

MINUTES OF WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING

HELD IN DISTRICT CHAMBER, TOWN HALL

MONDAY 22nd January 2024 at 15.00pm

Present: Cllr Irene Winters, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cllr Gail Dunne, Cllr Mary Kavanagh, Cllr John Snell, Cllr Paul O'Brien

In Attendance: District Manager, Brian Gleeson
District Engineer, Pat Clarke
District Administrator, Georgina Franey

Dave Shannon, Wicklow Town Team
Siún O'Donnell (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann)
Courtney Cullen (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann)
Tracey Maguire (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann)
John Powderly (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann)
Myles Buchanan, Wicklow People

Cathaoirleach Irene Winters opened the meeting at 15.00 p.m.

ITEM 1

Confirmation of the Minutes from the Wicklow Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th of December 2023

It was proposed by Councillor Paul O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Gail Dunne and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of the Wicklow Municipal District Monthly Meeting held on 18th December 2023.

ITEM 2

Update on the One Way System at Main Street, Wicklow Town

Cathaoirleach Irene Winters indicated that she felt this matter warranted a special meeting in order that the elected members, the Town Team and Wicklow District Chamber of Commerce could discuss all the implications. It was proposed by Councillor Shay Cullen, seconded by Councillor Paul O'Brien and agreed to defer this item to a special meeting to be held on Wednesday 7th February at 15.00pm.

ITEM 3

Briefing from Wicklow CCÉ (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann) regarding the Leinster Fleadh 2024

Siún O'Donnell, Secretary of Wicklow Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann thanked the members for their time and made a presentation as follows:

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann were seeking financial assistance from the Council towards costs involved in their hosting of the 2024 Leinster Fleadh to take place in Wicklow Town from 12th to 14th July 2024. The Fleadh is a celebration of traditional music, song and dance. Wicklow CCÉ hold classes five nights a week at The Boathouse on the Seafront and currently have 150 members. Wicklow Town last hosted the Leinster Fleadh in 2009 and the organisers are hoping this year to build on the success and enthusiasm generated then. Most of the events will take place at Dominican College and Coláiste Chill Mhantáin. Around 2,000 competitors are expected together with parents and supporters. The event presents a great opportunity to promote the town and county. The cost of hosting would be in the region of €80,000 to €100,000 with a likely cost shortfall of €30,000 after fund raising. They also hoped to acquire LEADER funding. Siún advised that when Athboy, a similar sized town to Wicklow, hosted the event in 2019 they secured funding of €30,000 from the County Council. She said they were seeking discretionary funding and was happy to answer any questions the members may have.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Siún for her presentation and said this was a great opportunity for the area which should be optimised. She said that some funding would be available and possibly the County Council would match funding.

All members agreed that this event was a great opportunity to showcase Wicklow Town and county and were fully supportive. It was pointed out that there is huge interest in culture, especially the language. It was suggested that as it was a countywide event that funding should be matched by Wicklow County Council.

A query was raised regarding accommodation for the visitors. Siún advised that this was one of the factors taken into account in selecting a location for the event and that all B&B's have been booked but there is still a shortfall.

The District Manager stated that the Fleadh presents a huge opportunity for Wicklow Town and county and said he would raise the matter with the Arts Officer and that the Council will be as supportive as possible.

Dave Shannon, Wicklow Town Team, stated that between 100 and 150 volunteers would be required and that anyone interested in volunteering should contact the Wicklow Town Team.

The District Engineer advised that he and the District Administrator would deal with any road closures or traffic management etc.

Siún was advised that the members would discuss the matter after the District Manager had consulted with the other departments and that the District Administrator would be in contact in the near future.

ITEM 4

District Engineers Report

Updates were provided by District Engineer Pat Clarke as follows:

Housing:

- ❖ **Relets/Prelets**
 - 4no. houses relets handed to WMD for refurbishment works. (Preparing Tenders)
 - 7no. houses being worked on, through WCC Housing Framework.

- 4no. houses returned to Housing Department for allocation.
- 2no. houses on hold (tenancy considerations by Housing Department).

❖ **Maintenance and operations**

- On-going repairs and maintenance being progressed as required on housing stock within the WMD.
- 1 DPG, due to start 29th January.

DTTAS Roads Programme:

DTTAS Allocations for 2024 Projects have not been released yet.

❖ **Drainage**

- General works on verge drains, gullies and road crossings to outlets are ongoing throughout the MD.
- Drainage Works completed between Three Mile Water and Brittas Bay on drain clearance. Pipes installed across entrances to remove flooding from road.
- Drainage works completed with the installation of 300mm diameter pipes on Claramore road, as a follow on to overlay of road. All works complete.
- Programme for cleaning of gullies continuing within the Wicklow MD. Drain surveys are still being carried out on problem areas as required.
- Drainage works on the R772, between the Milltown lane junction and the junction to Bel Air is completed. Surfacing works start in January, once weather is suitable.
- Drainage works at Knockrobin completed which was causing severe damage to the road. Surfacing works to be completed in January, weather is suitable.
- Drainage works being carried out on R750 at entrance to Brittas Bay North car park.

❖ **Restoration Improvement**

Below is a list of main works for 2023, all projects completed except for the two sections on the R772. There will be completed when the current weather temperatures rise.

Location	Length of Works	Completed to Date
Raheenmore L1102	2.0Km	Completed
Kilbride L5659	2.3Km	Completed
Cloghoge R115	2.1Km	Completed
Carrigower Quarry L1039-38	0.100Km	Completed
Monalin - Kilmurry R765	1.0Km	Completed
Rathnew Old Village L5121	0.250Km	Completed
Abbey Street R750	0.150Km	Completed
Carrigower - Easthill L1039	0.400Km	Completed

Claramore L6586	1.2km	Completed
Glenwood to Moneystown Hill L6088	2.3km	Completed
R772 Ashford (two sections)	1.3km	Contractor appointed, works to start when weather is suitable.

❖ Safety Projects

- Pedestrian Crossing civil works is finished at Mountain View in Newtown. Installation of belisha beacon poles and fit out to be completed by end of January. ESB connection application was been submitted and payment is being processed. Lowering of wall has been completed to increase visibility at this junction.
- Upgrade of crossing point at St Laurence's school is almost complete, ramp surfacing to be completed at school, when temperatures rise. Barriers to be installed in coming days.
- Upgrade of Road markings on R755/ R756 between Wicklow Gap and Djouce has started, approx. 14km of centre line completed plus 4km of edge markings. Chevron signage and delineator posts to be installed on Wicklow Gap in Jan.
- Periodic School Signage to be installed in coming weeks. Poles for signage have been installed at most locations.

❖ WCC Projects

- Erection of Speed limit signs is completed around the Wicklow MD just before Christmas. There may be a small few old signs that need to be removed in areas.
- Works required to stabilise steps and retaining wall area at Parnell bridge is complete. New safety railings to be installed in Feb at this location.
- New section of Parnell bridge parapet installed this week. LED strip lighting to be installed along parapet in coming weeks. New anti-slip surface to be installed on bridge deck in Q2 when weather is suitable.
- Duck feeder plinth has been installed, with solar duck feeder to be installed in coming days.
- Surfacing to Newtown Community Centre completed, white lining has been completed last week.

Fáilte Ireland:

❖ Abbey Grounds;

- Project continuing with Architect/ Structural Engineer and a Quantity surveyor working on tender package for the Coach House area at present. Tender package to be advertised by mid Feb.
- Detailed designs still progressing for Amphitheatre seating and performance area.
- Fire certs and Disability Access drawings have been submitted on the BCMS
- Initial works on tree trimming and scrub removal has taken place to enhance the Abbey and the grounds itself. Material finishes being worked through at present on certain elements of the design.
- Connection agreements with Utility providers are being progressed.

- A detailed archaeological survey of the existing ruins has started, with drawing to be completed by end of Feb..
- Site compound for construction works has been started. Erection of temporary site fencing has been installed around areas of interest on site, as per National Monuments requirements.
- Design works on new entrance for parochial house are being progressed, with site works to start by mid Feb on this area.

Community Recognition Fund/Outdoor Recreation:

- Brittas Bay Blueway funding for accessibility works; works have commenced on upgrade to toilet facilities. The upgrade to also include a disabled toilet, improved water storage and improvement of security facilities. – Tank due for install on the 24th of January, with remaining works to finish by end of January.
- A proposal for outdoor gym equipment around Riverwalk/Murrough Area is being progressed at present, tender documentation to be published in coming weeks.
- Tender package has been issued to contractors for Assembly Hall facility. Tender submissions will be reviewed in early February when received. Works to clean up at back of building have been completed.
- Repairs to Handball Alley to be progressed with specialist contractor through the Community Recognition Fund. These works will be completed when contractor becomes available in Q1 2024.

Town & Village Renewal:

- Wicklow Town – South Quay connections to Main Street (Connectivity Project); Decorative lighting (on lanes) and seating (at Scouts Hall) are currently being procured. Three ornate arches with lanterns are currently being fabricated for installation along the Doctor's Steps. – 7 murals now complete. Installation of Fabricated ship to town hall gable complete. Installation of Heron sculpture at scouts den complete. 'Mini' murals around the town still underway, 3 completed so far. Lighting and seating elements still ongoing.
- Newtown - Streetscape Enhancement Project works are complete. New bins (mixture of compactor and larger big belly bins) have been installed in response to complaints on litter issues, with additional street furniture (benches, bollards, display signs and planters) to be erected to further enhance the appearance of Newtown. These will be completed by end of Feb. Working with the Newtown Forum on finalising locations.

❖ NTA Projects

- Consultants still working on pedestrian and cycle improvement scheme, initial survey completed on the Marlton Rd and Rocky Rd, linking to Train Station on Station Road.

Additional MD projects:

- WCC have issued payments for the following connections. WCC waiting on MPRN's to progress completion:

- Laragh Pedestrian Crossing,
- Moneystown Pedestrian Crossing,

Scheduling of ESB to energise equipment has been progressed at some sites and these are now lighting.

- Annamoe Pedestrian Crossing (part of Town and Village Scheme),

- Annamoe additional Public lighting (part of Town and Village Scheme).
- Road markings progressing around the MD, with yellow boxes being painted at Bollarney woods as requested, Lining completed at Annamoe ped crossing and Abbey Street, White lining completed also at Magheramore. A review of lining at Killiskey cross roads being carried out at present.
- Murrough Masterplan being worked on at present, with concept drawings completed, landscape architect required to detail up concept. Identification of existing services underway at present.
- Cliff walk signage installed, all documentation and proof of works has been sent back to Sports Ireland for review.
- Rowing Club toilets – Survey to be completed by an access management contractor by end of January, to enable public toilets to be restored at harbour area. Refurbishment works to toilets to be costed in coming weeks once survey works complete.
- Tender issued to contractors for tree surgeon work around the district, removal of hazardous trees, stumps etc.
- Hand rails fitted to two areas in Rathnew Cemetery for safety reasons.

MEMBERS OBSERVATIONS

- New public lighting at the Sailing Club was welcomed.
- Query raised regarding reinstatement of a pedestrian crossing at Summerhill. The District Engineer advised that he is looking at reinstating same.
- Representations received regarding installation of speed signs, in particular at Wicklow Educate Together School. District Engineer advised that he hoped they will be installed in the next week or two. They are to be installed by the Roads Section of the County Council.
- New parking meters in Wicklow town – members referred to a lack of consultation with them prior to the introduction of the new machines. It was indicated that some members of the public were unhappy with the requirement to input vehicle registration number and the fact that it is not now possible to pass on tickets with credit remaining to someone else. A request was made that if extra income is received as a result of the new machines that it be ring-fenced for maintenance and improvement of the car parks. It was indicated that some information was incorrect on the machines and that they weren't age friendly. It was also suggested that people may avoid the Main Street altogether in favour of shopping outlets which provide free parking.
The District Manager advised that this is a countywide initiative undertaken by the parking section in Bray Municipal District. He acknowledged the members concerns and advised that they will be referred to the central section. He stated that these machines have been installed in other towns and villages across the country and revenue has increased by up to 20%. He also cited the benefits of the new technology, i.e. coin and contactless payment, app etc.
- Proposed footpath at Brittas Bay – a firm date for commencement was requested as works were postponed previously. The District Engineer advised that he will try to have an update from the Roads Section for the next meeting. He advised that a survey has been done but a Part 8 process will be required.
- The need for more tourist accommodation in Wicklow - Aires Park. Update to be provided.
- Improvement works required at Milltown Lane.
- Members welcomed the commencement of works on the footpath at Greenhill Road to serve the new GAA pitch which will take pressure off the main pitch at Dunbur Road.
- Query regarding more funding opportunities for the district, i.e. NTA and possibility of submitting proposal for a new footpath from Wicklow Town to Magheramore which includes

two caravan parks on the route. The District Manager advised that a lot of rural projects were not selected last time and historically there was greater focus on linkages for urban areas. Part 8 consultation would be required.

- Time frame for installation of periodic signage for schools, especially rural schools.
- Refurbishment of Assembly Hall – District Manager advised that tenders are due back in February. It is envisaged that the hall will be an inclusive facility for all. Quite a lot of work is required. Works will involve refurbishment of toilets, upstairs room for meetings, improved lighting and sound system. The Leinster Fleadh are hoping to use the building in July.
- Overhanging trees and hedges in rural areas. District Engineer advised that the Roads section have put out a campaign advising landowners of their responsibility. The MD has no funding available to trim trees.
- Members acknowledged the huge amount of work carried out by Council staff in the last few weeks resulting from the extreme weather conditions and the very large geographical area they cover.
- Provision of salt boxes at estates – possibly consult with residents regarding location.
- Follow up requested for provision of public lighting at Merrymeeting Hill. District Engineer advised that there were ESB issues and landowner issues here and the costing would be examined.
- Clarification requested on plans for Wicklow Courthouse. It was stated that this building offers so much, not just for the town, but for the entire Municipal District. District Manager advised that he would contact Minister Simon Harris.
- Public Lighting at Milltown – replaced with LED. District Engineer advised that the whole unit required to be taken down. He also advised members that the PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) survey would take place in the next few weeks in Wicklow MD. Footpath from Milltown South to North – explore funding – incorporate into Masterplan for the area.
- Provision of wheelchair access to beach – District Engineer advised that he would examine.
- Gym equipment at the Murrrough.
- Slip near beach covered in slime.

ITEM 5

Correspondence

The District Administrator advised members of the following:

An information meeting regarding the Local Area Plan to take place on Tuesday 30th January at 2.30pm in the Town Hall.

Advertisement regarding Estate Development Grants to be published in Wicklow People on Wednesday. A copy of the Application Form to be emailed to each councillor.

Mick Higgins, South East Coast Protection Committee, was seeking to make a presentation to members on erosion at Brittas Bay. It was agreed that he would attend the meeting in February.

St. Patricks Day Committee submitted a request for funding in the sum of €1,500 as in previous year. The Council had requested some clarification regarding the committee accounts. It was proposed by Councillor John Snell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kavanagh and agreed that this sum should be again provided subject to the committee satisfying the queries raised. The committee also advised that they were seeking new members, if any councillor was interested.

ITEM 6

Any Other Business

Request for an item regarding the traffic situation in Newtownmountkennedy to be included on the agenda for next meeting. District Engineer advised that a meeting with the consultants would take place during the week. He acknowledged that the junction was very difficult and had caused frustration but advised that traffic lights would be the only solution and that a roundabout would not be a safe option, especially for pedestrians.

Cathaoirleach Irene Winters proposed a vote of sympathy to the District Manager, Brian Gleeson on the recent loss of his father, Michael Gleeson. The members then observed a minute silence.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 16.45 pm

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Date: _____