

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting

held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington

on Monday, 11 April 2011

at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Members as per attached list.

Minutes

The previous meeting was held on 14 February 2011. The meeting scheduled for 14 March 2011 had been deferred, as members had attended the Joint Policing Committee Public Meeting at St. Kevin's Hall on that night. The minutes of the meeting of 14 February 2011 were proposed by Seamus Balfe, seconded by Pat Conlan and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting dealt with the following matters:

1. Old Library Building

Several Forum members had viewed the old library building on Wednesday 16 March 2011 when a viewing was arranged with Ms. Lorraine Gallagher of Wicklow County Council. Members present gave their views. It was noted that the use of the building as a day care centre is no longer on the agenda, while it was pointed out that Manus O'Donnell had completed plans to redevelop the building. It was agreed that the Chairman would revert to Wicklow County Council advising that the Forum is completing a feasibility study on its possible use and that in the meantime, if Wicklow County Council are agreeable, the Forum will arrange for a clean-up of the outside of the building including repair of fascia and gutters and hose-down of the outside walls.

2. Litter

Pat Conlan and Seamus Balfe advised of continuing efforts to maintain St. Patrick's Well. Considerable litter had accumulated on St. Patrick's Day and a small skip is required at this juncture to have the tidied rubbish taken away.

Members were read an email from a resident complaining of dog fouling in all parts of the town, and particularly the relief road. It was agreed that the signs recently

erected should also include a notice to say it is an offence. It was agreed also to include a paragraph in the newsletter and mention to John Bohan for the Wicklow People Notes. In the meantime the Forum will check if there is a bye-law on this and what is the view of the dog warden. The Forum will also check on what is happening elsewhere in relation to receptacles and availability of bags.

Members were advised of the letter of 26 February 2011 to Declan Geraghty, Area Engineer, complementing the Council on present work at Main Street being completed on a daily basis by Denis Toomey.

3. Road surface, Main Street

Pat Winters put to the meeting that the Forum needs structures whereby matters not being tackled by various bodies are more aggressively pursued. Pat Winters believes that the local residents are unbelievably tolerant. There was general consensus that the amount of debris left from building sites is considerable. In particular, the Council arranged for the derelict building on the Naas Road to be knocked down, however the general area has been left in a dangerous condition with no action taken on the clean-up necessary following the demolition. It was noted that there is considerable debris also on the Cookehill site and on the Council site beside the Council office. David Egar agreed to make contact with the various parties and make an effort to have these sites remedied.

There was considerable discussion on the imminent resurfacing of Main Street and in particular the attitude to overhead cables. It was explained by Pat Pidgeon that the NRA decide when the work is to be done and fund Wicklow County Council. Seamus Balfe advised that in Lacken, when a road surface job was done recently, all cables were put underground. David Egar explained that Wicklow County Council have allocated a large portion of their 2012 allocation to Main Street and it is now incumbent on the community to take up the option to have the surface of Main Street done and deal with the ESB and trees issues later. It was acknowledged that the ESB or agents on their behalf are continuing to butcher the trees on Main Street. Enquiries will be made by the Forum as to how, in the long term, these cables can be put underground.

The Forum noted recent advices from Sean Quirke at Director of Services, Transport and Roads Infrastructure, Wicklow County Council, that "the tender process has been completed for the project and funding has been confirmed for the current year. We are currently awaiting confirmation of some information on the tenders prior to appointment and would hope to commence work next month". Pat Pidgeon also advised the meeting that Sean Quirke advises that the Council will adequate notice prior to commencement of the work.

4. Turning Point

A presentation was made to the meeting on efforts by representatives of Turning Point to have FÁS courses in Blessington. Turning Point representatives are anxious to have a short course on tourism as a similar FÁS course was recently given in Rathdrum. The Forum will check on the availability of FÁS courses and also liaise with the Department of Social Protection on this item.

5. Theatre

Pat Winters gave an update on where matters stand at the Theatre, in particular the need to have people to work and drive the Theatre. Pat Winters explained that the Theatre is struggling to get people to run things at the moment, although sincere thanks were passed to Gráinne O'Rourke for the recent concert and the contribution to Tramway Theatre funds of €3,000.

6. AOB

- It was noted that the launch of the Community Survey will be in the week beginning 23 May 2011 and is planned to be at the Tramway Theatre.
- Members were advised of the recent mention in the Wicklow People of "Council gets €1.2m water windfall". Fintan Gilheany is anxious that this matter be followed up with the Council, particularly in the context of upgrading the Hempstown water scheme.
- Members were advised of a letter from the Forum of 26 February 2011 thanking Margaret Flynn for services to Blessington Library on her recent retirement and wishing Margaret well.
- Good wishes were extended to Fr. Kevin Lyon on his recent hip operation.
- It was agreed to liaise with Wicklow County Council on the trees being cut down on Main Street.
- Members were advised of a letter of resignation from Secretary Ann Horan, who was badly injured recently. Ann's right arm has been broken in several places and there will be several months of rehabilitation and in the meantime Ann is standing down as Secretary. All members were very appreciative of the great contribution Ann makes to Blessington & District Forum on an ongoing basis.

This concluded the business of the meeting.