

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Municipal District of Baltinglass on Zoom on 22nd
March 2021, 10.30am**

Present: Cathaoirleach Patsy Glennon
Councillor Vincent Blake
Councillor John Mullen
Councillor Avril Cronin
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. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator
Ms. Andrea Connolly, Assistant Staff Officer

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Glennon, opened the March ordinary meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd February 2021.

Cllr. O'Neill proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Baltinglass dated 22nd February 2021 and this was seconded by Cllr. Mullen.

2. Matters Arising.

Cllr. Blake had raised concerns at the previous District meeting on the impact level 5 restrictions were having on the maintenance of local roads. He commended District staff on the work done since then in improving the condition of the roads in the area. Cllr. Blake noted there was a lot work that needed to be done on carrying out repairs to roads across the Municipal District as a result of winter weather.

Cllr. O'Neill asked for clarification on the submission of an objection to the proposed wind farm in Kilranelagh by individual councillors. Ms. Kilkenney, District Manager, advised that as this is a live planning application no further discussion should take place on the matter.

3. Correspondence

Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator, advised members that correspondence had been received from Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly's Parliamentary Assistant, in response to a letter sent regarding the site at Crooksling. Mr. Hickey read the response received which outlined that a stay had been put on the sale of Crooksling by the HSE subject to Ministerial review. Cllr. O'Neill advised that as a member of the Regional Health Forum, the HSE had indicated that are proceeding with the sale of Crooksling in March or April. Cllr. O'Neill outlined that he will a motion forward to the next Health Forum meeting to discuss the Crooksling site and hopes to get some clarification on the matter.

Mr. Hickey reminded members of correspondence from the Community, Cultural and Social Development section in relation to the Community Awards Scheme was now open with all details online and advised members to encourage community groups to apply. The closing date for applications is the 23rd April 2021.

At the January Baltinglass Municipal District a query was raised on the review of the Blessington Town Plan and members asked for the query to be raised with the Planning section. Mr. Hickey advised members that the review of Blessington Local Area Plan will not commence until the County Development Plan has been adopted, this likely to be done in 2022. Cllr. O'Neill noted that a lot had arisen since the adoption of the Blessington Local Area Plan in 2013 and there were major developments proposed since then.

Cllr. Mullen queried if the documents on the Draft County Development Plan could be issued in print format as it is hard to navigate online. He also queried the consultation process during level 5 lockdown and if this had been considered. Ms. Kilkenney advised members that the documentation circulated to members on the link of the County Development Plan was in the interest of engagement and is not a draft plan. A draft plan will not issue for a number of weeks and process at the moment is for the Councillors. Ms. Kilkenney noted that

at the moment it is about going through what the crucial issues are and that members are engaged at all stages in the development of the County Development Plan. Ms. Kilkenny outlined that the draft of the draft County Development Plan came to approximately 1,200 pages and also outlined the financial and environmental costs of printing a copy for each councillor. Ms. Kilkenny proposed that one printed copy per district could be made available for members. Ms. Kilkenny outlined the stages of the County Development plan process at which public engagement is undertaken and advised members that every effort will be made to engage public in the process.

With respect to the query from Cllr. O'Neill Ms. Kilkenny assured members that staff in the planning section are working hard to get the new County Development Plan completed and once adopted the Blessington Town Plan will follow. She advised that there is a masterplan being developed for the Burgage and Avon Rí areas and consultants are on board. This will be separate to the Blessington Town Plan. Cllr. Glennon proposed having one draft plan available per district for members to browse and they could then address their concerns, this seconded by Cllr. Timmins. Cllr. Timmins queried if the presentation on the County Development was being presented at the Wicklow County Council meeting on the 12th April was the draft plan and if the plan would then be available to the public. Ms. Kilkenny pointed out that a presentation would be made at the council meeting on the 12th April was a pre-draft and the draft plan should be ready for the May meeting. Cllr. O'Neill questioned what the plan for the Avon Rí area was and stated that locals and councillors should be involved in the process. Ms. Kilkenny advised that there will be a public consultation process as there would be no validity without it.

4. To consider Roads Reports (national and non-national roads).

Mr. Byrne briefed members on the N81 Progress Report. He advised that TII has carried out skid resistance testing on the N81 and he is waiting on a report of the results. Mr. Byrne informed members that Wicklow County Council TII approval / funding for a number of minor drainage and surfacing works on the N81 in 2021. A drainage scheme at Hempstown and minor surfacing repairs on Main Street Blessington has been approved for this year. He also advised that resurfacing works on a section of the N81 from south of Blessington to Russborough bends will proceed during the summer months and tender documents are

currently being prepared by TII. Mr. Byrne added that TII are currently carrying out a study on a section of the N81 from Baltinglass to the Toll House at Annalecky and he will update members when the report is received. Cllr. Timmins queried if any reports had been made available on this study and when the final report would be available. He also questioned if any application had been submitted on the footbridge in Baltinglass. Mr. Byrne advised that a preliminary report had been completed and he would send it on to Cllr. Timmins.

Cllr. Blake queried who carries out skid resistance testing on regional roads and Mr. Byrne informed members that testing is carried out every three to four years but at a cost of €3 per square metre all areas cannot be completed. He added that TII provide the funding for these works on the N81. Mr. Graham advised that he would get an update on the application for the footbridge from the roads section in Wicklow for the next meeting.

Following an update from Mr. Graham on the non national roads report members raised a number of queries. Cllr. Timmins queried if contact could be made with the ESB and some works done on Knockieran Bridge as it was in need of attention and could be a great feature for Blessington if improvements were made. He also questioned if funding of 3.5 million from Rural Regeneration Fund for Baltinglass town centre could be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Cllr. Timmins also queried when the fifteen lights that had been installed at Lathaleere, Baltinglass would be switched on.

Cllr. Mullen raised concerns over the road surface at Kelly's Hill, Tinahely and queried what percentage Baltinglass MD received of the overall county allocations. Cllr. Blake agreed with Cllr. Mullen that the road surface at Kelly's Hill needed investigation as another accident had occurred on this section of road and these accidents were encroaching on the footpath. Cllr. Blake also queried if any additional resurfacing works were scheduled for Backbawn's and if a roads map of the district could be supplied to each member together with a report on the discretionary budget carryover from 2020. Mr. Graham replied that he has been assured by ESB that the lights at Lathaleere will be switched on shortly but he will revert back to them on this matter. On the issue of the road surface at Kelly's Hill he advised that an outside specialist will need to be engaged to carry out independent testing as this section of road was resurfaced in 2017 and added it is unusual to have such issues. Following Cllr. Mullen's query on the budget allocations for the roads programme, Mr. Graham advised that Baltinglass Municipal District have received €2,249,460 which is approximately forty

per cent of the overall allocations for the county. Mr. Graham added that the new three year programme will be undertaken in September this year and funding will be announced at a later stage. He also advised that Backbawn's Lane had failed to make the list when the last three year programme was being formulated but it will be considered for inclusion on the next three year programme. Cllr. Cronin asked if the restoration improvement works scheduled for the Cowpasture Road would include the whole road as she had received a number of calls regarding potholes on this road. Cllr. Cronin also queried when a decision would be made on the five live CIS applications and if they roll over to next year. Mr. Graham replied that there are currently seven schemes on the list countywide with five in the Baltinglass district and it is hoped that at least two out of five will be completed this year. Mr. Graham highlighted that approximately sixty percent of the county's allocation for CIS had been allocated to the MD. Mr. Byrne confirmed that all of Cowpasture Road is included in the restoration works.

5. To discuss the speed limit on the N81 covering the two Hollywood junctions.

Cllr. Timmins thanked all for including this item on the agenda and noted that this issue has been discussed on several occasions at Municipal District meetings. Cllr. Timmins noted that the speed limit between the two Hollywood junctions was an important issue and need concrete steps to move it forward. Cllr. Timmins stated that exiting from Hollywood village onto the N81 is very dangerous and asked if the necessary steps could be taken to get the speed limit graduated from 60 kph to 80 kph along that stretch of the N81 from Poulaphouca to beyond Hollywood Cross. Mr. Byrne advised that Pat Clarke from Wicklow County Council was committed to getting a countywide speed review completed this year and as the N81 is under the jurisdiction of TII an assessment would need to be carried out and reviewed based on their guidelines. Mr. Byrne added that a recommendation from TII is required to reduce the speed limit. Cllr. O'Neill stated that these concerns have been raised by members of the public and as representatives they should have some input into the speed limit on a national route instead of TII making the decision. He asked if there was any process that members can have an input into this decision. Ms. Kilkenny advised that she had spoken with Mr. Lavery, Director of Services, about the possibility of reducing the speed limit to 80 kph and she would raise this issue again with him. Cllr. Glennon stated that he joined with his colleagues on the idea of a graduated speed limit from 60 kph to 80 kph on this stretch of the N81 and asked if bus stops can be extended to south of the cross. Ms. Kilkenny advised

that the success of the bus stops funding application would depend on the reduction of the speed limit. Cllr. Cronin stated that she had raised the issue of bus stops at Hollywood cross with TII and was advised that a decrease in the speed limit would affect this. Cllr, O'Neill asked if there was any update on the supply of bus stops and Mr. Hickey advised that there had been a number of issues with supply and were awaiting parts for the installation of the bus stop in Baltinglass.

6. To discuss and consider Estate Development Funding Applications 2021.

Mr. Hickey advised members that a report on the proposed allocations for each estate had been distributed to members. He advised that no application had been received from Dunlavin this year and suggested that €300 be held back from the budget in order to assist Dunlavin Tidy Towns group to carry out work in the estates. Cllr. Mullen noted that Derry Drive in Tinahely had not put in an application and noted that when Tidy Towns groups are applying on behalf of an estate that it should be made clear on the application. Cllr. Cronin advised that no application had been received from Dunlavin as there had been changes to the residents association but that the contribution of €300 to Dunlavin Tidy Towns would be most welcome. Cllr. Timmins asked that all estates applying should be considered as sometimes houses are purchased by the council that the Municipal District may be unaware of. Mr. Hickey advised that all applications received had been considered and all had received an allocation. All members were in agreement of the proposed allocations and Cllr. Blake proposed and Cllr. Cronin seconded the allocation of funding.

7. To pass a resolution for the holding of the April Ordinary Meeting of Baltinglass Municipal District on an online platform at the discretion of the Cathaoirleach at 10.30am on Monday 26th April 2021 as set out in the Municipal District of Baltinglass, Standing Orders, regulating the business and proceedings of the Municipal District and the Supplementary Standing Orders to regulate the proceedings of remote meeting, Baltinglass Municipal District.

This resolution was passed and proposed by Cllr. Mullen and seconded by Cllr. Cronin.

8. Any other business.

Following a discussion on the opening of Knockroe bends Ms. Kilkenny suggested that the opening of the footpath at Hollywood and the new section of road at Knockroe be unveiled in early June when restrictions have lifted slightly. Mr Byrne pointed out that some surfacing works at both ends is required before the opening and Mr. Hickey proposed that he liaise with all involved and set a date in May for all members to attend. Cllr. O'Neill noted that it was the wish of all the councillors that the Cathaoirleach unveiled these works whilst he is still Chair and that the MD should not wait for TII. Mr. Hickey outlined that the official openings would have to be conducted in line with Wicklow Council's protocol guidelines.

Cllr. Cronin queried if there was any update on the location of a site for Blessington Allotment campaign. Ms. Kilkenny advised that she had been corresponding with the group and residents from Carrig Glen had been approached.

Cllr. Blake asked Mr Graham if an application can be submitted for Clár funding this year as it is of huge benefit to the area and if there has been any change to the area. Cllr. Mullen asked about allocating litter pickers to area offices for collection raised a number of queries that he had received in relation to rubbish collection. Mr. Hickey advised that there is currently no extension to the CLÁR programme areas in County Wicklow and the Municipal District will work with the CCSD section and the community groups in Knockananna on an application. Mr. Hickey proposed that the relevant staff member from the Environment section contact Cllr. Mullen and Mr. Davidson, this was agreed to by Cllr. Mullen. Mr. Hickey advised that he was willing to collect litter pickers from County Buildings and leave them in the office in Blessington and Tinahely so groups did not have to travel to collect them. He added that there has been a delay in getting litter pickers from the suppliers but some litter pickers and green bags have been distributed to Pure Mile groups and estate groups. Mr. Hickey noted that he agreed with Cllr. Mullen regarding the increase in the amount of rubbish and paid tribute to the work of the outdoor staff, tidy towns groups and Pure Mile groups in cleaning up areas.

The Cathaoirleach queried when the lights at Hollywood footpaths will be connected and Mr. Byrne advised that the fence is to be reinstated next week and Airtricity have been paid for the connection.

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

Signed: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed: _____

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR