

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District held in Blessington Civic Offices on 24th June 2024 at 10.30am

Present: Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon
Councillor Edward Timmins
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Gerry O'Neill
Councillor Jason Mulhall
Councillor Peter Stapleton

In Attendance: Ms Theresa O' Brien, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Aideen Russell, Assistant Staff Officer, Via Zoom
Ms. Christina Brophy, Clerical Officer

Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon opened the first meeting of the five year term of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present, he also conveyed his thanks for being nominated to the position of Cathaoirleach.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th May 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Timmins and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th May 2024.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. O' Neill asked Mr. Cullen was there any correspondence back from Dublin Bus. Mr. Cullen informed the members that he had written to Dublin bus but as of yet he has not received a reply back. Cllr. O' Neill suggested that contact be made again to try to initiate a response, Mr. Cullen agreed to write again to Dublin Bus

3. Update on Baltinglass RRDF

Mr. Byrne informed the members that the walkway around the Park in Baltinglass is almost complete, the next stage is to black top the surface.

Mr Byrne informed the members a tender process for the construction of a new playground was carried out recently and a contract was awarded to the successful applicant, works on the playground will commence in the coming months

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Plans to construct a new pedestrian crossing close to the bridge in Baltinglass are underway and works will commence on the project in the coming weeks.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Timmins thanked Mr. Byrne and his team for the work they have done to date in the park and the town centre in Baltinglass however he advised that members of the public have raised concerns regarding the stop start nature of works in the town. Cllr. Timmins acknowledged that further funding is required to complete town centre project in full and remarked that it is unfortunate that the recent RRDF application for extra funding for the project has been unsuccessful, he advised that he has raised this issue at national government level. Mr. Byrne informed the members that the lack of detailed design from the consultants is having a major impact on the delivery of the town centre project, he also advised more funding would be required to complete the project.

Blessington RRDF

Mr. Byrne said an architect has been appointed for the design of the renovation works for the Blessington Health Centre building.

A meeting is scheduled with the Town Regeneration Officer in order to progress the plans to hire a consultant to carry out a survey of the underground and overhead services in the town. Following on from this survey a detailed design can be carried for the development works in the town.

As per funding allocation under RRDF, WCC are currently seeking to acquire a site/building in the town with a view to creating an economic development hub.

Cllr. Timmins asked for an update on the Courthouse in Baltinglass, Mr. Cullen informed him that plastering works on the building are now complete. A painting contractor is currently painting the building with an expected completion date of two weeks.

Following a request from Cllr. Stapleton for a brief overview on Baltinglass and Blessington RRDF projects, Mr Pat Byrne gave an update on both projects

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

Mr. Byrne informed the members that surface dressing on roads in district will commence in the coming weeks, he also remarked that although the budget allocated to the district for road maintenance is large it must be split between the Tinahely and Blessington areas and it will be difficult to carry out all the required works within budget due to the fact that we have such an extensive road network within the district.

Mr. Byrne explained that Safety improvement grants are sought by the district engineers in February of each year and they are then tendered out. All drains, edging etc has to be done between May – October as all money has to be claimed by November. There is only a small budget each year for drainage.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Timmins complimented the work done on the white lines on R747 near Kiltegan.

Cllr. Cronin complimented the work on Colbinstown Bridge which is ongoing. She also asked that Ballyhubbock Road be considered.

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Cllr. O' Neill thanked Mr. Byrne for the roads report. He highlighted that Knockieran Bridge is in a dreadful condition. He said cars have to swerve to avoid potholes and the weeds are very high on the edge of the road surface thus making the road narrower to drive on. He advised that he has raised this issue on many occasions previously pointing out that there is some confusion/debate between Wicklow County Council and the ESB over who is responsible for these repairs. With the tourist season upon us, he feels this should be looked at as a priority and suggested we request an urgent meeting with the ESB.

Mr. Byrne explained that WCC are of the opinion that ESB as the owners of the bridge are responsible for the maintenance of the bridge. He advised that there has been a principal inspection carried out on the bridge in relation to the greenway and that there are issues with joints and structural elements on the bridge that need to be considered. Cllr. O' Neill said it needs a new bridge as the bridge in its current state is unacceptable.

Cllr. Timmins suggested that this issue be escalated to the Chief Executive with a view to getting a resolution. Cllr Glennon supported Cllr Timmins suggestion highlighting that that the Wicklow County Council Chief Executive needs to be made aware of the issue with a view to raising it directly with the ESB

Cllr. O' Neill also brought to the attention of the members that he spoke with Emergency personnel after a recent tragedy at the bridge and they pointed out to him that if works are carried out on the bridge to facilitate the Greenway, then Emergency Vehicles would have limited access to the bridge therefore hindering their efforts to get to a patient quickly.

Cllr. Stapleton asked for an update on junction on the Tinahely Road in Carnew. He explained there are ongoing issues with the junction and there has been long delays resolving these issues due to local opposition, Mr. Byrne said this scheme needs to go ahead as the Junction definitely needs to be tightened up, he will speak with Mr. Graham about this.

Cllr. Stapleton also brought to the attention of the meeting that as part of a new housing development currently taking place in Tinahely, new footpaths have been constructed. He asked if other footpaths in the area could be resurfaced as they are dangerous and also an eyesore

Mr. Byrne explained that there is no funding available for upgrading of footpaths or construction of new footpaths. Active Travel provides funding for footpaths but this funding is mainly for Urban areas. There was a Rural Active fund established last year but it is a one off scheme.

Cllr. Glennon advised that Burkes Bridge is in a bad state of disrepair, cars are in danger.

Cllr. Mulhall advised the meeting of a traffic hazard at Blessington South, he explained that motorists coming out of Burgage cannot assess the road appropriately as there are lorries continuously parking in a nearby layby in front of Texaco blocking the view of traffic travelling on the N81.

5. Correspondence

No correspondence.

6. AOB

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Cllr O' Neill wants it recorded that he is disappointed he has not been appointed as the Cathaoirleach as he is the people's choice with over 2000 votes. He said he wants it noted that it is a snub to all those people.

Cllr. Glennon said his views are noted.

Cllr. Cronin pointed out the lack of wheelchair parking in Dunlavin, particularly at the Health Centre and the Church.

Cllr. Mulhall requested a small sign maybe at the entrance to Blessington acknowledging the bronze medal that the Tidy Towns achieved.

Cllr. Mulhall pointed out that cars are parking at the entry/exit points for Dunne's Stores, the yellow box will need to be re-painted.

Mr. Cullen advised the members that a new CCTV location has been added near Dunne's stores which covers the stairwell.

Cllr. Cullen announced that this will be Aideen,s last meeting before taking up her new role in WCC He thanked her for hard work and commitment to Baltinglass Municipal District, he wished her the best of luck in her new role. The elected members also thanked Aideen and wished her well in her new position

Mr. Cullen proposed that the next local policing meeting be held in September. This was unanimously agreed with the members and it was agreed that this meeting will take place at 9:30am in September before the regular meeting

7. Date of next meeting

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The next Baltinglass Municipal District annual and ordinary meeting will be held on the 22th July 2024.

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

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR