



Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray on Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

- Cathaoirleach Councillor Melanie Corrigan**
- Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Rory O'Connor**
- Councillor Joe Behan**
- Councillor Dermot O'Brien**
- Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy**
- Councillor Mick Ryan**

Also in Attendance:

- Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, District Manager**
- Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator**
- Mr. Stephen Fox, Executive Engineer**
- Ms. Rachel Griffin, Minute Taker**

Apologies:

- Councillor Anne Ferris**
- Councillor Erika Doyle**
- Mr. Brian Wildes, Administrative Officer Housing**
- Mr. Liam Bourke, District Engineer**

Item 1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray dated the 5th March 2024.

Councillor Rory O'Connor proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray held on the 5th March 2024. Councillor Mick Ryan seconded the proposal and they were unanimously agreed by the Members.

Item 2. To consider the Chief Executive's report (as circulated) in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in respect of the proposed Sugarloaf Repair Project at the Great Sugarloaf, Red lane, Kilmacanogue Co. Wicklow (Roundwood Reservoir Recreation Project).

The elected members received a presentation from Ms. Caroline Fox, A/SEO CCSD and Ms. Carol Coad, Rural Recreation Officer regarding the update of the public consultation for this project. Members were informed that twenty submissions were received of which seventeen were for the proposed project and three were neither for nor against. Copies of the presentation were circulated to members.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members thanked Ms. Coad and Ms. Fox for the presentation and commended their work on the project to date.
- The elected members noted that it is great to see such effort put into getting the public involved and acknowledging their views and opinions for this project.
- The scale, scope and detail of the project were welcomed.
- Members queried the duration of the works and noted the importance of protecting the valuable amenity which is the Sugarloaf.
- Queries were raised in relation to the tender process and how long this project will take once this step is completed.
- Members expressed their concerns that there was no proposal for a public toilet to be installed and noted the importance of having such a facility at a popular attraction like the Sugarloaf.
- Will the works stop people from accessing the car park or the walk itself, and if so how long will this be for?
- Will there be any public lighting installed?
- The elected members noted that it is important to acknowledge the culture of the sugarloaf and to keep it as natural as possible.
- Some members noted that a public consultation should come first if the public toilets were to proceed. It was noted that only one submission requested for a toilet to be installed.

Ms. Fox and Ms. Coad advised the members that the sugarloaf walk will not be closed during any of these works. The car park will be closed for approximately six weeks while works are being carried out.

In relation to the issue with public toilets, members were informed that 'Dry Toilets' are currently being trialled out at the Vartry Walk in Roundwood, however they do require maintenance which raises a number of issues. This proposal is under consideration and the members comments were taken on board. The advantage of a dry toilet is that it does not require mains water or electricity.

Ms. Coad outlined that there will be no extra public lighting and it will be local stone that will be used during the project. The tender will be done for three phases 1 the car park, 2 water redirection phase and 3 development and repair works on the sugarloaf trail. Cllr. Behan requested that it be noted that the provision of public toilets either traditional or dry toilets be considered for the area in line with environmental concerns. Ms. Coad advised that this could be examined following the trial in Roundwood and the lessons learnt there. Members noted that dry toilets are used in Fern Hill and are very functional. There was a discussion on the screening of any built structures, to minimise the impact on the landscape.

Councillor O'Brien proposed the adoption of the Chief Executive report and the Sugarloaf Repair Project as outlined in the report, this was seconded by Councillor Ryan. Members then proceeded to vote on the resolution.

| | FOR | AGAINST | APOLOGIES |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|-----------|
| Councillor Joe Behan | X | | |
| Councillor Melanie Corrigan | X | | |
| Councillor Erika Doyle | | | X |
| Councillor Anne Ferris | | | X |
| Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy | X | | |
| Councillor Dermot O'Brien | X | | |
| Councillor Rory O'Connor | X | | |
| Councillor Mick Ryan | X | | |
| <i>Total Votes</i> | 6 | 0 | 2 |

The resolution passed with six members voting in favour and two members absent.

Item 3. To receive a presentation on the Mermaid Theatre from Julie Kelleher, Artistic Director / CEO Mermaid Theatre.

The elected members received a presentation from Julie Kelleher explaining the services the Mermaid Theatre provides from comedy shows to creative writing workshops. Ms Kelleher noted that it has been 21 years of bringing arts and culture to County Wicklow and creating a town full of creativity. She informed the members that there are over 35,000 people attending annually. Over half of the tickets for shows are bought by the people of Bray which shows a great sense of community in the town. Ms Kelleher informed the members that they have a dedicated and skilled team of staff.

Ms Kelleher highlighted the challenges that the Mermaid Theatre face such as lack of space, there are only three rooms in the theatre which creates its own issues. Finances and balancing the books remains a constant issue, as the Mermaid has to balance its commercial and community obligations. Approximately 46 percent of the income comes from public support grants; in 2023 the income was approximately €1.4 million. Income has grown by 22 percent since 2021, however as result of the pandemic and rising costs the Mermaid is currently operating a deficit.

Ms Kelleher outlined the importance of having a cultural centre hub in the town and county. The outreach work which the Mermaid is involved in was outlined and it was noted that the programme of activity needs to be put in place twelve months in advance. Ms. Kelleher and the staff try to create a balance between commercial and community artistic shows. Promotion of events is done online and through local media outlets.

Ms. Kelleher noted the challenges facing the Mermaid both in the short and medium term including space for artists, accessible toilet facilities, difficulty in retaining staff due to cost of living, developing safe space for artistic and community participation. A new café is Il Fico is now operating in the Mermaid and offers patrons and visitors something to enjoy and experience. Capital costs and the need for continuing investment will continue to be challenges.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Corrigan on behalf of the members congratulated Ms. Kelleher and all the staff in the Mermaid on their recent IMRO award.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members thanked Julie for the presentation and complimented all the hard work herself and the team do.
- It was noted that arts is a critical part of our society and it doesn't always get the recognition it deserves.
- It was noted that not all people understand the work that goes on behind closed doors and it is great to hear about it.
- Members complimented the outreach work being done by the Mermaid especially with St. Catherines and Marino school.
- Accessibility of toilets especially for people with carers of different gender is an issue.
- Members noted that the Mermaid has to earn approximately half of its income from commercial activity.
- Members noted that the third floor of the Civic Offices was vacant and while it would be desirable to see it full of Bray Municipal District staff this was not possible due to resourcing and the Mermaid should consider renting the space for office staff.
- Members noted the importance of fighting for the arts and having the county theatre in Bray which makes the arts accessible to the community,

Ms. Kelleher thanked the members for their comments and noted that balancing between community demand, artistic demand and the commercial element was going to be a constant balancing exercise. The financial balance is healthy but the capital development puts it under enormous pressure. Improvements to the toilets and making them more accessible is included in the capital programme.

Item 4. To receive an update on the Ballywaltrim Recreational Area community consultation.

A copy of the report was sent to members in advance of the meeting. District Administrator informed members that non-statutory public engagement session on the development of a masterplan for the Ballywaltrim Recreational area took place on the 13th March 2024 in the Ballywaltrim Community Centre. Mr. Hickey thanked the members for their input and supporting the non-statutory community engagement. There was a high level of engagement and enthusiasm from the stakeholders and members of the community. It was especially pleasing to see the number of young people from the locality that attended. 253 people provided their contact details, however we estimate that around four hundred people attended the afternoon and evening. Not all persons who arrived signed in due to the crowds and people queued for up to thirty minutes to attend and gain access to the room with the proposals on display.

The following submission in support of development of the Ballywaltrim Recreational area were received by the office

- 1,328 Signed by Ardmore Rover's supporters were handed in by individuals.
- 16 from match officials in support of the development.
- 11 from Ballywaltrim United supporters.
- 3 Individual scripted submissions in support of proposals.

During the course of the public engagement 107 people completed a survey and the results were overwhelmingly in favour of the different aspects of the proposed development of the Ballywaltrim Recreational Area. The area which received most negative reaction was the proposal to develop a dog park with 23 percent against and 77 percent in favour. There was also surprisingly some resistance to adult exercise equipment provision. The consultation showed an overwhelming support for the upgrading of the facilities and provision of an all-weather playing surface, a running track, upgraded sand based pitches, cycle connection for swimming pool to the schools road, MUGA surface, Pump action Cycle track. There is also a huge interest in the Council pursuing additional walkways and amenity off road walks linking up areas both around the town and into the country side. Copies of the survey results were circulated to members.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members acknowledged the work and commended the staff for the effort that was put into this consultation.
- It was noted that the turnout was amazing and it was great to see such an interest from various individuals and groups.
- It was noted that it is important for people to be aware that the next stage is developing a vision and each step still has to go through a Part VIII process.
- The largest degree of opposition was 23% for the provision of a dedicated dog run, however it was noted that this is still a considerably low percentage of opposition.
- The elected members acknowledged the concerns of some residents and noted that this is just the first step of this plan.
- Non statutory public consultations are extremely important and people appreciate the value in ongoing engagement throughout the process.
- Concerns from neighbouring estates need to be considered
- The use of the pitches by people with a disability needs to be taken into account. A number of wheelchair sports games have had to be cancelled due to dog fouling on the pitch.
- Members noted that discussions on the management of the facility and allocation of space to different clubs needs to be considered. While there is one large club there are a number of smaller clubs and their needs have to be considered as well.
- Members enquired if there a possibility of one or more members going on to the Balywaltrim Users Committee.
- Members noted that if the area was to be renamed Tucker Dowling would have to be considered given his relationship and history with the area. Members noted that this would be considered following completion of the works to the recreational area.
- Members requested that when the draft master plan is done, could it be circulated to the members in advance of the May Meeting.

District Manager, Lorraine Gallagher, thanked the elected members and the staff for spreading the word about this consultation and the effort that went into organising it. It was great to see such a huge turn out and noted that this plan is going in the right direction. District Administrator informed members that it was the aim to have the draft masterplan for member's consideration at the meeting on the 14th May. This draft masterplan would outline the proposed works and development of the recreational area. Mr. Hickey also advised members that he noted their concerns usage of the facility and this would have to be done with mutual respect to all users and sport leases would have to be put in place.

Item 5. To receive an update on the development of the Historic Courthouse/Heritage Building.

District Administrator Mr. Hickey gave members an update on the proposed development of the Courthouse/ Heritage building. Mr. Hickey advised members that an architect Ms. Kennedy B.Arch of CUBETECTURE DESIGN Ltd. has been contracted to produce a preliminary report for the proposed refurbishment of the Heritage centre at Bray Main Street as part of Wicklow County Council's application for funding under the Thrive initiative.

Ms. Kennedy has extensive experience working for local authorities and was a former Senior Architect with Dunlaoighaire Rathdown County Council with extensive experience in these types of heritage projects.

A structural engineer is being employed to examine the structure of the building and make recommendation on works that are required to ensure that the buildings structure meets required standards and identify any defects.

The Thrive funding application is being prepared by Town Regeneration officer Ms. Deirdre Whitfield in partnership with the Heritage Officer. THRIVE promotes a citizen-centred community-led approach to planning and design under the Town Centre First framework and will fund projects that embrace the core values of the New European Bauhaus – sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion. Heritage buildings under the scheme are classified as structures that form part of the architectural heritage and have unique architectural, historical, archaeological or artistic qualities, or its links to the cultural and economic history of a place. To qualify for a THRIVE grant to renovate a heritage building, the building must be in public ownership and have been identified through locally developed plans and public consultation to establish most viable reuse for the building renewed.

The submission made through the consultation hub for the development of the Heritage building were wide and varied but can be classified as follows:

- Exhibition space/studio and cultural centre
- Bridge Centre
- Museum and Heritage Centre
- Tourist Office
- Film Museum
- Sports/Arts
- Culture Museum
- Creative Space for Arts and Music

- Remote Working Hub
- Community space for meeting rooms and office space for development groups
- Homeless shelter

Mr. Hickey proposed that Ms. Kennedy would be invited to the May meeting of Bray M.D. to give a presentation on the THRIVE application.

A fire safety consultant has also been asked to inspect the existing building with the architect. Review of architectural proposals vis a vis Part B fire safety and prepare a fire safety audit report on architectural proposal for new use of building.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members thanked everyone involved and noted that it is great to see updates on the development of this building.
- Great to hear about the proposed accessible public toilets as these are essential for the town.
- Members commended the Tidy Towns for the upkeep of the outside of the building.
- Could the path outside the corner of the building be attended to as it is an issue in terms of accessibility?
- It was noted that there are a lot of artefacts in this building, could these be maintained and protected?
- Is there a threshold of viability for the Thrive Grant?
- Members noted the importance of the sustainability of the building for the future, Heritage buildings can be costly to maintain and run.
- Members agreed to that the presentation on the THRIVE application for the building should be on the agenda for the May meeting.

District Manager, Lorraine Gallagher, advised the members that there is a €2m - €7m grant available so it is a huge opportunity. The deadline for this application is the 3rd May 2024 so it will be submitted before the May meeting but the presentation at the May meeting will offer an opportunity to update members on progress to date. Due to the size and historic nature of the building potential uses are limited and in the application we are going to be as comprehensive in what is feasible and practical.

Item 6. To receive an update on the development of the Bray Town Team

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Corrigan noted that the members had met together and the questions raised by members had been sent on to the District Manager. The Cathaoirleach noted that give the limited life span of the current Bray Municipal District Council any decision on the development of a Bray Town Centre Team should be decided by the new council. This was seconded by Cllr. O'Brien. This was unanimously agreed by the members. Members agreed that the development of a Bray Town Team should be on the agenda for the September meeting of Bray Municipal District.

Item 7. To consider District Engineer's report on Roads, Transport, Public Realm projects within the Bray Municipal District.

Apologies were received from Mr Liam Bourke, District Engineer. Executive Engineer, Stephen Fox took observations and queries from the members.

The Elected Members made the following comments and observations:

- Can the yellow boxes at Dargle Bridge be repainted as they are extremely difficult to read?
- Concerns were raised regards the muck and dirt on the Southern Cross due to the construction vehicles entering and exiting the site. Does the council have any oversight on public roads when private contractors are appointed to them? Are there are any penalties the Municipal District can enforce on a contractor.
- Issues were raised regarding the Bray Dart being closed on the weekends to carry out works. Can this be done at night?
- It was proposed to invite Mr. Barry Kenny to a meeting of Bray Municipal District.
- Members passed on their thanks to one particular council worker on the Southern Cross Road who is making a huge difference to the green areas along this road.
- Members thanked executive engineer, Mr. Fox for the installation of the signage at Kilmacanogue Marsh.
- Are there any updates on the signage for hidden disability parking bays?
- Members noted their concerns and frustration regarding the dangerous junction at Ballywaltrim Lane. It is has been reported many times over the past few years.
- Concerns were raised regarding the flow of traffic all around the District. It was noted that roads are managed by Bray, Wicklow County Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and suggestion was put forward to invite all parties together to discuss issues.
- Is there any update on the Quill Road, the residents cannot continue in these circumstances.
- Concerns were raised regarding the standard of grass cutting in the estates especially Deerpark and Mountain View. They are left in bad conditions and are not cut to a high standard.
- Members enquired if additional bollards are going to be installed at the sea front to stop people parking on the plaza and creating obstructions for other users.
- Can a name plate be installed at Jameson Heights estate?
- Can a bottle bank be installed at the Main Street?
- Concerns were raised regarding breakfast boards being placed in parking spaces outside the Strand Hotel. Can these be removed? They are impacting on existing parking spaces.

Executive Engineer, Mr. Fox advised the members that the grass cutting contractors have been informed of the issues. Due to the high level of rainfall the green areas are wetter than usual and machinery is marking the green areas. The contractors have advised that machinery will be changed in order to deliver better cuts.

District Administrator, Mr. Hickey advised the members that letters have been sent to Irish Rail in relation to the closures and it was agreed by the members to invite representatives from Irish Rail to a council meeting. Mr. Hickey to inform member of response to letters at the next meeting.

Executive Engineer, Stephen Fox advised members that he will refer the rest of the comments onto District Engineer, Mr. Bourke.

Item 8. To consider the Housing Report

The housing report was circulated to members in advance of the meeting and was taken as read.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- The elected members raised concern in relation to the cold weather beds in San Remo. It was noted that it was proving very difficult to gain access to these beds. The elected members requested clarity as to who was the correct contact person for this matter.
- Members asked that the procedure for referring homeless persons to emergency accommodation out of hours be circulated to all members. Members noted that in some instances when contacting the emergency Dublin number they refused to deal with the issue as it was in County Wicklow.
- Members noted concerns that there was still no progress on Rehills land.
- Members acknowledged the housing team for taking the lead in regards to the rough sleeper Count in Bray. There is a need to have accurate data and be informed by correct data.

Item 9. Notice of Motions:

1. Notice of motion in the name of Cllr Rory O'Connor (29/02/2024)

"That this council ensures that all publicly placed road signage for amenities/businesses within the district are in both Irish and English".

Currently all new business/amenities signage placed by Bray Municipal District is only in English. In keeping with the Official Language Act 2003. This council commits to rectifying all its signage to ensure it has both Irish and English translation within a 5 year period. This council will also attach a condition to all new road signage applications by businesses/amenities. That the translation must be in both languages. The same will follow with businesses/amenities renewing their road signage license.

This act ensures an equal status is given to both the Irish & English languages

This notice of motion was seconded by Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

Response:

The aim of the Official Languages Act 2003 is to increase and improve in an organised manner over a period of time the quantity and quality of services provided for the public through Irish by public bodies. Bray Municipal District conforms to the Official Language Act in respect of signage. The District Engineer procures all new signage conforming to the Traffic Signs Manual and in accordance with statutory requirements to use both Irish and English. There is no onus on private businesses to conform with the Act.

Item 10. Correspondence

An email was received by Bray Tidy Towns to request that all candidates help make Bray as poster-free as possible by limiting the amount of election posters. It was agreed by the members that they would reply individually to Tidy Towns on this matter.

Item 11. Any Other Business

Cathaoirleach, Melanie Corrigan invited the elected member's to the following events:

- Turning of the Sod – Dart Interchange on the 18th of April at 2:30pm.
- Reception for Loreto students from Wurzburg and Bray in the Town Hall Wednesday the 10th of April at 10:30am.
- Reception for St Killian's students from Wurzburg and Bray in the Town Hall on Thursday the 17th of April at 10:30am.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Corrigan gave an update to the members on their official trip to Dublin California for St. Patrick's Day the itinerary included the following activities they attended: Camp Park, History Centre, Dublin Senior Centre, and St. Patricks Day Parade. The Cathaoirleach thanked the members and officials of Dublin California for their hospitality and showed members what was presented to the delegation by the members of Dublin, California. The piece is to go on display in the Civic offices.

District Manager, Ms. Gallagher informed members that a planning application had been received by the planning authority, Wicklow County Council for the development of padel tennis courts at the Carlisle grounds. The planning application can be viewed by members on the online portal. Reference number of planning application to be sent to members for their information.

The Cathaoirleach noted that the May meeting of Bray Municipal District on the 14th May will be the last meeting of the present council.

This concluded the meeting.

Signed:



**Cllr. Melanie Corrigan
CATHAOIRLEACH**

Signed:

**Garvan Hickey
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR**

Dated: