

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Blessington Civic Offices on 28th September 2023 at 10.30am

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

In Attendance: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Aideen Russell, Assistant Staff Officer

Corporate Enterprise

Deirdre Whitfield, Town Regeneration Officer

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

Votes of Sympathy

The Members expressed a vote of sympathy;

To Con Cashen and his family on the passing of his Father, Michael Cashen, Clonmore, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow and formerly of Templederry, Co. Tipperary.

To Andrew Spencer and his family on the passing of his Father Jim Spencer of Clonard Road, Wexford and formerly of Waterford.

To the family of Cllr. Damien O'Reilly of Mullagh, Kilcock, Meath, who passed suddenly, on 16th September.

Mr. Cullen expressed a vote of sympathy to our colleague and friend Sheena Hubbard on the passing of her devoted boyfriend Kieran Griffin of Knocklyon, Dublin / Sallins, Kildare.

All present 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 24th July 2023.

It was proposed by Cllr. Blake, seconded by Cllr. Glennon and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 24th July 2023.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. O'Neill requested that it be put on record that the language used by some of the Elected Members at the special meeting held in Co. Buildings regarding the vote on the Section 183 (modular homes in Dublin and Baltinglass) was not acceptable.

Cathaoirleach Timmins requested, and it was unanimously agreed, to change the order of items on the agenda moving item 5 to 3 to allow Ms. Whitfield to give her presentation on the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2023 at the beginning of the meeting.

3. Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2023 – Presentation Deirdre Whitfield

Ms. Whitfield gave a presentation of the Town & Village Scheme 2023 which had been circulated to the members prior to the meeting.

Questions & Answers

- Cllr. Mullen requested that a discussion be held with Ms Whitfield at a later date regarding the Carnew application.
- Cllr. Blake requested a list of outstanding projects from Ms. Whitfield which could be reapplied for.
- Cllr. Blake also requested that Wicklow County Council investigate, as a matter of urgency, the possibility of putting an offer into purchasing the 2 acres of land in Tinahely Village which is on the market. It was proposed by Cllr. Blake and seconded by Cllr. Mullen that an Expression of Interest is lodged by Mr. Cullen and Ms. Whitfield on the afternoon of the 28th September.
- Cllr. Timmins stated that there are not enough resources available within Wicklow County Council to ensure that we avail of funding for potential projects in the district. And also highlighted the delays in proceeding with projects which have been successfully funded.
 - Ms. Whitfield agreed to get analyses on the above.

4. Update on Baltinglass RRDF

Court House

Mr. Cullen informed The Members that he has consulted with Mr. Martin regarding the Court House and was advised that works will be carried out on a phased basis. Phase 1 works will include remedial works to the building. Wicklow County Council are currently engaging with architects to obtain drawings for phase 1. Mr. Cullen has been contacted by local community groups requesting that phase 1 commence as soon as possible as the building is falling into disrepair.

Mr. Graham agreed with Mr. Cullen that there are cosmetic works which could be moved forward.

Mr. Byrne advised that work on underground services have commenced and will be carried out directly by Wicklow County Council staff. Mr. Byrne also advised that plans were changed to reflect different requirements for ESB, EIR, CCTV etc. which will future proof the development and ensure the correct services are in the correct location.

Members Comments and Observations

- Cllr. Mullen stated that it was great to hear about the progress being made and congratulated all involved.
- Cllr. Timmins welcomed the progress being made on the project and advised that he had received representation from members of the public regarding proposed layout for parking and the recent red line markings on the street.
- Cllr. O'Neill said that he has received numerous emails regarding the poor condition of the footpaths in Baltinglass Town Centre, some of which are not part of the upcoming development. He would like them to be made a priority.
- Cllr. Timmins also highlighted the poor condition of a number of footpaths in the town and requested that if funding becomes available that repair works be prioritised.
 - Mr. Byrne said that he is hopeful that extra funding will become available which will allow works to be carried out on these footpaths and footpaths throughout the district.

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. O'Neill thanked Mr. Byrne for all his hard work. He expressed his concerns regarding the roads infrastructure in place in the district and the pressure it faces with upcoming housing schemes.

Cllr. O'Neill also stated that when all speed limit signs are upgraded it should be done by adding a new sticker over the original rather than replacing the whole sign/post. He believes that huge financial savings could be made by doing so.

- It was unanimously agreed that this was a cost effective approach which should be passed on to the Transport Infrastructure of Ireland.
- Cllr. Glennon agreed that the increase in population is going to put an even greater strain on the roads infrastructure but believes that nothing will be done until the N81 is put back into the National Development Plan. He asked Ms. Kilkenny to encourage Wicklow County Council's Management Team to fight to get the N81 back on the National Development Plan Agenda ASAP.
- Cllr. Mullen thanked the district engineers for all their hard work and said it was great to see progress on so many projects.

Members Comments and Observations (non-national roads)

- Cllr. Mullen advised that he has received complaints regarding the Togher junction in the Arklow District's Area which is badly maintained and is a traffic hazard. He asked Mr. Graham to contact his colleague in the Arklow Area Office to see if anything can be done to improve the junction.
- Cllr. Mullen also enquired about footpaths in the Shillelagh and Tinahely area.
 - Mr. Graham advised The Members that Active Travel funding has been used for new builds this year and that future budgets need to be put towards ongoing maintenance of footpaths.
- Cllr. Glennon asked that the safety of the footpath being used by school kids in Donard be addressed.

- Mr. Byrne advised The Members that a safety scheme has been put to them which would address the safety issue but was not favoured.
- Cllr. O'Neill complimented the job that was carried out at Lamb's Cross and stated that the bus shelter was a great addition to the area. He also wanted to thank Con Cashen for his input.
- Cllr. Blake enquired about the R725 and the tender process.
- It was proposed by Cllr. Timmins, seconded by Cllr. Glennon and unanimously agreed that payment to Enerveo be ceased, until the street light problems, outstanding faults, are repaired and their turnaround time on fault repairs improves.

6. To consider and adopt the Part 8 for junction improvements at Lockstown, Valleymount

It was proposed by Cllr. Glennon, seconded by Cllr. Blake and unanimously agreed to adopt the Part 8 for junction improvements at Lockstown, Valleymount. The Members agreed that this was a worthwhile project and a welcome asset to the area.

- Cllr. O'Neill enquired about the land that was to be purchased and supported the adoption of this Part 8.
- Cllr. Timmins thanked everyone for all the fantastic work carried out to date on this project.

7. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen advised that the Christmas Festival & Light Funding Application 2023 form is now available from the Blessington Municipal District office and that copies were available for The Members to take away with them for distribution.

8. Any other business

- Cllr. Blake enquired about the status of the Carnew Playground and asked why it was closed at present.
 - Mr. Graham advised that there is a local committee in place who arrange the opening and closing of the playground and stated he would investigate as to why it was closed at present.
- A discussion was held regarding The Shopping Centre area in Blessington and the issues raised by Cllr. O'Neill and Cllr. Glennon, antisocial behaviour, repairs needed to roads, footpaths, lighting, access to upper floors, general upkeep of the building and surrounding area. It was proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Glennon and

unanimously agreed that Mr. Cullen contact the Management Company of The Shopping Centre area to arrange a meeting if needs be to discuss what needs to be done and by whom to improve the area and combat the issues being reported to The Members.

9. Date of next meeting

The next Baltinglass Municipal District meeting will be held on the 23rd October 2023.

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

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: _____