

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Blessington Civic Offices, Blessington on 27th June 2022 at 10.30am

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

In Attendance: Ms. Jackie Carroll, Senior Executive Officer, Planning
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer
Mr. Michael Flynn, Senior Engineer, Roads
Mr. Brian O'Sullivan, Assistant Engineer, Roads

Apologies: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, District Manager

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mullen, opened the June meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 23rd May 2022

Cllr. Cronin proposed the minutes of the May meeting and Cllr. Blake seconded them.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. To discuss and review the speed limits within Baltinglass Municipal District

Mr. Brian O'Sullivan, Roads Section, briefed the members on the speed limit review for 2022 within the district and outlined the reasons for special speed limits and the guidelines that must be taken into consideration when amending bye-laws for speed limits. He advised that changes to default speed limits must be via a special speed limit and this is a vested power by the elected members with agreement from TII on national roads. This review of existing speed limits is undertaken every five years.

Following the presentation a number of issues were raised by the members. Cllr. Glennon asked if the change to the speed limit on the R756 to the N81 junction could be extended past the GAA pitch entrance. He also noted the change to the speed limit from Hollywood cross to Poulaphouca, 100kmph to 80kmph, and offered his full support to this proposal. Cllr. Timmins also supported this change and asked if the 100km speed limit south of Blessington at Texaco could also be changed to 80km. Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns on the issue of speeding around the lakes in Blessington including, Ballyknocken and Old Court and queried if these areas could be reviewed. Mr. O'Sullivan advised that members have a vested power to amend the draft and this will go before the full council meeting in November/December and amendments can be made then. Cllr. O'Neill queried the reduction of the speed limit at Crosschapel and asked when this would go to public consultation. Mr. O'Sullivan replied that would happen in early August. Mr. Michael Flynn, Senior Engineer, advised the meeting that if any particular roads are flagged early, the roads section can see what can be done and traffic surveys etc. can be carried out. He continued that the changes to speeds on the N81 are following recommendations by the members and TII have the final say on these amendments. Cllr. Blake advised that a number of submissions have been made to reduce speeds in Aughavannagh and asked if this could be looked at. He also queried how far the speed reduction at Shillelagh extended to. Mr. O'Sullivan replied that the reduction extended past the soccer pitch entrance and advised that due to Aughavannagh located in a lower density area had not been included. Both Cllr. Glennon and Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that amendments should take a number of upcoming projects into consideration including the park & ride facility south of Hollywood Cross and the Blessington eGreenway. Cllr. O'Neill expressed his frustration at the lack of progress being made on the upgrade of the N81. He stated that every effort has been made by Councillors to push for an improvement over the last twenty years but to no avail. He added that he is critical of the Blessington Inner Relief road as a lot of houses are due to be built in the area and suggested that a bypass would be a better option. Mr. Michael Flynn advised that progress is being made with the Blessington Inner Relief Road and this should alleviate traffic around the town. Cllr. Glennon echoed the frustrations of his colleague and noted that the Minister is due to attend a Wicklow County Council meeting to discuss the N11 and not the N81 whose infrastructure is unfit for purpose. He stressed that senior officials need to convey their frustrations and concerns to the minister. Cllr. Cronin noted that the upgrade at Knockroe bends is a huge improvement

but the N81 is still a difficult road to commute on a daily basis. She stated that this is an opportunity for senior officials from Wicklow County Council to push for this upgrade. Cllr. Timmins raised the issue that no support has been given from neighbouring counties which the N81 passes through and asked if there was any way to rally support from them. The Cathaoirleach thanked both engineers for their presentation and asked if copies of such could be forwarded to each member.

4. To consider Roads Reports (National and Non National)

Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer, briefed the members on the N81 Progress Report. He advised that TII are currently carrying out testing on sections of the N81 North of Baltinglass and results will indicate if surface dressing is required on this section of road. He also advised that the annual clean up of the N81 will commence as soon as the surface dressing is completed and the upgrading of safety barriers on the N81 continues with works due to be completed by the end of the month. Cllr. Glennon raised concerns that vision was impaired when exiting from Dunlavin at the Hollywood Junction due to a pole and ditches being overgrown. Cllr. O'Neill questioned if there was funding available for traffic lights at Crosschapel as this section of the N81 has one of the highest volumes of traffic and a number of fatalities have occurred over the years at this section. Mr. Byrne advised that the road surface at this section of the N81 was in good condition and stated it would be difficult to get lights at this location unless it was part of a scheme. He added that hedges and ditches are the responsibility of the landowner and Wicklow County Council will only cut back if there is an issue with sightlines or if they are preparing for roadworks. Cllr. O'Neill queried if there was any update on the road surface of Knockieran Bridge. Mr. Byrne advised that if the eGreenway goes ahead it should resolve this issue as Wicklow County Council would be responsible for the bridges. He will ask ESB to resurface the bridges before they are taken in charge.

Following a report on the non-national roads by Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer, Cllr. Mullen queried if inflation was affecting any of the surface dressing or improvement schemes and if any roads would be omitted due to rising costs. Mr. Graham advised that final costs are not known yet as tenders are still coming in for these works. Cllr. Blake queried if Millbank Road in Shillelagh had been taken in charge yet and noted that whitelines need to be reinstated in some areas. Mr. Graham advised that the Millbank Road is not out to tender yet and he hopes to get a tender for whitelining out in the coming weeks. Cllr. Timmins raised concerns that a number of footpaths in the district are in need of repair and queried if there was any way to increase funding for these works. Mr. Graham informed the meeting that work was currently underway on prioritising footpath works in the district. Cllr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Byrne for the improvement works at Kilmalum junction and noted it was a great improvement and a lot safer for school children. He also queried when the bus shelter at the Lamb would be completed and Mr. Byrne advised that there is

currently a legal dispute ongoing with the supplier but it is hoped to get these erected through a new scheme. He reminded the members to get their list of projects funded by their discretionary budgets in to each engineer as tenders need to be raised for these works.

5. To discuss and allocate Baltinglass Municipal District festival funding

A report on funding applications received had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for their consideration. Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator, advised members that Baltinglass MD had a budget of €14,000 for festival funding with €10,000 of this going toward Christmas Lights leaving a balance of €4,000 for festivals and asked members for their recommendations. Cllr. Timmins proposed giving an extra €250 to Dunlavin Festival of Arts to round off their allocation to €1,000. Cllr. O'Neill proposed giving an extra €250 to Dunlavin Festival of Arts, €200 to Coollattin Canadian Connection and €100 to Halfway to St. Patrick's Day Festival. Cllr. Glennon seconded this motion and all members were in agreement.

Cllr. Mullen noted that the overall budget of €4,000 for festival funding was quiet small for such a large district and Mr. Cullen advised that this has been highlighted previously and will be looked at for next year. He also advised that there is a budget of €7,000 for Economic Development available.

6. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen presented members with an update on the Community Awards funding. He informed the members that a total of 228 applications had been received with 60 of these in the Baltinglass Municipal District with a total allocation of €19,200.

He advised that the West Wicklow Pool group have sought planning permission to locate a portable pool in St. Kevin's Community Hall carpark and once granted, hope to have up and running by September.

7. Any other business

Cllr. Blake advised the meeting that a number of years ago the HSE vacated the Health Centre in Tinahely and the grounds have been left derelict. Negotiations have been ongoing with the HSE but do not seem to be going anywhere. He proposed the District write to the Health Minister, Stephen Donnelly, and the HSE and ask them to find a resolution to this issue. Cllr. Mullen added that this issue is holding up a number of developments in the area. Ms. Jackie Carroll advised that the Housing section could relook at this issue.

Cllr. Blake noted that the district was given the loan of a chain of office when the district was formed and suggested the procurement of a new chain if funding was available. Cllr. Cronin noted that this issue was raised previously and the cost of replacing the existing chain was quoted as €10,000.

Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns with a planning application for twenty one houses at Burgage. Cllr. Timmins stated that this cannot be discussed as it is a live planning application. Ms. Carroll clarified that no discussion can take place as submissions and observations are still being submitted. The Cathaoirleach agreed that rules and regulations need to be adhered to and no discussion can take place on this as it is a live application.

10. Date of next meeting

The next Baltinglass Municipal District meeting will be held on the 25th July 2022.

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

Signed: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: _____

DRAFT