**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD REMOTELY BY ZOOM ON TUESDAY 19th OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Present: Councillor L. Scott, Cathaoirleach

Councillors M. Crean, T. Fortune, D. Mitchell & G. Walsh

Also Present: Mr. M. Nicholson, Greystones Municipal District Manager

Ms. M. Porter, Greystones Municipal District Administrator

Ms. K. Coughlan, Greystones Municipal District

Apologies from: Councillor J. Neary

Mr. R. O’Hanlon, Greystones Municipal District Engineer

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1. **Deputation from Church of the Nazarene**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Rev. Luke Carrig and Pastor Tim Bowen-Evans from the Church of the Nazarene to the meeting. They showed a short video and referred to their document that had been circulated which outlined their proposals to provide a community hub to include a free, public access, sheltered playground; a space to facilitate a pre-school (ECCE programme) with outside play area; affordable high quality rental spaces for leasing to community groups; a coffee shop selling ethically sourced coffee at affordable prices; a selection of church run low cost community initiatives such as parent and toddler groups, homework clubs, youth drop ins, etc.; environmental preservation area with allotments and links from new housing estate to Mill Lane, Three Trout Greenway, local supermarket and transport options. Reverend Carrig stated that their proposed facilities would be non-religious and not for profit.

Pastor Bowen-Evans stated that there would be no pressure on anyone using the proposed facilities to participate in any of the Church’s religious activities.

All the members were very supportive of the very impressive proposals and welcomed them. Some expressed the view that it might be difficult to secure adequate funding to progress the plans but wished the deputation well in their efforts and offered to assist them in any way possible.

1. **Discussion on Memorandum & Articles of Association for Greystones Town Team**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Christine Flood, Wicklow County Council to the meeting.

Ms. Flood gave a Powerpoint presentation which gave a short background to Town Teams together with details of projects carried out to date and funding details. She stated that the Memorandum & Articles of Association for Greystones Town Team were drawn up using a generic template and needed to be tweaked. She did not foresee any problem with changing the documents. She stated that there was no attempt to undermine democracy and that the Town Teams were a collaborative with the MDs.

Ms. Flood also provided the members with a synopsis of legal advice received in relation to the Greystones Town Team which had been requested by the members. The llegal advice synopsis was as follows:

* Firstly and foremost the GTT as a CLG is a completely independent legal entity with its own legal standing.
* The Town Team would require their own independent legal advice regarding incorporation and obligations and duties that are imposed by incorporation and in compliance with the obligations under the Companies Act. Their obligations stand separate to those of the MD and that has to be made clear.
* The documents are from a template not entirely in keeping with the intentions expected but could be easily rectified. However this should be done with independent legal advice.
* GTT is a separate legal body so the MD does not have direct control over it.
* The key document, being the Articles of Association, also underpins the fact that the CLG is independent of the MD. The membership of the Company is at the discretion of the Board.
* The CLG stands separate and apart from the MD. Key governance procedures must be put in place to support the laudable intention of both the Town Team and the MD to promote enterprise in the Greystone’s area. If a conduit is required for the purpose of Grants that has all the obligations and clear governance procedures in place, then that body acts as a separate entity and must be regarded as such and that concern rests more with policy than legal requirements.

Councillor T. Fortune expressed the view that the creation of Town Teams was a red flag for democracy that needed to be taken seriously by Councillors. He stated that local Councillors were constantly being taken out of local issues in housing, environment, planning, etc. and he suggested that there was a bigger agenda. He likened the Town Teams to quangos being set up to leverage public money.

Members expressed concerns about oversight questions and about the role of Wicklow County Council in setting up these Town Teams which were private companies. They suggested that if the County Council was resourcing the Town Teams, then it was critical that the members had full oversight and they enquired about County Council policy on Town Teams, administration and funding and if the Town Team meetings were open to the public and properly minuted.

The members all welcomed the participation of volunteers in getting things done in the district and commended their efforts and achievements. It was suggested that the MD Cathaoirleach and District Administrator should be members of the Board of Directors of the Town Team and that the minutes of Town Team meetings should be circulated to the Councillors.

In response to queries from the members, Ms. Flood stated that a summary of the activities of each Town Team was included in the Chief Executive’s report for the monthly meetings of Wicklow County Council. She stated that it was intended to review the structures and formations of all the Town Teams across the County for ease of management and proper governance and that she would be recommending to the Town Teams that they undertake adequate governance training. She pointed out that the way Councils operated had changed and that many grant funding applications were now based on getting community groups, such as the Town Team, involved.

In conclusion, Ms. Flood stated that a further meeting could be organised once the review of Town Teams was completed. She welcomed the opportunity to discuss matters at this meeting and stated that the issues raised would be taken on board.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

SIGNED:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

DATED THIS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_DAY OF\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2021