

**Minutes of the Ballinamore Municipal District Meeting held in The Island Theatre,
Convent Road, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim on Monday, 24 July 2023 at 10.30 am**

Members Present: Councillor Paddy O'Rourke (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Enda McGloin
Councillor Caillian Ellis
Councillor Brendan Barry
Councillor Gerry Dolan

Apologies: Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn

Officials Present: Laura Sharkey, Meetings Administrator, Ballinamore MD
Pamela Moran, Clerical Officer, Finance Department
Finian Joyce, Chief Fire Officer
Alison McKeon, Assistant Engineer, Roads Department South

Deimhniu Miontuairisci

Cathaoirleach Paddy O'Rourke welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting.

BMD.92.23 Adoption of Minutes – Ballinamore MD AGM – Monday 26th June
24.07.23 2023

**Proposed by Councillor Brendan Barry, Seconded by Councillor Gerry Dolan and
UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:**

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of Ballinamore Municipal District Annual General Meeting held on Monday 26th June 2023 be adopted”

BMD.93.23 Adoption of Minutes - Ballinamore MD - Ordinary Meeting - Monday
24.07.23 26th June 2023

**Proposed by Councillor Enda McGloin, Seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and
UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:**

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of Ballinamore Municipal District held on Monday 26th June 2023 be adopted”

BMD.94.23 **To approve Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) - LIS Applications where**
24.07.23 **cost will exceed €65,000**

A copy of this report was circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting (**Appendix 1 to these Minutes in the Minutes Book**).

Ms. Alison McKeon, Assistant Engineer informed the members that their approval is required where Local Improvement Schemes are in excess of €65,000.

She said that the proposed 5 Local Improvement Schemes are on the new waiting list and have been inspected and assessed for compliance with the terms & conditions of the scheme.

Schemes are as follows:

- Drumcoora, Drumshanbo (€74,910)
- Liscuffea, Ballinamore (€99,880)
- Annaughbrennan, Cloone (€106,123)
- Drumcattanon, Foxfield (€967,419)
- Greaghnafarna, Dowra (€68,688)

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the acceptance of these schemes. He said that the reason for the high costs were because of the new points based system. The more occupiers on the laneway the more points it would receive.

Cathaoirleach Paddy O'Rourke commented that it was so long since many of these lanes were previously done that some were in excess of 25 years so the extent of the repair and drainage works required would be substantial.

Proposed by Councillor Caillian Ellis, Seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“To approve Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) – LIS Applications where cost will exceed €65,000.”

BMD.95.23 **Meeting Correspondence**
24.07.23

Correspondence received from office of Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. regarding proposal for extension of timeline for the Agri-Climate Rural Environmental Scheme (ACRES).

Councillor Brendan Barry noted the reply and said that the Minister was not showing any commitment to make any changes. He said that it was his understanding that just 15% of

the scoring has been completed with advisors needing to complete the scoring by 31st August and if the scoring has not been completed on time, these farmers will not get paid in November.

Councillor Gerry Dolan said that he also raised this issue. He informed the meeting that he understood that the smartphone app being used by the advisors to score the land parcels was giving trouble in areas of poor coverage and commented that the deadline will have to be extended.

Councillor Barry said that the app active until the 9th June, which meant 9 days scoring was lost. He noted that co-operation teams for commonages have been given extra time to September to score lands and will have two years to submit scorecards, while farmers with their own hired Farm Advisors also in ACRES Co-Operation will be required to meet the August deadline with no additional time allowed which he described as "double standards.

Cathaoirleach Paddy O'Rourke said that he understood that the North-West Region have far more parcels of land than most other areas in the country. A typical 40 acre farm in this region could have up to 30 separate parcels of land and that these are unique circumstances because of the nature of the farm holdings.

He said that he had spent about three and a half hours with a planner on the previous Friday only doing part of his farm and had already completed several days before and the assessment is still not complete. Also, many farmers are losing out on the late meadow bonus as now advisors must submit the information required to apply for this payment whereas previously farmers could submit it themselves.

Councillor Enda McGloin suggested that a letter should be sent to the Minister outlining the points raised by the Members and seek to have the deadline extended and that we should try to put the pressure back on the Department.

Councillor Brendan Barry said that he believed that the Minister needs to move to an average payment to get them properly scored, to allow whatever can be done this year and for the remainder to be scored next year. He stressed that cooperation teams for commonages have two years to submit scorecards and general farmers should be given the same.

Proposed by Councillor Enda McGloin, Seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That a letter issue to Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to amend the ACRES Scheme to provide an average payment for farmers in 2023 where scoring cannot be completed within the tight timelines”.

BMD.96.23
24.07.23

Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Service & Clean Storm Drains in Drumshanbo Town

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda McGloin;

"I call on Ballinamore Municipal District to service and clean all storm water drains in and around Drumshanbo town. Many of these drains are completely blocked with mud and debris and during heavy rains and storm result in flash flooding as recently as 3 weeks ago. This action should form part of our climate action plan around the county.

Report by Roads

"The District Office will carry out a full storm drain cleaning in 3rd quarter in the main thoroughfares in Drumshanbo and can then identify any blockages, if any, within the system."

Councillor Enda McGloin noted the reply and said that he was glad to see that a full storm drain clean would take place. He remarked that the autumn leaves were already coming down and that there are two or three locations in the town that have been consistently flooded in the last year.

He said that an area next to the Food Hub is particularly bad as well as another location at Barrack Square. Following the recent frequent flash floods there are concerns for flooding of property and commented that it might require more manual work to get the clay and residue out of the drains.

Ms. Alison McKeon advised him that they have decided to move these works to next week with contractors due on site. The reason for bringing the works forward was to try and rectify these issues and hopefully this will clear the residue and will allow time before the winter to re-do if required.

Councillor Brendan Barry remarked there was an issue with bad flooding in a couple of locations as a result of gullies being blocked by leaves and debris.

Councillor Brendan Barry and Councillor Gerry Dolan both supported the motion.

BMD.97.23
24.07.23

Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Road Subsidence along R-207 at Urbal, Ballinaglera

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda McGloin;

"I ask that Ballinamore Municipal District would look at the road subsidence along the R-207 (15) at Urbal, Ballinaglera further up at Clancy's house and finally above Ballinaglera Hall. There are concerns locally that this may lead to an accident."

Report by Roads General

"We have a Climate Action Grant along this section of the R207 at the approach into Ballinaglera. We have contacted the landowner and now have permission to carry out verge stabilising works. It is anticipated that these works will be carried out in the 3rd quarter of the year."

Councillor Enda McGloin welcomed the reply and was glad to see that works would be carried out soon.

BMD.98.23 Motion from Councillor Caillian Ellis - Ramps at Lahard
24.07.23

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Caillian Ellis;

"I request that Ballinamore Municipal District put ramps in Lahard to slow down the traffic coming into the town."

Report by Roads General

"The District Office will not be constructing ramps in this estate. This road is not a "Rat Run" and the only people using this road are residents."

Councillor Caillian Ellis said that there was some confusion with the Notice of Motion. He is seeking to ramps installed on the main road coming into the town i.e. the R199 at Lahard.

Ms. Alison McKeon said that she will investigate this and would revert back to Councillor Ellis.

BMD.99.23 Motion from Councillor Caillian Ellis - Provision of Lairage in Rosslare
24.07.23 to facilitate shipping of Livestock.

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Caillian Ellis;

"I propose that Ballinamore Municipal District write to the Department of Agriculture and the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue in relation to putting a lairage in Rosslare to facilitate the shipping of livestock from this country."

Councillor Caillian Ellis informed the meeting that he was raising this matter as a result of the recent RTE programme which aired showing the mistreatment of some livestock travelling overseas. He said that a number of the calves experience a lot of movement before they even reach the port of Rosslare and they need to be fed and rested adequately. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and some of them don't get much of a rest period from when they leave the mart or farm until they reach their destination.

Councillor Brendan Barry said that the live export market is huge in this country and there is no room for error. Marts, Ports etc. all have a responsibility to look after the welfare of the livestock and ensure that they arrive in a healthy state. Trucks are fitted with drinkers which can provide drinks, vitamins and electrolytes to calves.

Councillor Gerry Dolan seconded the motion.

All Councillors supported this motion to send a letter to the Department of Agriculture and also to the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue.

BMD.100.23 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - Support for Retained Fire
24.07.23 Fighters

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brendan Barry;

“That Ballinamore Municipal District fully support Retained Firefighters in their campaign for fair pay and working conditions. There is a recruitment and retention crisis in the Retained Fire Service and it is putting the safety of firefighters and the public at risk.

This crisis is a result of the government’s failure to engage with the firefighters’ representatives and implement or even propose meaningful actions that would solve the recruitment and retention crisis.”

Mr. Finian Joyce, Chief Fire Officer informed the meeting that Leitrim Fire Service is facing industrial action from Wednesday, 26th July 2023. He said that the Leitrim Fire Service had lost 10 members out of its 45 in the last 5 years.

Many Firefighters are currently unable to take their leave entitlements due to staff shortages and members have seen their incomes drastically reduced due to reductions in call-outs over the last number of years.

Mr. Joyce said that one of the main issues that was leading to firefighters to leave the service was down to their inability to secure a mortgage. He said that many of them are young and when they go to the bank looking for a mortgage, the only income the banks take account of is the retainer.

He informed the meeting that Firefighters start out on a retainer of around €9,000, however this can increase to around €12,000 and stressed that the retainer is only about 50 percent of their overall earnings. The average Retained Firefighter earns between €15,000 and €20,000 while some of the busier stations could see staff earning up to €30,000.

Mr. Joyce noted that the focus of talks should be on their structured pay and members of Ballinamore Fire Station go to around 40 incidents a year and that this should be put in as part of their structured pay plus their training day they complete every two weeks.

He said that there was a real difficulty in recruiting firefighters in the county. Leitrim County Council held three rounds to try and recruit firefighters in Manorhamilton. Leitrim County Council recently took on two new firefighters in Ballinamore but it is difficult to find staff living and working locally in small towns around the County.

Councillor Brendan Barry said he tabled the motion as the firefighters need our full support. He informed the meeting that he recently witnessed a fire where the flames were encroaching towards a house but that the fire was brought under control quickly by the local firefighters and if they had not acted so quickly, there may have been a serious loss at this property.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke commented that currently the wages are too low to attract new members and they know that this may pose problems when they are trying to secure a mortgage.

Mr. Joyce remarked that all of the retained firefighters are part-time and many of them have other jobs to supplement their income but that currently the staff members feel that they are tied to their pagers daily. The Labour Court offer would mean for every station to recruit three new fire officers and this would allow for staff to have the option of work pattern of week on/week off. For Leitrim, this would allow the four stations to increase from nine to twelve firefighters and each station would operate with six firefighters week on/week off.

However, this would cost Leitrim County Council more than €600,000 annually and Leitrim County Council would also have to train these firefighters and this cost is €10,000 per head so the training cost for 15 firefighters is €150,000.

Councillor Enda McGloin said we should try to get that message to the Minister after our meeting today.

The members supported this proposal.

The Members agreed that a proposed solution in relation to the action being taken by the Retained Fire Fighters would be for a structured pay solution so that more of their annual current earnings are included as part of their defined pay. This proposed structured pay solution would be based on an estimate of the number of call-outs each station completes annually, their training days and community fire safety work to be included with their retainer as their annual defined income.

Proposed by Councillor Enda McGloin, Seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Ballinamore Municipal District fully support Retained Firefighters in their campaign for fair pay and working conditions. There is a recruitment and retention crisis in the Retained Fire Service and it is putting the safety of firefighters and the public at risk.

This crisis is a result of the government's failure to engage with the firefighters' representatives and implement or even propose meaningful actions that would solve the recruitment and retention crisis"

BMD.101.23 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - Provision of additional Car
24.07.23 Parking at Sligo University Hospital

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brendan Barry;

"I request that Ballinamore Municipal District contact management in Sligo University Hospital to find out can additional car parking be provided close to main entrance of hospital where the mobile Cath Lab used to be. 40 places could be provided in this area which has been fenced off for a considerable time, while no works appear to be happening."

Councillor Brendan Barry informed the meeting that the main entrance to the hospital has been relocated to the old hospital area. This is posing a difficulty for people with mobility issues who are not able to walk the long distance from the existing car park to the relocated entrance.

Councillor Caillian Ellis remarked that he had seen the problem firsthand. People are only allowed to drop patients off at the door and are then moved on by the Traffic Warden and short stay parking is not permitted. Some of the people being dropped off have mobility issues and need assistance getting into the hospital.

All Councillors supported this motion.

BMD.102.23 Notice of Motion - Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn - Update on Corgar to
24.07.23 Cavan Greenway

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn;

"Can I ask Ballinamore Municipal District at what stage is the Greenway from Corgar to Cavan border currently at and when is it likely to be completed?"

Report by Capital Projects Office

"We have appointed a contractor for the construction of the greenway from Corgar to Aghawillan. He expects to commence construction in three weeks. The construction will take 3 months."

**BMD.103.23 Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - Issues around reintroduction of
24.07.23 Pine Martens**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Dolan;

"After recent events with Pine Martens, I call on the Minister for Agriculture to revise plans that have been made for the reintroduction of these non-native species and others. These plans should be halted."

Councillor Gerry Dolan informed the meeting that Pine Martens have become very common and they are posing a danger to livestock and wildlife. He said that they should be culled, he recently witnessed one killing a curlew and of an incident where a Pine Marten got into a shed and killed hens worth €15,000.

**BMD.104.23 Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - 100% Grant for Septic Tank
24.07.23 Upgrades for people in rural areas.**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Dolan;

"I ask Ballinamore Municipal District to write to the Minister for Housing requesting that Grants of 100% be made available to people who are in rural areas, to have their septic tanks upgraded to meet the required standards."

Councillor Gerry Dolan informed the meeting that the people in rural areas of the county are feeling deprived and they are getting nothing back. They must put up with bad road conditions, to pay to cut their hedges and that anyone who needed to upgrade their septic tank should get grant aid of 100%.

Councillor Caillian Ellis supported the motion and said that he knew of one family who had received an estimate of €20,000 to carry out works.

Councillor Enda McGloin said that if your tank is deemed to have failed the test, that's the only way you can access a grant presently and an entirely new scheme needs to be introduced.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said that the grant at present is just €5,000 and that residents only qualify for a grant if the water quality within a particular catchment area deteriorates, and an investigation is carried out with the septic tanks identified as the issue.

Councillor Brendan Barry commented that there are some works which can be carried out before an inspection takes place, this may minimise the cost involved in carrying out upgrading works.

All Councillors supported the motion to write to both Minister for Environment and Minister for Rural and Community Development on this matter.

**BMD.105.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Patching Works on L-14941
24.07.23 and L-16160**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke;

"I ask that Ballinamore Municipal District arrange to have the necessary patching work carried out on road no L14941 in townland of Mellican and also L16160 in townland of Corduff South/Camber."

Report by Roads

"We will dispatch our maintenance crew to these public roads."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke noted the reply.

Ms. Alison McKeon, Assistant Engineer said that the patching unit would be dispatched this week.

**BMD.106.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Update on Traffic Safety at
24.07.23 Glan Cross, Beaghmore**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke;

"I ask has there been any progress drawing up a plan to make safe the traffic movements at Glan Cross, Beaghmore, which I requested along with signage to indicate how the road L1586-2 narrows immediately after the cross, making it unsafe for two heavy goods vehicles to meet. "

Report by Roads

"There is no redesign expected at Glan Cross as that would require specific grant allocation under the Specific Improvement Grant. The district no longer receives these grants for road widening or junction redesign. We currently have signage indicating junction ahead. We can erect road narrows sign from the existing junction to Longford border."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke noted the reply. He said that it is a very wide area and for years it was too narrow and now it's wide and people are shooting across it. Signage and road markings would go a long way to help with safety. He added that there is a continuous white line in the middle of the road giving the impression, particularly to heavy

goods vehicles drivers that there is enough space on either side of the white line for two HGVs to meet and there isn't.

Ms. Alison McKeon, Assistant Engineer said that the council could look at the possibility of erecting "Road Narrows" signage and also look at additional road lining. She informed the meeting unfortunately there is no Significant Improvement Grant for Junction/Layout changes.

BMD.107.23 Any Other Business
24.07.23

To seek Approval for Additional Restoration Improvement Grant Funding

Ms. Alison McKeon, Assistant Engineer informed the meeting that Leitrim County Council had received additional Restoration Improvement Grant Funding. This was required due to the rising costs of blacktop.

She said that the Roads Department were looking to extend RIG No. 13 on this year's Roads Programme. It is from Greagh Cross to Aghoo East. She explained that this section of road was previously restored and is now starting to fail.

Proposed by Councillor Caillian Ellis, Seconded by Councillor Enda McGloin and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"Approval for Additional Restoration Improvement Grant Funding to extend RIG No. 13 from Creagh Cross to Aghoo East."

Ms. Alison McKeon also informed the meeting that the Roads Department were looking to take two roads from the 2024 Roads Programme and put them on the 2023 Roads Programme.

The two roads were a section on the L8299 and on the L5369.

She advised that if this were approved it would free up two places on the 2024 Roads Programme and the members could consider which roads they would like to be placed on the list.

Proposed by Councillor Enda McGloin, Seconded by Councillor Caillian Ellis and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"Approval that Sections of Road No's L8299 and L5369 be taken from the 2024 Roads Programme and placed on the 2023 Roads Programme."

Parking Issues – Drumshanbo Town - Joe Mooney Summer School

Councillor Enda McGloin highlighted an issued regarding casual traders taking up car parking spaces in Drumshanbo town during the recent Joe Mooney Summer School and that this also happened at the recent An Tostal Festival.

He informed the meeting that he had written to Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner whose department has responsibility for issuing the casual trading licences.

The issue is that 6 or 7 Customer Car Parking Spaces are being taken out of use when the casual traders set up, this is to the detriment of the Rate Payers in the town. These rates payers are losing revenue because of the reduction in foot fall.

He asked that at the September meeting a report from the Planning Department to explain to the Members why these casual trading licences are being issued when they are resulting in reduction of customer car parking spaces for rates payers.

He also remarked that there were a couple of casual traders who were present who did not have a licence.

He said that in future scenarios regarding the issuing of licences it would be logistically looked at with a view to not reducing car parking spaces and the reduction of spaces is the main issue.

Councillor Gerry Dolan supported the request and said that he felt very strongly on this matter.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday 25th September 2023 at 10.30 am in The Island Theatre, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 11.39 am.

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Cathaoirleach
Ballinamore Municipal District

SIGNED: _____
Laura Sharkey
Meetings Administrator
Ballinamore Municipal District

Date: Monday, 25 September 2023