

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Bray Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray on Tuesday 13th September at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Déirdre De Búrca, Cathaoirleach
Councillor Joe Behan
Councillor John Brady
Councillor John Byrne
Councillor Caroline Burrell
Councillor Brid Collins
Councillor Anne Egan
Councillor David Grant
Councillor John McManus
Councillor Ciaran O'Brien
Councillor Pat Vance

Also present: Mr. Des O'Brien, Director of Services
Mr. David Forde, Acting Town Clerk
Mr. Sean O'Neill, Town Engineer

Apologies: Councillor Anne Ferris

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Deirdre De Burca opened the meeting by proposing a time extension until eleven o'clock to allow sufficient time for Minister Dick Roche to speak and also for the members to ask any questions they may have.

A number of councillors did not agree to this so the Cathaoirleach asked for a show of hands to see who would like to extend the meeting.

Only three councillors raised their hands - Councillor Caroline Burrell, Councillor Joe Behan and Councillor Ciaran O'Brien so the Cathaoirleach's proposal was defeated.

1. To discuss the following issues: the Swimming Pool, the Recycling Centre, Staff for Bray Town Council and town boundary extension with the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Minister Dick Roche TD

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that because of time constraints members will only be allowed a half an hour to speak to the Minister about the relevant issues on the agenda.

The members raised the following issues:

- Would like to warmly welcome the Minister and would like to congratulate him on his appointment and also would like to acknowledge all of the funding he has given to Bray.

Recycling Centre

- Terrific news that we now have a temporary site but will this definitely be up and running by November and will we continue to look for a permanent site?
- Would like to welcome the €1 million for the recycling centre.
- Opposed to the recycling centre – is this application a normal planning application or a Part VIII?
- Twenty-four parking bays – you could not get a worse scenario and not supporting it because it will have dreadful impact on the residents around the area.
- Would like to see a lot more car parking spaces on the site because there will be a lot of visitors.
- There is pilot scheme in some of the RAPID areas and I would hope this could be expedited.

Oldcourt Estate

- There have been fires over a number of years and the council need to work together with the Minister's help to try and resolve the issue. Is the Minister aware of the present situation?
- This estate does need investment like James Everett Park etc. It is not fair on the residents and this issue should be dealt with speedily.

Town Boundary

- This should be investigated because it is important we create economic conditions to create jobs.
- A part-time Town Manager is not acceptable – we would get extra benefits if we became a Borough Council?
- Bray is the largest town in Ireland so is there any possibility we could become Borough Council?

Swimming Pool

- Since June last year, we have only discussed this once. It is regrettable this Council has not taken the lead and called on the Minister to help with the Swimming Pool. Would request that the Cathaoirleach ensure this issue is discussed on a regular basis.
- The fundamental delay has been because of the Department and Bray Town Council.
- Concerned about the delay of dealing with the swimming pool as there are still another two phases to go.

Fire Service

- This is well overdue and badly needed in Bray. There is a purpose built fire station lying idle at the moment.

- It is in Wicklow County Council's Corporate Plan to have a Fire Service for North Wicklow.
- There is a need to educate people by knocking on their doors and explaining fire safety.
- Fire Hydrants are not being maintained in Bray. Residents should not have to put up with this.

Fire Audit

- This is a main priority and it is inevitable this will end up in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government so when it does can it be given priority?

Affordable housing

- There is none in Bray and people are requesting information and an update on a daily basis. This is something the Council need to address with Wicklow County Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. We are driving people out of the town when it comes to housing.

Bray Town Centre

- There is a definite need for rejuvenation and I would ask the Minister to look at this also.

Staff for Bray Town Council

- Would like to see more permanent staff in Bray Town Council.

Miscellaneous

- Registration of landlords and the inspecting of private rented accommodation – this matter needs to be sorted as soon as possible.
- There are certain waste issues in the County that need to be dealt with e.g. the dump at Bray Harbour.
- Greenstar – they hold a virtual monopoly in the county so would the Minister consider establishing a waste authority for Wicklow?
- Is it possible to for Minister Roche to ask the Minister for Transport for a driving test centre in Bray?

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Minister Dick Roche TD then thanked the members for their input and for giving him the opportunity to answer these questions.

He stated that he has always had a great passion and is a firm believer in Local Government and he addressed the members with the following:

Fire Safety

- Fire Safety - he stated that the members should all listen to Councillor John Byrne because he has extensive experience in this area.
- Community Based Fire Safety Service – educating people is the best form of prevention.

Fire Audit

- Oldcourt Estate – this is not something people should be playacting with. When the fire-audit is completed he will definitely look at it, as it is a very serious issue.
- Full Time Fire Service – the issue is that Bray has an effective fire service. Nobody needs to march around outside and protest and when the audit is ready it will be dealt with.

Town Boundary

- Town Boundary – there is a specific process. On the Southern Cross, which there is a part being dubbed as “no-mans-land”, he would hope some practical solutions could be drawn up.
- Would want to be careful before moving to a different status.
- Bray is very far behind in development terms – should look at other small towns in Ireland such as Carrick-on-Shannon and follow their lead. If we want this town to progress we need to be courageous and there is more than enough energy around this table to do this.

Dump in Bray

- When that article came out in the New York Times about the dump in Bray I was furious, not because of the portrayal of me, but of the way it was making Bray look. It is up to us to clean our town, not people in other countries.
- This is something that precedes all of us here at the table but ultimately it is something that needs to be dealt with.

Recycling Centre

- Recycling – Wicklow County Council have done fantastically with this. There is a real effort being made to progress.
- It is very difficult to find a site that is perfect – Most anxious to see that this goes ahead.

Staff for Bray Town Council

- Staff for Bray Town Council – Under Better Local Government the employment of staff has to be funded somehow. If not under tax, then it has to be delegating staff within the Council.
- We need to look at the system to get more efficiency out of Local Government.
- It would be dishonest of me is I said I could get more staff though.

Swimming Pool

- I am very anxious for this to go ahead because it will be very bad for the town if it does not. When the two swimming pools (Greystones and Bray) are up and running simultaneously it will be fantastic.

Golf Club developments

- Concerns of floods have been brought very forcefully to all our attention because of the New Orleans disaster.
- I would be amazed if the people looking at the planning proposals for the Golf Club development do not look at it seriously.

- We should see this as an opportunity to deliver and achieve for the people of Bray.
- Everybody is allowed to make submissions on this matter, except me as a serving minister. The town's future is very tied up with this so getting the balance right is the key.

Social and Affordable Housing

- My very first day in the job I asked for the file on affordable and social housing and I was appalled at the previous records from previous ministers with regards to this.
- It is utterly unsustainable that young families are being driven out of the town because a lack of affordable and social housing. There will always be a need for affordable and social housing.
- There is a possibility that the LUAS will be extended to Cherrywood and an obvious route to extend it would be through the new Fassaroe development.

Demand on Bray Town Council by Wicklow County Council

- Very concerned about the rate of impact. Something needs to be done.

Rejuvenation

- Bray badly needs rejuvenation and one area that comes to mind is the Harbour area.
- James Everett Park is an area that needs development.

The Minister then concluded by stating that he is very grateful to the Council for being given the opportunity to meet the Council members and he thanked the members and the officials.

The Cathaoirleach then thanked the Minister for attending the meeting.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the Monthly Meeting dated 12th July 2005.

The minutes were then proposed by Councillor John McManus and seconded by Councillor Ciaran O'Brien subject to an amendment by Councillor John Brady, which read as follows.

“Councillor **John Byrne** stated that he would like an amendment to page 9 of the minutes of the 21st June 2005. The amendment is as follows:”

This is to be changed to “Councillor **John Brady** stated that he would like an amendment to page 9...”

3. Reports and recommendations

The Acting Town Clerk informed the members of the following in relation to the recycling centre:

There are concerns by members in relation to the location of the recycling centre. In the next few weeks Wicklow County Council will be required to pay a substantial sum of money to the landlord for rent for the three years to secure this property. This is non-refundable.

Obviously it would be wrong to make this payment if there are serious concerns from the members at this stage. It is proposed that Bray Town Council work in partnership with Wicklow County Council to ensure that the proposed recycling centre at Beechwood Close is brought on stream as soon as possible.

The Town Manager then stated that Bray Town Council does not want to progress with this until we know it will go through. He stated that there will be a traffic impact, but as a temporary solution this will suffice and the staff will litigate the traffic impact. He also stated that he would recommend this be done in partnership with Wicklow County Council as a Part VIII under the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The members raised the following points:

- If a more suitable site became available, would we look at it?
- People have rights in these matters so if the planning is not dealt with properly and transparently, it is very likely there will be more delays and Wicklow County Council will need to reflect on this. Think the residents will seek to vindicate their rights.
- The officials cannot do this without any help. The residents around the area of the site must stand up for their rights.
- This is not an ideal site but will support it if it is the only site available.
- Is there an allowance in the car park for the turning of lorries and big vehicles?
- Everyone wants a recycling centre and here we are bickering among ourselves. The normal planning process should be gone through as this is only temporary but it is a big issue.

The Town Manager informed the members that this planning process will go ahead in the next ten days or so, so we need to know if the members want to do this through a planning process.

The Cathaoirleach stated that she will inform the officials as soon as a decision has been made.

Councillor John Brady then stated that he would like to propose a suspension to the standing orders. He stated that last week the officials and some Councillors walked out of the meeting when he was still speaking which showed great disrespect to the table and the chair. He added that there was a proposal put in by Councillor JON Brady, which was seconded by Councillor Behan.

The Town Manager said that under standing orders, that if a meeting is not extended by the members, the staff can leave at ten o'clock.

The Cathaoirleach then stated that this issue would be brought up at the end of the meeting.

4. Disposal of Fee Simple Interest in 18 Wolfe Tone Square South, Bray, in accordance with Statutory Notice

It was proposed by Councillor Anne Egan and seconded by Councillor John Byrne to dispose of the Fee Simple Interest in No.18 Wolfe Tone Square South.

5. To consider the provision of the Taxi Ranks in Bray

Documentation showing the proposed changes to taxi ranks in the town had been circulated to the members.

The members raised the following points:

- Definitely support this proposal.
- Was this proposal recommended by the Taxi drivers?
- The two spaces outside Hollands premises should be used as car-parking spaces.
- Bray Town Council should review this scheme after one year.
- The Council should put in proper signage also.
- Can the Council review the nose-to-kerb parking because it is not ideal?
- The dual use of the loading bay is a great idea.
- The traffic wardens should give some leeway to the taxi drivers while the ranks are being set up.
- Would like to congratulate the Cathaoirleach on her efforts in relation to this as she was a big influence on getting the ball rolling.

The Town Engineer stated that a couple of items were changed from what was circulated. He added that we will examine the issue of nose-to-kerb parking.

6. To discuss the “Out of Hours” answering service

A short report was circulated to the members on the “out of hours” answering service.

The members then raised the following points:

- People do not realise that the Council has this service so it should be advertised more.
- Sewerage complaints – if someone rings with a blockage the information is only to be logged and no council official is to be disturbed, is this what ultimately is being said?
- If someone is locked out of their house it is logged and then responded to stating that it is not a Council problem. The Council could give some assistance because there are some elderly tenants and they are entitled to more consideration.

- Seems like this service is to be kept under wraps. Bray Town Council should write to all tenants informing them of this service. How much is this costing us?
- We were recently supposed to have a cut-off of water – this kind of thing should be recorded onto a message on the answering service.
- This issue should be kept on the agenda.
- It is time that we reviewed the emergency mechanism and call out service in Bray. If nothing is done then Little Bray will flood if another storm hits.
- Can the Council look into the possibility of a getting a Freephone number for the emergency service.

The Town Engineer said that we have an out of hour’s answering service. He informed the members that under ten calls were responded to by staff out of approximately three hundred calls received. He stated that there is certain flexibility and that the system is not as rigid as it may seem, he has no problem looking at the criteria again.

The Cathaoirleach then informed the members that Councillor Caroline Burrell made a proposal that this be reviewed in four months time at the January meeting.

8. To further discuss the Boathouses and the Harbour Shed.

The acting Town Clerk, Mr. David Forde informed the members of the status of the disposal of the boathouses and the Harbour shed and advised the members of the valuations Bray Town Council had received on these properties.

The meeting was then concluded.

Signed:

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:

TOWN CLERK

Dated:
