

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

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

In Attendance: Ms. Theresa O' Brien, District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Christina Brophy, Clerical Officer

Presentations: Mr. Will Blumlein, Lakeshore Striders
Ms. Emer Deegan, Lakeshore Striders
Ms. Carmel Cashen, Lakeshore Striders
Mr. Niall Mc Hugh, Lakeshore Striders
Ms. Caroline Cullimore, Senior Staff Officer, Economic Development Section

Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon opened the meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th January 2025.

It was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Mulhall and unanimously agreed by all members to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27th January 2025.

2. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

3. Presentation from Lakeshore Striders.

Ms. Emer Deegan from Lakeshore Striders running club gave a presentation to the elected members on Lakeshore striders proposed plans to construct a running track in Blessington. The Lakeshore Striders have upwards of 150 members, their juveniles regularly compete at the Community Games, and the club would like to work with other groups such as Special Olympics and Kare but need a proper running track campus in order to do so.

Mr. Blumlein concurred with this adding that the lack of facilities puts limitations on who can join the club, they would like to be a club that is inclusive for everyone in the community. He also added that having their own dedicated running track/campus would allow them to host the Wicklow Athletics meets which currently only happen in the East of the county. Having proper facilities would be of benefit to other clubs such as community games, other sports clubs and local schools.

Ms. Cashen agreed with the other speakers, stating that current facilities do not match facilities in other communities and if the project progressed it would be a club for everyone not just the elite.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Cronin thanked the Lakeshore Striders for their comprehensive presentation, she is pleased that they are advocating not only for their club but for other groups in the community and are conscious of inclusivity for all, she is happy to support the project. Cllr. Mahon asked what the cost would be to get this up and running and would it be a community owned facility or would the club take ownership. In response to the costing question, Ms. Deegan said they would be looking at constructing a 400m Cinder track and it would be hard to put a price on that as the costings would be dependent on how much groundwork is needed to be done. Mr. Blumlein stated when the track is completed that the club would be happy to take on a long term lease agreement. Cllr. O' Neill said he would be supportive of the running track on the proposed location (on the Cairn owned lands), he advised that a draft plan be put together outlining in detail the project, he also proposed council owned land at Burgage as an alternative option for a running track. All Councillors were supportive of the project

Cllr. Glennon reiterated his best wishes to the club and said he agrees with Cllr. O' Neill suggestion that a draft plan be done up, he asked Ms. Deegan if the club have any funds of their own. Ms. Deegan said the club have some funds and have a team that are good at fundraising, they also raise money to donate to charity from racing events.

Ms. O' Brien thanked all for the concise and ambitious presentation, she said it's obvious the club have the best interests of the community.

4. Presentation on the proposed plans for the former Bank of Ireland, Carnew.

Ms. Caroline Cullimore, Senior Staff Officer presented the members with the proposed plans for the former Carnew, Bank of Ireland building which was purchased in 2022 for €200,000. Its currently in a state of disrepair, the current windows don't allow much light into the building. There is a Vault at the back of the building that is re-in forced by steel. The building is structurally good but does need upgrading, energy retrofitting and making it Wheelchair

accessible. The intended use of the building is for it to be used as remote working hub. It will be a multi-use building with flexible working space that can be used as hot desks as well as meeting rooms.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Stapleton is delighted to see this project moving along and would like to keep the momentum going on the project going. He also said the design on the outside will bring life to the streetscape.

Cllr. Mulhall concurs with Cllr Stapleton's statement. He also said that adding a changing room with a hoist would make it fully inclusive with a possibility of having a changing places area there also.

Cllr. Mahon said while the design looks fantastic he thinks there are an excessive amount of hot desks for the area, but agrees that there should a community space and accessible toilets and showers in the building.

Ms. O' Brien thanked Caroline for the presentation and she also thinks that the changing places area is a great idea and asked would it be possible to add in a sensory garden to the design also.

Cllr. Glennon said this is a welcome development but has concerns that 23 hot desks in a rural town is excessive and may not be the best use of the space, he felt there should be more emphasis on community use.

Ms. Cullimore said this project is going to part 8 and the timeline regarding the construction/renovations of the building will depend on funding.

Mr. Cullen informed the members that part 8 will come back to the district for the members approval. Cllr. Stapleton queried if this can go to part 8 straight away or do we have to wait for funding approval. Ms. Cullimore said this can go to part 8 immediately.

5. Baltinglass RRDF

Mr. Cullen informed the members that he contacted Director of Services, Ms. Leonora Earls for an update on the Baltinglass Public Realm project.

He read a statement from Ms Earls in which she outlined that Wicklow County Council officials had a very productive meeting with the construction team, after a lot of complexities in relation to the underground services and petrol tanks. Works were carried out to largely de-risk, however there continued to be difficulties in relation to drainage, which Wicklow County Council are satisfied has now been resolved.

The members were advised that it has been decided to now tender for the construction of the full Phase 1a and not just the drainage.

Ms Earls sated that Wicklow County Council looked at the most expedient process in order to go out to tender in the coming weeks. This will bring us to stage iii the evaluation, award of the contract and the stage iv construction. With these stages in mind, Wicklow County Council plan to have construction underway by June 2025

Members Comments and Observations

Baltinglass Public park

Mr. Cullen informed the members that Wicklow County Council has secured a grant for a basketball court and ten to twelve thousand euro for planting of trees and shrubs. District Engineer Mr. Dermot Graham advised the Members of recent vandalism in the park. Cllr. Mahon said he is disappointed to learn that the park has been defaced already after all the hard work that went into it and it is such a good facility. He said we need a deterrent and asked if CCTV can be installed as soon as possible, Mr. Cullen replied that the CCTV application has been submitted but unfortunately this is a lengthy process with an expected completion date to be in 2026.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the issue of dog fouling in both Blessington and Baltinglass Town parks. Ms. O' Brien suggested creating awareness of the issue possibly at the time of the official opening of the park. Cllr. Glennon acknowledges all the hard work that went into this park and thanked Mr. Graham.

6. To Consider Roads Reports (National and Non-National Roads)

Mr. Byrne informed the members that the Active travel funding allocated, details of which were circulated prior to the meeting

- €100,000 allocated to develop a cycle path from Deerpark to N81 in Blessington.
- €20,000 Dunlavin School allocated for lighting and
- €100,000 allocated to the Bridge in Baltinglass for which an Engineer will be assigned to oversee.
- €70,000 Scoil Mhuire na n-Aird, provide infrastructure for schools to increase walking and cycling as the preferred travel mode where possible and improve safety at front of schools.
- €50,000 Aughrim Road Pedestrian Crossing, Tinahely. New Zebra / Controlled crossing and upgraded footpath to link Kilcommon National School to Residential areas.
- €50,000 Kiltegan Road Pedestrian Crossing Baltinglass, New Zebra Pedestrian Crossing and footpath extension at Baltinglass GAA Club Grounds to link to residential areas.

Mr Graham advised that the road markings at the new ramps at Baltinglass GAA club have now been completed. He also advised that the works have commenced on the new roundabout at Clough Cross in Baltinglass, it is expected the works will take up to 5-6 weeks.

Mr. Byrne advised the members that there is an emergency road closure notice in place at Ballyfolan as the Bridge has been damaged and repair works are due to commence in the coming weeks

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Cronin expressed her disappointment that Donard was not included in the Active Travel scheme. She also requested an update on Colbinstown Bridge. Mr. Byrne said he will follow up re: Colbinstown bridge and revert back with an update.

Cllr. O' Neill asked if there is any map or drawing for the proposed plan for Deerpark Cycle tracks as he feels money is wasted on designs and could be spent elsewhere. Mr. Byrne replied that the road is wide enough for a cycle path and that certain gateways need to be followed in order to secure funding.

Cllr. Mulhall thanked both engineers for their reports and asked if there are plans to fix the footpaths around Coolboy. Mr. Graham stated that funding has been sought for footpath repairs and will be allocated in the coming months but he does not envisage it will be a sufficient amount to carry out all the footpath works required in the Tinahely area.

Cllr. Glennon thanked both engineers for their work to date and said all improvements are welcome.

7. Discussion on pending Blessington Local Area Plan

A wide ranging discussion took place on the upcoming Blessington Local Area Plan. Cllr. O' Neill said he has been studying the plan in depth and is disappointed with the entire process, he said the current five year plan is well out of date. He feels the elected members are being rushed into decisions and that the timeframes are too tight. Cllr. Glennon encouraged the elected members input saying that the Chief Executives report was not intended as the final report. Cllr. Mulhall said the timeline is a concern and he is not confident that a full consensus will be reached by the deadline set.

8. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen advised the members that the Estate Development Grant scheme is now open for applications with the closing date the 14th March.

He advised that a meeting has been scheduled for local business owners and community groups on Monday 3rd March to discuss the Town Square plans and subsequently these findings will be reported to the elected members at a scheduled meeting on Tuesday 04th March.

Mr. Cullen read out an email from Baltinglass Forum in which their members expressed their disappointment that the Baltinglass Forum Chairperson, Ms. Mai Quaid, was not afforded the opportunity to speak at a recent Municipal District meeting. Ms Quaid attended the meeting as member of the public gallery and was invited during the meeting to speak, by Cllr O' Neill, something which is not permitted under the standing orders of the meeting. Cllr O' Neill wanted it noted that he did propose to suspend the standing orders to allow Ms Quaid to speak but no other Councillor would second the proposal.

9. Any Other Business.

Mr Cullen advised that the heritage officer has secured funding to carry out minor repair works at Nolans of Knocknadruice which is a listed building and also heritage funding has been secured for funding to paint a wall in Dunlavin.

Mr Cullen said the revised date for the Cathaoirleach's reception for the Tinahely Ladies Senior Football team and the Knockananna Camogie team will take place on Friday 21st March in O' Connors in Tinahely.


Mr. Cullen said the proposed date for the Cathaoirleachs awards is pencilled in for May 2025.

10. Date of next meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday March 24th at 10:30am.

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

Signed:  CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:  DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

24/3/2025

Dated: 24/03/2025