

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington on Monday, 16 April 2012 at 8.00 p.m.

- Present:** List of attendees as per attached
- Apologies:** List of apologies as per attached
- Guests:** Eileen Byrnes (Bray Area Partnership)
Christine O'Donnell (Suicide Prevention & Counselling)

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2012 were proposed by Brian Schweppe, seconded by Michael Curran and signed by the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.

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

1. Lake Walk

Killian McGreal updated members on progress to date. It was explained that an application for planning exemption has been lodged with Wicklow County Council, while a grant application has been lodged under the Community Awards Scheme. Killian McGreal explained that at present matters are still on schedule for a tender process in May, with the work to be carried out in July/August with an opening in September.

2. Theatre

Liam Fay advised that there is still no further news on the grant application in respect of the outside sign and other capital works. Members were reminded that on Thursday, Friday and Saturday this week BYMDS have a major production and that coming up in May will be a concert with Jack L.

3. Environmental Sub-Committee

Jason Mulhall, Chairman of the Environmental Sub-Committee, updated members on present progress. The Environment Committee comprises Forum members Jason Muhall, Noreen Keegan Kavanagh, Brian Kane, Michael Duggan, Anita Moroney and John Brennan. Brian Kane gave details of the CE scheme which has been put in place, whereby two CE workers now spend 20 hours each per week on Tidy Towns work. The CE workers are presently looking after a tidy-up of the approach roads. Jason Mulhall also advised that a phase one tidy-up has been completed in respect of Dempsey's Lane and St. Patrick's Well. News of

the CE scheme workers was greeted enthusiastically by members and it is seen as a first step on the way to re-entering the national Tidy Towns competition. Other short-term goals include a follow-up clean of Dempsey's Lane, a review of bins in the town and a meeting with Wicklow County Council local representatives. Jason Mulhall advised that a roster for a half hour tidy-up each weekend of Main Street has now been arranged and several Forum members have now joined the Environment Committee to facilitate this roster.

4. Services Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee, comprising Lorcan McMahon, Deirdre Ward and Pat McGrath, is concentrating efforts on the old library building. The Committee has arranged for a local builder to review the property and also an electrician and reports are awaited from both. The Committee has arranged to block open windows and it is now intended to liaise with Lorraine Gallagher in regard to whether or not any of the remedial works are covered by insurance. The Committee will in due course be bringing a proposal in regard to the old library to a Forum Meeting.

5. Culture & Heritage Sub-Group

The Culture & Heritage Sub-Group had a walk over the local town trail on Saturday 14 April. This group is working on how to make the public and tourists to the town aware of the local points of interest.

6. Glending

Glending representatives Aisling Dermody and Carmel Cashin reported on remedial works presently being carried out by Wicklow County Council. Members noted that 8 houses were flooded in 2008 and that currently 28 houses, out of the 90 houses in the estate, are unoccupied. Flooding has been a constant problem since 2008 and happened again in October last year. The idea of a holding tank was abandoned by Wicklow County Council and the present remedial works comprise the installation of 1 metre drainage pipes, which, it appears, will require a water pump to ensure the water feeds from the surrounds of Glending Estate into the drainage system. It was agreed that the Glending representatives would meet with David Egar and endeavour to secure further clarification of the works presently being undertaken, particularly the plans for those works.

7. Outstanding issues

- The outcome of the meetings on the issues raised by St. Kevin's Trustees.
- Updates are to be obtained on lights at Crosschapel, Blessington Local Area Plan, Manor Kilbride graveyard extension.
- The question of lights from Downshire Park to Dunnes Stores is still outstanding with the management company.

8. Hillbilly Tractor Run

Members need to keep in mind the visit of the Hillbilly Tractor Run to Blessington on 24 June.

9. Presentation – Eileen Byrnes, Bray Area Partnership

Eileen Byrnes made a presentation in regard to the Community Outreach Digital Switchover Programme. It was explained that the switch over from analogue to digital will take place on 24 October 2012 and that if person receives only RTE1 and RTE2 through an aerial and not TV3 or TG4, a new aerial will be required and a new set-top box. Persons who receive RTE from Sky, UPC or any other subscription service don't need to do anything. Eileen Byrnes pointed out that if people receive RTE1, RTE2, TV3 and TG4 from an aerial, then the aerial is fine. If persons only receive RTE1, RTE2 and TG4, then the aerial is probably fine but may need to be pointed in the right direction. It was explained that the object of the programme is to ensure that members of the public are aware of the importance of making the switch over and consequences of not doing so, aware of the options available to them to make a successful switch over and able to make a decision and exercise that decision. The contact number is 1890 940 980 and information is also available on www.goingdigital.ie.

10. Presentation – Christine O'Donnell, Suicide Prevention Counselling

Christine O'Donnell made a presentation on the possible set up of a suicide prevention network in Blessington. At present the network, which is just commencing has six persons and Christine O'Donnell is seeking the help of perhaps two or three Forum members to join the network group. The objective of the presentation was to put out the idea to form a pool of about 10 – 12 core supportive locals interested in and committed to forming a community suicide prevention network and set up a local community suicide prevention website. The network group will also facilitate the education and awareness of training through the community and encourage local people to participate in the Safe Talk and Assist training programmes run by the HSE. It will also be the intention to lobby HSE and other relevant organisations to provide suicide prevention assistance in the area.

This was a very informative presentation and members complimented Christine O'Donnell on the initiative in setting up this network in Blessington. Gerry O'Neill, Ruth Fitzsimons, Noreen Keegan Kavanagh and Fr. Tim Murphy raised points which Christine O'Donnell has noted to forward to the network group. The point was made that there is no MABS availability in Blessington and in this connection members will investigate how this might be rectified.

11. A.O.B.

- Gerry O'Neill advised that Kilbride GAA will having an event at their pitch on 5 May to commemorate Ciaran Jones and that there will be a Community Alert presentation in Valleymount on 19 May.
- Members unanimously approved the nomination of Sally Ann Ryall as Secretary in place of Catherine Kehoe, who has stood down due to work commitments.

It was noted by members that the next meeting would be held on 14 May 2012.

This concluded the business of the meeting.