

MINUTES OF OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING OF GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD IN THE CIVIC OFFICES, MILL ROAD, GREYSTONES, CO. WICKLOW ON TUESDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2024 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present: Councillor T. Fortune, Cathaoirleach
Councillors M. Barry, O. Finn, L. Fenelon-Gaskin & L. Scott

Also Present: Mr. M. Devereux, Greystones Municipal District Manager
Mr. B. Gleeson, Head of Finance, Wicklow County Council
Mr. R. O'Hanlon, Greystones Municipal District Engineer
Ms. T. Kearns, Greystones Municipal District Administrator
Ms. K. Coughlan, Greystones Municipal District

Apologies from: Councillor S. Stokes

At the outset the members passed a vote of sympathy to Marie Hatton and her family from Killincarrig on the death of Danny Hatton. A minutes silence was observed in remembrance of him.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Councillor L. Scott stated that the first paragraph in the draft minutes in relation to Notice of Motion (a) should be amended to state that 'Councillor L. Scott apologised' and not 'Councillor O. Finn apologised' and this was agreed.

It was then proposed by Councillor L. Scott, seconded by Councillor L. Fenelon Gaskin and agreed that the amended minutes of the monthly meeting held on 24th September, 2024, as circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

2. REPRESENTATIVES FROM GO-AHEAD IRELAND

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Adam Harvey, Ms. Niamh Swords and Mr. Derry O'Leary to the meeting. They gave a slide show presentation that outlined details of their background, milestones, routes, passenger numbers and the proposed BusConnects changes to services that will operate in the district from early December. They agreed to circulate a copy of the presentation to the members.

In response to queries from the members they stated that most of the north Wicklow bus services connected to Bray DART station but that Bray MD would not agree to grant priority to buses on the Bray Main Street which would help ease the traffic issues in the town. In relation to difficulties for students getting to UCD the representatives pointed out that the new routes were due to be launched on 8th December following which there would be 80% more buses on the roads. They pointed out that they had difficulty in recruiting mechanics for their fleet and they stated that they supplemented public transport services when DARTS were off.

In response to further queries from the members Ms. Swords stated that all the public transport services, routes and timetables were planned by the NTA and that Go Ahead Ireland, as well as other operators, ran the services under contract to the NTA. She pointed out that Go Ahead fed into the NTA plans based on their experience.

Following further discussion, the Cathaoirleach thanked the group for attending the meeting and looked forward to receiving a copy of their presentation.

3. PRESENTATION BY 'SAVE OUR CLIFF WALK' GROUP

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Dermod Dwyer, Ms. Georgia Gallagher and Mr. Peter Murtagh to the meeting.

The delegation circulated a lengthy document which outlined the background to the Friends of the Cliff Walk group and gave details of clearance works carried out by the group to date. The document outlined the groups proposals for getting the Cliff Walk re-opened. The delegation welcomed the Taoiseach's recent commitment to set up a Task Force to look at all the issues and they sought a commitment from the members and officials to have the Cliff Walk re-opened by St. Patrick's Day in 2025.

The District Manager welcomed the presentation and stated that the Council has had many meetings with interested parties and that a lot of work had been done behind the scenes. He stated that landowners must be given adequate opportunity to be part of the process as well as Irish Rail. He pointed out that the Cliff Walk spanned the Greystones and the Bray Municipal Districts so it was a joint effort but would take time. He stated that the walk was closed because it was not safe and that the detail for the Task Force had not yet been worked out. He stated that the whole route from Bray to Greystones would be assessed as there was no point in fixing a small area only to have another area presenting with the same issue in a year or so. He pointed out that Irish Rail had carried out some studies on the route which they would share with Wicklow County Council. He stated that a short term solution would be sought but he stressed that the walk was unsafe at present and that there was a real risk that it could collapse when people walked on it, catastrophically and without warning.

The District Engineer stated that the report by Bill Murphy that was referred to in the documents circulated had been given serious consideration. He pointed out that there were many areas of collapse that were not visible from walking on the Cliff but had been reported by the Coast Guard, as well as rock falls reported by Irish Rail. He stated that the walk had been allowed to get overgrown as a deterrent to people using it, as many people ignored the barriers that were put in place.

Following discussion all the members stated that they wanted to get the Cliff Walk re-opened as soon as possible and they welcomed the setting up of a Task Force by the Taoiseach. However they could not give a commitment on re-opening dates for the walk until such time as all the issues had been looked at by experts. They stressed that they had a responsibility towards all, especially on health and safety issues, but agreed to work with all the stakeholders towards a short term solution.

4. CONSIDERATION OF 2025 DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN FOR GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Members had been circulated with a copy of the 2025 Draft Budgetary Plan for Greystones Municipal District, together with a letter from the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council in relation to same.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Brian Gleeson, Head of Finance, Wicklow County Council to the meeting.

Mr. Gleeson gave a short background to the budget process and pointed out that the 2025 GMD Draft Budgetary Plan must be approved before the Wicklow County Council budget. He stated that the draft budgetary plan figures were based on historic events and in response to queries from the members in relation to different amounts allocated to the various MDs he stated that sponsorship of roundabouts was a source of income in Arklow MD and parking charges generated income for Bray MD. He suggested that the members of Greystones MD should consider charging for parking in the park and ride car park now that train ticket prices had been standardised. Members expressed concerns that charging for the Park and Ride would discourage its use.

The District Engineer stated that the Greystones park and ride car park was the only free one on the east coast and he pointed out that the NTA was now pushing for a bus park and ride too.

The District Administrator informed the members that Greystones MD was looking at having roundabouts in the district sponsored but pointed out that any income from this source would only cover the maintenance of the roundabouts.

The members thanked Mr. Gleeson for attending and following further discussion it was proposed by Councillor L. Scott, seconded by Councillor L. Fenelon Gaskin and agreed that the 2025 Draft Budgetary Plan for Greystones Municipal District, as circulated, be adopted.

As time was getting on, it was agreed to extend the meeting by half an hour to allow for completion of the agenda.

5. REPORT FROM GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ENGINEER

A report from the District Engineer had been circulated to the members in advance of the meeting.

In response to queries from the members, the District Engineer stated that it was hoped that the Contractor doing the roadworks at Crowe Abbey would be back shortly to complete works there and on Church Road. He stated that it was difficult to get contractors to do works at present.

It was agreed that any further queries from the members in relation to the District Engineer's report should be emailed in to the office.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

No notices of motion were considered.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

1. The District Administrator advised the members of an update on the twinning partnership with Holyhead. She stated that a delegation from Holyhead would travel over for the Christmas Lights event in Greystones on 16th November and that it was intended to host an event for them on that weekend, details of which would be circulated once available.
2. The District Administrator informed the members of a request from Planet Youth for a contribution of €1,000 from each of the five Municipal Districts. She stated that the five District Administrators were of the opinion that this group should be funded centrally rather than by the Municipal Districts.

Councillor M. Barry pointed out that this funding was being sought as a once-off contribution for a survey around drug use, etc. in schools.

It was agreed to postpone a decision on this funding until after the District Administrator had an opportunity to discuss the matter further with her colleagues and to look into possible alternative sources of funding.

3. The District Administrator stated that Newcastle Village Forum had sought a contribution towards their Christmas lights event and following discussion it was agreed to allocate the sum of €1,500 to them.
4. The District Administrator informed the members that a request had been received from Connecting Kilcoole for a contribution towards the senior citizens Christmas party in the village. She pointed out that

various groups in the district organised such events, and it would not be advisable to set a precedent for funding such events.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor O. Finn and seconded by Councillor T. Fortune that €250 be allocated to Connecting Kilcoole for this event. Councillors M. Barry, L. Fenelon Gaskin and L. Scott voted against the proposal so it was not agreed.

5. The District Administrator stated that a response had been received from the office of Minister Malcolm Noonan in relation to a recent GMD notice of motion requesting that the state purchase lands adjacent to the Glen of the Downs. She stated that she would circulate a copy of the response to the members.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. The District Administrator informed the members that two hours free on-street parking was usually agreed for Greystones on the four Saturdays prior to Christmas which would fall on 30th November and on the 7th, 14th and 21st December this year. This was agreed by the members. The District Administrator pointed out that the Traffic Wardens would be on duty on these dates to enforce any illegal parking.
2. The District Administrator informed the members that she intended to look at better ways of allocating available funding to community groups earlier in the coming year and that she would let the members know in advance of any such changes.
3. It was agreed that Council officials would look at options for charging for parking in the park and ride car park.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

SIGNED: _____ **CATHAOIRLEACH**

CERTIFIED: _____ **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR**

DATED THIS: _____ **DAY OF** _____ **2024**