

## BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

**Minutes of Meeting  
held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington  
on Monday, 10 October 2011  
at 8.00 p.m.**

**Present:** List of names herewith

**Apologies:** List of names herewith

### Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th September 2011 were proposed by Nuala Cashin and seconded by Gilmer Hamilton. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.

The meeting dealt with the following issues -

#### 1. Nominations

Pat Pidgeon was nominated as vice chairperson, proposed by Brian Daly and seconded by John Coogan. Killian McGreal was nominated as P. R.O. and Glenn Fitzpatrick as assistant P.R.O., nominated by Michael Curran, seconded by Brian Schweppe. Catherine Kehoe was nominated as minutes secretary, proposed by Michael Sargent, seconded by Frank Hanlon.

#### 2. Presentation

Mr. Tim Kyne, a representative for West Wicklow Tourism, made a presentation to the Forum regarding the walk around the lake. He commented on the fact that only 200,000 people visit Wicklow on an annual basis. This compares to 600,000 for Co. Clare and over 4 million for Dublin. He noted that Wicklow only attracts visitors on a day basis rather than staying in the county for a couple of days. He also stated that Fáilte Ireland and WRP are focused on developing Wicklow & Kildare as a key area for tourists and that they hope to focus on Blessington as the nerve centre for West Wicklow. He noted that there was an investment potential of €2 - €2.5 million from Fáilte Ireland available. He suggested that John Horan organise a public meeting in the Avon Rí to discuss the project in detail. He also reported on the visit to Rutland Waters and said that it was very successful and informative.

Tim Kyne also suggested that the Forum look at how Tinahely had developed its walks and perhaps ask a PHD student to do an analysis of the local benefits of an investment in tourism.

Questions – Mrs. Haughian asked about the closure of the Downshire Hotel as did several other members. It was agreed that the chairman and vice chairman would endeavour to check the position.

3. Social Media

Glenn Fitzpatrick made a presentation on social media and how it could be of benefit to the Forum. He suggested that the Forum set up its own facebook page and that the P.R.O. would manage this. There was also a suggestion that the Forum set up its own web page. A full sheet outlining the benefits of facebook and social media was given to every member of the Forum.

4. Volunteer Group Meeting

A sheet was passed around to all Forum members informing them of a volunteer information day taking place on Monday 17th October in St Kevin's Hall. Members were asked if they would like to attend and man the stand for the Forum. Interested members were to contact Michael Sargent.

5. Strategic Groups

Liam Fay and Pat Winters presented a report that was put together by the strategic group. This outlined the structure of the groups as well as the working methods, meetings and membership of the groups. The groups were divided in to four areas - Development, Environment, Culture & Heritage and Services. Each member was asked to join one of these groups, however it is not obligatory. It was suggested that a form be sent out to each member with the list of the groups and that this would be returned to the chairman before the next meeting. It was noted that a separate meeting would need to be held for the strategic groups each month and that a report would be presented to the Forum at the monthly meeting.

6. A.O.B.

- Frank Hanlon noted that his newspaper would be up and running again in the New Year and that he would appreciate support from the local community.
- Fr. Tim suggested asking ALDI for sponsorship for the Old Library. He noted that when Dunnes Stores came to the town that they received sponsorship for many projects.
- Pat Conlon - advised of a Swedish group visit on 5th November 2011.
- Catherine Kehoe asked was there a plan in place if the snow occurred again this year. Fr. Tim said the same group as last year would operate.
- Ruth Pritchard, a PHD student, asked members if they would be interested in talking to her regarding her research.
- Members again raised Dempsey's Lane & Rockypool and also the road lights exiting the Theatre.

The meeting concluded. The next meeting will be held on Monday 14th November 2011.

Brian Scheyff

Peter Nolan

Michael Sargent  
14/11/11