

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass held in Stratford Community Hub on Monday 26th May 2025 at 10.30am

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

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. Christina Brophy, Clerical Officer
Mr. Mark Devereux, Director of Services, Emergency Responses
Ms. Caroline Cullimore, Senior Staff Officer, Economic Development

Apologies: Councillor Jason Mulhall

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 22nd April 2025.

Confirmation of the April Municipal District meeting was proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Mahon and unanimously agreed by all members to confirm and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 2nd April 2025.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. O' Neill proposed to suspend standing orders to condemn the starvation, slaughter and genocide currently happening in Gaza. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cronin.

3. A welcome to Stratford from a member of Stratford Development Association.

Ms. Eilish Mc Donald extended a warm welcome to all present and proceeded to give an informative talk on the history of Stratford from 1774 all the way up to the present day.

She advised all that the new building in Stratford is an A-rated building which will be available to various different groups in the community. The Café will be managed and operated by local person, Grace Kelly

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Glennon said it is a fantastic facility to have in Stratford. He wished Grace Kelly all the best in the running of the Café. He also acknowledge the community contribution Gerard and Laura Kelly have made to help bring the project to fruition, He pointed out that Gerard and Laura Kelly were the previous owners of the Café. He also paid tribute to the input into the project by Wicklow County Council officials, Ms. Breege Kilkenny, Ms. Theresa O' Brien, Mr. Michael Nicholson and Mr. Pat Byrne.

Cllr. O' Neill commented that he also would like to wish the Grace Kelly and her family members all the best in managing the Café and asked if there will there be a shop there too or is there just going to be café. He said he would like to see the community centre run as a community project rather than being operated by a private company. Cllr. O' Neill also felt that the Stratford Forum which has been recently established should play a part in the running the centre.

Cllr. O' Neill queried if the building has been bought by Wicklow County Council . Cllr. Glennon responded that Wicklow County Council are currently in the process or purchasing the building pointing out the deal is at an advanced stage but is not yet fully completed.

4. To consider the Chief Executive's report in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in respect of the former Bank of Ireland Building, Main Street, Carnew, Co. Wicklow.

Ms. Caroline Cullimore gave a comprehensive report on the design plans to relating to the former Bank of Ireland Building, Main Street, Carnew, Co. Wicklow.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Mahon welcomed that there are two EV charging points outside the building but questioned why there were no disabled parking spaces outside the building.

Cllr. O' Neill concurred with Cllr. Mahon and also asked if the building is to be wheelchair accessible. Ms. Cullimore stated that the building is fully wheelchair accessible, pointing out there is a lift in the building which allows access to the second level.

Cllr. Stapleton expressed his gratitude for all the work done to date on getting the project to this stage. Cllr. Cronin said that it is great to see this project progressing and that it will revitalise the whole street.

The part 8 for the proposed development of a Community Based Remote Working Hub at the former Bank of Ireland Building, Main Street, Carnew, Co. Wicklow, was proposed by Cllr. Stapleton, seconded by Cllr. Cronin and unanimously agreed by all.

5. Update information on IPASS centres in Baltinglass Municipal District.

Mr. Devereux, Director of Services for Emergency Responses presented a report to the members which detailed the IPASS numbers in County Wicklow, he pointed out that the

statistics have not changed since he issued a report to the members last month. He advised that there are ten IPASS centres in Wicklow of which five are based in the Baltinglass Municipal District, this equates to 1,425 residents of which 755 are situated in the District of Baltinglass.

He informed the Members that Tynte House in Dunlavin is now closed, stating it closed last week and that all the residents were moved elsewhere.

Mr. Devereux also informed the members that the role of the Wicklow County Council Integration team is to assist residents in IPASS centres and other immigrants to integrate into communities, they do this by holding clinics at the centres to answer any questions residents may have, liaise with other integration teams, and point the residents towards services such as HSE and Intreo.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Glennon asked if Mr. Devereux information is available to him on the movement of IPASS applicants before these decision are made. Mr. Devereux responded that he does not; he is only notified after decisions have been made.

Cllr. Stapleton queried why B&B's and Hotels are being handed back rather than being kept on the books as accommodation centres, Mr. Devereux responded that currently the Department are closing smaller centres in preference of using larger centres.

Cllr. Mahon asked why Ukrainian families are being moved in favour of IPASS residents. Mr. Devereux reiterated that he is not a part of the decision making process on such matters.

Cllr. O' Neill said he is aware that Mr. Devereux is not fully kept informed on the decision making regarding the opening of IPASS centres however he said Councillors should be informed. He also pointed out that Members were given incorrect information about two IPASS centres being opened in The District last year, stating that incorrect eircodes were given on the Departments website, this caused great concern and distress in the area.

Cllr. O' Neill also queried if The Avon were granted a licence for an IPASS centre, he said he is aware that for the past 14 months IPASS residents are being moved in after being moved from the 65 illegally built houses in Kippure estate. He said it is pure greed by the owners of the centre to turf families out in favour of IPASS applicants. Cllr. O' Neill also stated that conditions in some of these IPASS centres are deplorable and this issue should be addressed.

Cllr. Cronin said she is very proud of the community of Dunlavin for helping the residents of Tynte House integrate. She said it is appalling the way these residents have been treated by the Department. She said a letter was given to residents a few days before being moved on informing of the decision and asking them to pack their belongings, they had no idea where they were being sent to. Cllr. Cronin said she personally contacted the Department but as of yet has had no response. Cllr. Cronin also queried who inspects these properties as conditions in some of the centres are awful. She said the residents in Tynte Park volunteered in community work and were a huge asset to Dunlavin.

Ms Cronin advised that the community of Dunlavin hosted event in the park to say goodbye to the residents, there was food, face painting etc. Cllr. Cronin said it was great to see the community come together, she also acknowledged the work from Dunlavin District Forum.

Cllr. Glennon said he concurs with all councillors and he is aware there are lots of concerns re; the Avon and Kippure, people's views are very mixed. He said that the Baltinglass District has a disproportionate share of IPASS Residents, stating that the District always step up to do its share but in the interest of equity and fairness the 1,425 should be divided between the five Districts and not for just one District to take the majority of applicants .

Cllr. O' Neill echoes the comments from Cllr. Cronin, he stated that he appreciates Mr. Devereux's position is very challenging and difficult however he asked for his support on this issue and queried what Wicklow County Council Officials and Members can do to prevent the eviction of families from the Avon on the 8th of August this year.

Cllr. Glennon asked Mr. Devereux to communicate all the Members concerns back to the Department.

Cllr. Mahon asked that the members be informed of the response back from the Department .

6. To consider Roads Reports (national and non-national roads

Mr. Byrne and Mr. Graham presented the National and Non-National Roads reports.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. O' Neill asked if there is any update on the construction of a footpath from the village to the GAA field in Stratford. Mr. Byrne replied that an application would need to be made through Active Travel and that land would need to be purchased. He pointed out that these applications have not been successful recently.

Cllr. Mahon asked for an update on the Ballyknockan Drainage Scheme. Mr. Byrne responded that the design has been done, the crew are available and ready to start but it is in the hands of the solicitors at the moment.

Cllr. Mahon pointed out that there is a speeding issue on the back road from Rathvilly to Baltinglass and he enquired if it would be possible to install ramps in the area. Mr. Byrne responded that ramps are not generally installed on rural roads. Mr. Graham added that it is a 60km zone, if speeding is an issue, An Garda Siochana would need to take action on this

Cllr. Cronin asked about traffic calming measures at Pound Road, Dunlavin and queried if it would be possible to get extra signage. Mr Byrne said that he would look at getting new signage erected in the area

She also asked if there are any further updates on Colbinstown Bridge. Mr. Byrne said there are no new updates.

Cllr. Stapleton asked if there is any update on the proposed work at Kennys Corner in Carnew. Mr. Graham responded that he has been examining the files and he needs to speak

with a colleague regarding the process for public consultation. Cllr. Stapleton expressed his frustration at the lack of progress on this project.

Cllr. Stapleton asked about the possibility of installing a Pedestrian crossing at Coolafancy school pointing out there is a ramp there but the construction of a pedestrian crossing would enhance public safety. Mr. Graham replied that this was looked at previously and that he would consider Cllr. Stapleton's proposal.

Cllr. Stapleton also asked if there is there a plan in place for the upgrade of footpaths in the District using the €200,000 which was recently allocated to each District.

Mr. Byrne stated that this funding is to be divided equally between Blessington and Tinahely areas so €100,000 would not go very far in constructing or replacing footpaths. He said that Dermot and himself will identify high risk areas and carry out work accordingly.

Cathaoirleach Mr. Glennon suggested proposing a time extension for the meeting. This was proposed by Cllr. O' Neill, seconded by Cllr. Mahon and unanimously agreed by all members present.

7. To consider and adopt the Baltinglass Municipal District Schedule of works.

Mr. Cullen informed the members that the spreadsheet on the proposed Baltinglass Schedule of Municipal District works, details of which were circulated to the members prior to the meeting.

Members Comments and Observations

Cllr. Stapleton queried budget of €1.2 million for housing repairs, does this cover maintenance or staff. Mr. Byrne replied this is for maintenance only, he also made the members aware that the budget for housing maintenance has been significantly reduced this year.

Cllr. Stapleton proposed to adopt the Baltinglass Schedule of Works, this was seconded by Cllr. Cronin and unanimously agreed by all members.

8. Correspondence

Mr. Cullen informed the members that he received acknowledgement of his letter to the ESB , in which he requested a meeting between the Baltinglass elected members and the ESB to discuss the ongoing issues with the ESB owned bridges.

Mr. Cullen also advised that he has had correspondence back from Bus Eireann and they are willing to meet via Zoom, the members agreed on the date of 4th June 2025 at 3pm.

Mr. Cullen said that he had received correspondence from a twinning committee from the town of La Mézière in France, they would like to explore the possibility of twinning with a town in Baltinglass Municipal District. Mr Cullen advised that he sent this correspondence to the members and that following on from the email to the members, Cllr. Mulhall contacted him asking if could

follow up on this matter and explore what opportunities are there available for a meaningful twinning partnership with La Mézière a town in the Baltinglass Municipal District.

Mr Cullen reminded the members that the official opening of Baltinglass Park will take place this afternoon at 3:30pm.

Mr Cullen also advised that the Baltinglass Cathaoirleach's Community Achievement Awards Ceremony, of which there are 14 awardees will take place on Friday 06th June at 6:30pm at Tulfarris Golf and Country club

Suspension of Standing Orders

As the suspension of standing orders was taken as per request at the beginning of the meeting

Cllr. O' Neill wanted it noted that Baltinglass Municipal District condemns the starvation, slaughter and genocide currently happening in Gaza.

Cllr. Glennon said he condemns what is happening and stated, he also pointed out that there is discontent on both sides of the conflict.

9. Any other Business

Cllr. Cronin asked if there was any consideration for a Columbarium wall in West Wicklow. Mr. Byrne responded that the Wicklow County Council environment section are looking into the possibility a Columbarium wall for Blessington graveyard but he has no further update on this. Ms. O' Brien said she will follow up on this matter.

Cllr. Cronin advised that Baltinglass Kayak Club are requesting an update on a query they have regarding a location to store their equipment. Mr. Graham said he had met with the Kayak Club previously, there are planning issues as their requested location is in a flood plain.

Cllr. O' Neill requested that a bouquet of flowers be given to Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Services, from the Baltinglass MD members as a token of appreciation for her service over the years, Ms. Gallagher is due to retire after 41 years of service with Wicklow County Council. Mr. Cullen said that he will arrange this.

Cllr. Cronin informed the members that the safe route to schools in Dunlavin will be officially opened on the 23rd June.

10. Date and venue of next meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday June 23rd at 10:30am in Baltinglass Civic Offices.

Signed: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH



Signed:


DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated: 26/05/2025