

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting

held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington

on Monday, 11 July 2011

at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Liam Fay, Joe Hanley, Patsy Phibbs, David Egar, Gerry O'Neill, Brian Schweppe, Pat Conlan, Peter Nolan, Seamus Balfe, Michael Sargent, Michael Curran, Pat Winters, Fr. Tim Murphy, Gilmer Hamilton, Killian McCreal, Fintan Gilheaney, Nuala Haughian, Pat Pigeon.

Apologies: John Brennan, Michael Doyle, Tom McGillicuddy, John Coogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 June 2011, were proposed by Brian Schweppe, seconded by Peter Nolan and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting dealt with the following matters:

1. Road Surface Main Street

Members were pleased that upgrading of Main Street had commenced. David Egar agreed again to check on what would happen to the old cobblestones between Ulster Bank and Dempsey's. It is David's understanding that the cobblestones will remain in situ. In relation to areas around the relief road, David Egar explained that it had been necessary for him to clear these areas himself as the developers explained that they did not have the resources to enable any tidy up to be completed.

2. Planning Permission Application

Liam Fay, Peter Nolan and Gerry O'Neill reported on the recent meeting held at South Dublin Golf Club, Brittas, concerning objections to all planning applications by one individual. A second meeting has been held at Enniskerry and further meetings are planned. Gerry O'Neill advised that consultation with the relevant Minister is also planned. Members noted that only one local Councillor from South County Dublin and Jim Ruttle attended the meeting at South County Golf Club.

3. Theatre

Pat Winters advised in relation to three matters concerning the theatre:-

- i) It is planned to make a final grant application to WRP for circa €30,000 which would facilitate installation of an additional lighting bar and other ancillaries such as an outside sign.
- ii) The principal focus at present is to have an events group which would organise visiting acts and also provide funds for the theatre.
- iii) Directors of the theatre have to be mindful of the ongoing obligations for maintenance, insurance, etc.

Pat Winters confirmed that all seats in the theatre are numbered and that the directors are continually aware of Health & Safety concerns during all events.

4. Tax Office

With the reduced hours now operating at the tax office, it was agreed to ascertain exactly what services are being provided and notify these locally.

5. Tourist Trails Company

The Chairman advised of the submission last week to County Wicklow Partnership under the Leader Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2010 of a Blessington Trails Analysis & Development Study application. The application is for circa €30,000 to allow a study be completed on a walk from Avon Rí to Russborough. The funds will be used to carry out Ecological Impact and appropriate assessments, winter bird surveys, cultural heritage assessment, inspection of other similar trails and project management. Several members were of opinion that this money would be best used immediately in completing a trail of this kind, however it was pointed out that, in order to get the necessary funds to complete the trail, studies such as this must be completed and that funds under Leader are available to carry out such study. The Chairman advised of the intention to set up a company under project leader John Horan, with directors from the Forum Michael Sargent, Seamus Balfe, Joe Hanley and Killian McGreal together with Eric Blatchford, Russborough, Paul Ashmore, Avon Rí and Mark Howell, Tulfarris. Additional Forum members are welcome to join the directors of this company, called Blessington & District Trails Limited, when the next Forum meets in September. John Horan will be speaking at the September meeting on what is planned. Members were of opinion that other walking areas would probably give better features, however all agreed that this walk from Avon Rí to Russborough would be a good test of what is involved and is only the initial stage of what is intended to be a walkway around the lake.

6. Forum Elections

Fiona Mulvany joined the meeting and the Forum boxes were opened. On the proposal of Gerry O'Neill, seconded by Killian McGreal, the following persons were approved to join the Forum from September:

- Lorcan McMahon
- Pat Mahon
- Michael Duggan
- David Irwin
- Ruth Fitzsimons
- Noel Nolan
- Bernie Kavanagh
- Patricia McGrath
- Brian Kane
- Anita Moroney
- Noreen Keegan Kavanagh
- Lindsey Sullivan
- Ariadne Laurenns-Conlon
- Catherine Keogh
- Jason Mulhall
- Deirdre Ward
- Nuala Cashin
- Hugo Magee
- Anthony Quinn
- Mary Lorna Murphy
- Tommy Brady
- Jim Fitzsimons
- Cathal Hardiman
- Glenn Fitzpatrick
- Sally Ann Ryall

It was agreed that a sub-committee comprising Pat Winters, Liam Fay, Patsy Phibbs, Joe Hanley and Killian McGreal would meet in advance of the next Forum meeting in September to formulate how the new Forum will operate and allocate projects.

7. A.O.B.

- Gerry O'Neill advised of the tremendous work done by residents at Glending and all members were unanimous in wishing well to the continued work at Glending.
- The Chairman raised the question of a preferred route for the N81 transgressing the existing grounds of Blessington Soccer Club. The matter was debated and consensus was that the Forum should await the outcome of the N81 consultations

and then be supportive at that stage of those affected, be they sporting or commercial.

- There is no further news on the old library building and this will be left to the new Forum to follow up.
- Gerry O'Neill suggested that Dublin City Council be written to in relation to their assisting with the planned trails around the lake.
- Peter Nolan advised that Topaz had cleaned all of the green areas at the garage and that visibility has much improved for those residents exiting St. Joseph's Road.
- Irene Hayden from Adult Education Centre joined the meeting to advise of planned tourism courses. Irene Hayden is anxious that the Education Centre, which is about adult education in the community, should be more a part of the community and people should be more aware of its activity. All agreed that it is necessary to get the message out there and have the facility availed of. Further discussions with Irene Hayden of the Education Centre will be held in September.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

W. E. O'Neill

12/9/11

*Proposed M. Green
Sunder B. Smyth*