



Minutes of 14th September Forum Zoom Meeting

The meeting was opened and chaired by Carmel Cashin at 7:30pm and everyone was welcomed after a very long break due to Covid 19.

Blessington Greenway

Caroline Fox was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances but should be available in November. A brief update was given around Greenway progress. Designs will be on display in the Library and the old Health Centre will be used for all greenway materials. John Horan advised at the Town Team meeting that 150 additional parking spaces will be available at Avon and the council car park beside the Health centre would be used as a park and ride.

The forum has been in contact with Caroline regarding contactless water filling stations etc. The Valleymount and Ballyknocken forum held a public meeting in Valleymount on Wednesday 01/07/2020 to discuss local concerns regarding the new phases of the Greenway. Caroline will also ensure the Forum is kept up to speed on developments.

Begin Together Awards

The Town Team/ WCC submitted a community award application promoting the work of the town team. The forum was involved when Blessington became finalists against Kinsale and the forum were invited to speak about its community work. Judging along with a video and Presentation pack would take place: In attendance would be cllr Patsy Glennon, Town Team John Horan, District Administrator Garvan Hickey, Forum Carmel Cashin, Business Kilian McGreal and Tidy Towns Jason Mulhall It will be structured as follows: A 30 minute presentation from us about our entry; A 30 minute question and answer session. The results would be out in October

Planning Applications

Members were advised that the roadstone objection had gone in to both KCC and WCC. All members received both these via Email. Members were also advised that according to the Town Team and Brid Kilkenny the Inner relief road is at consultation point and Wicklow are in talks with KCC re: Leading out on the project.

Community Pool

We were updated that the community pool had been added to the county Development plan and that Wicklow County Council had agreed a site area up at the Avon for a multi-Purpose Leisure complex.

Blessington Lights Up Christmas

It was noted that we were in a very serious financial situation with no fundraising it was looking highly unlikely we could provide Christmas lights this year. A plan was put in place and several forum members agreed to take on roles to help with the fundraising. A virtual Christmas is planned with a live streaming event on November 28th at 6pm. A go fund me page would be launched, posters and bucket collections in the town. (More details to follow)

Burgage Castle Preservation Project

Madge advised that while work was due to commence during June 2020 it would begin before the end of the year. A conservation engineer had been appointed and progress was being made. Madge through the Forum subgroup will continue to engage with the ESB and monitor the work when it commences and keep the local community informed. Town Team would also be contacted and informed on progress for the tourism element of the Begin Together awards.

Blessington Cemetery Committee

The Graveyard committee contacted us seeking support in lobbying WCC to commence work to extend the graveyard. There are currently only 15 plots left and the cemetery committee are concerned that demand is continuing to rise due to the ever-increasing population in the Blessington and surrounding areas. They in theory have provided three solutions

We are aware that there are 3 solutions being examined by the Council to alleviate this demand

- Removal of mature trees at the back boundary of the cemetery adjoining Milltown Gate Estate that would create further spaces. This could result in freeing up approximately 250 spaces.
- Provision of a cremation wall within the cemetery as more people are opting for this method of internment.
- Provision of a new Cemetery across the road from the existing cemetery.

Jason noted that the preferred solution would be that the new graveyard site comes into place and the cremation wall to be created, and that the removal of the trees and green area should be considered carefully, as it's a small graveyard, with heritage and biodiversity values. While this was noted we also acknowledged the urgency of the task and that a new graveyard may take some time. A compromise was reached that the forums letter of support would include all three options with the removal of trees being the short-term fix but with the replacement of some more suitable trees.

AOB

- Blessington Allotments – progress is being made and Donal applied for LEADER funding and a site for the allotments is at negotiation stage
- Ron asked where we are on the question of the 'Twinning' matter. An update was given in that a subcommittee was formed to deal with all twinning related matters that they would be following up their letter to Garvan Hickey, the Administrator in the Municipal District, of February last. When updates are available the sub committee will update all members.
- Donal raised the question once again of no town team minutes available online. Carmel agreed to contact Garvan.
- Ron is preparing the constitution and will update forum accordingly.
- Peter Eustace- raised the issue of Payed parking in the town- after a discussion it was noted community consultation would need to take place and that it should be community led rather than trader led.
- Catherine raised the parking issue at Burgage because of the greenway and asked about timeframe etc- All members were asked to email over greenway related questions so they could be passed on to Caroline Fox for accurate responses.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm and our next meeting will take place on October 12th at 7.30pm via zoom.