



Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30 p.m.

**Present:**

- Cathaoirleach Councillor Dermot O'Brien**
- Councillor Joe Behan**
- Councillor Melanie Corrigan**
- Councillor Malachai Duddy**
- Councillor Ian Neary**
- Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy**
- Councillor Caroline Winstanley**

**Apologies:** **Councillor Erika Doyle**

**Also in Attendance:**

- Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, District Manager.**
- Mr. Garvan Hickey, District Administrator.**
- Mr. Brian Wildes, Administrative Officer, Housing,**
- Mr. Liam Bourke, District Engineer.**

Votes of sympathies were passed for Ger Minogue, Margaret Kane and James Connor. Members paid condolences to their family, friends and loved ones.

The elected members held a minute of silence to pay their tributes.

**Item 1. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.**

Councillor Caroline Winstanley proposed the confirmation of the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy seconded the proposal and they were unanimously agreed by the members.

**Item 2. To receive an update on proposed Part 8 for the social housing development on the lands at Rockbrae House, Bray, Co. Wicklow, from Michael Stack, Executive Architect and Emma Hickey, Executive Architect.**

The Elected Members received a presentation from Executive Architect, Michael Stack on the current proposals for Rockbrae House. Mr. Stack advised the members that due to the number of units involved the full Part 8 would go to the full plenary Council for consideration this is being voted on by the full council in Wicklow Municipal District, however they wanted to give an insight to Bray Municipal District on what was being proposed as the site is of major importance to Bray Municipal District.

Mr Stack advised the members that there are 53 units proposed and the buildings are arranged in three blocks with a mix of 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bed social housing units. The area is designated as high density residential.

It was noted that there is proposals for 33 car parking spaces and there is a good public open space. There is currently anti-social behaviour occurring at this vacant building and the proposals of the new build is hoped to stop this.

The intent is to keep with the natural design of the current buildings as much as possible. A new entrance will be developed into site and it was noted that Rockbrae house would be replaced by a five storey apartment complex.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members thanked Mr. Stack for the informative presentation
- Members noted that as we only own a portion of the site, are we aware of any plans for the rest of the site as there is anti-social behaviour happening here too?
- Members enquired if there was any way of interacting or communicating with the owner of the rest of the lands at Rockbrae, could the County Council purchase the remainder of the site. Members asked if the proposed development will
- When allocations are being considered, can we link in with our own housing list and try to provide units for people with additional needs?
- Is there any lifts in the proposed apartment complex?
- Who will the apartment be managed by once completed?
- Is there any cost rental properties for those who can't apply for social housing?
- Members queried if there would be any age friendly units?
- Members noted the that Rockbrae House and coach house has emotional and heritage value to the people of Bray. What will happen with the materials of the current house?
- Will there be a good view of the church from the site?
- Members expressed disappointment that the full Part 8 will not come before the Municipal District for consideration and queried how the number of 53 units was reached?
- Has Wicklow County Council engaged with the property owners of the other site or put a CPO on the site to secure it for affordable purchase?
- Members noted the need for affordable purchase in Bray and the land bank in Bray is very limited.
- There is already difficult getting in and out of Charnwood estate, can this be looked at when works start?

- Members expressed concern in respect of the height of the apartment complex and its impact on adjoining estates.
- Members asked if the design of the units and the apartment complex could be visually appealing.

Mr. Stack advised members that the current proposals are for social housing units only but members comments and observations on the need for affordable purchase units will taken back to management.

Ms. Hickey advised the members that Rockbrae House had been damaged by fires and flooding over the years and it would not be possible to keep it. Adapting the existing house was examined but was not feasible. Ms. Stack also informed members that a structural survey of the coach house was conducted and noted defects in the structure, however it is hoped to remedy these and use it as a bin and bike shelter area. Ten percent of the car parking spaces will accommodate for electric vehicles.

It was noted that the site will be managed by Wicklow County Council. Mr. Stack informed the members that the apartment complex will have one stairs and one lift. Ms. Hickey noted that the design will be in accordance with universal design standards. In relation to the query regarding people with additional needs, Mr. Stack advised that this can be looked into and he will revert back to the members.

Mr Stack noted that the rest of the adjoining land is privately owned and engagement was made with the owners with a view to purchase it but unfortunately it was not feasible. Members will have to engage with the Director of Services directly regarding the CPO query.

Members were advised that they are doing their best to try and salvage the materials from the building and will do their best to keep the design. Materials salvaged will be used on site.

There is a view of the church from the pedestrian walkway into the site, however Mr Stack advised that these were just proposals and full decisions still need to be made.

Mr Stack advised members that the buildings are kept to as low height as possible and should not have a huge impact on adjoining areas and apartment complex will be set back in the site. Ms Hickey noted that the design proposal is in line with other developments in the area and the development will open the permeability of the site.

Members were advised that the number of units to be developed on site was done in accordance with Department guidelines and the designation of the area as high density residential. It was noted that the issue raised in connection with the entrance to the estate will be discussed with the roads department.

### **Item 3. To receive an update on Discretionary Projects 2025.**

Cathaoirleach, Dermot O'Brien informed member that it is hoped to consider and adopt the discretionary projects for 2025 at the February meeting of Bray Municipal District. The Cathaoirleach advised that the rationale for the different projects should be outlined by the proposer. It was proposed that the members should meet separately to discuss their proposals and figure out which ones would benefit the Municipal District the most. It was agreed that members would send their proposals to the Cathaoirleach.

It was noted that the memorial bench for bagatelle was still on the list of Discretionary Projects from last year and a timeline was sought on the project. Members were advised that the bench should be installed in the next few months.

### **Item 4. To consider the Housing Report.**

Mr Wildes advised the members that there are now 28 vacant units in the district all with plans to allocate, renovate or awaiting legal advice.

Mr Wildes advised the members that there will be a rent review this year as there has been none since 2019. The government auditor has requested the review and to amalgamate the two rent schemes to one. This is at an early stage of review and members will be kept informed as progress is made.

Mr Wildes advised the members that during the cold there was intensive engagement with Garda stations from the homeless team and all rough sleepers were offered accommodation or a safe space. He advised members that a rough sleeper count is planned for April and November.

Mr Wildes informed members that an out of hours service for homeless referrals is being considered and members will be kept informed as progress is made.

It was noted that there was a house fire in Fassaroe and the housing team are engaging with the client and insurers. Mr Wildes thanked Cllr. Neary for alerting them to the fire.

#### The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Can there be something provided to the MountView houses to separate the public footpath from their front door such as a gate?
- Members queried if the out of hours service for the Bray Municipal District be reviewed as reports were made over the Christmas break and urgent requests were not reported straight away leaving the public stuck over Christmas period. Members queried if what was an emergency was defined.
- Members complimented the housing team for the engagement with the rough sleepers during the cold snap and noted the difference it made.
- Members complimented Councillor Ian Neary and Brian Wildes for the quick reaction to the house fire in Fassaroe.

Mr Wildes advised the members that he will endeavour to get a solution for the Mountview houses should funding become available.

District Manager, Lorraine Gallagher advised the members there is a review taking place with the out of hours service and the issues mentioned will be brought up with the providers.

**Item 5. To consider District Engineer's report on Roads, Transport, Public Realm projects within the Bray Municipal District.**

The District Engineers reports was circulated in advance of the meeting and was taken as read.

The Elected Members made the following comments:

- Members commended the outdoor staff for the work that was put in over many hours over the Christmas to deal with a various issues.
- Can grit boxes be installed in more housing estates to help the residents get in and out during cold snaps such as Richmond Hill and Seapoint Court? It was noted that the snow and frost can linger longer in certain areas in estates.
- Members noted the concerns regarding the public lighting issues around the District.
- Is there any update on the brief regarding the landslide at Herbert Road?
- Members queried if areas could be prioritised for public lighting repairs especially areas where there are number of lights out such as Wolfe Tone Square.

District Engineer, Liam Bourke advised members that if residents associations purchase their own grit boxes they are usually stocked before the cold snaps. It is up to the residents association to ensure that they are locked and secured.

Mr Bourke advised members that the documents are ready to be issued for tender for the landslide at Herbert Road.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Dermot O'Brien proposed the establishment of a new committee which will address the traffic and transport issues in Bray. This decision was made following consistent engagement from the communities in Bray, the presentation by the Alliance of Bray Residents Associations and engagement with officials in the roads section. Members agreed with the establishment of the subcommittee.

The terms of reference will be drafted with consultation from the elected members and will be presented for approval by a meeting of Bray Municipal District.

**Item 6. In accordance with Section 44 of Municipal District of Bray Standing Orders to decide to receive a deputation from representatives of the Bray Community Addiction Team (BCAT) at a meeting of Bray Municipal District.**

The Elected Members agreed to receive a deputation from representatives of the Bray Community Addiction Team (BCAT) at a meeting of Bray Municipal District.

Members noted that it would be helpful to request groups looking to give a presentation what their specific ask is to get a better understanding before the deputation presents. This would allow for more informed engagement.

**Item 7. Notice of Motions:**

**1. Notice of motion in the name of Cllr Joe Behan (12/12/2024)**

That this Council re-instates the public road surface on Loretto Avenue up to its boundary with Kingsmill Lane when the current drainage works are completed

Following the completion of the drainage works on Loretto Avenue the road surface was reinstated up to the boundary with Kingsmill Lane

**2. Notice of motion in the name of Cllr Joe Behan (12/12/2024)**

That this Council undertakes a clean-up of the Cove and surrounding area and formulates a vision for its future as a community and visitor asset.

At present there is no budget or proposals for the development of Naylors Cove. Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure funding and BlueWay funding will be examined to secure funding for an assessment of the cove and the development of a vision for the area. Due to the location and poor access, any commercial or recreational development is likely to be unviable. It may be best to facilitate the restoration of the natural environment of the cove to an area of natural beauty and which benefits wildlife.

Members requested a copy of these replies for their records.

**Item 8. Correspondence.**

District Administrator, Garvan Hickey advised members that Bray Library in collaboration with the Active Travel Team's 'Bray DART Interchange Project', is hosting a special community event showcasing an evening of local history, focusing on the old Arcadia Ballroom.

The event will feature Heritage Officer Deirdre Burns, who will discuss the Wicklow Online Community Heritage Archive and how to get involved, Local Historian Robert

Butler, who will deliver a short presentation on the ballroom and opportunities for attendees to share related memories and memorabilia with the team.

The event is taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January from 6pm-8pm in Bray Library.

#### **Item 9 Any Other Business.**

Cathaoirleach Cllr Dermot O'Brien advised the members that he will be in contact with them to arrange a meeting with the Town Regeneration Officer to discuss the terms of reference for the Town Team.

The Cathaoirleach also advised that there will be trip taking place to Bray's twinned city Dublin California in March and neither himself or Cllr Erika Doyle can make it so he will be looking for an elected member to go to represent Bray. He will discuss with members and come to an agreement between the members for a designated Bray Municipal District representative.

Councillor Behan raised an issue regarding the school wardens not getting paid for days that the school is off, he understands for the long breaks or days on which schools are scheduled to be closed but for one unexpected or unscheduled day when the school is closed can they not be paid? Can the District Manager look into this?

As this was the District Engineer's, Liam Bourke's last meeting, the District Manager Lorraine Gallagher expressed her sincere thanks to Liam for his long and distinguished career in the council. Ms. Gallagher noted that Liam worked in many county councils and had huge experience and dedication to public service. She complimented his excellent problem solving and technical thinking throughout his role. Ms. Gallagher said it is a huge responsibility to look over a district with many staff and he handled the role with great commitment. She noted that Mr Bourke always tried his very best for the district and tried to help in any way possible.

Ms Gallagher finished by wishing Mr Bourke well in his next chapter and to enjoy his retirement after many years of working hard.

The Elected Members paid tribute to Liam for his dedication throughout the many years in his role. They admired his ability to stay calm and focused no matter what was thrown his way. They thanked him for all the help with all the projects and work that has gone into the District and noted that it wouldn't have been possible without his dedication. They noted all the behind the scenes work that many people do not get to see. They admired his patience and complimented him for always listening carefully to each member. They wished Liam the best in his future and wished him a happy retirement.

Mr. Bourke thanked the members for their compliments and kind words and wished everyone in the district well.

Signed:

  
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Cllr. Dermot O'Brien  
CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Garvan Hickey  
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:

*11<sup>th</sup> February 2025*