

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in the Coimín Centre, Blessington on 18th October 2021, at 10.30 a.m.**

**Present:** Cathaoirleach Avril Cronin  
Councillor Vincent Blake  
Councillor John Mullen  
Councillor Patsy Glennon  
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. Liam Cullen, District Administrator  
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer  
Ms. Benan Clancy, Executive Architect, Housing  
Mr. Declan Marnane, Senior Engineer, Housing  
Ms. Paula Boland, Kiltegan Pride of Place

Cathaoirleach Cronin opened the Baltinglass Municipal District Ordinary meeting.

**1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

Cllr. Glennon proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and this was seconded by Cllr. Mullen.

**2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **3. To receive a presentation on pre-part 8 for Lugduff, Tinahely**

Mr. Benan Clancy, Executive Architect, presented the meeting with a report on the pre-part 8 planning application for Lugduff, Tinahely. He outlined the site plans for 20 units consisting of six one bed, eight two bed and six three bed units with an entrance on School road. Mr. Marnane added that this was quite a difficult site to develop due to the steep sloping aspect and the proximity to the town centre, Ms. Kilkenny noted that it was great to see approval from the department as there were a lot of constraints to get the plans up and running on such a difficult sloping site. Following the presentation Cllr. Mullen asked if a copy of the presentation could be circulated to members and raised concerns over the location of the development. He noted that the elevated site was in a very busy community area which included the GAA grounds, the Community centre, the daycare centre and crèche along with the primary school and playground with all of these essential services experiencing car parking issues. He also raised concerns over the density of the development and access to the site. He added that consultation with the local community has been restricted due to the pandemic but that solutions can be found. Cllr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Clancy and Mr. Marnane for their presentation and stated he understood Cllr. Mullen's concerns but saw this as a positive for the town of Tinahely. He queried if the houses would be managed by a housing agency or by the Local Authority and Mr. Clancy replied that all units would be managed by Wicklow County Council. Cllr. Blake noted it was a difficult sloping site to develop but the location was close to facilities. He added that the biggest concern was the sewerage aspect and queried if Irish Water could be pursued to upgrade the waste water treatment system. He also questioned if the Men's Shed will be retaining their entrance and if car parking spaces are included on the development. Mr. Marnane addressed the issues raised by members. He advised that zoning is mixed use on the site and that density is not excessive. He continued that there will be shared parking throughout the estate and Irish Water have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity for this development. He added that there are existing issues on the School Road and a proposal has been made to Irish Water to include in the part 8 but are waiting to hear back on this. Cllr. Blake stated that the sewerage issue is more complicated as there are a lot of private houses on this road and more works will be required. He queried if the area below the units on the regional road is being retained for future development and asked for a timeframe on the development. Mr. Clancy replied that this area will be kept for percolation and is not suitable for development and Mr. Marnane advised that the full part 8 will be lodged within the next few months, with a view

to commencing construction on site late next year with delivery late 2023. Cllr. Mullen queried if there will a public consultation and Ms. Kilkenny advised that information will be prepared and advertised in the local papers and then go on public display in the Tinahely area office and Wicklow County Council website for six weeks. Submissions can then be made. Both Cllr. Glennon and Cllr. Cronin welcomed the development and noted it was great to see houses being built in the locality.

#### **4. To consider the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Baltinglass for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.**

A copy of the Draft Budgetary Plan had been circulated to the members prior to the meeting. Cllr. Glennon questioned why the Baltinglass MD budget for twinning and economic development was a lot lower than other districts with the same population and number of councillors. Mr. Cullen, District Administrator, advised members that other districts have sponsorship schemes in place on roundabouts etc. and twinning is stronger in other towns and districts. Mr. Graham advised members that prior to 2014 town councils were in situ in other districts which had stronger historic links in place whilst Baltinglass MD did not due to not having any town Councils. Cllr. Timmins stated that the budgetary figures needed amending as festivals in the district are suffering due to lack of funding. Cllr. Mullen informed members that there is an imbalance in funding and Cllr. Blake stated that the larger towns had funding in place for festivals unlike the rural areas and that as all districts are now on an even keel, funding for Baltinglass MD festivals should be increased to €20,000. Cllr. O'Neill also expressed his disappointment with the budget for festivals and stated these events and festivals should be encouraged. He also raised concerns over the total budget for maintenance of the public conveniences in the county. Mr. Cullen advised members that the budget has been allocated and figures cannot be increased at this stage. Ms. Kilkenny advised that the budget report had been received late and suggested sufficient notice would be received from the finance section next year in order to have more input from the members. Cllr. Blake queried the budgets for local authority housing maintenance and regional and local road winter maintenance in the district and asked if there was the same level of equality throughout the districts. Mr. Graham advised members that in relation to winter maintenance that regional roads were priority 2 (after N81) for treatment and the allocation was for these roads. There was no budget for priority 3 routes (local roads). In relation to the housing

maintenance budgets were fairly equal across the county approximately €300 per house. Ms. Kilkenny added that the housing maintenance budget is divided equally countywide. Cllr. Mullen noted that it was important that senior management ensure the same funding is given to rural areas. Cllr. Blake proposed the draft budgetary plan for the Baltinglass Municipal District and Cllr. Glennon seconded this motion.

#### **5. To receive a presentation on Kiltegan Pride of Place application 2021.**

Ms. Paula Boland, Secretary of Kiltegan GAA, presented members with a report on Kiltegan village's Pride of Place application. She gave a brief history on the village and spoke about the fundraising initiatives to develop a community fitness hub in the village. Currently an all-weather astro turf pitch and community walk way has been constructed with plans to buy out a derelict building to house a community hub and shop. Cllr. Mullen thanked Ms. Boland for her detailed presentation and noted it was a great example of what a rural community can achieve when they work together. He added that the pandemic caused problems but also opportunities in rural communities with the demand for work hubs. He noted that dealing with community finance agencies can be very bureaucratic and quite slow to pay out which can lead to added interest and costs. Ms. Boland informed members that funding from Leader had not been received yet and the GAA club were covering the cost of interest on the loans. Cllr. Timmins expressed his admiration on what can be done in a rural community when they work together. He added that the Town & Village Renewable scheme were very supportive of this project. Cllr. Blake noted that Kiltegan village are entitled to the same facilities and services as are available to more urban communities and he noted that the recycling facilities in the village have been removed as they were located across the county border in Carlow. Ms Boland agreed that the much used services had been removed and hoped this could be resolved between both local authorities in the near future. Cllr. O'Neill stated it was great to see a community striving and working together and noted that the old derelict building in the centre of the village needs to be utilised and would fully support this initiative. Cllr. Cronin thanked Ms. Boland for her presentation and assured her that Baltinglass MD fully support the community of Kiltegan with their plans.

The Cathaoirleach advised members that the meeting would exceed the time limit of two hours and proposed that an extension be made. Cllr. Mullen proposed this motion and Cllr. Blake seconded the proposal.

## **6. To consider the distribution of funding to interested groups of Christmas Light Funding.**

Mr. Cullen, District Administrator, distributed a report on the proposed allocation of Christmas Lights & Festival Funding 2021 for the member's consideration. Mr. Cullen advised that a budget of €10,000 was available and all applicants had been given funding. He asked members if there were any amendments to be made to the report. All members were in agreement that funding had been distributed fairly and Cllr. Timmins proposed this motion and Cllr. Mullen seconded it.

## **7. To consider Roads Reports (national and non-national)**

Mr. Pat Byrne, District Engineer, presented the meeting with an N81 Progress Report. He advised members that all schemes and projects on the N81 have now been completed with the exception of minor improvements to the road surface at the Knockroe Bend Realignment which are scheduled to be completed by the end of the month. He informed members that overhanging branches and trees are currently being cut back from Russborough to Hangman's Bend and at the graveyard in Blessington. There are also double yellow lines being installed at the Avon Rí. He continued that the consultant's report on the bus stop at Hollywood has been completed and he will update members within the next week. Cllr. Timmins queried if the R747 between Kiltegan and Baltinglass could be upgraded or if an application could be made to widen sections of this road. Mr. Graham, Executive Engineer, advised that the R747 in the Tinahely area had been resurfaced over the past four years and to widen a section of road would be a major scheme but he would check if a Specific Purpose Grant could be utilised for this purpose. Mr. Byrne advised that there are Low Cost Safety schemes which can be accessed but for the realignment of roads there are limited sources of funding available. Cllr. Mullen noted it was great to see improvement works completed on the Kilquiggan to Laragh road but questioned if a speed survey had been completed on this section of road and if a speed reduction could be made. Mr. Graham advised that speeding is a Garda issue and they do enforce in that area quite frequently. Cllr. Blake queried if the micro surfacing in areas has been successful as Carlow town had had issues with a loss of materials on with this surface. Mr. Graham replied that some chip loss had been reported early on but this is normal and roads has now settled. Cllr. O'Neill asked if there was any progress being made on Knockieran bridge. Mr. Byrne explained that he had spoken to the

ESB engineer and is waiting on them to provide legal documents stating that the bridge is owned by the ESB and road surface maintained by Wicklow County Council before any works can be completed. Cllr. O'Neill also raised concerns over the supply of bus shelters in the district. Mr. Cullen advised that one bus shelter has been installed in Baltinglass by the Baltinglass crew and another will be installed in the weeks coming. The remaining two bus shelters for Blessington area have been ordered and will be in place by mid-November. Cllr. O'Neill stated that TII are calling the shots on the bus stop in Hollywood and he didn't see the need to spend €10,000 on a consultant's report. Mr. Byrne advised that there is a legal process which needs to be followed and safety audit completed with approval from TII and there is no way around it. The Cathaoirleach agreed that it is a long process but it needs to be completed the right way. She queried if the whiteline could be reinstated on the Castledermot to Baltinglass road and if anything could be done about the Dutchman's pub in Baltinglass as there have been reports of slates falling off the roof. Mr. Cullen advised that Michael McNamara from the Environment section has been in contact with the owner of the building and will have an update soon.

## **8. Correspondence.**

Mr. Cullen advised the members that a number of correspondence was received including a response from AIB stating what services they will continue to provide in Blessington and through An Post. He also advised that the outdoor recreation funding of €14,000 that was announced for Tinahely, in May 2021 will go towards the provision of public seating in the town, the orders for the seating have been placed by District Engineer, Dermot Graham.

## **9. Any other business**

Cllr. Timmins enquired if an old graveyard on St. Patrick's College road in Kiltegan could be cleared as it was done a number of years ago.

Both Cllr. O'Neill and Cllr. Cronin advised they had received reports of issues with the public convenience in the Main Square in Blessington and asked if these issues could be addressed.

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CATHAOIRLEACH**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR**

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_