

Signed

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington on Monday, 8 October 2012 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 10 September 2012 were proposed by Brian Schweppe, seconded by Nuala Cashin and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting followed a prepared agenda and dealt with the following:-

1. Tractor Run

It was agreed to collect the annual contribution of each Forum member of €5 to the Hillbilly Tractor Run 2012 charity at the next meeting. The charity is Crumlin Children's Hospital. Pat Winters raised the question as to whether or not the Tractor Run organisers might make a contribution to Blessington & District Forum which could then be used for any one of the several projects, be it Tidy Towns, Theatre or Trails.

2. Services Sub-committee

Lorcan MacMahon, Chairman of the Services sub-group, advised of correspondence received from Wicklow County Council on 21 September. The Council are prepared to grant a lease of 4 years and 11 months at a rent of €1,000 per annum. Lorcan MacMahon advised that there is already a list of community groups who would like to use the old library when renovated. Lorcan MacMahon advised that the County Manager has signed off on the project and it is now to be decided and granted by the members of Wicklow County Council when they next meet, probably at their November meeting.

Lorcan MacMahon advised that the Forum will need to raise approximately €10,000 to renovate the old library building. Members felt that, with this level of expenditure, any monies expended by the Forum should be offset-able against any rent payable over the period. Lorcan MacMahon noted the various points made and will continue to liaise with Lorraine Gallagher at Wicklow County Council in relation to advancing matters.

3. Culture and Heritage Sub-group

Seamus Balfe advised that himself and Aidan Cruise have drafted plans for signs for the various heritage points, however it will be the next meeting before this comes before the Forum. Aidan Cruise was unavailable tonight and Chairman of the group, Hugo Magee, should be back in action at the next meeting following his illness. Members wished Hugo a speedy recovery.

4. Roundabout at Naas Road / Deerpark junction

There were no further updates on the roundabout at Naas Road/Deerpark Junction, although members did note that the junction is now operational although there is still a lot of work to be done on tarmac etc.

5. Theatre

Pat Winters, Chairman of the Theatre Company, reported on recent events and passed around a calendar of upcoming events. Pat Winters confirmed that the capital programme has now been completed and in excess of €170,000 has been spent on equipment such as sound, lighting etc.

Pat Winters advised that he is anxious to involve more people in the ongoing running of the Theatre, as Pat Winters sees this as an educational opportunity to build skills towards getting a job, particularly in the sound and lighting areas. Members were asked to encourage people to come forward, particularly as there is always a maintenance programme to be kept and finances to be maintained by the running of events.

Pat Winters clarified the cost of the signage, which, including finger signs, wiring etc. came to €6,800 plus VAT. Members agreed that every effort will be made to facilitate work such as this being passed to locals where at all possible.

6. Local Area Plan

The Chairman thanked sub-committee members Liam Fay, Pat Pidgeon, Noel Nolan, Killian McGreal, John Coogan, Gerry O'Neill and Nuala Haughian for their input with the Local Area Plan and to all members who attended the Forum meetings and public meeting on the matter. The Chairman confirmed that the submission was made and is now on the County Council website.

7. Lake Walk

Killian McGreal briefed Forum members on where matters presently stand and read an updated statement received today from John Horan, who has spearheaded the Forum's efforts to have the trail from Blessington to Russborough developed. John Horan reported as follows:

"CWP by email on 30 May told us that there were "delighted to say that the Board approved your project to a max of €176,250 at last night's meeting, the procedure is the Department ten day check".

Having had this matter on their desks for over four months the Department of the Environment has now focussed for the first time on our "licence" from the ESB and at this late stage is effectively "disallowing" its value as part of the matched funding requirement. It had never been queried before now.

The good news on the other hand is that the Department "is satisfied to allow County Wicklow Partnership to approve this project up to a maximum grant of €157,000" subject to a number of conditions.

The net effect of this decision is that we will have to "spend" more of our own funding. As of now we will have a shortfall and I have had some initial discussions with the Forum Chairperson in these regards. Wicklow County Council have been very helpful to us in the past and I have in recent days been in contact with Council Officials and with our local County Councillor Jim Ruttle. I have also been in contact with CWP. I should say also that Deputy Billy Timmins TD has been of assistance in our efforts to get movement from the Department on the matter.

As Forum members will know we have on a previous occasion been back to the "selected" contractor and have trimmed the project and their costs. I am not sure that there is any leeway in that regard at this stage.

While I do not yet have a solution to the funding shortfall I am still hopeful that the project is still "do-able". We will keep Forum members advised if any particular action is required from them."

Members noted that the actual cash shortfall is approximately €8,000 and this will need to be raised locally or by fundraising or by trimming the project. It was clarified for members that this is an EU-funded project and that the process was handled by an independent Quantity Surveyor who assessed the tenders received and nominated the appointment of the accepted tenderer. Members were advised that the Forum had no input into selection and the process was totally open, transparent and under public procurement processes. The contract had gone to tender and some local contractors had tendered, however the appointed tenderer, based on the criteria and process in place, was nominated by the Quantity Surveyor and accepted. Members would wish to keep contracts such as this local, however this is not possible under a public procurement open tender process.

8. Environmental Sub-committee

Jason Mulhall, Chairman of the Environmental Sub-committee, reported on having met with the Local Engineer, Declan Geraghty, on 24 September and having agreed a strategy going forward for that part of the Main Street from Hennessy's to Aldi. Some of the points addressed were:

- Tree survey
- No underground facility for cabling
- Derelict sites to be followed up
- Look at lamp-posts at Downshire
- Bases of trees
- Ideas re square
- Area around playground

Many thanks were passed to Forum member, Mick Duggan, on his great work in renovating the area around St. Patrick's Well. Work on the wall in the area has still to be completed and David Egar stated that this is being looked after.

Jason Mulhall passed around the new rota for the next number of months for the Sunday morning tidy-up and also expressed sincere thanks to Dan Kenny for his providing an appreciation night for Tidy Town helpers recently at the café. Gilmer Hamilton reported that St. Kevin's Hall committee will be meeting Aldi re the back entrance tomorrow, while Gerry O'Neill reported that the Boxing Club have come to a satisfactory arrangement with Aldi in regard to the sewerage problem being experienced. Jason Mulhall advised having had discussions with Aldi in regard to the Tidy Towns, however Jason Mulhall reported that Aldi do not financially support Tidy Towns.


9. Awards Night

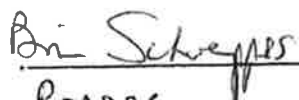
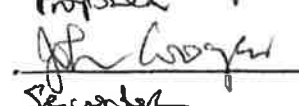
Ariadne Laurens-Conlon, together with Frank Hanlon and Nuala Cashin, reported on their proposals for an awards night. Ariadne reported that the awards night will be held on Thursday 25 October 2012 at Avon Rí who have agreed to fund and sponsor the whole event. On the night, the Tiday Estates competition results will be announced and also announced will be the award for a special person who has contributed to the area. The sub-committee will come up with ideas on this and the relevant citation. It is expected that the cover charge will be €5 and that all members of Tidy Towns, Forum and members of the public will be invited to attend.

10. A.O.B.

- The Chairman reported that Gerry O'Neill and David Egar, together with the Chairman, will be meeting with Councillor Jimmy Ruttle at 5pm on Wednesday 10 October to review Residents' Committee queries at Beechdale, Blessington Abbey and Glending.
- Gerry O'Neill reminded members again of the deteriorating problem in regard to the houses at Glending.
- Members were reminded that the Christmas lights and efforts to raise funds for the erection of the Christmas lights will be announced shortly. It was agreed that Christmas lights should be erected at the tyre centre.
- Nuala Haughian reported on plans to have the Manor Kilbride graveyard extended. The extension is only ¼ of an acre, but is not expected to be in place until next year.
- Pat Conlon asked if plans could be put in place for a horse-trail and it was agreed to liaise in this matter with Eric Blatchford at Russborough.
- Members were again reminded of "The Gathering 2013" event for next year and asked to consider their thoughts on this matter as to what Blessington and District could do for this event.
- Liam Fay reported on his attendance at a twinning event organised by Nessa Childers. Speeches were given by a member of the Institute of Public Administration and the Oranmore Town Twinning Committee. Liam Fay reported that the process is bureaucratic and difficult, as the committee will be liaising with the EU. Where it is intended, it would be necessary for the committee to run an event which would convince the EU team of the twinning intention and then have that reciprocated by a European town. The matter will continue on the agenda.

This completed the business of the meeting.


10 December 2012


Proposer

Secretary

Blessington & District Forum
Attendance List 8 October 2014

	Name	Phone	Email	Signature
1	Balfe Seamus			Seamus Balfe
2	Brady Tommy			
3	Brennan John			John Brennan
4	Cashin Carmel			
5	Cashin Nuala			N. Cashin
6	Conlon Pat			Pat Conlon
7	Coogan John			
8	Curran Michael			APOLOGIES
9	Daly Brian			
10	Dermody Aisling			
11	Doyle Michael			
12	Duggan Michael			Michael Duggan
13	Egar David			David Egar
14	Fay Liam			Liam Fay
15	Fitzpatrick Glenn			
16	Fitzsimons Jim			
17	Fitzsimons Ruth			
18	Gilheany Fintan			Fintan Gilheany
19	Hamilton Gilmer			Gilmer Hamilton
20	Hanlon Frank			Frank Hanlon
21	Hanly Joe			
22	Haughian Nuala			N. Haughian
23	Irwin David			
24	Kane Brian			APOLOGIES
25	Kavanagh Bernie			
26	Keegan Kavanagh Noreen			Noreen Keegan Kavanagh
27	Kehoe Catherine			
28	Laurens Conlon Ariadne			Ariadne Conlon
29	Magee Hugo			APOLOGIES
30	McGillycuddy Tom			APOLOGIES
31	McGrath Patricia			Pat McGrath
32	McGreal Killian			
33	McMahon Lorcan			Lorcan McMahon
34	McNabb Roisin			
35	Moroney Anita			Anita Moroney
36	Mulhall Jason			Jason Mulhall jinegad.com
37	Murphy Fr. Tim			APOLOGIES
38	Murphy Mary Lorna			Mary Lorna Murphy
39	Nolan Noel			Noel Nolan
40	O hAilín Ruaidhrí			APOLOGIES
41	O'Neill Gerry			Gerry O'Neill
42	Phibbs Patsy			
43	Pidgeon Pat			
44	Quinn Anthony			
45	Ryall Sally Ann			
46	Sargent Michael			Michael Sargent
47	Schwepe Brian			
48	Sullivan Lindsay			
49	Ward Deirdre			APOLOGIES
50	Winters Pat			Pat Winters