

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Donard Community Centre, Donard on 19th October 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. Theresa O'Brien, Planning Development and Environment
Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer
Mr. Barry O'Brien, Aurora Telecom

Apologies: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer

Cathaoirleach Glennon opened the Baltinglass Municipal District Ordinary meeting.

Cllr. Blake proposed a vote of sympathy to the Osborne family from Carnew on the passing of Niall Osborne in a tragic accident and extended condolences to his wife Róisín. Cllr. Mullen wished to be associated with Cllr. Blake's proposal. Cllr. O'Neill proposed a vote of sympathy to the Walsh and Dwyer family from Donard on the passing of Mary Walsh. The Cathaoirleach wished to be associated with both votes of sympathy.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 28th September 2020.

Cllr. O'Neill proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 28th September 2020 and this was seconded by Cllr. Blake.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Correspondence

Mr. Hickey advised members that he was conscious of time restraints so wouldn't read through all correspondence but copies of letters received were included in the member's packs that had been distributed earlier. These included letters from four TD's, John Brady, Steven Matthews, Stephen Donnelly and Jennifer Whitmore, offering their support to the Blessington Allotments Campaign. He added that a letter from the Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee was also included advising of an online Christmas market commencing in early November in support of local businesses.

Cllr. O'Neill noted that the campaign for allotments in Blessington has been ongoing for some time now and proposed to go ahead with a short term lease for the site at Knockieran. Cllr. Cronin added that there are issues with the site at Oak Drive and may be unsuitable. Cllr. Mullen noted that they are seeking a short term lease of 11 months and once they are willing to comply with guidelines this shouldn't be an issue. He added that especially in these trying times it would be wrong to not give the campaign the opportunity. Mr. Hickey pointed out that the main concern would be that if a temporary site was provided would an alternative site be available when the lease was up. He also noted that Knockieran car park area was required for the development of the Blessington Greenway and nothing should be done which would undermine the project. Cllr. O'Neill queried if the Greenway would start construction in early 2021. Mr. Hickey informed members that it was hoped to start work on

the construction of the Greenway by next March. Mr. Hickey informed members that it would be unfair on the Blessington Allotments group to offer them a site in Knockieran and then have to ask them to move in the first half of 2021, it would be better if more long term site could be obtained. The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Glennon, advised members that this issue would need to be discussed further at the next meeting as both Ms. Kilkenny and Mr. Byrne, who were dealing directly with the Blessington Allotments Campaign, were not present to advise. Cllr. Glennon also noted that the Blessington Allotments Campaign had outlined that they were only looking for a short term lease. All members were in agreement.

4. To discuss the disposal of site to Aurora Telecom for the development of a collocation cabin.

The Cathaoirleach noted that the proposed disposal of the site to Aurora had been discussed at the September meeting and drawings had been circulated to members. The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Glennon introduced Mr. Barry O'Brien from Aurora Telecom who presented members with background information on Aurora Telecom and the services they provide. Mr. O'Brien outlined how the site was identified in Blessington to construct a collocation facility as part of the Dublin, Cork, Waterford return pathway. While Aurora Telecom does not provide broadband services directly, they supply an open access dark fibre network to carriers and telecom operators (fixed / wireless / mobile), broadband providers, online and social media, and public sector customers. Their networks helps support broadband backhaul by providing links between towns, which enables broadband services to reach communities. Drawings of the Blessington Collocation Module design and maps of the route were circulated to members. Mr. O'Brien outlined that project had New Era approval and the collocation cabin was one of three which would be constructed. Cllr. Timmins questioned if this facility would improve connectivity to the Blessington area and Mr. O'Brien advised that Aurora work hand in hand with multiple carriers and internet providers to increase their network coverage. Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns over a number of black spots in Blessington town and stated that if improvements were being made he would like to see the town centre improve. Cllr. Glennon queried if there were any health implications from electronic fields etc from the collocation cabin. Mr. O'Brien advised that there were no radio waves from equipment housed in cabin as it utilises light and there is no transmission equipment housed there. Cllr. Glennon also asked how far Aurora will provide services to outside of Blessington and Mr. O'Brien replied

as far as Ballymore Eustace. Mr. O'Brien went through the issues raised by members at the previous meeting.

Cllr. Cronin noted there are huge broadband issues in certain areas of West Wicklow and she has tried contacting the Wicklow County Council Broadband officer but has had no response to date. Cllr. Cronin outlined that it was important that the National Broadband plan be rolled out across the District as it was required by both businesses and students. Mr. Hickey advised that a representative from National Broadband was due to attend meeting but had to reschedule and will be present at Baltinglass Municipal District meeting in November. He added that Wicklow County Council Broadband Officer has not been replaced and will raise this issue with the IS Section. Mr. Hickey continued that if members are in favour of the disposal of the site to Aurora, they will provide fencing around Blessington skatepark and playground in return for the site. Cllr. O'Neill queried the location of the site and Mr. Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer, advised that the location of the site backs on to the existing e net site and will tidy up that area. Mr. O'Brien added that Aurora will also acquire a 1.5 metre section of land from Aldi so there will be no surplus space between the two cabinets. Cllr. Mullen proposed the disposal of site to Aurora Telecom and Cllr. Cronin seconded this proposal. Mr. Hickey noted that the proposed disposal of the site will have to go to the November meeting of Wicklow County Council for approval.

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

Mr. Graham briefed members on the non national roads report which had been circulated to members. He advised members that it had been a very successful year overall with a lot of works completed. He advised that a schedule of footpath works will be reviewed next month for both areas and any bridge rehab works not completed by the end of the year would go ahead next year. He advised that two Community Involvement Schemes have been completed in the Tinahely area, Mangans Lane and Lambert's Lane, adding that Mangans Lane is a longstanding amenity in Tinahely area and congratulated the contractors on the fantastic work done.

An N81 progress report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting and Mr. Graham updated members on works. He advised majority of works are completed at Knockroe Bend Realignment and a Safety Audit has been completed.

Cllr. Cronin thanked Mr. Graham for both reports and noted that the resurfacing works in Stratford were very welcome and asked when works were commencing in Dunlavin. Mr. Graham advised that the contractors had been demobilised to complete works in Knockroe for two days and once works in Stratford were completed they would commence on works in Dunlavin. Cllr. Cronin also questioned when footpath works in Hollywood would start and it was noted that works had commenced this morning. Cllr. Cronin also raised concerns that a road section of the Blessington Greenway to Russborough route had no barrier to protect pedestrians from traffic and noted it was quiet a busy stretch of road. Mr. Graham advised that this section of the route has been without a barrier for a long time and the option of erecting a fence or barrier could cause issues for cars. Cllr. Mullen thanked Mr. Graham for the consultation with residents of Mangan's Lane and asked if all the tarmac will be completed this year. He also questioned works on Kelly's Hill, Tinahely. Mr. Graham replied that drainage works on Mangan's Lane needed completing and once works on pedestrian crossings in Shillelagh and Carnew were completed they would commence works on Kelly's Hill. Cllr. O'Neill congratulated Mr. Graham on the completion of the Local Improvement Schemes in Tinahely area and noted that there can be difficulties in getting all residents on board. He added that if one resident on laneway objects to improvements, the scheme can be held up and noted two in particular that are not progressing – one in Donard and a scheme in Lacken. Cllr. O'Neill proposed writing to the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport requesting changes to how these schemes are dealt with as currently it is unfair on residents. Cllr. O'Neill noted that was not right that one person could stop a local improvement scheme going ahead when everyone else were in support of the scheme and were willing to cover the cost of it. He pointed out that in some instances one landowner had prevented schemes seriously impacting on the lives of older people, with money being returned to people by the Roads Section. Cllr. Blake concurred with Cllr. O'Neill and thanked Mr. Graham for his work on the schemes in the Tinahely area. Cllr. Blake raised concerns over the ramps in Valley Heights, Carnew and when the ramps could be reinstalled and noted that signs are required at Kilavaney junction. The Cathaoirleach noted it was great to see works start on the footpaths in Hollywood and thanked Mr. Byrne for all his efforts. Cllr. O'Neill agreed.

6. To consider the distribution of funding to interested groups of Christmas Light Funding.

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, distributed a report on the proposed allocation of Christmas Lights & Festival Funding 2020 for the member's consideration. Mr. Hickey advised that a budget of €10,000 was available. He added that support for the Tinahely Fireworks Display of €2,000 was included in the proposed allocation and members can redistribute the remaining allocations. Cllr. Blake noted that Carnew had only been allocated €250 although the Main Street was quite long. Cllr. Mullen stated that the Tinahely Fireworks Display will be conducted in line with Covid -19 regulations and Cllr. Glennon questioned if the event would go ahead. Members agreed that if the project did not go ahead the funding would be reallocated at the discretion of the District Administrator. Cllr. O'Neill noted that priority should be given to the smaller rural areas. After some discussion it was agreed that the minimum allocation to a town/village would be €500 and other proposed allocations would be reduced to ensure that the allocations remained within the overall budget. All members were in agreement. The distribution of Christmas Light funding was proposed by Cllr. Timmins and seconded by Cllr. O'Neill. Funding to be allocated by means of electronic funds transfer and Cllrs. requested that the funding would be paid out as quickly as possible as groups were under financial pressure due to the pandemic.

7. To consider dates for the Baltinglass Policing Committee meeting.

Mr. Hickey advised members that no Baltinglass Policing Committee meeting had been held since February 2020 and he had contacted the Superintendent in Baltinglass to enquire about the holding of a meeting be held through Zoom on either the first or second Monday of November. He asked members which date suited and it was agreed by all that Monday 2nd November was the most convenient.

8. To consider casual trading in Baltinglass.

Mr. Hickey advised members due to the pandemic all Christmas markets in the Municipal District have now been cancelled and one business had sought permission for a stall in Weaver's Square, Baltinglass for a two week period in November. Mr. Graham advised that there are three casual trading spots in Baltinglass and these are now fully occupied. Cllr.

Timmins stated that he would hope these traders licences could be retained once the new parking layout has been completed in Baltinglass. Mr. Hickey circulated a draft copy of Baltinglass Municipal District Casual Trading Bye-Laws 2020 to members for their information. He proposed designating all of Weavers Square as a casual trading area for the months of November and December subject to it being approved by the Law Agent. Cllr. Timmins proposed this motion and Cllr. Blake seconded. Cllr. Timmins noted that it was important to get sign off from the Law Agent ensure that the designation was within the Casual Trading Act.

9. To pass a resolution for the holding of the November Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District in a venue at the discretion of the Cathaoirleach at 10.30am on Monday 23rd November 2020 as set out in the Municipal District of Baltinglass, Standing Orders, regulating the business and proceedings of the Municipal District.

Mr. Hickey advised that the next meeting is due to take place on 23rd November 2020 and members unanimously approved the resolution.

11. Any other business

Cllr. Mullen noted that the venue for the next meeting could change and this would depend on the Government announcement later today. Cllr. Cronin noted that the Strategic Policy Committee meetings are clashing with the Irish Water meetings and noted this was down to bad communications between the groups. Cllr. Timmins stated that the overall calendar needs to be looked at. Cllr. Cronin asked that the schedule of meeting be e mailed to Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Services, Enterprise and Corporate Affairs to ensure that

Cllr. O'Neill advised members that the sixtieth anniversary of the deaths of nine soldiers killed in the Congo at the Niamba Ambush was coming up on the 8th November. He proposed the marking of this anniversary by laying a wreath at the monument erected in their honour in Weaver's Square, Baltinglass on the 8th November at 12 O'clock and also proposed to fly a United Nations flag at Wicklow Council buildings. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Timmins.

Cllr. Glennon enquired about the mattress amnesty and asked why it was not taking place in West Wicklow. Ms. O'Brien replied that the Environmental Section make the decision to roll out this programme and due to Covid restrictions it has been pushed forward to next year.

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

Signed:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:


DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

23/11/2020