

BALTINGLASS & DISTRICT FORUM

Meeting Minutes
3rd April, 2008

1. **Apologies:** Eamonn Horan Mary Vernon Marie McCormack
 Patricia Bennett Ken Browne Michael Brown

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting having been distributed in advance were taken as read. Acceptance proposed by: Michael Coogan and seconded by John Vernon.

3. **Matters arising**

Liam McGabhann stated that there was no undertaking to maintain the park pathway.

Chairperson Noel Lyons greeted everyone and welcomed Garda Superintendent Mulligan and Sergeant Hipwell.

4. **Guest Speaker: - Garda Superintendent Mulligan**

Superintendent Mulligan said that he arrived in Baltinglass from a background in city policing and wasn't delighted at being posted here. It was a shock to the system in that you were expected to be all embracing and take on more than you should.

There are big changes on the way from 2nd June 2008 when the Garda service will be re-organised on a strictly County basis. This promises to create problems as the West Wicklow area has more in common with Naas and Kildare than Bray or Arklow. Even radio communication, currently run from Naas, will in future be controlled from Bray.

Asked if he (or a Superintendent) will still be based in Baltinglass, Supt. Mulligan replied yes and that he was actively seeking an increase in personnel.

Noel Doody asked, if as they are losing areas like Rathvilly, will they also be gaining other areas. It appears that the arbitrary division of Garda districts will create ludicrous situations for some outlying areas where the nearest major town could be in a different district.

Part of the policing initiative is the creation of J.P.C.'s (Joint Policing Committees) which provide a forum for discussion of policing issues. All meetings of the Wicklow J.P.C. have been advertised and a local one has been held in Germaine's but it coincided with a local Forum meeting.

The one area where the Gardai could have some immediate impact is in traffic and in relation to bad or dangerous parking. Supt. Mulligan suggested that the Gardai and members of the Forum should get together in identifying the areas which are problematic and that the Gardai can then bring pressure to bear on the local authority to do something about them.

Cait Clerkin asked if any measures can be taken against owners of vacant/abandoned properties to ensure they don't become locations for underage drinking and illegal drug use.

On "boy racers" the question was asked that if the management system of the car has been micro-chipped to significantly alter its performance is the insurance cover not rendered invalid.

If the vehicle displays a current insurance disc the Gardai do not have the necessary equipment to hand to check its correct performance status.

It was reported that groups of "boy racers" were gathering in a specific location prior to their nightly activities. If the member of the Forum who witnessed this could give the registration numbers of the vehicles then Sergeant Hipwell would "have words" with them.

The less time that the Gardai spent investigating minor incidents would leave more time for the larger issues. To this end Supt. Mulligan recommended that members of the public not contribute to making theft and other crimes any easier by leaving valuables exposed in cars and leaving house doors unlocked etc.

In conclusion he wished the Forum well and remarked that if they were as successful as the Blessington Forum they could feel proud of their achievement.

The Chairperson thanked the Superintendent and said that we would be delighted to welcome him back at regular intervals. Supt. Mulligan suggested that the Crime Prevention Officer could attend and might distribute some useful literature.

5. Correspondence

The Chairperson suggested that any correspondence be postponed until the special meeting on 10th April. This was agreed.

6. Financial report

It was similarly agreed to postpone the Financial Report

7. Constitution

A special meeting to consider the Constitution will be held on 10th April. Members should send their approval or suggestions prior to that meeting.

8. Town Plan

Discussion on progress on the Town Plan was similarly deferred.

9. Any Other Business

Mr Peter Griffen had asked to address the meeting and the Chairperson felt it would be unrealistic to ask him to return at another time. Mr Griffen informed the Forum members that he has applied for planning permission to build in Mill Street at the site of the Lawler house. The development would contain residential and commercial units.

Guest Speakers. It was pointed out that although a time constraint on guest speakers had been requested at the last meeting this month had another overrun. The time restraint was requested but the subject did not lend itself to brief coverage.

It was agreed that there would be no guest speaker for May.

**Date for Special Meeting. Thursday 10th April 2008 at 8.00p.m. sharp
at Stratford Lodge.**

**Date for Next Meeting. Thursday 1st May 2008 at 8.00p.m.
at Stratford Lodge.**