

Report: 8th February 2021 – Blessington Forum Zoom Meeting

The meeting was opened and chaired by Carmel Cashin at 7:30pm.

The December report was proposed by Madge Tyrrell and seconded by Marion McNally.

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

Apologies: Charlie Brophy, Pat Conlon, Ron Corry, Mick Duggan, Joe Hanly and Karen O'Donoghue.

Correspondence

- Letter from Blessington History Society on the proposed Famine Memorial and rededication of the Downshire Monument.
- Letter to be sent to the MD on the Famine Memorial and rededication of the Downshire Monument.

Famine Memorial

- Blessington History Society (represented by Paul Tyrrell) presented to the members on the history of the Downshire Monument and on the famine in Blessington and West Wicklow.
- BHS confirmed their support for an appropriate memorial in Blessington (West Wicklow) and this aligned with the view of the membership of the BDF.
- Members suggested that any memorial should also include detailed research into An Gorta Mor and its actual impact in West Wicklow (& Blessington).
- Members expressed concerns at the wording in a recent article in the Wicklow People that suggested wide spread public support and consultation, which was not the situation at all, and this concerned members about the perception it was creating.

Matched Funding

- Members were advised of a matched funding that had been donated to the Forum by the McGreals Group. It was agreed that this funding would be used for matched funding purpose on larger projects; members were presented with a form to complete for any ideas and suggestions they might have. The membership welcomed the donation and thanked the McGreals Group for their ongoing supports to the local community.

AGM

- The AGM is scheduled for March and subgroups to provide updates as required.
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Town Team

- Meeting reports are now available online.

Blessington Square

- Peter asked about the square and possibilities to improve.
- Noel queried on power in the square.
- Members were advised on the status of the EV Charging Points
- Frank asked about underground cabling in the area and in the main street.

Social Inclusion Group

- Establishment of a Woman's Shed in Blessington
- Hampers Application to the CEP
- Update on the Alone Befriending Service
- Blessington Access Group Update by Andra & Plans for Report Launch
- Jigsaw established in West Wicklow and will come online in the latter half of 2021
- Suggestion the BDF could invite groups to attend meetings and present on their activities and services within the local community.

Greenway

- Members were advised that there are numerous changes to the design, and this is the reason for ABP review and also changes to the Natura 200 requirements. We will have wider paths in some areas, extra bridges and crossings etc...
 - WCC confirmed to the BDF that all funding is in place and guaranteed, so increased costs are not a worry for WCC.
 - Submission to ABP expected in March (but could be April/May) with a decision by September and then works to take approximately 18 months, opening in late 2023 is most likely outcome.
 - Website is under construction, subject to tendering being completed by WCC
 - Members queried the changes on facilities and asked to ensure access for all abilities was catered for on the route.
 - An Interpretative Centre will be located at the old surgery on the Kilbride Rd. In the short term it will be used as site office.
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Burgage Castle

- Madge provided an update and confirmed that the tendering process for the phase1 works is about to begin.

A.O.B.

- Concerns were raised on littering and dog fouling in Blessington. Some awareness raising campaigns were suggested.
- Members raised the CCTV articles in the recent Wicklow People editions, and queried the current status. It was agreed to ask WCC at an upcoming Town Team meeting.
- Community Policing in Blessington remains an issue with no Community Garda in place for some time. Agreed to ask PPN Reps to follow up in it as well. And write letters to the JPC and Councillors.
- Members queried what had become of the Glending Feasibility Study for access to the woodland, it was agreed to ask WCC at one of the next Town Team meetings. It was noted that Cairn Homes had included a plan for access to the woodland as part of the current planning application.
- A suggestion was made to consider the purchase of some flags for St. Patricks Day and other events. This was agreed to be followed up by the Executive.
- The Chair welcomed new BDF Member Paul Tyrrell from Blessington History Society and also introduced and welcomed Natasha Jordan who will work closely with the Forum as a Resource Worker. Members welcomed both Paul and Natasha and wished them well.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm and our next monthly meeting will take place on April 12th at 7.30pm via zoom.
