

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Blessington Civic Offices, Blessington on 24th February 2020, at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Cathaoirleach Gerry O'Neill
Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor Patsy Glennon
Councillor John Mullen

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

Apologies: Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Edward Timmins

Cllr. O'Neill opened the Baltinglass Municipal District meeting and apologised for the delay in starting the meeting as a special meeting on Independent Living units beforehand had ran over. He added his congratulations to those that were successful and commiserations to those that were unsuccessful in the recent General Election.

- 1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th January 2020.**

Cllr. Blake proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th January 2020 and this was seconded by Cllr. Glennon.

2. Matters Arising

District Administrator, Mr. Hickey, advised that at a previous meeting it had been proposed to correspond with neighbouring Local Authorities to request support for the upgrade of the N81. He advised that he had been in contact with the Mr Patrick Harrington, Engineer in

Carlow Carlow Local Authority and Mr. Josh Hannigan, Meetings Administrator in Naas Municipal District, Kildare County Council and letters had been sent to the respective local authorities which would be raised under correspondence at their March meetings. Mr. Hickey had been advised that as Baltinglass Municipal District was looking for neighbouring Local Authorities to lobby the Minister at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to include the upgrading of the N81 in the roads capital programme a motion should be passed by the members of Wicklow County Council asking for this support. Cllr. Glennon agreed that this motion should be developed and noted that he foresaw a unanimous decision to put this motion at a full council meeting. Cllr. O'Neill proposed that Mr. Hickey draft the wording of the motion and distribute to members for their agreement. This motion will then be brought forward to a full Council meeting for their support.

Cllr. Glennon asked for clarification on the installation of the CCTV system in Blessington as the Cathaoirleach had stated he would not be available to attend the Baltinglass Municipal District Policing Plan Committee which followed. Cllr. O'Neill advised members that the CCTV was on the agenda for discussion at the meeting and stated that he had made his point clear on the CCTV system and added that his argument was that some cameras were facing into housing estates. Mr. Hickey advised members that a public consultation had taken place for the CCTV scheme, adverts had been placed in local papers and posters had been displayed but there had been no negative feedback and no issues with the scheme. He added that any issues had been discussed at a Special meeting in Wicklow and approval had been given to proceed with the application for funding.

Cllr. Blake added that the Gardai had been present at the Special Meeting in Wicklow and there had been issues with cameras facing into estates but assurances had been given at the meeting and these matters had been clarified.

Cllr. Glennon asked the Cathaoirleach if he was satisfied that a public consultation had been carried out and he replied that he wasn't and added that there were already a lot of CCTV cameras in private businesses around Blessington but none in rural areas where most crimes are carried out. He also noted that responsibility of data now lies with the Local Authority and not with the Gardai.

Mr. Hickey advised members that the application for the Blessington Community CCTV scheme had been submitted to the national Garda CCTV Advisory Committee for their consideration and Gardai from Blessington would present at the meeting. Once approval was obtained the scheme would be submitted to the Department of Justice for grant funding. Mr. Hickey informed members that while he agreed with the Cathaoirleach regarding the need to tackle rural crime in Baltinglass Municipal District the scheme is firstly being rolled out in Blessington and the Gardai have produced heat maps to show the locations of anti social behaviour in the area. In County Wicklow, Arklow are the first town to roll out the scheme, Greystones and Wicklow will also be submitting applications. The total cost of the project is €100,000. Under the terms of Community Based CCTV Systems the Local Authority is to act as data controller and Mr. Hickey agreed with the Cathaoirleach that this places a lot of responsibility on the local authority. Mr. Hickey to circulate minutes of the Special Meeting to members for their information.

Mr. Dermot Graham, A/Senior Executive Engineer presented a report on public lighting within the Baltinglass Municipal District. He outlined the numbers of faults logged on the Deadsure system over the last number of months and the number of lights still out. Ms. Kilkenny, District Manager, noted that the level of service provided by Airtricity is not sufficient and a letter would be drafted outlining these issues. Cllr. Mullen thanked Mr. Graham for the data and questioned how these numbers compare in other Municipal Districts. Mr. Hickey stated that after speaking to other District Administrators it seems to be a county wide issue. Mr. Graham noted that this issue would be raised at the District Engineers meeting on Wednesday. Cllr. Blake stated that a definitive answer was needed on when these lighting repairs would be completed and if a timeframe could be given. Ms. Kilkenny advised that the meeting on Wednesday was not with Airtricity but with in-house engineers and therefore a definite timeframe could not be got at the meeting. Mr. Pat Byrne, Executive Engineer, questioned what the conditions of the service agreement and contract with Airtricity were and Mr. Graham noted that it would be discussed in full at the upcoming meeting.

3. Correspondence

Mr. Garvan Hickey informed the members that he had received correspondence from the Blessington Tidy Towns requesting support for a competition they were considering running under the title "Pick up after your dog". This competition would be open to primary schools to design a poster and the prizes would include €400 for the school and €100 for the winning student. It would be similar to a campaign ran in Cobh by Cork County Council. He noted that dog littering is an ongoing issue within the district. Cllr. Blake commended the work done in the past by a former Councillor Cullen and noted he had campaigned on this issue and had made improvements to certain areas. Cllr. O'Neill asked what was needed from the members and how much it would cost. Mr. Hickey advised a cost of €500 from the Economic Development and Promotion Fund and local primary schools would be invited to take part. Members agreed to support the initiative but that consideration should be given to rolling out across the Municipal District.

Mr. Hickey also advised members that correspondence had been received from Baltinglass Town Forum in relation to improving public transport in Baltinglass town and surrounding areas, a copy of which had been distributed to members. He briefly outlined the suggested proposals from Baltinglass Town Forum and these included to increase the Bus Eireann 132 route to hourly runs from Baltinglass to Dublin rather than five daily runs as scheduled presently. They also suggest that this route could connect with the Luas and other services in Tallaght rather than terminate in Busáras as presently scheduled.

After some discussion on the lack of bus routes and public transport within the district Ms Kilkenny suggested writing to National Transport Authority with suggested routes for the area. Cllr. O'Neill noted that a review on local bus routes was also needed.

Mr. Hickey also advised that an email had been received from Dunlavin & District Forum raising concerns over a number of issues. These included the condition of roads and footpaths in the area, some areas require removal of cobbleblock to accommodate wheelchair users. The Forum also enquired about funding for HIVE@W91, the development of a co-working programme in Dunlavin. He noted that they would appreciate any advice on a rates reduction and support from the members.

4. 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. Mr. Byrne presented the N81 Progress Report and advised members that works are progressing at Knockroe Bend Realignment site and should be completed by July. He advised that funding would be sought for installation of an artwork scheme at Knockroe. He also advised on the N81 Safety Works programme to be extended to 2020. Mr. Graham added that the fencing retrofit was for safety purposes and at no cost to the landowner. Mr. Byrne noted that these retrofits would be applied only with agreement from landowners. Cllr. Glennon questioned what identified a category B resurfacing project and Mr. Byrne advised that they are sections of the road that Wicklow County Council identify as requiring rehabilitation. He added that HD 28 are categorised as areas of the N81 that have poor skid resistance and these are identified by TII through SCRIM testing. Cllr. O'Neill noted that the road surface at Knockieran bridge was in very bad condition and enquired if any updates had been received from ESB over who is responsible for the maintenance of the bridge surface. Mr. Byrne advised that improvement works at Knockieran bridge would involve planning the existing surface and reinstating and could cost approximately €100,000. Mr. Graham added that Mr. Geraghty, former District Engineer, had been in contact with ESB regarding the maintenance of bridge but with no outcome. Cllr. Mullen suggested Wicklow County Council Legal Department correspond with the ESB in order to get clarification. After some discussion it was agreed to get legal advice first before corresponding with the ESB.

Mr. Graham briefly outlined the scheduled works on the Non National Roads Report. He advised members that the provisional allocations for RI works and RM works for Baltinglass Municipal District was €2,060,800 and €592,375 respectfully. These final allocations would be determined at the upcoming District Engineers meeting. These allocations will be divided equally between Blessington and Tinahely areas. He also advised of allocations for footpath and drainage works and a schedule for these works would be devised by himself and Mr. Byrne. He added that €307,000 had been allocation to Community Involvement Schemes and advised that the final decision will be made within the next few weeks on which schemes progress. Cllr. Glennon questioned if the CIS scheme in Corragh would be completed this

year as 0.8 of a mile was left unfinished from 2019. Mr. Graham noted that there was no commitment made to complete this year but would look at in more detail.

Cllr. Mullen enquired if the footpath budgets included the extra funding from Irish Water and Mr. Graham confirmed that the extra funding was from Irish Water was spread out over all the Municipal Districts within the county. He could not confirm the exact figure but would check back on the minutes of the County Council meeting. Cllr. Mullen also raised concerns over the lack of linemarking on the R747. Mr. Graham advised that linemarking had been completed in Shillelagh and once weather improves it will be completed from Barraderry to Kiltegan. Cllr. Blake noted that there was an increase in funding for Restoration Improvement and questioned if a 200 metre section of road at Coolkenno could be included in the programme as it was in very bad condition. He also questioned if the WCC bridge crew were permanently employed and Mr. Byrne advised that they were only employed four to five months of the year and maintenance is now an issue with a number of bridges. Mr. Graham advised members that he had met with the Fisheries Board recently at Ballinglen bridge and works were required in order to improve fish spawning. Cllr. Mullen noted that Ballinglen Bridge dated back to 1798 and is held to be of historical significance.

Cllr. O'Neill asked if new applicants could still apply for the Local Improvement Schemes and noted that a scheme in Donard had not progressed because of one household objecting to the scheme. Mr. Graham advised that monies had been refunded to applicants for the Donard scheme from the Roads section but unfortunately the scheme cannot be completed unless all residents are on board.

5. To discuss and consider Funding Applicants received.

Mr. Hickey advised members that correspondence had been received from West Wicklow Festival enquiring if funding of €4,000 could be sought from Baltinglass Municipal District. He added that funding of €2,000 had been made last year and the previous year from the Festival Fund. This had been raised at the February meeting and copies of the correspondence circulated to members. Cllr. Blake proposed €2,000 to be granted as funding and Cllr. Glennon seconded this motion.

The District Administrator also advised members two further funding applications had been received one from Old Coollattin Canadian Connection and Blessington Twinning Committee. Mr. Hickey read correspondence received from the Blessington Twinning Committee outlining their upcoming projects which include a reception in Blessington Library with an exhibition on links to O'Neill City with a cost of €1,500 for display boards. Mr. Hickey also outlined a request from Coollattin Canadian Connection for funding, copies of which had been given to members at the February meeting. Cllr. Mullen enquired how much funding was available and Mr. Hickey informed him €3,000 was available from the Twinning Baltinglass MD budget and €4,000 in the Festival budget. Cllr. Blake proposed that Coollattin Canadian Connection receive the same amount of funding as last year, €2,000 and Cllr. Glennon seconded this. Cllr. O'Neill proposed Blessington Twinning Committee receive funding of €1,500 and Cllr. Mullen seconded this. Cllr. Blake abstained from this proposal.

6. To receive an update on the development of the Blessington Greenway.

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, advised members that a draft appraisal report had been carried out by Aecom Ireland Ltd., site walkover has been carried out, appointment of Murphy Surveys to carry out a drone survey of the route. He also advised members that a tree felling licence application was being developed, forestry advisor appointed and draft application for the Valleymount to Annacorney route (approximately 5 Kilometers). The drone survey by Murphy's is to be carried out within the next two weeks. He also advised that the building originally housing the HSE had now been purchased and would now house the Interpretive Centre. Cllr. O'Neill enquired if a total figure was available on how much the project would cost. Mr. Hickey noted that the complete Greenway project is expected to cost approximately €15 million.

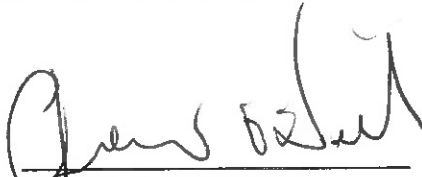
Cllr. Blake asked if there was any update on the Shillelagh to Arklow greenway which would mainly be dealt with through Arklow Municipal District office. Cllr. Mullen added that now Blessington Greenway has been approved, the Shillelagh to Arklow greenway should now be a priority. Cllr. Blake asked if an update could be made available for the next meeting.

7. Any other business

Mr. Hickey advised members that the BMD District Policing Plan Committee meeting was taking place at 12.30pm and all were welcome to attend. He informed members that the next meeting would take place on 23rd March 2020 and reminded them that their list of work projects from their discretionary fund was required.

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

Signed:



CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

25/05/2020