

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Blessington Civic Offices on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 10.30am**

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

- Ms. Mary Cahill, Acting 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. Larry Roe, Senior Executive Engineer
- Ms. Aisling Hubbard, WCC Sports Partnership Officer
- Ms. Carol Coad, County Wicklow Partnership

**Apologies:**

- Ms. Theresa O' Brien, District Manager.

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

**Votes of Sympathy**

Cllr. Mulhall expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mary Gregan (nee Hassey), Coolboy, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow and formally of Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, who died peacefully on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Cllr. Mahon expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of James Mc Carron, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare and formerly of Listowel, Co. Kerry who passed away unexpectedly on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Cllr. O' Neill expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Tommy O' Dwyer, Blessington and formally of Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow, who died peacefully on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Cllr. Glennon expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mary Davin (nee Murray) of Blessington Co. Wicklow and formally Athleague, Co. Roscommon who died peacefully on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

May they all rest in peace. A minutes silence was observed.

**1. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

It was proposed by Cllr. Stapleton, seconded by Cllr. Cronin and unanimously agreed by all members to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**2. Matters Arising.**

No Matters arising.

**3. To receive a presentation on the West Wicklow Activities and Outdoor Recreation plan**

Ms. Aisling Hubbard, Local Sports Partnership Coordinator gave an update on the various Sports Partnership projects being undertaken in Baltinglass Municipal District.

Ms. Hubbard informed the members that Health Screening recently took place in Carnew and proved very successful, they received positive feedback.

Funding has been secured for planting trees and the construction of a basketball court in Baltinglass Town Park, it is also planned to have a junior park run there on Saturday mornings, commencing in the coming weeks.

Soccer goals have been provided and will be erected Blessington Park in the coming days.

There are active "Learn to Cycle" Programmes currently being rolled, participants for these programmes include children from Autism units in local schools. Bike Week will also be promoted at a County and National level too.

Wicklow Trails walking aims to promote physical activity. There are inclusive clubs grants available, the closing date for these is 01<sup>st</sup> May 2025. The aim is to promote Wicklow with four steps which are

- Wicklow Outdoor Recreational
- Local Sports Plan
- Physical Activity for Health Pilot
- Chronic conditions target groups (referral from GP, Physio)

The Wicklow Trails App has now been launched and is proving to be very successful with over 3000 downloads already. The app also has rewards for completing journeys and tasks so it is very motivational. There are 50 different walks so far on the app and the difficulty level is colour coded as follows;

- Red = Strenuous
- Blue = Moderate
- Green = Mild

Ms Carol Coad informed the members that the Outdoor recreational plan is currently being rolled out nationwide, the feedback in Wicklow has been very good and there has been positive interaction.

Ms Coad highlighted projects within the County that have been completed recently

The Roundwood Recreational area has been opened and is a great success. There is a play trial, 5 play areas and a walking loop.

The Sugarloaf Mountain has gone through a part 8 process and work has commenced on restoring and preserving the tracks/trails already there. A Carpark and picnic area has been added to this amenity.

The CWP are currently working on;

- Securing Maintenance funding
- Securing 1.4 million ORIS funding
- Rolling out leader project
- Completing dormant funding application
- Maintaining relationships with stakeholders.

Ms. Coad explained that there is a plan in place for 2030 which will aim to improve all outdoor amenities in the County, tackle Environmental Protection Issues and promote inclusivity for all recreation users. It is envisioned that six maintenance crew would be needed to maintain these areas and a full time recreational manager.

#### **Members Comments and Observations**

Cllr. Stapleton congratulated the team on the incredible work to date and said he is delighted to see projects being delivered in such a timely manner, all the members agreed with this statement. Cllr. O' Neill asked that the sports inclusion initiative be defined more clearly. Cllr. Mahon queried if there are plans for additional equestrian trails. Ms. Coad agreed that there should be more equestrian trails Wicklow but pointed out that there are issues in insuring equestrian trails, issues which she is keen to see addressed and resolved. Cllr. Mulhall said he is impressed with the app and thinks this is a great addition and shows off Wicklow in a very positive light. Cllr. Cronin thanked Ms Hubbard and Ms Coad for the presentation adding that Wicklow is a beautiful county and that it is great to see facilities and amenities available throughout the county, she pointed out that she recently visited the Sugarloaf Mountain and the new works there greatly enhances the area making it a much more safe walking route.

Mr. Graham expressed disappointment that funding has been secured and projects give the go ahead without proper consultation with the engineers pointing out that events are taking place in public areas without Engineers knowledge or approval, particularly events on public roads. He suggests that early engagement and communication will help with event applications. Mr. Byrne agrees with this stating the engineers need to be notified so they can attach conditions to events for safety reasons.

Cllr. Glennon asked if there is any funding available for West Wicklow. Ms Coad replied there are a number of projects in West Wicklow about to commence and that further applications have been applied for projects in 2025, recently submitted.

#### **4. To receive an update on Baltinglass Municipal District public lighting.**

Mr. Roe informed the members that KLS were appointed in September 2024 to deal with the backlog of problems in relation to outages, they are triaging areas but the storms delayed the progress, nevertheless they are progressing very well. He informed the members that they are currently looking to appoint a public lighting inspector and urged the members to email [publiclighting@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:publiclighting@wicklowcoco.ie) to inform them of any public light issues or outages so they can be logged on the Deadsure app.

#### **Members Comments and Observations**

Cllr. O' Neill thanked Mr. Roe for the update, he also reported a light out at Ballyknockan. He added that it is great to have a contact person to touch base with when reporting lights out. Cllr. Mahon agreed with this stating that you can see the improvements already in towns and villages since Mr Roe has taken up this position. Cllr. Mulhall suggested the Deadsure app needs updating and also stated that Donard issue is a source of great frustration to the people in that community, he also queried if areas that have faults which have not been taken in charge by WCC are being reported and dealt with. Mr. Roe responded that it would be the responsibility of the developer/management company until it is taken in charge. Mr. Roe explained the fault in Donard is a complex problem and they are working hard to isolate and solve the problem.

Cllr. Cronin said in relation to Donard the light across from the hall has been not been working for years and that there is no light outside the Church of Ireland in Stratford. Ms Cronin pointed out that Dunlavin Green has no lighting at all on one side of the Green and that there is no lighting outside Ballynure Church which is in a rural area and very much needs some source of lighting. She said she is aware that there is no funding for lights but asked can anything at all be done to improve the situation in this area. . Mr. Graham and Mr. Byrne both agreed with this stating that most small villages are not up to standard, they pointed out that there is no funding allocated to the Districts for lights. Mr. Roe said in terms of improvements if bulbs are gone it's a simple matter of replacing a bulb but if lights are broken it would then be recommended to fix or install or extra lights.

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

Mr. Byrne updated the members on the National Roads report, he advised that in relation to the Hollywood bus stop and traffic calming facilities, the scheme is progressing well. He is hopeful to have further update on this project and on the Blessington South project within the next month. He advised the annual clean of gullies and drains on the N81 is currently in progress

Mr. Graham updated the members on the non-national roads reports and he informed the members that the annual allocation from the department for RI works for the Baltinglass Municipal District has been received and the figure is €2,855,160.00 which will be divided equally between Blessington and Tinahely areas. The allocation for the Road Maintenance Works has also been announced, the allocation is €872,300.00 which again will also be split equally between Blessington and Tinahely areas. The Annual allocation for drainage works has been advised as €158,580, the schemes for 2025 will be identified by both engineers in the coming months.

Mr. Graham also added that six Bridge Rehabilitation Works and eight Safety Improvement Works have been approved for Baltinglass Municipal District for 2025. He advised the roadworks at Clough Cross are progressing well.

#### **Members Comments and Observations**

Cllr. O' Neill pointed out that the road adjacent to the Men's Shed in Blessington is in a bad state of repair. There have been 2 bad accidents there already and he requested that the upgrade works on this road be looked at as a priority. He again mentioned Knockieran Bridge pointing out the disgraceful condition it is in. Mr. Cullen advised the members that he has written to the ESB inviting their local engineer attend an MD meeting to discuss this issue and others, he has had no response back from them to date. Cllr. Mahon said he has had similar experiences with the ESB not responding following contact that he has made with them.

Cllr. Stapleton stated that line markings and ramps need to be installed close to the school in Carnew, he said he has raised this at the last three meetings and he is receiving constant calls about

this issue, he requested an answer as to when this work will be done. Mr. Graham replied that contractors have been priced up and he is hopeful of progressing this work within the next few weeks. Mr. Byrne queried if there are not flashing lights at this crossing already. Cllr. Stapleton said there are flashing lights there but may not be entirely visible on a sunny day so this work needs to be done regardless.

Cllr. Cronin asked if there has been an update from the bridges crew in relation to Colbinstown Bridge.

## **6. Correspondence**

Mr. Cullen informed the members that he received a letter from the Wicklow Pride committee requesting funding.

Mr. Cullen also reminded everyone of the closing date 04<sup>th</sup> April for the upcoming Achievement awards, the provisional date for which is set for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in May. He advised the members to include as much information as possible on the nominees.

## **7. Any other business**

Cllr. Stapleton queried the procedures and protocols in place for the maintenance of Council houses, he said a lot of the houses in Beechwood in Tinahely are in need of new doors and windows. Mr. Graham advised Cllr. Stapleton the replacement of windows and doors are not carried out by the district maintenance team, he pointed out that Baltinglass Housing budgets are quite low and would not cover major works on houses. Mr. Byrne agreed with this adding that larger housing upgrade schemes are done centrally through Wicklow. The District only covers routine maintenance and the average allocation the district receives is a couple of hundred euros per house so as a result maintenance issues have to be prioritised. Mr. Graham said he is not aware of any current scheme that will replace doors or windows for existing tenants, this will only be done under retrofit.

Cllr. O' Neill asked that an update on IPAS centres be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Cahill informed the members that Mr. Marc Deveraux is now in charge of looking after IPAS and Ukrainians and that she will request an update be given to Members at the next meeting

Mr. Byrne urged the members to submit projects to the District Engineers that they wish to have funded from their Discretionary funding.

Mr. Cullen advised that the Baltinglass MD Estate Development Grants competition has now been closed. The list of applicants will go before the Members at the April meeting for their approval

Cllr. Mulhall queried if there was any update on producing byelaws for the parks in the District. Ms. O' Brien was to look into the possibility of introducing by laws. Ms. Cahill said she will relay this to Ms. O' Brien.

Cllr. Glennon proposes having the May 2025 Ordinary meeting in the new Community Centre in Stratford.

Ms. Cahill congratulated all the recent award winners in the Tidy Towns competitions.

Cllr. Stapleton thanked all involved in organising the recent Cathaoirleach's Civic reception in Tinahely, the reception was held to acknowledge the achievements of the successful Knockanana Camogie and Tinahely Ladies Senior football teams

Cllr. O' Neill thanked the Municipal District staff who organised a beautiful bouquet for the recently retired Pauline Murphy from McGreals Primary Care Centre.

**8. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting has been moved and will take place on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 10:30am.

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025