

Signed

BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting
held at St. Mary's National School, Blessington
on Monday 8 December 2014
at 8.00 p.m.

Present: List of members as per attached

Apologies: List of apologies as per attached

In Attendance: Councillor Gerry O'Neill

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2014 were proposed by Noel Nolan seconded by Mrs Nuala Haughian and signed by the Chairman.

Christmas Lights

Thanks were expressed to Forum member Michael Duggan who chaired the subcommittee looking after the Christmas tree lights assisted by Mrs Haughian, Carmel Cashin, David Egar, Noel Nolan and Eamonn Kelly. Considerable assistance was also provided by Seamus Balfe, Barry Hamilton, Paul Carey and the Tidy Towns Committee members and Pat Conlon, Kieran Mulvey, Paul Cullen, Noel Murphy and Sean Healy. There were particular thanks to Dan Kelly (SuperValu) and to Lisa Charles at Charles Camping.

Thanks also to Fr. Noel Campbell, Rev. Leonard Ruddock and West Wicklow Home and to the following

Chloe Gallagher switching on of the lights
Blessington Folk Group
Endeavour Tia Duffy and Jenni O'Brian
Sinead O'Brien School of Dance
Angela Brien School of Dance
Catherine O'Toole hula hoop act
Mick Flynn, Margaret Eustace, Niall Kelly & Eugene Flanagan to finish off the evening.
Miley Balfe re Santa

The Committee are discussing how matters went and should have a note in due course for a Forum meeting, of possible improvements.

The Chairman handed out details of the Receipts & Payments relating to the Christmas lights 2013 (copy attached) showing the business contributions last year at €2,810 with an amount of €1,425 spent on repairing lights. This Cash Receipts & Payments Account has been circulated to the businesses and contributions towards this year's lights to date have been received from Credit Union, Sakura, St. Kevins, Punctual Print, R&H, Anne Reid, JP & M Doyle, Michael Sargent and AIB Bank. It is hoped that €3,000 can be collected from the businesses as an amount of

€2,100 has been incurred this year already on repairing lights, new lights for the street and new lights for the Christmas tree. The Chairman also confirmed that the Forum looks after the payment for the insurance which last year cost €382.

Blessington Youth Project

Members attention was drawn to the BYP Bulletin which recently issued and which is available and which gives a summary of actions to date and planned events. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Blessington Greenway

Members were very disappointed with the revelations in the Sunday Business Post of 30 November 2014 which gave details of the top ten Greenway projects selected by an independent assessment team. The Sunday Business Post article pointed out that Environment Minister Alan Kelly however, ignored the expert advice and only provided funds for two of the top ten Greenways selected. Funds instead went to other low ranking Greenway projects such as Clonmel to Carrick-On-Suir ranked 14 out of 38 and Patrick's Well Limerick ranked 34th. Councillor Gerry O'Neill advised that both himself and Councillor Ruttle raised this at Wicklow County Council today 8 December and Wicklow County Council accepted the proposal to write to the Minister deploring overlooking the Greenways selected by the independent assessment team. The Chairman read to the members an update received from John Horan and John briefed members as follows

A lot has happened on the Greenway front since the last update to the Forum.

In brief the following has been the sequence of events.

Twenty Waymarkers and three Mapboards were received, erected and paid for. Thanks are due to Russborough (Eric Blatchford) and Avon Ri (Valerie Bracken) for funding and Paul Ashmore for the hard work to get them in place.

This enabled us to get the final inspection carried out by the National Trails Office. I accompanied the Inspector on the day and he was impressed by what we had done. On 11 November we received confirmation that the Greenway "complies with national standards and is listed on the National Trails Register and recorded as accredited". NTO approval is a major milestone.

This in turn enabled us to submit our final grant application to County Wicklow Partnership ahead of the scheme closure date of 31 December 2014.

The Greenway was featured in the Magazine of the Sunday Business Post in conjunction with a feature on Russborough.

On 18 November Kilian McGreal visited Brussels (thanks to Cllr Gerry O'Neill) as part of a Leader Delegation and made very useful contacts and got a lot of good information on potential funding sources for the development of Phase 2. On the same day I attended a Cross Border seminar on Utilising our Natural Resources for Economic Development in Leighlinbridge with a similar objective.

The Sunday Business Post on 30 November had a major story on how funding had been allocated for Greenway's earlier in the year. In short the reporter had used Freedom of Information and established that of the 38 projects submitted for funding by Local Authorities Blessington

Greenway had been rated as Number 2 by the expert Assessment Team - but had not been allocated funding by the Minister involved. This has been the subject of much comment by other politicians in the National and Local media in the past week.

On the following day Wicklow TD, Simon Harris, who is Minister of State at the Department of Finance with responsibility for the Office of Public Works was in Blessington. Michael Sargent, Killian McGreal and myself met with him and outlined our plans for Phase 2 and the need for funding. I followed up with a detailed submission on Wednesday and I understand that the Minister is convening a 'summit' of key interested parties in Government Buildings in January. The aim will be to progress what is in effect a 'shovel-ready' project which has been endorsed by the experts as a project of substance.

Killian McGreal advised having travelled to Brussels recently and discussed funding options with European MEPs Deirdre Clune, Brian Hayes and the Sinn Fein MEP Liadh Ni Riada. Killian McGreal had joined a delegation facilitated by Councillor Gerry O'Neill. Killian also advised having attended a funding seminar recently in the Ferrycarraig Hotel, Wexford on the same matter.

Finally, the Chairman concluded as did John Horan in his update to say that Junior Minister Simon Harris is convening a meeting of interested parties in Government Buildings in January and we will await the outcome of this event.

Tidy Towns.

Jason Mulhall advised that the Skate Park should be ready in December and that Dempsey's Laneway is at present being resurfaced. Carmel Cashin asked Jason if he could speak with the Council in regard to perhaps fencing off the Skate Park at present as in an unfinished condition it is dangerous and is being used.

Jason also advised that the County Council had not been aware of the planned cutting of trees and are taking this matter up with the ESB. The crossing at Aldi is a matter the Council will have a look at in January/February next year and likewise for Crosschapel. The idea of transparencies on the pavement in regard to dog fouling is on hold at the moment and how it has worked in such areas as Dublin's City Council are being looked at.

Brian Kane advised that there are presently five CE workers until March and that they work within the speed limit signs in the area of the town. Although certain workers will be leaving the scheme in the months March/April to June Brian is hopeful of recruiting others by way of replacement.

Forum 8th December 2014 – from 9pm

Tidy Towns

- The Blessington Tidy Towns accounts for 2013 were presented. Accounts for 2014 will be presented end of January 2015.
- There was a request that children should be kept out of the skatepark while it is still under construction, noting that it was for the Council to secure the site at this point.
- A public meeting with the Council is to be held Tuesday 9th December at 11am in the local Council offices.

Glending Estate

- A Report has been prepared via Council Architects and the opinions of residents are to be sought. However, this has not been forwarded to residents, those affected are not aware of what is being planned for their houses and when. There is an urgent need to put strong pressure on WCC to communicate with residents.
- The Clerk of Works is not effective. He needs to explain in a timely way what is to be done in each house.
- The Council Report must be immediately sent to all residents.
- Agreed that Gerry O'Neill set up meeting with residents and Michael Nicholson of W.C.C.

Housing

- Gerry O'Neill MCC gave a description of the housing situation in Blessington and Wicklow in general, with a possible 400 on the housing list (this could amount to 1200 persons). Forum should open communications with Wicklow, Kildare, and Irish Water regarding the need for additional housing in Blessington. GON can facilitate a meeting with officials, probably in January.
- Some Blessington houses in Co. Kildare use Wicklow water services and this should be addressed by the Forum.
- Gerry O'Neill MCC confirmed that monies for the remediation works in Glending Estate remains 'ring-fenced'.

Blessington Youth Project

- Good progress has been made on this project and there is wide acceptance in the community of its goals. A bulletin is to be sent to all involved parents describing this progress and the next steps.

Text Alert

- A further meeting is planned for 14 January in the Boxing Club.
- While up to 30 people have attended previous meetings, a leaflet drop to houses is needed to explain the proposal and seeking whether or not people are interested in joining.
- It was suggested that one estate be selected as a trial location, to get the system launched and to learn lessons. Westpark was selected.
- Agreed that Gerry O'Neill liaise with Westpark re text alert.

Forum Nominations


- No further names have come forward. MS pursuing.


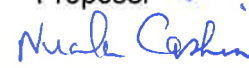
AOB

- It was announced that a strategy paper to develop the economy of Co. Wicklow will be available for public consultation – more details to follow Jan/Feb.
- Killian McGreal is now a member of the Wicklow SPC for Economic Development.
- KMcG reminded the meeting that there is no Chamber of Commerce in West Wicklow. In order to commence setting one up there will be a Business Networking meeting in Tulfarris in January.
- There was a short discussion on the future of the old Engineer's Office – should it be removed?

This concluded the business of the meeting

The Forum will reconvene on 12 January 2015


Chairman
12 January 2015
Date


Proposer

Seconder

Blessington & District Forum 2013/2014
Bank Receipts and Payments Account

Christmas Lights

€

Balance at Bank at 1 January 2013

685

Receipts

Business contributions to xmas lights (2013)	2,810
Business contributions to Street Map (August 2013)	1,295
Glending Residents contribution	300
Donation	<u>350</u>
	<u>5,440</u>

Payments

Erection/take down of lights	1,099
Repair lights	1,425
Cables, switches	194
Christmas tree	200
Insurance	382
Print Street Map (Aug 2013)	1,000
Architect re Glending (Nov 2013)	1,000
Bank charges	<u>67</u>
	<u>5,367</u>

Balance at Bank at 25 November 2014

73

Blessington Tidy Towns

Income & Expenditure Account 2013

Income

	€
Sponsorships	350
Grants	4,117
Collections	795
Short Term Loan	3,000
Raffle	325
Pure Mile Award	<u>250</u>
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	<u>8,837</u>

Expenditure

Misc. expenses 2013	2,267
FFEC Plan & Report – Payment #1	4,576
Short Term Loan Repayment	3,000
CE Scheme – PRSI & Fine	<u>307</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>10,150</u>
<u>TOTAL DEFICIT</u>	(1,313)
<u>Cash at Bank Balance at start of year</u>	<u>3,967</u>
<u>Cash at Bank Balance at end of year</u>	<u>2,654</u>

Made up of

Cash balance	18
Credit Union balance	1,176
Ulster Bank balance	<u>1,460</u>
	<u>2,654</u>

& District Forum

List 8 December 2014

Name	Signature
Brady Tommy	APOLOGIES
Brennan John	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Cashin Carmel	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Cashin Nuala	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Conlon Laurens	a <i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Ariadne	
Conlon Pat	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Curran Michael	Apologies
Noel Murphy	
Doyle Michael	
Duggan Michael	
Egar David	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Fay Liam	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
O'Heany Fintan	
Hanlon Frank	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Hanly Joe	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Haughian Nuala	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Kane Brian	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Keegan Kavanagh	
Noreen	Apologies
McGreal Killian	
Moroney Anita	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Mullhall Jason	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Murphy Fr. Tim	
045 865442	to 2
Murphy Mary Lorna	Apologies
Noel Noel	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
O'Riada Patsy	APOLOGIES
Sargent Michael	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Schweppe Brian	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>