

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Blessington Civic Offices, Blessington on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019, at 10.30 a.m.**

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

**In Attendance:** Ms. Teresa O'Brien, Senior Executive Officer  
Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer  
Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator  
Ms. Andrea Connolly, A/Assistant Staff Officer  
Mr. Andrew McBride, Wicklow Local Sports Partnership

**Apologies:** Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager

Cllr. O'Neill opened the Baltinglass Municipal District meeting and offered vote of sympathy to former staff member Ms. Jean Brady on the death of her mother. Cllr. Blake offered condolences on the passing of Mr. Jim Wilson a former General Operative for the Baltinglass Municipal District.

**1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019.**

Mr. Hickey noted a correction to the minutes circulated by e mail – the footpath in question that needed clearing was from Croneyhorn to Carnew and not as stated Croneyhorn to Shillelagh.

Cllr. Mullen proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and this was seconded by Cllr. Timmins.

**2. To confirm and sign minutes of the Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019.**

Cllr. Timmins proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and this was seconded by Cllr. Mullen.

**3. Matters Arising**

Cllr. Mullen asked if there was any update in relation to the issue with public lighting at Soldiers Bench in Carnew. Mr. Graham, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that no progress had been made to date, although calls were being made on a daily basis with no response. He noted that there had been some movement on the lighting issue in Deerpark, Baltinglass and a connection agreement had been received. Cllr. Timmins questioned if Airtricity get paid for this facility and Mr. Graham advised that it was ESB Networks that were holding up the connection. He explained that Airtricity supply and maintains the lights but ESB Networks were responsible for the connections. Cllr. Blake noted his disappointment at this delay and that no explanation has been received for the delay with the works. Cllr. O'Neill proposed writing to ESB Networks requesting completion of these works as a matter of urgency and Cllr. Mullen seconded this proposal.

Cllr. Timmins informed the meeting that he had met with representatives of the Blessington Tidy Towns who informed him that they had not received any response to their correspondence regarding the Twinning sign and asked if this was the case. Mr. Hickey advised members that he had met with the representatives of Blessington Tidy Towns and had given a verbal response. Cllr. Cronin asked that Blessington Tidy Towns receive a written response to their letter and Mr. Hickey agreed to send a letter to the Chair of the Tidy Towns. Cllr. Timmins also questioned if planning permission was sought for the Twinning sign and Mr. Hickey responded that no planning permission was required for the sign.

Cllr. Cronin asked if there had been an update on the footpaths at Rathlawn, Dunlavin which had not been completed by the building contractor. Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer, advised that he had met with a contractor in Dunlavin and he was awaiting a quote for these

works. He also advised that a speed review had been completed and a report was circulated to all members.

Cllr. O'Neill asked Cllr. Cronin if she had attended an Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly meeting and brought up the issue of the upgrade of the N81 as proposed at the Special Meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr. Cronin advised that she had been unable to attend but had written requesting support for the upgrade of the N81 and was awaiting a response.

Mr. Hickey advised members that he had written to Minister Ross regarding getting the upgrade of N81 back on plan but was awaiting a response. He had also enquired about a review mechanism and the response was that it was too early to request a review of the strategy as it had only recently been adopted.

Following some discussion on this issue Cllr. Glennon proposed writing to Minister Simon Harris expressing concerns over the lack of response from Minister Ross and the frustrations experienced by the members in getting a meeting with Minister Ross. Cllr. Mullen seconded this proposal.

Cllr. Mullen proposed that the District Administrator should write to the District Administrator of Tullow Municipal District seeking the support of the County Councillors for the upgrading of the N81. Cllr. Timmins noted that this letter should be copied to the Chief Executive of Carlow County Council. Cllr. Glennon and Cllr. Cronin noted that the state of the N81 affected a number of different counties and that all the local authorities should be applying pressure to get the road upgraded.

#### **4. Correspondence**

Mr. Garvan Hickey informed the members that he had received an email from Community Pool for West Wicklow committee thanking Wicklow County Council for the funding received towards their Christmas fundraiser.

He also advised members that he had received correspondence from the Department of Community and Rural Development advising that they have decommitted the allocated

funding of €29,750 for the Hollywood footpath project under the 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme as the project did not proceed in the agreed timeframe. However the Department did note that it was open to new applications for the project under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in the future. Several members raised concerns over this and were under the impression that funding for this project had been retained. Ms. Teresa O'Brien advised that there were strict deadlines in place regarding funding and if these are not met, funding can be withdrawn by the Department. Cllr. Blake noted that he had spoken with other Local Authorities and had been advised that if the project is not "shovel ready" funding can be withdrawn. He advised reapplying for funding but ensuring that the project is ready to go beforehand. Cllr. O'Neill added that the Hollywood issue is going on a long time and noted that there are complications with this project. Cllr. Glennon thanked Mr. Pat Byrne for making progress on this but raised concerns over reassurances of funding being retained and then withdrawn. Cllr. Cronin asked if an agreement with landowner can be made before new funding is sought. Mr. Pat Byrne advised that he couldn't guarantee an agreement with the landowner but he seemed to be on board with the project, there were a number of issues still to be resolved. Mr. Byrne also confirmed that he had met with TII regarding the project.

#### **5. To receive a presentation from Wicklow Local Sports Partnership**

Mr. Andrew McBride from Wicklow Local Sports Partnership presented the members with a detailed report on the Healthy Blessington Pilot Programme. He outlined that the aim of this programme was to highlight existing health & wellbeing initiatives currently in place, to identify gaps and implement new programmes or structures to fill these gaps. Provide training and educational opportunities to empower the community in the area of health & wellbeing. To make Blessington the healthiest town in Wicklow. He advised that a number of partners have come on board including local schools, fitness providers, McGreals Pharmacy and various community groups. A number of upcoming events have been organised for the New Year including the Operation Transformation walk on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020. He also advised that training courses in first aid, safeguarding and autism in sport would be run throughout the year.

Mr. McBride advised that a Healthy Blessington meeting had taken place recently and was well attended by local groups including Blessington GAA, Lakeshore Striders and the Blessington Walking Group. He added that the Blessington Operation Transformation walk

was one of the strongest in the county over the years with over two hundred and fifty attending.

Cllr. O'Neill asked what input Wicklow Local Sports Partnership has with the local primary schools and the local community college. Mr. McBride advised that they have a healthy eating initiative in place in local schools and they are working with parents of younger children to instil healthy eating habits. Cllr. Cronin noted that the primary schools should be a key target and complimented the LSP on the recent tug of war event.

All members thanked Mr. McBride for his presentation and commended him on the success of the Operation Transformation walk in Blessington over the last number of years. Cllr. Mullen queried if the LSP and Baltinglass MD could look at a community access bike scheme.

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

Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer, presented a report to the meeting on non national and national roads and copies of same were distributed to the members. He advised members that all road improvement works in Blessington were completed with the exception of yellow linemarking at Kiltel Junction which is due to be completed next week depending on weather conditions. Contractor is due back on site in the New Year to complete minor works on this route.

An updated progress report on works at Knockroe Bend Realignment on the N81 was also distributed to the members.

Cllr. Timmins thanked Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer, for the updated N81 progress report and welcomed the progress made on works at Knockroe Bends. He raised the question of the possibility of installing extra lanes or lay-bys on the N81 to alleviate the issue of tailbacks in certain places. Mr. Dermot Graham advised that there was limited space on the N81 between the boundary and road and these extra lanes would incur major expense through the purchase of land. He also noted that these lay-bys can become pollution hotspots and that a longterm solution was needed. Cllr. Blake also welcomed the works at Knockroe and

agreed with Cllr. Timmins on the need for pull in areas on the N81. He also questioned what would be done with the old road at Knockroe. Mr. Pat Byrne advised that the old road would be kept as a private residence was located on part of this road. Cllr. Glennon asked if there were plans to install a footpath on the new road and Mr. Byrne advised that it was not in the contract.

Mr. Graham briefly outlined the Non National Roads Report and advised that road improvement works scheduled for Kevin Street and Aughrim Road had now been deferred until after the Christmas period and all other works had been completed during the summer. He also advised that footpath works had been completed in Grangecon and Stratford on Slaney had been completed but further works under the IPB Funding are ongoing in Blessington. He also noted that bridge works at Boley, Shillelagh and Highpark, Kiltegan had been transferred to next year.

Cllr. Mullen and Cllr. Blake both thanked Mr. Graham for postponing the scheduled works Kevin Street and Aughrim Road until the New Year. Cllr. Blake noted that footpath works had been done in Valley Heights, Carnew but more was required due to the high footfall to the primary school.

Cllr. Timmins raised concerns over the lack of linemarking on the Wicklow Gap Road and Mr. Byrne advised that the high points on the Wicklow Gap Road were part of Wicklow Municipal District and engineer, Mr. Kevin Scanlon, was to seek funding for this next year. Cllr. Timmins questioned the cost of line marking and Mr. Graham advised the cost of €1 to €1.50 per metre but this did not include the cost of traffic management which would be required.

Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns over the Local Improvement Schemes. He noted that if an individual on the road objects to the scheme, then the scheme cannot proceed. He added that something must be done to accommodate the other residents. Mr. Graham pointed out that if there is an objection then there is very little the council can do. Mr. Garvan Hickey advised that this issue had been raised at a previous meeting and he had been in touch with the Department of Transport and been advised that no changes could be made to these schemes due to legislation.

## **7. To consider proposals for hosting a reception to recognise achievements within Baltinglass Municipal District**

Mr. Hickey asked the members to consider the proposal of hosting a reception to recognise achievements within the Municipal District. He added that this had been proposed previously but had not proceeded and he suggested committing to holding an event in 2020. A slate had been designed previously and a copy of the slate image was e mailed to members. A budget of €2,000 was available. He suggested giving out seven to eight awards and these could be for achievements in sport etc. Ms. Theresa O'Brien suggested advertising categories and getting nominations in as these achievements could be very localised. Mr. Hickey advised members that the design of award needed to be finalised and that we need to decide on whether giving out the awards on an ad hoc basis to recognise particular achievements/contribution to the community or to run an annual event and seek nominations.

After some discussion it was agreed by all members not to run an annual event but to present those individuals or groups who merit it an award throughout the year. Groups or individuals to be proposed by members during the year to recognise their contribution to their chosen field. Cllr. Blake proposed that the awards could be given out the same night as the community grants and Cllr. Timmins seconded the proposal and it was agreed by members.

## **8. To discuss the Discretionary Fund 2020**

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, advised members that the total discretionary budget for 2020 was €180,750 with approximately €30,125 available for each member. He added that the footpath renewal fund for BMD had a total of €56,000 available and Mr. Graham advised that this fund is used to maintain the existing footpaths.

A discussion followed on how the discretionary fund should be used with Cllr. Blake making the point that discretionary funding should be used for public realm projects. Mr. Hickey advised members that each member should submit three to four projects and once received he would compile an initial list of the proposed projects.

## **9. Any other business**

Mr. Hickey advised members that the new edition of the Countywise publication was available and distributed copies to all, along with copies of the Pure calendar. He added that the publication raises awareness of projects in West Wicklow and would welcome suggestions for articles which could be included in the Spring 2020 edition of Countywise.

Cllr. O'Neill asked if there was any update on whether land at Burgage would be used for community allotments. Mr. Hickey informed members that as discussed at a previous meeting the proposal for the development of allotments at Council lands at Burgage was premature until a master plan was developed for the area. Mr. Hickey advised members that he had been in touch with the Housing Section regarding using a portion of the land at Carrig Glen for community allotments and there was no objection in principle. The area would need to be mapped and fenced off. Prior to the development of the allotments, consultation should take place with residents in Carrig Glen. Mr. Hickey proposed that some discretionary funding could be used for fencing and water points to be installed as the Municipal District will have to fund these costs at a total of approximately €20,000. Cllr. O'Neill asked if the smaller green areas could be used for allotments rather than one large area for all. Mr. Hickey replied that this option could be explored and would propose it to the community allotments committee.

Cllr. Cronin asked if the light had been fixed at the Market House in Dunlavin and Mr. Hickey replied that yes this issue had been rectified. Cllr. Glennon enquired if the two public lights at Saunders Grove, Baltinglass had been reported.

Cllr O'Neill wished all members and staff a very happy Christmas and thanked all for their co-operation over the year. Cllr. Timmins paid tribute to Mr. Sean Quirke on his recent retirement and thanked him for all his work with Baltinglass Municipal District over the years. All members were in agreement.

There being no other business the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Neill, concluded the meeting.



**Signed:**

Cathal O'Connell  
CATHAOIRLEACH

**Signed:**

Garán Hickey  
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

**Dated:**

27/01/2020

