

Report: 8th November 2021 – Blessington Forum Zoom Meeting

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

The report of the September meeting was proposed by Susan Rossiter and seconded by Charlie Brophy

Apologies: Dónal McCormack, Marion McNally, Eamonn Kelly and Mick Duggan

Condolences

- The BDF membership offered their condolences to the Miley family in Vallemount on recent death of Christy Miley.

Congratulations

- The BDF membership offered their congratulations to Blessington GAA on their recent successes in County Finals in the Mens and Womens Football.
- The BDF membership offered their congratulations to Deirdre McCormack on here recent County Wicklow Volunteer Award.

Correspondence

- Ron Corry has taken the decision to retire from the BDF. The membership thanked Ron for his time involved in the Forum and wished him good health in his retirement.
- Members were presented with details on the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility plans.

Safe Talk

- Carmel provided an update on the Safe Talk project from Jeff O'Toole who presented to the membership at a recent meeting. Applications for involvement have been requested. At this time they hoped to run an in person event on December 14th for 25 people from 6-930pm. More info to be shared with interested applicants.
-

Greenway

- No further updates, more info expected at the Town Team meeting of November 9th

Castel Maggiore – Twinning Request

- Members were presented with a report on a request for Blessington to twin with a town in Italy called Castelle Maggiore
 - o Request came via Enzo Farinelli on behalf of Castel Maggiore
 - o Michael Doyle took the lead and has followed up with Enzo Farinelli
 - o In October when on vacation Michael visited the Bologna region and called to Castel Maggiore, where we had a short meeting with the local council & Mayor.
 - o There is a strong interest to twin with Blessington
 - o Castel Maggiore is currently twinned with Onglet in France.
 - o Information on the invitation was also presented to the BMD Administrator and Cathaoirleach of the BMD.
 - o The BDF membership by unanimous vote mandated that the group follow up and pursue the possibility to twin with Castelle Maggiore and that a presentation will be made to BMD at an upcoming Municipal District Meeting.
- Action: Michael Doyle to progress this matter

Planning & Environment

- Allotments Group – No updates on procuring a long term site from WCC.
 - The Tidy Towns group continues to be active, litter picks, weeds and general maintenance, volunteers welcome. BTT also working closely with Community College TY classes and facilitating Gaisce participants. The group look forward to the 2021 results in November.
 - Susan provided an update on the Campaign for Pool for West Wicklow, and outlined details of the Christmas Market planned for Russborough in December.
 - The membership was advised that concerns remain from the Angling Club on the Waste Water Treatment plant.
 - A review of the in progress, and planned applications for Blessington noted that it was possible for 500+ homes to come available in the town in a short period of time, along with two Nursing Homes. As always the BDF maintains a position to ensure that community facilities are delivered in parallel or before any large developments commence.
 - No further updates on Burgage Castle
-

BLUC

- Event Planning continues, with plans at an advanced stage for the event in November.
- Fundraising from businesses continues, with thanks to businesses who have contributed.
- Fundraising via a public GoFundMe page in place.
- Volunteers requested to support and help out at the event.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- Andra and Carmel provided extensive updates on a number of topics.
 - o Women's Shed Update
 - o Access Group – Andra is stepping off the group due to personal circumstances and had emailed the Access group to that effect. It is hoped that the work of the access group could be incorporated under the Social and Inclusion arm of the forum, and the Access Group membership have been contacted to determine how to move forward.
 - o It was noted that the benches outside of Centra are causing an obstruction on the foot path, particularly to those in wheelchairs, buggies, a blind or infirm person etc.
 - o Carmel has been in contact with the BMD regarding the possibility of having a Hidden Disability parking space put in the town and who could use them.
 - o The group have launched their Toy Appeal again this year and hoped it would be as successful as last year's one. Andra mentioned how many it helped including women's refuges and school's not just here in Blessington but in the wider West Wicklow Corridor and it was requested that forum members could please share the post that is on the forum's page far and wide to promote it.

TOWN TEAM

- The membership was advised of a Town Team Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 9th November and it was agreed the following topics would be brought up in the meeting.
 - o WCC – Consideration of the UB Building – MS
 - o RRDF Funding Application – Clarity on what is included, the timeline for announcements, and what the plan is thereafter – JM
 - o Housing / Population Growth – Large number of developments have been sanctioned or are in progress ~ 500 homes & 2 Nursing Homes & more – What plans are there for complementary community facilities and traffic calming measures (i.e. Kilmalum Rd & Burgage/N81) for Blessington – CC
 - o CCTV – Time frame for Installation, finalized locations, and pole for cameras – JM
-

- Town Square – Great work to date, but pending EVs to be activated, the lighting needs to be completed and the allocation of the parking spaces for the Age Friendly and Disabled Spaces – CC
- Recycling Facilities – Seek an update on plans and timeline to replace the bottle banks that were removed – JM
- Blessington Womens Shed – Urgent need for a premises – CC
- Inner Relief Road – Seek an update on plans and timeline – CC
- Greenway – Seek an update on plans and timeline of the submission, and can community groups like the Forum gain an income for running costs once the project is completed –KMcG

A.O.B.

- Recycling Banks update by Jason
- Storyboard on Blessington History being progressed by Paul Tyrell
- Members pointed towards an article on Blessington in the Irish Times
- Cairn Homes to be contacted regarding the Town Park and other issues on the site.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm and our next meeting will take place on December 13th at 7.30pm.
