

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Blessington Civic Offices on 23rd October 2023 at 10.30am

Present: Cathaoirleach Edward Timmins
Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor John Mullen
Councillor Gerry O'Neill
Councillor Patsy Glennon (Joined remotely at 11:25am)

In Attendance: Ms. Jackie Carroll, Acting District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Aideen Russell, Assistant Staff Officer
Housing
Mr. Jason Smith, Homeless Outreach Officer
Finance
Mr. Brian Gleeson, Head Of Finance (Via Zoom)

Apologies: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager

Cathaoirleach Edward Timmins opened the October meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present.

Cllr. O'Neill requested a suspension of orders to allow a discussion on the Israel - Palestine conflict and to show support for our president however this request did not receive the backing of his fellow Councillors. Cllr O'Neill expressed his dissatisfaction that his request for a suspension of standing orders was not granted.

Votes of Sympathy

Cllr. Blake expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mary Tallon (née Cunningham), Mount Pleasant, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow.

To the family of James 'Jim - The Bear' Doran, Croneyhorn and Tomacork, Carnew Co. Wicklow. Son, of the late Cllr. Pat Doran, RIP.

To the family of Susan Tutty (née Traynor), Silverhills, Ballymore Eustace Co. Kildare / Hollywood, Co. Wicklow.

Cllr. Mullen asked to be associated with the above and a minutes silence was observed.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 23rd October 2023.

It was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Blake and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 23rd October 2023.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. Blake wished to congratulate the following teams on their recent success;

- The Tinahely Senior ladies football team who defeated Blessington to win their ninth county title in a row.
- The Knockananna's senior and junior camogie teams on their finals in Arklow on 15th October 2023. The senior team defeating Carnew by 3 points and the junior team defeating Éire Óg by 5 points.

Cllr. Blake enquired if there was an update on the land being sold in the Village of Tinahely and asked if Wicklow County Council had put in an offer.

- Mr. Cullen advised Cllr. Blake that Mr. Nicholson, (DOS, CCSD), is dealing directly with the auctioneer and that he would contact Mr. Nicholson later that day, Monday, 23rd October 2023 for an update.

3. Homeless presentation from Wicklow County Council's Homeless Officer, Mr. Jason Smith.

Mr. Smith gave an informative and interesting presentation to the members regarding the homeless situation within the county. He agreed to forward the presentation to all The Members.

Questions & Answers:

- Cllr. Mullen thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and enquired about the latest data regarding the homeless situation for our district.
 - Mr. Smith advised that a breakdown of all data can be found in the Chief Executives report. He stated that in the month of September twenty eight people presented as homeless and currently we have two rough sleepers within the County.
- Cllr. O'Neill welcomed Mr. Smith back to Baltinglass MD and thanked him for his presentation. Cllr. O'Neill queried the homeless beds available in West Wicklow.
 - Mr. Smith advised that there are no retained beds in our district but they do have three to four rooms in Naas.

- Cllr. Blake asked if the people who are on the housing list and present at homeless are prioritized.
 - Mr. Smith advised Cllr. Blake that these cases are not prioritized but that an assessment is made on each case when they present as homeless.
- Cllr. Cronin thanked Mr. Smith and congratulated him on having a good grasp on the situation. Cllr. Cronin enquired what happens when a couple separate and one person needs to move out of the family home.
 - Mr. Smith advised Cllr. Cronin that the individual would be taken off the tenancy agreement and would apply to go on the housing list in their own right. They might then qualify for homeless HAP. The homeless HAP team endeavour to have a two week turnaround on applications.
- Ms. Carroll commented on the complexities facing the homeless team and commended them on the phenomenal work they do. She advised The Members that Wicklow County Council work closely with Kildare County Council which allows people who present as homeless to be housed in different areas.
- Cllr. Timmins asked how many of the twenty three B&Bs on the retained bed list were in the Baltinglass Municipal District. Cllr. Timmins also commented on council houses that have been vacant for a number of months / years and asked Mr. Smith to keep the pressure on the appropriate departments to get these houses re-let ASAP.
 - Mr. Smith advised Cllr. Timmins that none of the B&B retained beds were in Baltinglass Municipal District.

Cathaoirleach Timmins requested, and it was unanimously agreed, to change the order of items on the agenda moving item 5 to 4.

4. To consider the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Baltinglass for the financial year ending 31st December 2024 (copy circulated prior to the meeting).

Mr. Gleeson joined the meeting via zoom and confirmed that The Members had received a copy of the Draft Budgetary Plan.

Questions & Answers:

- Cllr. Blake stated that playgrounds and graveyards are not being properly maintained. He felt that there is not enough Wicklow County Council staff on the ground to keep up with the work required.
- Mr. Gleeson advised that all funding allocated be prioritised accordingly and any extra funding required should be highlighted and requested through the District Administrator, all requests will be then assessed under the budgetary process.

It was proposed by Cllr. Blake, seconded by Cllr. Mullen and unanimously agreed to adopt the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Baltinglass for the financial year ending 31st December 2024.

5. To Consider Roads Reports (national and non-national roads)

The District Engineers updated the members on the Baltinglass MD national and non-national roads reports, both of which were circulated to the members prior to the meeting.

Members Comments and Observations (national roads)

- Cllr. Blake enquired if the Park & Ride plan was in difficulty.
- Cllr. Glennon asked that the Park & Ride remain a priority item until it is resolved.
- Cllr. Cronin spoke of the importance of the parking facility and said she was glad to hear things are progressing with it.
- Cllr. Timmins said that he very much welcomed the progress of work on the bus shelter and looks forward to the Park & Ride facility in the future.
 - The Members were informed by Mr. Byrne that TII had objected to the new entrance on the N81. But that there was another entrance available to us. He said that he will fight to keep any money allocated for these works as delays are down to TII.

Members Comments and Observations (national roads)

- Cllr. Mullen enquired about works to be carried out in the Shillelagh, Tinahely and Carnew Area. Cllr. Mullen also requested a meeting be scheduled for December to discuss the planned junction in Carnew.
 - Mr. Graham is aware of all works and they are on his to do list.
- Cllr. O'Neill enquired about the Local Investment Schemes in the Blessington Area.
- Cllr. Mullen noted the differences between the Local Investment Schemes & Community Investment Schemes, Local being capped and Community are not.
 - A discussion was held regarding same and Mr. Byrne agreed that we need to promote Community Investments Schemes.

Regarding the 2023 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Works R747 Ballytore Road flood relief scheme Mr. Byrne would like to thank the landowner Mr. Martin Twyford as he has been very accommodating.

Two offers have been made to the landowners at Loughs Town / Vallemount Junction and we are awaiting a response.

6. To consider distribution of Baltinglass Municipal District Members Discretionary Fund 2024.

The Members were asked to submit lists to the of projects before the end of 2023 to allow for projects to be carried out in the coming year

A discussion was held and it was agreed that discretionary funding is to be allocated to projects in a similar manner to previous years. All projects allocated discretionary funding must be public realm projects or community based projects.

7. To consider the distribution of funding to interested groups of Christmas Light Funding 2023.

Mr. Cullen had previously distributed a report on the Christmas Lights Allocation of Funding for 2023. A budget of €12,450.00 and amounts to be distributed to interested groups were agreed by all The Members. Cllr. Blake proposed this motion and Cllr. Glennon seconded it.

8. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen received correspondence enquiring about allotments in Blessington.

A discussion took place regarding same and the members advised that a number of locations have been suggested but that they have been deemed unsuitable by the group.

Cllr. Cronin requested that something is done regarding the public lighting situation and the lack of repairs being carried out.

- Cllr. Mullen proposed that a meeting be held to discuss the situation. It was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Glennon and unanimously agreed to hold a meeting and that Mr. Brian O'Sullivan of Wicklow County Council be invited to attend.

9. Date of next meeting

The next Baltinglass Municipal District meeting will be held on the 27th November 2023, in Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow. A67 H026 (to be confirmed)

There being no other business, Cllr. Timmins, concluded the meeting.

Signed: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: _____