

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass on Zoom on 24th
May 2021, 10.30am**

Present: Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon
Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor John Mullen
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Edward Timmins
Councillor Gerry O'Neill

In Attendance: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer
Mr. Declan O'Brien, Executive Engineer, TWES
Mr. Michael Flynn, Senior Engineer
Mr. Brendan Doyle, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Conor Page, Senior Executive Engineer

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Glennon, opened the May ordinary meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed Mr. Liam Cullen to his new role as District Administrator of Baltinglass Municipal District.

Vote of Sympathy

The elected members passed a vote of sympathy and a minutes silence was held following the recent and sad passing of former elected member Pat Doran. Tributes were paid to Mr. Doran and sympathies were extended to his family.

- 1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 26th April 2021.**

Cllr. Blake proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 26th April 2021 and this was seconded by Cllr. O'Neill.

2. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

3. To receive an update on the development of the Blessington relief road.

Mr. Declan O'Brien presented the members with an update of the Blessington Inner Relief Road. He advised that the first meeting with the design consultants, DBFL Consulting Engineers, had taken place and the surveyors have been appointed. An ecologist will also be appointed to carry out environmental reports. He added that landowners have been written to and a desktop study of all documents and information has been completed. It is hoped that delivery of all documents will be complete by mid August. Cllr. O'Neill welcomed progress on the relief road and stated he was anxious these works were in place before any of the six large housing developments in the town commenced. Cllr. Timmins noted that TII are well disposed towards the Inner Relief road and stressed the importance of Wicklow County Council and Baltinglass Municipal District pushing to make this a reality. He queried the timescale on works commencing. Cllr. Blake advised that four years ago the Department of Transport gave a firm commitment this project would go ahead and noted it would be a great addition to the town. He thanked staff for their input on this project and questioned the overall cost and if there was a map of the route available. Ms. Kilkenny, District Manager, reassured members that this project was a priority but it had been hindered due to Covid. She added that the final detail of the route would be determined from the consultant's report. Mr. O'Brien advised members that no costs or timeframe was available yet but once the consultants had completed their reports he would update members with the results. Cllr. Cronin queried if Kildare County Council had much involvement in the project and noted the importance of keeping the local community updated. Cllr. Glennon noted it was great to see progress on this priority piece of infrastructure and expressed his regret that the upgrade of the N81 had been shelved. Ms. Kilkenny advised the level of engagement with Kildare County Council was at Section 85 agreement phase which would have to be approved by both councils. The wording of this agreement was presently being finalised.

4. To receive a presentation on the NTA schemes.

Mr. Michael Flynn, Senior Engineer, presented members with a detailed report on the NTA Sustainable Transport Measures grant allocations for 2021. He outlined the importance of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy Review and how it prioritises funding for Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. This strategy runs for five years and will be updated in 2022. He advised that Wicklow County Council have submitted a list of projects to include cycle lanes, cycle facilities and park and ride facilities. There is ongoing engagement with NTA and this includes a Councillors representative group to feed in the views of members consisting of Cllr. Pat Kennedy and Cllr. Derek Mitchell. On the five year Sustainable Transport plan he reported that funding is applied for each year and provides for projects that improve transport options in rural towns which lead in with bus and rail services. He also outlined the Safe to Schools programme and advised that all schools had been written to inviting principals to apply and 925 submissions had been received although there is only funding available for 120. The programme supports active travel infrastructure for selected schools and aims to create safer walking and cycling routes within communities, alleviate congestion at the school gates and increase the number of students who walk or cycle to school by providing walking and cycling facilities. Mr. Conor Page, Senior Executive Engineer, advised members that projects from the Covid 19 Mobility Measures and the July Stimulus Active Travel Projects from 2020 for the Baltinglass MD area amounted to a total of €200,000. He continued that allocations from the Active Travel Measures for 2021 along with Baltinglass MD projects bring the total allocations amount for Baltinglass MD to over €1 million. Mr. Brendan Doyle, head of the implementation team, outlined the completion process for NTA projects and gave an update on the Active Travel projects. He advised that Edward Street footpath works are currently out to tender and alignment works are being finalised for the Red Lane footpath linking Blessington to the Educate Together National School.

Cllr. Mullen thanked all for their very detailed presentation and stated that it was a fantastic investment for Baltinglass MD but noted that there is a large amount of primary schools in the area that are in need of improved pedestrian access as some are located on very dangerous

routes and existing footpaths are in very dangerous conditions and do not allow universal access. He also enquired about the Arklow Shillelagh Greenway and noted that works have been ongoing for a number of years on this project. He added that there were hopes that this project would get to the planning stage this year. Mr. Flynn advised that this project is at the land acquisition stage and there is renewed focus on this very important green route. Cllr. Timmins enquired about the application for the footbridge in Baltinglass and asked if the cost of these works could be included in the refurbishment of the town centre. Mr. Flynn advised that it was hoped that the allocation of 3.5 million through RRDF for Baltinglass town centre could be extended to cover the footbridge works rather than go through as another application. Cllr. Timmins also stated it was great to see footpaths on Edward Street being rectified but raised concerns that footpaths and lighting upgrades were needed at Talbotstown National School and at Grangecon. Cllr. Cronin thanked all for their presentation and stated that huge improvements have been made thanks to the July stimulus programme but queried if there was any update on the footbridge works in Baltinglass and on the bus stop at Hollywood. Cllr. O'Neill acknowledged the works completed in the area such as Hollywood footpath scheme and the current Red Lane footpath scheme but asked for clarification on the maintenance of the five bridges around Blessington Lakes. Cllr. Blake raised concerns over the condition of footpaths at Valley Heights in Carnew and Derry Drive in Tinahely and noted these two areas need to be prioritised for improvement works. He also queried if the Safe to Schools programme would be extended as the deadline was very tight and many schools may have missed out on this initiative. Cllr. Glennon noted it was great to see improvement works take place in the district and thanked Mr. Flynn for extending the white lines on the Wicklow Gap road. He also noted that Mr. Frank Curran had suggested a Park and Ride facility could be installed alongside the bus stop in Hollywood. Mr. Flynn informed members that the process for getting a bus stop at Hollywood is underway and he had spoken with the team working on the N11 upgrade on the possibility of a park and ride facility on the N81.

5. Correspondence

Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator, thanked members for their welcome and stated he was looking forward to working with them in the future. He advised members that the Community Grant Schemes had been awarded and letters would be sent out this week to applicants. He extended an invitation to all members to the opening of Hollywood Footpath Scheme on Thursday 27th May, to be opened by the Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon in the presence of Councillor Pat Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council and Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council at 3pm. Mr. Cullen advised that correspondence had been received from Dunlavin District Forum enquiring when works could commence on the erection of a memorial in Tournant graveyard. Funding had been provided from Cllr. O'Neill's discretionary fund for this project after an application for a heritage grant from the Dunlavin Heritage group had been unsuccessful. This motion was proposed by Cllr. Glennon and Cllr. O'Neill seconded it.

Cllr. Mullen raised concerns over the response received from TWES following his query in relation to the recent announcement from Irish Water that the Aughrim Wastewater Treatment Plant has been selected for upgrade as part of the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme. He stated that following a request made to Irish Water, it had been made clear that both the Tinahely waste water treatment plant and the Dunlavin water treatment plant were top of the list for upgrades. Cllr. Mullen asked if this issue could be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Cllr. Blake advised that he had attended meetings with Irish Water and they had indicated that both Tinahely and Dunlavin were on the list for upgrades. He noted that Avoca, Aughrim and Rathdrum are all in the Arklow area and Baltinglass MD have now been put on the back burner. He added that he had been advised that this decision is made at the discretion of Wicklow County Council and with work he is confident that progress will be made. Cllr. Cronin also raised concerns on this decision and stated that although great to see Aughrim selected she had thought Dunlavin was a priority. She added that the Dunlavin area needs infrastructure in place in order for further development to happen and she hoped these points would be taken on board. Both Cllr. Timmins and Cllr. Glennon agreed with their colleagues that it was critically important that West Wicklow gets improved infrastructure. Ms. Kilkenny advised members that a response from TWES had been distributed to members prior to meeting and added that both Tinahely and Dunlavin are on the list for upgrades and will be progressing. She advised that the housing issue in Dunlavin had been held up due to Covid and houses were being brought up to a high standard. Ms. Kilkenny added that she would request an update from the housing section.

Cllr. Mullen proposed that a representative from TWES attend the next meeting with an update on this issue and Cllr. Cronin seconded this.

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

Mr. Byrne updated members on the N81 Progress Report. He advised members that resurfacing works on a section of the N81 from south of Blessington to Russborough bends will proceed during the summer months as part of the Pavement Capital Works Scheme. Tender documents are currently being prepared and the contract will be awarded this week. He also advised members a tender was ran for a report to be carried out on the Hollywood bus stop and DBFL Consultants came in at the lowest cost. He queried if any member would like to contribute some of their discretionary fund towards the cost. He also advised that he had been in contact with the ESB in relation to the issue of maintenance of the bridges in Blessington and a meeting had been arranged for a later date. He continued that the drainage scheme at Hempstown is due to commence within the next two weeks. Cllr. Timmins queried if the minor issue of the road surface at either side of Knockroe bends would be rectified and Mr. Byrne replied that the contractor would be on site shortly to rectify this issue. Cllr. Timmins also raised concerns at the lack of visibility for vehicles coming from the right hand side at Tuckmill cross. Mr. Byrne advised members that improvements at this junction are a high priority but there had been an issue previously with the landowner and a CPO may have to be considered.

Following an update from Mr. Graham on the non national roads report members raised a number of queries. Cllr. Blake welcomed the allocation of €10,000 for safety improvement works on the Glennashouk Road, Carnew and noted there had been a number of accidents on this stretch of road. He queried if there was any proposal for works at Kenny's Corner, Carnew and Mr. Graham stated he was working on the design stage. Cllr. Mullen queried if any data was available following the study completed on the road surface at Kelly's Hill, Tinahely. He also raised concerns on the footpath surfaces in the area and stated that some have disintegrated so badly that improvement works on them could be classed as installing new footpaths. Mr. Graham advised that speed is a factor on Kelly's Hill and one option would be to install driver feedback signs or another option being looked at is a oneway

system on this route. On the issue of footpaths, he advised members that there is no footpath budget allocated this year but that work is being done on funding.

7. To consider and adopt Wicklow County Council draft Civic Memorial policy.

All members were in unanimous agreement on the adoption of the draft Civic Memorial policy and Cllr. Mullen proposed this motion and Cllr. Cronin seconded.

8. To discuss the development of a formal structure for interactions with Naas MD.

At the previous Baltinglass District meeting in April Cllr. O'Neill had proposed the linking up with Naas MD to work together on issues such as the N81, Glending Walkway, Blessington Inner Relief road and new housing developments where the districts intertwine. He suggested that meetings could be held on a quarterly basis and asked if this could be set up formally. Cllr. Cronin noted that this motion had been proposed following a meeting to discuss the development of walkways with Naas MD and added it would be great to work alongside other county councillors from Kildare. She added that commitment would be required on both sides in order for this to work. Cllr. Mullen supported this idea but asked for an amendment to include Wexford and Carlow for more connection with other adjoining counties. Cllr. Timmins was also in support of this proposal in order to keep all districts up to speed. Ms. Kilkenny advised that she would liaise with the District Administrator as the proper protocol would have to be looked into for setting up such a structure and she would have an update for the next meeting.

9. To pass a resolution for the holding of the June Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District on an online platform at the discretion of the Cathaoirleach at 10.30am on Monday 28th June 2021 as set out in the Municipal District of Baltinglass, Standing Orders, regulating the business and proceedings of the Municipal District and the Supplementary Standing Orders to regulate the proceedings of remote meeting, Baltinglass Municipal District.

This resolution was passed and proposed by Cllr. Cronin and seconded by Cllr. Mullen. The Cathaoirleach noted it would be better to hold a physical meeting in June and agreed to pass the resolution but to check further in two weeks time.

8. Any other business.

Ms. Kilkenny, District Manager, offered her condolences to Pat Doran's family and friends and paid tribute to the work he had done in the area.

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

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR