

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting

held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington

on Monday, 10 January 2011

at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Members as per attached list.

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 December 2010, were read, approved on the proposal of Fintan Gilheaney, seconded by Michael Curran and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting dealt with the following matters:

1. Correspondence

Forum Secretary Ann Horan read to the meeting letters to Dublin Bus on 16 December 2010, Superintendent Eamonn Keogh, Baltinglass 16 December 2010 and Declan Geraghty, Area Engineer 16 December 2010. Ann also advised details of a reply to Lorraine Gallagher on 16 December 2010 in relation to the old library and it was noted that an acknowledgement had been received dated 5 January, advising that "I will be in further correspondence with you in relation to this matter at an early date".

2. Theatre

Pat Winters confirmed that the second and final payment had been received from CWP and the loan at AIB had now been cleared and the director guarantees released. Pat Winters advised the meeting that Richard Lynch intends to direct the play "Sive". This will be the first full theatre production. Pat Winters did advise that recent meetings of the management group have been disappointingly attended and that perhaps after two years this group needs to be re-constituted. Fr. Tim expressed his appreciation of how events had gone at the visit of Mary McAleese and that as many people as possible should have a look at the DVD of the event.

3. Christmas lights

The Chairman reported that, at this juncture, approximately 30 businesses out of the 64 circularised have contributed to the Christmas lights. Seamus Balfe advised that it had been disappointing that the Christmas tree had not been possible this year as, due to snow, it had not been possible to extricate the tree from the wood or the base from the yard behind SuperValu. Seamus Balfe confirmed that the arrangements to take down the Christmas lights are in hand and would commence tomorrow.

4. Litter

The Chairman reported of communications which had been received from local resident Sharon O'Brien including a letter which had been written by Sharon O'Brien to all Wicklow County Councillors and to Declan Geraghty. The Chairman advised that he had replied to Sharon O'Brien, making comments in relation to where matters presently stand to our knowledge.

There was a long discussion on how matters might be improved and it was generally agreed that there needs to be a new impetus to emphasise Blessington "pride" and make a fresh start. The following points were made in discussions:

- The promotion of Blessington as a heritage town was again raised and it was agreed that Ruairí O hAilín and Liam Fay would, by 31 March, report to the Forum on this possibility.
- The Secretary will correspond with Wicklow County Council regarding bins on the relief road.
- The Chairman will continue to follow up with the History Society the application to the Heritage Council for signage for the historical landmarks in the town.
- The Secretary will correspond with Wicklow County Council in regard to future bad weather and the possibility of the Council allowing local farmers to spread sand/grit. This could be left at a collection point for local farmers to obtain and then spread as needed.
- Contact will be made with Alan Kinsella at the Community College in regard to the possibility of the transition year students having a look at a tidy-up of Dempsey's Lane.
- David Egar reported that he is now on the Roads Committee of Wicklow County Council and would like the Forum to correspond with both Kildare County Council and Wicklow County Council and ask them to liaise in particular on the Kilmalum Road and its gritting in bad weather.
- Liam Fay suggested that the Forum speak with contacts in Greystones regarding how the litter problem had been considerably improved in Greystones.
- John Coogan advised that, some years back, 8 additional bins had arrived to Wicklow County Council in Blessington, but had not been erected, the Forum will check with the Council.
- Contact will be made with the Council in regard to seeking the assistance of business people in the emptying of bins when full and the storing of the litter until collected by the Council.

It was agreed by all that a fresh start needs to be made and John Brennan pointed out that, in the case of publicans, they are well aware of the necessity to clean outside their premises because of recent prosecutions. It may be a case that enforcement in this manner may be the spur to help others in the town to do likewise.

Gerry O'Neill pointed out that Wicklow County Council will be meeting on Monday in regard to assessing damage to roadways and that it would be vital for the Forum to communicate the views of the local area to the Council in advance of that meeting. It was agreed to notify the bad state of the roads from Blessington to Kilbride and from Kilbride to the Lamb in particular.

5. Snow response

The Chairman reported that several persons had given their names in regard to their availability to provide help with 4x4 vehicles in the event of bad weather. A number of those persons had assisted over the Christmas in the delivery of the Vincent de Paul hampers when the weather was bad and 4x4 vehicles were required.

6. A.O.B.

- a. Ruairí o hAilín advised that the Kilmalum Road would be closed from 11am on 11 January 2011 for one week to facilitate tarmacing of the road near the Gaelscoil.
- b. Gerry O'Neill mentioned the communities networking meeting in Glendalough on Thursday and it was agreed that contact would be made to establish what had transpired in regard to that meeting.
- c. Gerry O'Neill advised that those in ownership of County Council housing have the option, through the Social Housing Programme, of a purchase option and this should be conveyed to those persons by newsletter notices where possible.
- d. Gerry O'Neill also advised that the Motor Tax Office has another three months' reprieve. In the meantime it was agreed that the Forum would again write to the County Council to request that the Council office be kept open and that the Council endeavour to enhance services by the provision of other services from the building.
- e. There was a discussion also on the question of the transfer of Tallaght/Crumlin Children's Hospital services to the Mater site in the city centre. It was agreed that this is going for planning permission and that people in West Wicklow would prefer to see a site at Crumlin which would be closer and that the Forum might make an objection in this regard.
- f. Secretary Ann Horan agreed to continue liaising with Brendan Fitzsimons at Cookehill in regard to the lights behind Joseph's Road.
- g. There was no update on the Chamber of Commerce, but the Chairman has indicated that some business persons have suggested a West Wicklow Chamber of Commerce rather than Blessington, and this will be considered in the coming months.

- h. John Coogan asked if contact could be made with Quinn Reddin in regard to the very bad stated of the site adjacent to the new library.

Members were delighted to see Pete Nolan (Rockypool) back at the Forum meeting. Very best wishes were extended to Pete on his first outing to the Forum since August last year and everybody was delighted that he is out and about again.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The next meeting to be held on the second Monday in February, being Monday 14 February 2011.