

MINUTES OF WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING

HELD IN DISTRICT CHAMBER, TOWN HALL

MONDAY 22nd APRIL 2024 at 15.00pm

Present: Cllr Irene Winters, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cllr Gail Dunne, Cllr Mary Kavanagh, Cllr John Snell, Cllr Paul O'Brien

In Attendance: District Manager, Brian Gleeson
District Engineer, Pat Clarke
District Administrator, Georgina Franey

Cathaoirleach Irene Winters opened the meeting at 15.00 p.m.

ITEM 1

Confirmation of the Minutes from the Wicklow Municipal District Meeting held on the 25th March 2024

It was proposed by Councillor Shay Cullen, seconded by Councillor Paul O'Brien and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Wicklow Municipal District Monthly Meeting held on 25th March 2024.

ITEM 2

Presentation from Deirdre Whitfield, Town Regeneration Officer, in relation to Thrive – Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme and Project Development Measures

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Deirdre Whitfield, Town Regeneration Officer, to the meeting, who made a presentation to the members as follows:

THRIVE

Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme

THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union under the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027 and the Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-2027

Aim of THRIVE

- **Supporting locally developed plans that take an integrated strategic approach to the regeneration of towns through a citizen centred community led approach under the TCF framework and the core values of the New European Bauhaus – sustainability, aesthetics, inclusion.**

Strand 1 40,000 to 200,000

Development and enhancement of integrated urban strategies using a TCF Framework e.g. a TCF Masterplan

Identification of projects that promote the conservation and adaptive use of our built heritage stock while reducing vacancy and dereliction in town centres

Prioritisation development and specification of project proposals to create a pipeline of investment-ready built heritage refurbishment renovation and adaptive reuse projects

Designated Settlements

- Bray
- Wicklow Town/Rathnew

Update Plan to include

TCF Approach

Climate change & mitigation

Regeneration of public space/heritage focus

Digital transformation and new ways of working

Experience led retail

Access - disability, elderly, children, inclusion

Sustainable and adaptable reuse of existing assets

Integrated Urban Strategies

- an analysis of the development needs and the potential of the area, including economic, social and environmental interlinkages
- a description of an integrated approach to address the identified development needs and the potential of the area
- a description of the involvement of partners in accordance with Article 8 in the preparation and implementation of the strategy using a multi-level governance principle and bottom up approach.

Bauhaus Principles

- Transformative and encouraging a cultural shift to sustainable place-based living
- Inclusivity
- Accessibility
- Quality Design
- Sustainability

Town & Village PDM 2024

- Town & Village Project Development Measure funds the development of any necessary plans to bring projects to 'shovel ready' stage
 - Black Castle Area
 - comprehensive design, planning, and exploration of initiatives aimed at improving the public lands surrounding The Black Castle, a prominent historic site in Wicklow Town
-

It was suggested that an overall plan should be drawn up to have ready when funds become available.

Members stressed that any new plan should encompass the entire area of Wicklow Town, Rathnew and environs, not just Wicklow Town.

A request was made that communities would receive feedback when their applications for funding are not successful and also receive direction. Deirdre advised she would take this on board.

A point was made that presently the casual trading bye-laws are stifling creativity and project development in the area and that more facilities are required for the growing populations of Wicklow and Rathnew.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Deirdre for her presentation.

ITEM 3

District Engineers Report

Updates were provided by District Engineer Pat Clarke as follows:

Housing:

❖ Relets/Prelets

- 5no. houses relets handed to WMD for refurbishment works (Preparing Tenders)
- 7no. houses being worked on, through WCC Housing Framework.
- 4no. houses returned to Housing Department for allocation.
- 3no. houses on hold (tenancy considerations by Housing Department).

❖ Maintenance and operations

- On-going repairs and maintenance being progressed as required on housing stock within the WMD.
- All complete, only snags remaining, future DPGs to be completed by Housing Centrally.

DTTAS Roads Programme:

DTTAS Allocations for 2024 Projects have now been released to the Roads Section. Projects on the Restoration Improvement and Maintenance Programme have been reviewed based on pavement condition ratings.

❖ Drainage

- General works on verge drains, drainage inlets, gullies and road crossings to outlets are ongoing throughout the MD.
- Programme for cleaning of gullies continuing within Wicklow MD. Drain surveys are still being carried out on problem areas as required.
- Installation of drainage pipes along Milltown lane are to begin in next few weeks, once resources becomes available.

- Drainage works at Knockafrumpa Lane has been completed which was causing severe damage to the road. Surfacing works will be completed during the summer on part of this road.
- Drainage crossings completed on Conlon's hill, Newtownmountkennedy to remove excess water off the roads in this area.

❖ **Roads**

- Edge preparation and strengthening works have started on some roads in advance of our Restoration Improvement and Maintenance projects. These will be carried out mainly during the summer months.

❖ **Safety Projects**

- Pedestrian crossing civil works is finished at Mountainview in Newtownmountkennedy. Installation of belisha beacon poles are completed. ESB connection required to energise crossing.
- Upgrade of Road markings on R755/ R756 between Wicklow Gap and Djouce has been completed, approx. 17 km of centre line completed plus 6km of edge markings, further lining of symbols and chevron markings have also been completed. Chevron signage and delineator posts have been installed on the Wicklow Gap.
- Periodic School Signage has been installed at various locations in the WMD. Signage at school in Ashford to completed within coming weeks.
- Installation of new pedestrian crossing almost complete on the Dunbur Road, at Dunbur Park. Tightening of radii of junction for Dunbur Park has also been completed, along with new footpaths and tactile paving. All in the interest of safety for all road users.
- Installation of a footpath in Laragh Village along by the old post office has now been completed. This along with improved road markings in the centre of the village and at the pedestrian crossing at the Brockagh Centre has improved safety for all vulnerable road users.

❖ **WCC Projects**

- New anti-slip surface to be installed on bridge deck in Q2 when weather is suitable.
- A substantial review of the Wicklow town centre street furniture was carried out with the removal of planters from certain locations. Further works on footpath repairs to continue around the Main Street area. Additional road markings were carried out at the Upper mall road in response to HGV's taking the lower mall route. Signage has also been reviewed and updated.

Fáilte Ireland:

❖ **Abbey Grounds;**

- Project continuing with Architect/ Structural Engineer and a Quantity surveyor working on tender package for the Coach House area at present. Tenders have been received and an assessment is under way.
- Detailed designs still progressing for the Amphitheatre and performance area.
- Material finishes being worked through at present on certain elements of the design.

- Connection agreements with utility providers are being progressed.
- Site compound for construction works has been started. Erection of temporary site fencing has been installed around areas of interest on site, as per National Monuments requirements.
- Design works on new entrance for parochial house are being progressed, with site works to start as soon as ground conditions improve.

Community Recognition Fund/Outdoor Recreation:

- Brittas Bay Blueway funding for accessibility works; works have commenced on upgrade to toilet facilities. The upgrade includes a disabled toilet, improved water storage and improvement of security facilities. Tank has now being installed, increasing the storage capacity to 26,000 litres. Disability access ramp and new showers have been installed. Works are now complete, with the contractor to remove security fencing next week. WCC staff to complete final touch up on paint work and erection of signage. All works to be finished prior to opening in May to the public.
- The Assembly Hall facility works started on Monday 4th of March as specified, with a completion date of June 2024. Works will include the upgrade of electrical and heating systems, refurbishment of existing toilets and kitchen facilities, creating of a meeting room space upstairs to create a multi -functional building for different user groups, plus other aesthetic improvements throughout the building. Works are continuing on site and progressing as per scheduled.

Town & Village Renewal:

- Wicklow Town – South Quay connections to Main Street (Connectivity Project); Seating (at Scouts Hall) have been installed. Three ornate arches with lanterns are currently being fabricated for installation along the Doctor’s Steps, cabling works now complete for this part of the works. Installation of Fabricated ship to town hall gable complete. Installation of Heron sculpture at scouts den complete.
- Lighting along the Mall and Market Square elements to be completed soon. Mini Mural on Bridge Street Books wall has been completed, plus an additional mural at the sailing club. New corten steel planters installed to protect “Heron” sculpture from damage.
- Newtown - Streetscape Enhancement Project works are complete. New bins (mixture of compactor and larger big belly bins) have been installed in response to complaints on litter issues. Additional street furniture such as benches, bollards and planters has been erected to further enhance the appearance of Newtownmountkenedy.
- Compactor bins have been installed in Glendalough, Laragh and Roundwood to promote a cleaner environment but also to increase efficiency from an operational point of view. These bins have smart technology built into them and will communicate back to base when full and require emptying.

❖ NTA Projects

- Consultants still working on pedestrian and cycle improvement scheme as part of the Pathfinder project, initial survey completed on the Marlton Road and Rocky Road, linking to the train station on Station Road. A topographical survey of roads and footpaths to take place along entire route over coming weeks. This information is required as part of the detailed design process.

❖ **Additional MD projects:**

- WCC have issued payments for the following connections. WMD has received MPRN's to progress completion:
 - Laragh Pedestrian Crossing,
 - Moneystown Pedestrian Crossing,

Scheduling of ESB to energise this equipment is being progressed but is very slow.

- Road markings are being progressed around the MD, some have been carried out around the town, with others refreshed at certain locations. A new road centreline installed has also been between Annamoe and Ashford, on the majority of the route. To be completed when weather improves. Further road-markings completed at Diamond Hill junction in Roundwood.
- Murrrough Masterplan being worked on at present, with concept drawings completed, landscape architect required to detail up concept. Identification of existing services underway at present. Services have now been identified and tender documents are being finalised. Final review of tender documentation before being issued is currently taking place.
- Substantial cleaning of footpath area from Aldi in Rathnew to the M11 Junction 16 slip was completed at the end of March, which had deteriorated due to overgrowth. This has had a substantial safety improvement for all users using this footpath.
- Tender issued to contractors for tree surgeon work around the district, removal of hazardous trees, stumps etc. Almost all of this has now been completed, except for two locations where ESB attendance is required. The Arborist has completed a report on other trees within the MD environs. The MD which will review the report during the no cut season.
- Civil works have begun on the Public Lighting along the Promenade at the Brass Fox. A temporary solution was in place since Christmas at this location, but a permanent solution is now being completed.

MEMBERS OBSERVATIONS

- Members received some negative comments from the public in relation to the deteriorating condition of Wicklow Main Street. The point was made that the Municipal District covers a much wider area than the former Town Council and that resources haven't increased accordingly.
- Public upset at the lack of parking and benches obstructing the road outside the Brass Fox premises. District Engineer advised he will examine and revert back to them.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the Christmas Market returning to the Seafront and if it does that both sides of the road and the carpark shouldn't be used.
- Condition of the approach roads into to the county town raised. The District Engineer advised that Ballynerrin road will be surfaced this year and Irish Water had laid pipes in the road at the tennis club.
- Safety concerns regarding a building site at the Seafront. Members indicated that works have stalled and the hoarding has collapsed. The District Engineer will ask Planning to contact the developer, particularly if it is a safety issue.
- Problem of weeds on Main Street. The District Engineer advised that staff were working on this.

- Problem of dog litter. District Engineer advised that the machine is back in operation but is slow and requires an operative to walk behind. The District Manager advised that the Environment Section will be running an Awareness Campaign shortly.
- Members were appreciative of the reinstatement of the pedestrian crossing on Dunbur Road.
- Public Lighting required in a section of Dunbur Glen. District Engineer to examine.
- Position regarding cutting of a small area of grass in Wicklow Heights. To be examined.
- Interest expressed by Laragh GAA in providing parking facilities around the pitch. District Engineer advised that a meeting will take place shortly regarding the Glendalough Masterplan.
- Ashford crossing at Vartry Woods – work is ongoing in this area.
- Installation of signage in carparks advising of 2 hours free parking – The District Administrator stated that she will order stickers for parking machines.
- Condition of playground in Newtown. District Engineer advised that the playground has been examined and hazardous items will be removed.
- Dilapidated condition of playground in Hillview. District Engineer advised that consideration was being given to moving the playground out to the front of the estate in order to make it safer.
- Dilapidated condition of Hillview estate and possibility of power-washing houses. District Engineer advised that the MD are liaising with the housing section in order to clean up the area, progress power washing and possibly painting in order to add some colour and enhance the area.
- Members thanked staff for work carried out on the footpath near Maxol service station outside Rathnew.
- Dip in road on the old N11 under the railway bridge in Rathnew needs resurfacing. Manhole covers have sunk.
- The need for planning for the forthcoming Leinster Fleadh in order to showcase Wicklow Town. Members asked to be kept updated if there is anything they can do. Meeting to be held in next few weeks. Members asked if outdoor crew could be placed on overtime in order to control litter etc. for the event and also for the Round Ireland Yacht Race.
- Bins overflowing at Brittas Bay. District Engineer advised that the bins are serviced from 1st May and prior to this members of the public should take responsibility for their own rubbish.
- Members thanked the District Engineer for work carried out at Rosehill.
- Line marking has greatly improved safety for motorists and pedestrians in rural areas. The MD need to ensure it is maintained going forward.
- Members expressed thanks for the footpath in Laragh, which is an added advantage in a key tourist area.
- Query if funding is available to upgrade Wicklow Town centre, i.e. a painting scheme as in Newtown.
- Poor condition of road to new arboretum in Kilquade. Members queried if there were any conditions in the planning permission for safer access and asked if the District Engineer would check.
- Query regarding possibility of installing a disabled parking space outside a house. District Administrator advised that details of disabled badge should be submitted and the matter would be considered.
- Issue of a car parked on Main Street for approximately 3 weeks. Details to be submitted. District Administrator advised that one parking fine per day can be issued.
- Update requested on Milltown Lane. District Engineer advised that he drove through with the Senior Engineer from the Roads Section and will put forward the options to reduce the volume and speed of traffic at this location, i.e. ramps, one-way system, cul-de-sac, solar signs.

ITEM 4

Discretionary Projects 2024

The list of proposed projects was circulated to the members.

The District Manager advised that a sum of €359,000 had been carried forward from 2023 and a sum of €223,000 was available for 2024, giving a total of €582,000. A sum of €48,000 has been spent so far this year, the planned expenditure from the list amounts to €90,000 leaving €444,000 approximately available. He advised that each Municipal District has received an allocation of €100,000 for footpaths in the last few weeks.

The District Administrator advised members that an application was received from Wicklow Pride for funding in the sum of €5,000 towards their festival to take place from 1st to 6th July. Detailed accounts and costings were also submitted. The total cost of the festival was estimated to be in the region of €10,000. Members were advised that a sum of €1,000 was allocated last year. It was proposed by Councillor Paul O'Brien and seconded by Councillor Gail Dunne to allocate some funding, the sum to be agreed at a later date.

The District Administrator advised members that an application was received for funding from Wicklow Town Twinning Committee in relation to attendance at the 3 day Christmas Market in Montigny-le-Brettonneux, commencing on 29th November. It was proposed to take a stall for the 3 days in order to promote Wicklow produce and crafts and the funding would be used to transport the produce etc. It was proposed to discuss at the Twinning Committee meeting to be held in the next two weeks. It was pointed out that this was a great opportunity to promote Wicklow in the best possible way and it was agreed to support. Members queried if funds might also be available from the County Council. It was agreed to discuss again when costings are available.

The District Manager advised that the County Council would have already allocated budgets at this stage of the year and it may be easier to use discretionary funding.

The District Manager further added that the Civic Reception budget had a sum of €8,000 carried forward as it was not spent during the Covid period and some could be used for town twinning purposes.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that members would meet and discuss the proposals.

ITEM 5

Correspondence

An invitation was received from the Mayor of Montigny-le-Brettonneux in France inviting members to attend their festival on the weekend of 1st and 2nd June to include Europe Day, Local Market and celebration of 35 years of twinning with the city of Lunca (Romania). It was noted that this is the weekend prior to the Local Elections.

A request was received from Wicklow Lions Club to place one of the benches taken from the area at the scout hall opposite The Fishman shop on South Quay with an inscription commemorating the late Jimmy Balbontin RIP of Wicklow RNLI. The Members supported the request for same. The District Administrator will liaise with the Lions Club regarding the best location.

Correspondence received from Chris Daly of Beating Hearts enquiring about the possibility of the Council initiating an award for persons actively involved in the community. It was indicated that this would be a matter for the new councillors to decide following the local elections.

ITEM 6

Any Other Business

A vote of sympathy was passed in respect of the late Captain John Barlow, RIP.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 17.20pm

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Date: _____