

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington on Monday, 11 February 2013 at 8.00 p.m.

Present: List of members as per attached

Apologies: List of apologies as per attached

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 14 January 2013, were circulated, read, proposed by Noreen Keegan Kavanagh, seconded by Tommy Brady and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting dealt with the following:-

1. Tidy Towns

The Chairman of the Environmental Sub-group, Jason Mulhall, reported on recent meetings with the area engineer, Declan Geraghty. Jason reported that the area engineer is very positive and a good relationship has been developed with the Council. Following discussions, Jason Mulhall advised that certain actions are in hand:

- Signs for St. Patrick's Well
- Replacement of bins
- Review of tree bases
- Improving ground area close to Oak Drive
- Placement of a bin at Dempsey's Lane
- Independent consultant to complete tree survey

Jason Mulhall advised that in addition to the Forum members on the sub-committee, which include John Brennan, Anita Moroney, Brian Kane, Michael Duggan, Noreen Keegan Kavanagh and Jason, five non-Forum members have been added. CWP have confirmed that they are making available a grant of €4,100 for a town plan to be completed and the sub-committee are presently reviewing the maintenance of roundabouts in conjunction with local business people.

Jason Mulhall also advised that the committee would be making an entry in the Pure Mile Competition, together with the assistance of Seamus Balfe and Aidan Cruise.

Patsy Phibbs advised of his discussions and an examination of grants available under the Community Growers Fund. Patsy Pibbs will liaise with the Environmental sub-committee and make an application before 28 February.

Members raised the removal of a tree in the square which had been planted some years back and dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Smith. Members were advised that people had not been aware of the significance of the tree and it was only after its removal that this was realised. The Council will be re-planting the tree and there will be a sign to denote its significance.

2. Hillbilly Tractor Run

Organisers of the Hillbilly Tractor Run Ben Dalton, Noel Foster and James McDonald attended the Forum meeting and outlined details of the tractor run and various other events scheduled for

30 June and prior to that date. Ben Dalton advised that last year a sum of approximately €10,000 had been raised and this had been split between Lacken, Community College and Crumlin Hospital. This year's beneficiaries will be Lacken GAA, Valleymount Pre-School, Blessington Community College Parents' Council and Crumlin Hospital. The representatives clarified the questions raised in regard to insurance and also noted that the Parish website will be updated with details of the event. It was agreed that the Forum will again assist in the manning of the square from 7am on 30 June and also in assisting with stewarding on the day. Noel Nolan, on behalf of Jimmy and Essie and other members of the family extended thanks to the Hillbilly representatives on their deferring of the Tractor Run from the original date last year to a date in September as a mark of respect to James Nolan RIP.

3. The Gathering

John McNamara joined the meeting for a discussion in relation to how Blessington & District Forum could facilitate an event under The Gathering 2013. Following discussions it was agreed that Forum members Pat Conlon, Nuala Haughian, Pat McGrath, Deirdre Ward and Roisín McNabb would meet with John McNamara and discuss possible events for the weekend of 19 May 2013. In advance of the closing date for expressions of interest on 14 February, John McNamara and the Chairman will liaise.

4. Theatre update

Pat Winters confirmed the good news in relation to the acquiring by the theatre company of two workers under the Tús Scheme, each working 19.5 hours per week, one looking after caretaking and the second looking after marketing. Pat Winters advised that this is the third week and that his involvement is to schedule, on a weekly basis, a work programme.

Pat Winters confirmed that the recent musical production had three sell-out shows and that upcoming events featured De Dannan, BYMDS presenting "Oklahoma" and Tommy Fleming in April.

Pat Winters also confirmed that he is presently in discussions with Poppy Hill with a view to a course in the Theatre in sound engineering which would certainly suit people aspiring to develop a career in this area.

5. Day Care for the Elderly project

Members were advised of the development at the Church of Our Lady on Main Street involving the provision of a day care facility for the elderly. It appears that CWP funds can be made available to assist in the financing of this major community project and in this regard the assistance of the Forum is required in respect of the application. Members were advised that 18 community organisations are presently using the facility at the Parish Office and it is hoped that a properly designed facility will enhance this usage, together with that of the elderly who are presently availing of facilities at St. Joseph's Hall. Members agreed to progress this application for funds with the Parish Finance Committee and with LEADER and in this connection Forum member Patsy Phibbs will chair the Forum group and other members joining the group are Mary Lorna Murphy, Frank Hanlon, Noel Nolan and Liam Fay.

6. Blessington & District Forum logo

The Chairman advised having made available to the Community College a prize fund of €200 to facilitate students at the Community College coming up with a new logo for the Forum. The Chairman reported that to date 60 students have submitted entries and this is presently being co-ordinated at the Community College by Turlough O'Donnell. It was agreed that five Forum

members would liaise with Turlough O'Donnell and come up with a shortlist of possible logos. The Forum group will be co-ordinated by Liam Fay and Liam is joined by Pat Winters, Frank Hanlon, Noel Nolan and Noreen Keegan Kavanagh.

7. Town Walking Trail

The Chairman of the Culture and Heritage Sub-group, Hugo Magee, presented a draft of the intended new version of the Blessington Street Walking Trail. This runs to 33 items and the task now is to schedule these items into a brochure similar to what had previously been available. It was agreed to circulate the draft prepared by Hugo and his committee to other members for their comments. In the meantime, Hugo Magee and his group will research how the planned brochure can be taken to the next stage. Members believe that this is a project that might well be supported and funded by Forum members.

8. A.O.B.

- Members were reminded of the Main Street Tidy Towns Sunday morning rota and a notice has been placed in the newsletter asking for further volunteers.
- An email from Deputy Billy Timmins was read to the meeting noting the provision of funding for a pedestrian crossing at the Community College. The funding has been provided by the NTA for the design and construction of pedestrian crossing at the college.
- Members were reminded of the upcoming Literary Festival being co-ordinated by Janet Hawkins at Blessington Book Store scheduled for 27 April.
- There was no further update as yet on the old library. The names of the Trustees from the Forum were confirmed again as Michael Sargent, Pat Pidgeon, Liam Fay, Sally Ann Ryall and Killian McGreal.
- The letter forwarded to Chief Superintendent Tom Conway at Bray Garda Station requesting a meeting was read to members. Members were advised that communication has been received from Chief Superintendent Tom Conway to say that he would be available within the next 2-3 months to visit and review matters with the Forum.
- Correspondence with Brian Doyle, Director of Services at Wicklow County Council, in relation to water quality and Scurlock's Graveyard was read to members. The reply of Brian Doyle was noted: *"I referred the matters raised to the appropriate staff and will revert to you on receipt of their reports"*.
- The correspondence to Minister Phil Hogan T.D. in relation to Glending Estate was read to members and the reply from the Minister's office dated 31 January 2013 was noted: *"I have been asked by Mr. Phil Hogan T. D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to refer to your recent letter in connection with Glending Housing Estate. The Minister has asked that we forward your request to Ms. Jan O'Sullivan T.D., Minister of State at this Department with responsibility for planning and housing for her consideration and a direct reply to you"*.
- The advices of Councillor Jim Ruttle in relation to Manor Kilbride Graveyard were noted. Councillor Ruttle has confirmed that land for the extension to Manor Kilbride Graveyard has been acquired and paid for and is now in the ownership of the Council.

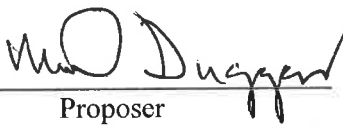
An estimate was submitted last Friday to the Council in respect of the works necessary to accommodate the graveyard and this work should go to tender shortly.

- Correspondence from Kieran Flood at Native Woodland Trust was read to the meeting. The Chairman advised that contact with Kieran Flood will be co-ordinated by John Horan from the Trails Company and it is hoped that the Trail will in due course connect with the Native Woodland Trust lands opposite Russborough. Members were very complimentary of the work of Native Woodland Trust and the great facility that their land provides for walkers.
- Pat Winters confirmed that a Comhaltas group is now established in the Tramway Theatre on Sunday evenings and that classes in guitar etc are now available.
- Roisín McNabb advised of the Community Alert Scheme now operational in Vallemount.
- Seamus Balfe requested that Jason Mulhall, in his dealings with the Area Engineer, enquires if directional signs for Glendalough can be placed at Lacken.
- Members were advised of the new conservation plan for Main Street which is now in place and can be inspected on the website.
- The Chairman advised that work on Blessington Greenway (Main Street to Russborough) is ongoing and John Horan of the Trails Company hopes to make the second payment to the contractor this week.

This completed the business of the meeting.


Chairman

11 March 2013
Date


Proposer


Seconder