining these properties and how long they will have to wait to take up their tenancies. Cllr. Mullen remarked that it was good to see social housing being developed but questioned why the cost of building is so high. Cllr. O'Neill questioned when the seventy four houses in Burgage were expected to commence and the forty units in Dunlavin would be occupied. He noted that the development in Dunlavin has been built to a very high standard and on a beautiful site. He concurred with Cllr. Timmins on the issue of affordable housing and asked if more houses could be allocated for affordable housing. He also asked if Irish Water had signed off on the housing development in Dunlavin or if they were holding it up. Mr. Marnane advised

members that there had been a planning compliance issue with Irish Water but this had been resolved and he hoped this development would be ready to hand over twenty one units by early new year. He added that the cost of a new build was based on an average of tenders received and there was a framework in place for each scheme tendered and each housing scheme is built to a very high standard throughout the county. Cllr. Mullen noted that procurement rules within local authorities are aimed at bigger companies whilst smaller contractors can work at a cheaper price. Cllr. Mullen also noted that in some instances the housing units being built by the County Council are to a higher standard than private developments. Cllr. Timmins suggested that tenders for the South and West of the county should be isolated and this would then lower the average cost of builds in the District. Mr. Marnane advised that the hope was for delivery of development in Burgage by 2024 and Rathcorran in Baltinglass due for completion in 2021. Cllr. Glennon noted that both developments in Baltinglass and Dunlavin are operated through approved housing bodies and are not available for purchase and this needs to be made clear. Cllr. Timmins queried why they were not available and Mr. Marnane advised that housing delivery through these bodies were allocated differently than if Wicklow County Council had built these units themselves. Cllr. O'Neill questioned why there were so many housing bodies nationally and the need for them and Mr. Marnane replied that these approved housing bodies are independent, not-for-profit organisations and provide additional housing to what is provided by local authorities. Cllr. O'Neill proposed that some of the Housing Agencies should merge and this would reduce administrative costs.

6. To consider Roads Reports (national and non-national roads).

Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer, briefed members on the N81 progress report. He advised that most of the Safety Fencing Retrofit programme from the Lamb Junction on the N81 has been completed. He added that some issues had been identified from the Road Safety Audit that had been completed recently at Knockroe Bends Scheme and landscaping and planting needed to be completed also. Cllr. Timmins noted that upgrade for works at Saunders Grove and not Hangmans Bend have been sought by Wicklow County Council. Mr. Byrne advised that a proposal to widen and resurface the road at Saunders Grove is up for approval from TII at a cost of €200,000 and it's hoped this will proceed next year. Improvement works at Hangmans Bend are currently being looked at. Cllr. O'Neill praised the footpath works in

Hollywood and congratulated all on a job well done but asked for an update on the bus stop in Hollywood and if there had been any progress made. He also proposed that the Cathaoirleach officially open the stretch of road at Knockroe Bends within the next few weeks and Cllr. Timmins seconded this proposal. Mr. Byrne advised that a report would be submitted to TII early next year and an assessment had been done on the high rate of accidents at bus stops on national routes. He added that TII are against providing new bus stops on national routes. Ms. Kilkenny thanked Mr. Byrne for his help with getting the consultant's report completed and also thanked Cllr. Glennon and Cllr. Timmins for their allocation of discretionary funding towards the cost. She advised members that TII have to consider reducing the speed limit on this section of road. It needs to be brought down from 100km per hour to 80km and a submission needs to be made by members to get this reduced first before any bus stops can be considered. Ms. Kilkenny also suggested that a footbridge over this section of road could be an option or a pull in section for people to disembark. Cllr. Glennon noted that Mr. Byrne had been making progress on this option and Mr. Byrne advised that he had spoken to landowners regarding a pull in area.

Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer went through non national roads report and advised members that all Restoration Improvement works had been completed with the exception of two schemes, Knockananna and Ballingate, and these would be completed in early December. He continued that bridge rehab works had commenced last week in Highpark, Kiltegan and works on Boley Bridge had been delayed until early 2021. Cllr. Timmins thanked all involved on the resurfacing works on the Main Street in Grangecon which had commenced. Ms. Kilkenny thanked both engineers and all staff for stepping up to the mark to get all works completed which had been funded through the July Stimulus package. She also congratulated Mr. Byrne on his recent promotion and noted it was well deserved. Cllr. Cronin also thanked all for the huge improvement works that had been completed and noted that even with the pandemic roads projects across the MD had been completed. Cllr. Blake expressed his thanks and to Mr. Byrne but also raised concerns over the response to frost and snow in the coming months and queried if there was enough of a salt supply to get through the winter months.

7. To receive a report on the progress of the Blessington Greenway.

Ms. Caroline Fox, Community, Cultural and Social Development Section, briefed members on progress of the Blessington Greenway. She outlined how the recent announcement by Minister Eamon Ryan, Minister of Transport, of the allocation of €63.5m to Greenways for 2021 included €6.4m to the Blessington Greenway. She advised that this now means a commitment of 100 percent funding to the total cost of €15m and added that this takes the pressure off. She advised members that environmental reports are being completed for the entire route and a construction plan is being developed. She added that most greenways are constructed on railroad tracks but Blessington Greenway is different and a lot of design work is required. She continued that this is moving well and expects reports to be completed this week. The old HSE building has been procured and lands cleared. She stated that the project will start in its entirety next year as initially it was hoped to commence on a trial section but the full project will go ahead instead. Cllr. Cronin congratulated all involved and expressed her delight that one hundred per cent funding had been allocated and stated it was a massive boost to the county. Cllr. O'Neill added his congratulations to Ms. Fox and John Horan of the Blessington Town Team. He noted that consultation with locals would be the key to success of this project as there was a lot of history of the Blessington Lakes and the movement of a town. He asked if the consultants report included the full 42km route. Ms. Fox advised that the environmental report covered the 28km around the lakes but also connections to villages. She added that the Department of Transport had funded but had not yet received the terms and conditions. Cllr. Glennon noted that great work had been done by all including the Greenway group, Ms. Kilkenny and the Chief Executive and stressed the importance of keeping all informed and any issues that arise would be resolved quickly. Cllr. Blake asked if there were any updates on the Arklow to Shillelagh railway route and Ms. Kilkenny advised that Ms. Margaret Harnett from the Roads Section was overseeing. She added she would get an updated report for the next meeting. Mr. Graham advised that this was still at the planning stage and an update for the January meeting would be more suitable.

8. To receive an update on the implementation of the Blessington Town Health Check.

Mr. Hickey advised members that the Blessington Town Health Check had been finalised earlier this year and a subgroup of the Blessington Town Team established with Cllr. O'Neill, Cllr Glennon representing the members on it. He added that the first meeting had taken place a week ago and the main projects the team would be hoping to make progress on were the Inner Relief Road and a RRDF funding application for Market Square in Blessington. An application for funding through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund would be submitted in February and the next meeting is to take place on 18th December 2020. Cllr. Glennon added that the subgroup is anxious that the Inner Relief Road is completed soon and Ms. Kilkenny advised that Ms. Margaret Hartnett will attend meeting in January with an update. She added that consultants designing the road will take this into consideration all of the recommendations contained in the Blessington Health Check and the Blessington Town Team point of view.

9. To pass a resolution for the holding of the December Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District in a venue or online platform at the discretion of the Cathaoirleach at 10.30am on Monday 21st December 2020 as set out in the Municipal District of Baltinglass, Standing Orders, regulating the business and proceedings of the Municipal District.

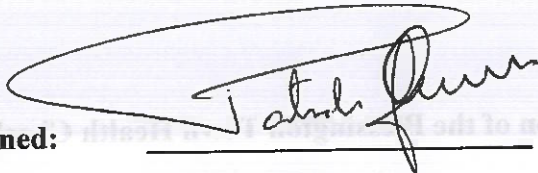
Cllr. Glennon asked members to consider holding the next Baltinglass Municipal District meeting through Zoom. Cllr. Mullen proposed this motion and Cllr. Blake seconded this.

10. Any other business

Cllr. Glennon acknowledged Marie Tutty and Richard Burke's presence at meeting and thanked them both for attending. Cllr. Glennon thanked the Tidy Towns for all they do in the village.

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

Signed:



CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

21/12/2020.

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