

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass on Zoom on 26th
April 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. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Margaret Hartnett, Senior Resident Engineer
Mr. Shane Gubbins, ARUP Consultants
Mr. Manuel Garrido, ARUP Consultants
Mr. Girorgi Dolidze, ARUP Consultants

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Glennon, opened the April ordinary meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District.

- 1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd March 2021.**

Amendment

Cllr. Timmins noted that item 5 of the minutes of the Municipal District of 22nd March 2021 referred to reducing the speed limit to 60 kph and should have read 80 kph. This amendment was noted.

Cllr. Timmins proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd March 2021 and this was seconded by Cllr. Mullen.

Cllr. O'Neill noted that a number of people were in attendance at this morning's meeting with their cameras turned off. Cllr. O'Neill asked that the District Administrator check the Standing Orders to ensure that this is not an issue. Cllr. O'Neill noted that everyone should have their camera on so everyone can see who is attending the meeting.

2. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

3. Correspondence

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, advised members that correspondence had been received from the Department of Justice in relation to the approval of the CCTV scheme in Blessington and the awarding of funding for this scheme. Mr. Hickey outlined that the Blessington Community CCTV scheme could now move to the next phase. Cllr. Timmins welcomed then allocation of funding by the Department and noted that this scheme has been three years in the making. Cllr. Blake asked for clarification on the number of cameras in the town and noted that it would be welcomed in the town as there was a lot of support for it. Mr. Hickey informed members that authorisation had been secured for thirty four cameras in total at twelve locations around the town. Cllr. O'Neill welcomed the scheme to Blessington and queried if a camera or two could be installed at Burgage graveyard as there has been a number of cars broken in to recently at this location. Mr. Hickey advised that he will speak to Inspector Tracey regarding this and noted that they will have to make an application to the Garda Commissioner's Office to locate a camera at Burgage as CCTV locations need to be authorised by the Garda Commissioner prior to being installed. Cllr. O'Neill advised members that he had been in touch with Inspector Treacy regarding the Burgage graveyard and locations in Manor Kilbride. Mr. Hickey advised that initially they proceed with what has been authorised and then look for the extra locations.

4. To receive a presentation on the refurbishment of Baltinglass Town Centre and Park

Ms. Margaret Hartnett presented members with a detailed update on the Baltinglass town centre refurbishment project. Ms. Hartnett advised that this part 8 scheme consists of two distinct projects – the town centre refurbishment and the town park following the allocation of funding of €3.5 million with 75% from the Urban Regeneration Development Fund and Wicklow County Council providing the balance of 25%. Ms. Hartnett added that a separate application had been submitted for the footbridge in Baltinglass and a feasibility study and costings have since been completed. She noted that surveys on both schemes had been delayed due to Covid restrictions but works can now continue and the contract should be awarded shortly for the refurbishment of the town centre and the town park. Ms. Hartnett introduced the design consultants from ARUP, who informed members that this scheme is to improve the public realm in Baltinglass town square for pedestrians and businesses. They briefed members on the changes to the design layout and the combination of materials to be used for this scheme. The changes to the design layout included:

- The junction at Market Square – alignment changed slightly to ensure pedestrians are prioritised
- Courthouse Plaza – updated the design for a plaza area to include a seated and eating area
- Main Street – linking the northern side to the Courthouse side, to include a traffic calming feature
- Chapel Hill – reallocated space to planting and pedestrian crossing
- Two raised crossings
- Realigned parking

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Glennon queried if the enhanced plaza area around the courthouse to make it distinctive from the road area. Mr. Gubbins outlined that it would be that the plaza area would be raised. The consultants also outlined that the paved areas would be made up of high quality materials of a silver grey colour for the pedestrian areas and that a sophisticated palette of materials would be used to make it aesthetically appealing. They proceeded to outline the greening of the area.

The presentation concluded with an oversight of the proposed works for Baltinglass park including the following;

- Redevelopment of the riverside walk with a bound gravel surface
- The main footpath to be widened to facilitate use and social distancing
- Improvements to access points to the park
- Changes to car park at main entrance
- Installation of disabled parking bays
- Viewing platforms to be more connected to the paths
- Proposal to move the fence closer to the water and allow for wilding area close to the footpath

Following the presentation members raised a number of concerns and queries. These included:

- Parking at Chapel Hill and Weavers Square for residents
- Retention of the casual trading licence in Weavers Square
- How far out the Kiltegan road do changes go?
- Can residents park along road by church?
- Is the one way system being retained?
- Flooding works to be taken into account in town park
- Are footpaths at church to be included in works?
- How many car park spaces will be lost in town square?
- New entrance to soccer pitch close to a private garage – any changes?
- Is the scheme for the town park following universal design principles to allow for access for all
- Maintenance of flood defences in the park
- Importance of keeping the public informed of the progress of the projects

Following clarification on the concerns raised all members welcomed the progress being made and thanked Ms. Hartnett and the consultant team for the update. Both Cllr. Timmins and Cllr. O'Neill raised concerns that the footpath improvements would not extend past the church and the entrance to the Lalor Centre and Ms. Hartnett advised that this issue could be re-examined. Cllr. Timmins noted that this is the largest invest in any of the towns or villages in the MD and it was important to get value for money. Cllr. Glennon queried if the old street

lamps in Baltinglass would be remaining. Mr Graham advised the meeting that approximately two years he had tried to get parts for these lamps but it was not possible as the system had been discontinued and it was not possible to get repairs done on them.

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

Mr. Byrne briefed members on the N81 Progress Report. He advised that the tender process is currently underway for two schemes on the N81 – Blessington to Russborough Pavement Capital Works and Ballinacrow to Saundersgrove resurfacing scheme and works are expected to commence in early summer. Mr. Byrne added that some extra tie-in works are required at Knockroe bends and these are due to begin in the next few weeks.

Mr. Graham updated members on the non national roads report, a copy of which was distributed to members prior to the meeting. Mr. Graham advised members that the procurement process is currently underway for Restoration Improvement schemes and these works will commence in the coming months. Materials for Restoration Maintenance works are procured and these works will start in early June/July. On the Community Involvement Schemes residents have been contacted to confirm if they want to go ahead with projects. Mr. Graham stated that no announcement has been made on funding for the Local Improvement Schemes yet.

Cllr. Mullen noted that a speed survey has commenced on Kelly's Hill, Tinahely and a speed sign has been erected at Talbotstown and thanked Mr. Graham for these works. Cllr. Timmins welcomed the study being carried out by TII on the section of N81 from Baltinglass to Annalecky and hopes this will lead to some improvements on this section of road. Cllr. Timmins raised concerns that the fifteen lights in situ at Lathaleere have still not been switched on and queried an update on works on the footpath and lights at Talbotstown. Cllr. Blake asked if there were any indications what works would be carried out on footpaths in the Municipal District and if there was any update on the discretionary works programme that had been brought forward from last year. Cllr. Blake also queried when the new three year road programme would be devised. Mr. Graham replied that a preliminary design has been drawn up for Talbotstown and hopes this will progress later in the year. Mr. Graham added that there is no budget in place for footpaths this year and emergency repairs only will be

carried out when required. Mr. Graham added that works on the discretionary programme will continue at the end of summer. Cllr. O'Neill stated his frustration with the ESB and proposed Ms. Kilkenny write to the ESB with regard to the maintenance of Knockieran bridge and get clarification on who is responsible for the upkeep. Cllr. Cronin noted it will be great to see resurfacing works on the Merginstown and Cowpasture roads going ahead in June or July but queried the process for compiling the three year road plan. Cllr. Glennon raised a query on the speed limit review on the N81 and on progress on the Ring Road, Blessington. Cllr. Glennon also questioned when the safety improvement works on the Wicklow Gap road are to begin. Mr. Byrne replied that tenders for the safety works are currently underway and should be concluded by the end of May. Mr. Byrne advised members that he had spoken to Mr. Clarke regarding the speed review and the speed review brief is being prepared and will be sent out to three consultants to tender for the work Ms. Kilkenny advised that Ms. Hartnett will provide an update on the Blessington Ring road for the next meeting. Ms. Kilkenny noted that the MD will draft a letter to the ESB and try to get a resolution to the issues regarding the road surface on Knockieran Bridge.

6. To consider Wicklow County Council draft Civic Memorial policy.

A copy of the draft Wicklow County Council Civic Memorial policy had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting for their perusal. Cllr. Glennon noted that the chair of each Municipal District was now included on the Civic Memorial Technical Committee. Cllr. O'Neill commended this inclusion and noted the importance of the Municipal District's input into these projects as they are recognition of our past. Both Cllr. Timmins and Cllr. Blake welcomed the amendments to the policy following the County Council meeting and noted it was long overdue but did raise concerns over the lengthy draft and asked if it could be reduced. Mr Hickey advised that this draft policy would be adopted at the full council but if members had any proposals or amendments to forward to him by the end of the week and he would send on to the Enterprise and Corporate affairs section for inclusion in the next iteration of the document. Cllr. Timmins questioned if this could be included on the agenda for the next district meeting and Ms. Kilkenny advised that amendments would be required for the next full council meeting but she will check with Ms. Gallagher to see if more time can be deferred to the June meeting.

7. Notice of Motions

a. Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Gerry O'Neill (12.03.2021)

“That Baltinglass Municipal District erect a monument in Blessington Square to remember the people from the area who died during the Famine”

Cllr. O'Neill proposed the erection of a memorial in Blessington Town Square for the victims of the famine. Cllr. O'Neill added that there were three workhouses throughout the district, Shillelagh, Baltinglass and Naas and he considered it appropriate to commemorate the unfortunate people who died in their own area. Cllr. O'Neill commended the great work done in the Shillelagh area on maintaining the records of those who died in the workhouse in Shillelagh but noted that no records exist for Baltinglass or Naas workhouses. Cllr. O'Neill advised that he had received support locally for this proposal and was open to where the memorial could be positioned in Blessington. He suggested the town square, the green or the new town park as a location. Cllr. Blake agreed that a lot of work had been done by the local community in Shillelagh in preserving the graveyard records with little or no funding and suggested that if a memorial was being erected it should be located in the Shillelagh area which he would fully support. Cllr. Mullen stated that the famine affected the whole district and a county memorial is already located in Rathdrum. Cllr. Mullen stressed the importance of widespread public consultation on where the memorial is erected. Cllr. Glennon supported the idea of a memorial but added that the location would have to have local support and suggested Peter Finnegan Park or the new town park. Cllr. O'Neill advised that he has had consultation with Blessington Town Team, Blessington and District Forum and the Blessington Historical Society and asked if he had a seconder for this proposal to remember the people who died during these tragic times. Cllr. Glennon asked if Cllr. O'Neill was amending his motion to read *“That Baltinglass Municipal District erect a monument in the town of Blessington to remember the people from the area who died during the Famine.”* Cllr. O'Neill replied that he was prepared to amend and Cllr. Glennon seconded this motion subject to consultation with the local community and the proposed monument being in accordance with Wicklow County Council Civic Memorial Policy discussed earlier.

Cllr. Cronin enquired about funding for the monument. Ms. Kilkenny advised that an application for funding could be made through the Heritage section in Wicklow. Mr. Hickey advised members that the motion is giving a commitment that a memorial will be erected but

that the proposal will have to go before the Civic Memorial Technical Committee to ensure it is in line with Wicklow County Council Civic Memorial Policy. Cllr. Timmins suggested the inclusion of the words “in consultation with local people” in the motion. There was a discussion on the location of the monument. Cllr. Blake noted that if this was a Municipal District monument consideration where in the MD it would go would have to be taken into account. Cllrs. Mullen and Timmins agreed with Cllr. Blake. Cllr. O’Neill noted that he was proposing a monument for Blessington and had noted that there were different workhouse areas in the district.

The motion was then put to a vote with Cllr. Blake abstaining from the vote.

VOTE	
For	Against
<i>Councillor Avril Cronin</i>	
<i>Councillor Edward Timmins</i>	
<i>Councillor John Mullen</i>	
<i>Councillor Gerry O’Neill</i>	
<i>Councillor Patsy Glennon</i>	

Cllr. Glennon advised members that the motion which was passed would have to go before the Wicklow County Council Civic Memorial Technical Committee for consideration and the proposed with the location of the memorial to be agreed through consultation with the community.

8. To pass a resolution for the holding of the May Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District on an online platform at the discretion of the Cathaoirleach at 10.30am on Monday 24th May 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. Mullen and seconded by Cllr. Blake.

8. Any other business.

Cllr. O'Neill proposed Baltinglass Municipal District link up with Naas Municipal District on a formal basis to discuss the issues on the N81 as the road intertwines both East Kildare and West Wicklow. Cllr. O'Neill added that he had spoken to the Cathaoirleach of Naas Municipal District on a proposal for regional funding on walkways at the last Eastern Midland Regional Assembly meeting and stated that Kildare County Council had put forward a very good proposal. Cllr. O'Neill asked members on their views of participating as a group, six members from Baltinglass Municipal District and six members from Naas Municipal District, and suggested they work in co-operation to try and get a result. Cllr. Glennon suggested including the item on the agenda for the next meeting. Cllr. Cronin advised members that a meeting with Naas MD by Cllr. Salmon to discuss development of outdoor recreation infrastructure in the Ballymore Eustace area.

Cllr. Cronin asked for an update on the location of a site for Blessington Allotment Campaign. She also raised concerns on the issue of parking at the Greenway at the weekend. Mr. Hickey replied he has discussed a site location with the Housing and Community sections and a proposal will be brought for consideration by members.

A discussion took place on the issue of car parking in Blessington over the weekend and Cllr. O'Neill stated that cars were parked at either side of the road as the carpark in Knockieran was closed. He sought assurances that the car park would be reopened this weekend and the parking issues in the town be addressed. Mr. Byrne advised that no instructions had been received from Government on whether carparks can be re-opened and would reopen the car park this weekend.

Ms. Kilkenny advised members that Mr. Hickey had accepted a promotion and would be leaving Baltinglass Municipal District. She acknowledged and thanked him for all the work he has done in the district and welcomed Mr. Liam Cullen to the role. All members wished Mr. Hickey the best in his new role and thanked him for his support and help over the last few years. Mr. Hickey thanked all the members and the officials in Baltinglass MD for their support and advice over the years.

Mr. Hickey advised members that the Baltinglass Municipal District Policing Plan Committee meeting was due to take place on Wednesday 28th May at 11.00 am and thanked members for their support on the accessibility report which was lodged last week. He also advised members that Kiltegan has been put forward to represent Wicklow in the Pride of Place competition and we will be working closely with the local community group on the application.

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

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR