

## **Report: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – Blessington Forum Zoom Meeting**

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

The February report was not available for the meeting and will be presented in May instead.

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

**Apologies:** Charlie Brophy, Michael Doyle, Donal McCormack, Pat Conlon and Karen O'Donoghue.

### **Correspondence**

- Letter to the JPC on Community Garda for Blessington
- Letter to the MD on the Famine Memorial & Downshire Monument

### **Planning & Developments**

- The St. Josephs Road Development was now for sale with FPP. Concerns were raised that any agreements the residents had with the owner would now be defunct. Concerns were also raised about the ABP decision and response to the residents.
- Cairn Homes Development activity related to the excavations for data gathering for future planning applications. Application status still remains the same pending further information to be supplied to WCC. Agreed the Forum would request a copy of the data results of the excavations when completed.
- Members were briefed on an application to amend the development of the Old Rectory and concerns were raised on same, agreed to monitor.

### **Greenway**

- Liam Fay provided the membership with an update on the most recent meeting with WCC on the Greenway, limited activity, but application to ABP expected during later April/May.

### **Environment**

- Donal & Allotments Group are continuing to work on procuring a site.
- The group is active, within what the ongoing covid19 restrictions will allow. A number of projects are ongoing with a focus on Biodiversity related projects at the moment, litter picking and clean ups also continue. Some work is in progress on the issue of dog fouling. The Dept. Confirmed there will be a Tidy Towns competition in 2021 but details are pending, it is expected to be online only, with no visits to towns.

- Catherine advised that the group are generating members for the moment and making plans for 2021 event in December. Eight people have volunteered to be par to the BLUC. Further updates in May as things progress.

### **Social Inclusion Group**

- The Access Report will be launched in the coming weeks, good response so far, and members are encouraged to register to attend.
- Dementia Awareness Training has been rolled out, and has been very well received in the local community.
- The Blessington Women's Shed was successfully launched in March, with 700 signing up, it was Wicklow 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Shed, and since then other Women's Sheds have launched in Rathdrum and Arklow. The group have had a meeting with the Minister for Health who is very supportive of the group and its plans. A number of programmes will launch in the coming weeks - Recliner to Couch with LSP & Shed to Summit with Mountaineering Ireland

### **Burgage Castle**

- Limited activity at the moment, but a contractor for works has been appointed by the ESB.

### **Famine Memorial**

- Members were advised that it is expected that a separate famine memorial would be proposed and supported by the MD. No modifications to any existing structures.

### **A.O.B.**

- Concerns on lack of seating in the town centre. Members advised that some plans are in place, with some limited funding available to the MD. Executive to try and gather more information for the May Meeting.
  - Members queried if the plaza at Dunnes Stores could be utilized as a social space.
  - The lack of ASD Units in West Wicklow and Blessington in particular was raised as a concern, it was agreed that the BDF would write a letter to the Board of Management of Blessington Community College on this topic, and suggest other Forums contacted their local schools as well (Dunlavin and Baltinglass).
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- Concerns were raised about parking in general, and how it would be once the existing restrictions were lifted. Issues currently in Burgage and Troopersfield due to Greenway



parking. A lack of bicycle parking in the town was also raised. It was agreed to raise these with WCC at one of the next Town Team meetings.

- 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 meeting will take place on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm via zoom.

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