

Report: 14th February 2022 – Blessington Forum – GP Room

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

The report of the January meeting was proposed by Mick McLoughlin and seconded by Mick Duggan.

Apologies: Jason Mulhall, Michael Sargent and Donal McCormack.

Correspondence

1. ASD Unit in the school: Two special classes have been sanctioned for the Secondary School. The first of these will open in September 2022. Andrea gave an update: Simon Harris announced an initial discussion has started. Reality of it looks like it will start in September 2023. Now we have a firm agreement this will take place. It has taken over 10 years to get to this stage.
2. Community Activities Fund:
A grant has been applied for the Christmas Lights of €5,900 and €650 for the lights. Wicklow County Council estate grants are open and arts grants.

Meeting with District Administrator & Town Team

A meeting was held with the District Administrator Liam Cullen. The following items were discussed.

- Christmas lights and erection of same. The agreed plan is to increase the funding under Community Awards and to also go for an energy upgrade on light replacements.
 - Questions were asked about the Town First Funding and RRDF
 - RRDF – further information is needed on this. A meeting will be organised with Cristine Flood in the coming weeks.
 - Sorcah from Event Fuel informed that the Kaleidoscope and The Gathering Festivals will be held in Russborough in June 22.
 - Ninette de Valois festival will return and be held this year (27th / 28th May)
 - CCTV installation works around the town has started.
 - Tidy Towns – the focus will be on achieving a bronze medal this year.
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Blessington eGreenway Update @ Town Team Meeting

- There was an update on the EGreenway at the recent Town Team meeting.
- Councillor Gerry O'Neill accused the Forum of not updating the membership of the Forum with available information. This was refuted and proven to be incorrect.
- It was suggested that if any Forum member felt they were not getting the available information, they needed that they should ask for it, or seek it out.
- It was decided that a statement would be put up on our Facebook account setting the situation straight.

Special Delegation for Blessington Greenway

- Three representatives from Valleymount (Sean Ascough, John Price and Harry Farrington) joined the meeting. They came to discuss the various planning issues related to the Greenway. The main issue discussed was that of the traffic lights on the bridges and single lane traffic. The original 2017 plan released included the use of canter lever bridges which they deemed acceptable. They also informed that the "Part 8" has been removed and therefore the public have no consultation. The only option is to go directly to An Board Pleanála with concerns. [It should be noted that the route to ABP is due to legislation and the requirement for an NIS]
- They also noted that the studies relating to the traffic were completed during May 2021 which was in the middle of full lockdown.
- In summary the group asked for the backup of the Forum with their application to an Board Pleanála. They suggested withdrawing the application and resubmitting once the traffic lights issue was solved.
- Carmel said that the Forum would discuss and that we would be back in contact with them in the near future.

Mental Health Ireland

- Sue and Andra spoke with a representatives of Mental Health Ireland. Four out of five representatives are representing the East. This shows that West Wicklow is being neglected. She wants to set up a West Wicklow mental help group.
 - Greg said that he can connect with the Darkness into Light.
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- There will be a West Wicklow campaign run separately called “Hello how are you” which will start on the 7th of April.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm, and members agreed that a second meeting would be held to allow for Forum business to be completed, and for the members to consider the Blessington Greenway and an appropriate response.