

## **BLESSINGTON AND DISTRICT FORUM**

### **Minutes of Meeting Held in at St Mary's National School, Blessington on Monday 11 December 2017 at 8.00 pm**

**Present:** List of members as per the attached  
**Apologies:** List of apologies as per the attached

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 November 2017 were proposed by Anita Moroney and seconded by Aine Keogh and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting dealt with the following matters.

#### **Enterprise Town Event**

Jason Mulhall outlined the outcome of our Enterprise Town participation.

- 96 towns across the country took part in the event and we were included in the 3000 – 7000 population category.
- 38 towns were shortlisted.
- The results were announced at a Bank of Ireland function in the Bridge Hotel Tullamore on 15 November 2017 attended by Jason Mulhall, Kilian McGreal, John Horan, Sonia Moran, Susan Nichols and Councillor Vincent Blake.
- Blessington was announced as the winner in the Leinster region in the category 3000 – 7000 population.
- Blessington was further announced as in the top three across all five regions with Carrick on Shannon winning the category award and Tralee winning the overall award.
- Soundings indicate that we were considered to be early on our journey in this competition plus the judges were aware of objections to the Greenway Project and the lack of a town plan to deal with such as overhead cables and town square did not help our efforts.
- Overall however, members were delighted with the award and the fact that we rubbed shoulders with some of the bigger and better known towns in the country.
- We received a trophy and €3000.

### **Christmas Lights.**

Mick Duggan reported that Christmas lights had been erected over the past couple of weeks with only one or two lights still to be put in place.

Electrician Kieran Malone has helped erect all of the lights with the assistance of Barry Hamilton and Paddy Sargent. Thanks were expressed also to Fergal Donoghue who provided a cherry picker for the job, to Stephen Doyle and the Boothman family for storage of the lights.

Special thanks were expressed to Blessington & District Credit Union for their sponsoring of the Christmas tree.

At this juncture the lights have been paid for at a cost of €20,834. The Chairman with the assistance of Mick Duggan will over the coming couple of weeks endeavour to collect the business contributions. As of today €1600 has been received in respect of the purchase of motifs, €850 in respect of the sponsoring of trees and €1645 in respect of the annual trade contributions. Thanks were also expressed to Reservoir Cogs for the contribution received of €2,600.

The Estates collection at the moment totals €2705 with further monies to be lodged and a full count will be available at the next meeting.

### **Christmas Santa Day.**

Mick Duggan also reported on the Santa day which was a great success and gets bigger and better every year.

- 370 presents were handed out.
- Fr Kevin Lyons did the official lights switch on.
- Thanks were expressed to the Credit Union for their sponsoring of the Christmas tree.
- Thanks also to electrician Kieran Malone, Barry Hamilton and Paddy Sargent.
- Thanks to Peter Eustace for looking after helpers after the event.
- Thanks to our Forum sub-committee of Mick Duggan, Carmel Cashin and Noel Nolan.

Thanks also to the following

- The Gardaí
- Wicklow County Council
- The many businesses who have sponsored Christmas lights.
- Susan Nichols Wicklow County Council
- Baltinglass Forum for loan of barriers.
- Colm Flynn at Flynn Crane Hire for the trailer
- Macaris for kids meals and sponsoring lights on tree
- Tinsley Carpentry who sponsored Santas presents.

- The BLUC Committee comprising Carmel Cashin, Noel Nolan and Michael Duggan.
- Jason Mulhall and the Tidy Towns Committee.
- The Reservoir Cogs Committee for their donation of €2600.
- Rockabilly Rebels for providing the music
- Martin Keogh for his assistance with transporting the barriers.
- Nigel Charles at Charles Camping.

Michael Duggan advised that this event is costing €1000 - €1500 to put on each year and fundraising needs to be put in place for this.

In looking forward to next year the following points were noted to assist in making things better.

- Need canopy for the queue.
- Power supply needs to be arranged with Wicklow County Council.
- Provide a Christmas market.
- Need additional stewards.
- No Parking signs to be put in place early
- Unsolicited hawkers to be monitored.
- Warm facilities for artists.

It was agreed that come July/August next year that additional members will be recruited to the BLUC sub-committee.

### **Price Brothers Homecoming.**

Pat Winters attended the Forum meeting and advised of the decision to put on a homecoming for the Price brothers on the Tuesday following their exit from the X Factor competition. A small committee comprising Liam Fay, Michael Doyle, Kilian McGreal and Pat Winters organised the event which with the aid of Peter Eustace at West Wicklow House helped the event go ahead on the stage outside the West Wicklow. Thanks were expressed to BYT for providing the stage and to Men's Shed for having transported this. There was also thanks to the Gardai, Vincent Blake and Susan Nichols at Wicklow County Council and Josh Gray for having provided music in advance of the homecoming.

Pat Winters thanked all members of the Forum and advised that the family were delighted with the reception and with the crowd that turned up on the night.

### **Website.**

Liam Fay reported that the name blessington.ie has been secured and that arrangements to secure blessingtonforum.ie and blessingtonforum.com are in hand.

The Forum CE Secretary is now contactable at [secretary@blessington.ie](mailto:secretary@blessington.ie).

Liam made the following points

- A designer has been retained for the website design.
- Liam Fay is meeting with the CE Secretary Stephanie this week to advance matters.

- Items on the Old Blessington Info site will migrate to the new website. There will be links to Tidy Towns and other entities.
- Thanks were expressed to Pat Winters for having provided a state of the art laptop.
- It is hoped to have a formal launch of the website say mid February.
- The CE Secretary Stephanie will do day to day updates.
- There will be ongoing website costs although these will not be huge.

Thanks were expressed to Liam Fay for his continuing efforts to have this up and running as soon as possible.

#### **District Administrator.**

Jason Mulhall advised that the new District Administrator is Ms Dionne Dixon who formerly worked in the Finance and Law Sections of Wicklow County Council.

#### **Awards Night. Review.**

It was agreed that the methodology behind the awards be reviewed and in particular how to nominate and select persons for the annual awards. With this in mind a sub-committee was agreed and this will be chaired by Carmel Cashin assisted by Jason Mulhall, Aine Keogh, Liam Fay and Frank Hanlon and this sub-committee will report in March 2018.

#### **Downshire Hotel.**

There were no developments to report on the purchase of the Downshire House Hotel other than that it is expected the new purchasers will be in occupation early in the New Year.

#### **Correspondence.**

An invitation from the Board of Directors of Blessington & District Credit Union to the official opening of the Credit Union Roundabout was read and it was agreed that Noel Nolan and Aine Keogh would represent the Forum at this event on Saturday 16 December 2017.

#### **AOB.**

- Eamon Kelly expressed concern at the number of local robberies particularly at Burgage Manor and the lack of any text updates from the text alert system. It was agreed that contact would be made with the text alert committee to check on the notifications system.
- Pat Conlon expressed the sympathies of the Forum on the recent death of Bertha Craul.
- It was agreed that a note be put in the Newsletter advising that extra members to the Forum would be welcome.

- Aine Keogh raised the question of planning permission for a house at Oak Drive which it appears will interfere with a long standing Oak tree and perhaps also be a traffic hazard. It was agreed that the Forum would follow up with WCC.
- Developments planned around the town are a cause for concern in the context of the sustainability of additional housing with no increase in such items as school accommodation. It is planned to liaise with Wicklow County Council and ask Councillors to attend the February 2018 Forum meeting.
- Michael Duggan advised in relation to the planned CCTV project next year that ducting be completed at that time to facilitate other projects which we have in mind.
- Pat Winters advised of the difficulty in having volunteers available at the theatre noting in particular that Pat Conlon on Friday 8 December had spent almost 12 hours in having the theatre ready for an event that evening. Volunteering continues to be a problem and consideration must be given to the hiring of people which will have the unsatisfactory result of increasing fees to users.

#### **Next Meeting.**

It was agreed that the Forum reconvene on 8 January 2018.

The meeting concluded with best wishes being expressed to everybody for Christmas and the New Year.

Proposed: Patry Phib

Seconded: David Egger