

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Blessington Civic Offices on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 2.30 p.m.

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

In Attendance: Ms. Theresa O' Brien, Baltinglass District Manager
Mr. Pat Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Dermot Graham, Executive Engineer
Mr. Liam Cullen, District Administrator
Ms. Catherine Byrne, Assistant Staff Officer, via Zoom
Ms. Ann Marie Butler, Clerical Officer, via Zoom
Hugh O Farrell Walsh Irish Independent

Cathaoirleach Avril Cronin opened the June meeting of the Baltinglass Municipal District and welcomed all present.

Votes of sympathy

Cllr. Mulhall expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mrs. Alice Josephine (Josie) Dagge (nee Gregan), Coolafancy, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow, who died peacefully on 23rd of June 2025. Mrs. Dagge was mother of our colleagues Ann Marie Roberts and Liam Dagge.

Cllr. Stapleton expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mrs. Ann Brennan (nee Cody), Avenue Court, Gorey, Co. Wexford, who died peacefully on 20th June 2025. Mrs. Brennan was mother of Brian Brennan T.D. Wicklow/Wexford.

May they rest in peace.

A minutes silence was observed.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 26th May 2025.

Confirmation of the May Municipal District meeting was proposed by Peter Stapleton seconded by Cllr Avril Cronin and unanimously agreed by all members to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 26th May 2025.

2. Matters Arising

Following on from the AGM Cllr. O'Neill asked to put on the record that he objected to members of the public coming in to the meeting room and telling him what photographs he should be in.

Cllr. Mulhall asked if he could get a copy of the presentation on the design plans relating to the former Bank of Ireland building, Main Street, Carnew, Co. Wicklow. He pointed out that he was unable to attend the meeting. He queried if the Councillors views and opinions were taken on board, Cllr. Stapleton said that having listened to the presentation, it was his view that the hub will be a multi-functional area that will be suitable to many groups

Cathaoirleach Avril Cronin advised that Cllr Glennon and herself are members of the East and Midland Regional Authority, she advised that they have made a joint submission to get the upgrade of the N81 on to the National Development Plan

3. Roads Reports (National and Non-National roads)

Mr. Byrne & Mr. Graham updated the Members on the National and Non-National Roads Reports.

National

N81 verge trimming at junctions is now completed. In relation to N81 Hollywood Bus Stop facilities and traffic calming the contract has been awarded and a start date will be confirmed in the coming weeks by the contractor.

N81 line marking renewal is underway and will be completed in 2025.

Cllr. Glennon acknowledged Pat Byrne's work on getting the Hollywood Bus Stop facilities and traffic calming over the line. He also mentioned that the white line markings made a big improvement in the District and thanked all involved getting this work done. Cathaoirleach Avril Cronin said she was also very happy with the progress on the Hollywood bus stop and hoped an improved service would follow

Cllr Glennon also asked for an update on the temporary safety barrier at Russborough and when it will there be a permanent one erected. District Engineer Pat Byrne advised that a safety barrier was installed further up the N81, as that was a priority, it being a very dangerous stretch of road

Cllr. Mulhall asked about an Uisce Eireann manhole on the main street in Blessington and also an Eir manhole which needs to be fixed. Mr. Byrne said the Uisce Eireann manhole is reported and a job log created and that the Eir manhole would need to be fixed by Eir.

Cllr. O'Neill asked about white line markings in the Blessington area and Mr. Byrne said that work is being carried out at present and will be completed this year.

Cllr. O'Neill also asked about Knockieran Bridge and pointed out that it needs to be resurfaced.

Mr. Byrne explained that it is now the opinion of Wicklow County Council officials that it is the responsibility of the Council to resurface the bridges and that the ESB are responsible for the structural elements of the bridges. Mr Byrne pointed out that the structural work on the bridges must be carried out by ESB before the resurfacing the bridges can be done. The ESB plan to tender for the structural work to be carried, it is hoped that work will commence in springtime of next year..

Non National

The annual Wicklow County Council allocation from the Department for RI Works and RM Works has been received.

Cllr. Glennon mentioned that the works at Ballyknockan are very welcome and thanked Pat Byrne for his work on this project. Cllr. Mahon also thanked Mr. Byrne for his work on the Ballyknockan project.

Cllr. Glennon enquired in relation to the progress on the safety scheme at Kiltegan cross roads. Mr. Graham indicated that as Surface Dressing works are now completed in Baltinglass, the crews will now become available to progress these works.

Cllr. Peter Stapleton asked about the pedestrian crossing in Lugduff Tinahely. Mr Graham said that the scheme might have to go to consultation as the works will cost more than the allocated budget. This would then provide the basis to see additional funding from the NTA.

Mr. Graham also noted that the NTA also gave funding for a crossing at Baltinglass GAA grounds and that some advanced works have been completed here previously and this scheme will be delivered probably before the Tinahely one.

Cllr. Stapleton enquired as to the extent of the works at Shillelagh Road Carnew and asked about the ramp at the pedestrian crossing Carnew Main St. Mr. Graham outlined the extents and indicated that the ramp at Corrells would be included as an add on to that project.

He then raised a question regarding the closure of a road by an individual in Valleymount near the lake. He queried, what is the position in relation to someone closing a public road? It is still open on the Ballyknockan side. How can a road be both public and not public.

Mr. Byrne pointed out that firstly it needs to be clarified that the road in question is 100% legally still a public road. A check of archived records would need to be undertaken to confirm the status of the road in question. Matters to be considered would include when was it last used as such? Mapping would have to be checked to confirm the status of the road.

We would also have to seek advice from the Law Department in Wicklow. It is a legal process to establish and decommission a road and it is very important to establish if it was a public road and still remains a public road. The legal Road Schedule has to show a public road.

Cllr. Mulhall asked Mr. Graham about Coolafancy National School and the safety issues there. He asked if something can be done and had he looked at possibilities to overcome the issues? Mr. Graham noted that he had received correspondence from the school which had been cc'd to Cllr. Mulhall and Cllr. Stapleton and he hasn't had time to go through the contents and points in detail. Mr. Graham noted that the carriageway between the school wall and the graveyard wall was exceptionally tight and there is no room to expand to provide a footpath unless land is taken from the school and this is further complicated by the proximity of the school itself to the boundary wall in places.

4. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen read a report from Stephen Clarke on the Baltinglass RRDF Project. The Cathaoirleach asked if it could be circulated to the Members after the meeting.

Cllr. Mulhall asked for an update on the plans for old HSE building in Blessington. Mr. Cullen said that Stephen Clarke, Town Regeneration Officer is now looking after the project. He has advised that he is seeking clarification from Department regarding the usage of the building, the funding was originally allocated for a Greenway Hub, it is now planned to convert the building to a tourism and community hub, he is also bringing the matter to the Management Team for their input into the matter.

District Administrator, Mr Liam Cullen said he had received correspondence enquiring about sourcing a new location for the Baltinglass Kayak Club storage unit. Mr. Byrne & Mr. Graham said that there are planning issues as the requested location is in a flood area. It is also located in the River Slaney S.A.C. Mr. Graham noted he had previously spoken to the Kayak Club and Wicklow Local Sports Partnership regarding the concerns of development in this area as it is known to flood during severe flood events.

Cllr. O'Neill asked Theresa O'Brien for a copy of the letter sent by Wicklow County Council re: the Avon becoming an IPAS Centre. He asked what the position was and stated that we as a Council are objecting to it as IPAS. People in rented accommodation were being moved out and it's frustrating and sad for the people on the housing list.

5. Any other business

Cllr. Stapleton enquired about proposed active travel projects for the District as well as plans for new bus stops in the District. He also asked about the surveys on Housing stock and asked if Beechwood Drive in Tinahely could be included in any future surveys.

Cllr. Glennon raised the issue of the new houses in Burgage which will not be progressing under the proposed PPP Bundle. It was noted this was raised at the full Council meeting also and the CE committed that these houses would be going ahead under a different procurement methodology. It was also noted that a certain volume of work already undertaken in relation

to this project (including Part VIII planning) will not have to be replicated in progressing this scheme.

Cllr. Stapleton asked about trees in The Hollows Tinahely. Mr. Byrne explained that there's no budget for tree maintenance and that in some cases an Arborist Report is required. Mr. Graham said that there is a Wicklow County Council Tree Policy which had been signed off by the Elected Members a number of years previously at the full Council meeting but there is no finance to back the policy.

Cllr. Stapleton mentioned the Playground in Carnew. There are issues with the surface since day one. Mr. Graham said it had been highlighted with the Contractor and he will raise it again with them.

Cllr. Mulhall asked if the playground in Carnew could be moved ? Mr. Graham said there was no consultation with MD staff when deciding to put the playground in what is known as the Back Alley in Carnew. He was of the opinion it would cost about €250,000.00 to build or move the playground.

Cllr. O'Neill asked Theresa O'Brien if she could look into a development behind the Downshire Hotel. There is construction works there and Cllr. O' Neill is not sure if it has been reported to Planning

Mr. Cullen pointed out that the October meeting on the Schedule of meetings for July 2025 to June 2026 will need to be changed to the 20th October 2025 as the 27th is a Bank Holiday. He will send a revised Schedule.



6. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 28th July at 10.30 a.m. in Baltinglass Civic Offices.

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

Signed: Avril Cronin

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:  

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: 28/7/2025