

## **Report: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 – Blessington Forum – GP Room**

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

This was a second meeting for February to allow the BDF to complete business and to consider an observation on the Blessington Greenway.

**Apologies:** Catherine Keogh

### **Blessington Greenway**

1. Each member was afforded the opportunity to outline their own opinions and observations on the application to ABP.
  2. The membership discussed in detail both the support for, and the concerns raised by the local community in recent weeks.
  3. Concerns were once again raised over how the BDF is being unfairly portrayed by certain person(s), concerns were also raised about the accuracy of some of the information being shared on social media and in the other social media platforms. It was also highlighted that some of the same person(s) may be creating a narrative of Blessington versus the Lakeside communities which is completely untrue, and without any basis.
  4. The membership considered the presentation from the Valleymount delegation, and the feedback from public meetings that were held. A concern was raised that not all members of the community in these areas were being contacted, and that suggested wide spread community support being mentioned for or against the Greenway needed to be considered carefully as to its accuracy.
  5. The Part8 removal was discussed and this was due to the NIS requirement.
  6. It was suggested and agreed that individuals have the ability to exercise their right to send in their own personal observations directly to ABP.
  7. Concerns were raised about the suggested withdrawal of the application to ABP, and what ramifications this could have for further funding for Blessington, and the Lakeside. After all a lot of funding applications are a result of the potential of the Greenway, and without a Greenway a lot of the funding may not have the required merits or needs.
  8. A number of concerns were raised and these are listed in summary format in the table. It was agreed that a number of these would form the basis of any observation to ABP by the BDF membership. A
  9. It was agreed that the BDF would not request the withdrawal of the application to ABP, as this was not felt to be a valid request.
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10. It was agreed that the membership were happy for the BDF to make an observation in support of the Blessington eGreenway but that our observation would outline some of the concern being raised in the local community, along and with our suggested conditions of planning being granted to address these issues.
11. It was agreed that once the observation has completed, it will be sent to ABP within the allowed timeframe, and that a copy would be posted to our face book page for transparency. This will also ensure that the BDF position is clear to the local community.

Concern / Thoughts - General Summary
Traffic Lights on the Bridge
Traffic Analysis flawed in the report
Support the plan in its current format due to the safety issues for pedestirans and for the need for the route to be fully inclusive for all abilities
Cantilver Bridges is this due to an end of life issue for the exisitng bridges - is the only alternate three new bridges to be built?
Support the plan, but make a submission outlining the concerns we hear from the local community, and some alternate suggestions for these, but acknowledge we do not have all the answers either.
Request a report on the safety and lifespan of the bridges from ESB / WCC
At times the bridges are one way traffic in their current format due to the heavy goods vehicles, large farm machinery, buses etc..
Concerns on the Rhetoric being relayed in the lcoal community - misinformation and falsehoods
Lack of public consultation in general
Main street Pedestrian / Cytcle Route - not so much from the removal of the spaces but fro a safety issue and how it would work, and what would happen to the access findly spaces that exist
Toilets on the route
Didn't like the tone that the visitors took at last weeks meeting
Emergency Service Access Issues with the lights
Request that an oral hearing to take place as part of the proposal review with the board of ABP, as oposed to afterwards if objections are raised.
Request that WCC withdraw the proposal - no member stated their support for this request.

### **Blessington Rose**

The fundraising committee gave a brief outline of the Blessington Rose festival, and the background to where it's come from. The group also gave an overview of what might be involved, but a more detailed description is to be given at the March meeting once plans are clear.

### **Ninette de Valois**

The membership was advised that Ninette de Valois Festival will be held the last weekend in May, but in a shortened format. A detailed update to be presented in March and April meetings as plans and activities become clearer.

### **Community Pool**

The membership were updated on an exciting initiative with Swim Ireland, which result in a portable 12 x 4 metre swimming pool being placed in Blessington between for a 12 week period starting this September. These pools are fully heated, sit above ground and have a ramp, steps and a hoist to ensure they are accessible for all. Each pool is housed in a hard sided marquee which is also heated and contains two dressing rooms.

### **CCTV**

A very brief update was provided on the CCTV. The civil works have been started at a number of locations and the poles will be erected in the coming weeks. The CCTV is expected to be active before May all going to plan. In cases where any residents had concerns that have been dealt with directly by WCC and agreements had been reached. The poles may not be the most aesthetically pleasing but things will be clearer once they are in place, the black version of the poles would be an extra 5-600euro per pole, and the budgets available did not cover this. Members were provided with a verbal overview of locations, but these have not changed since the original plans were discussed in 2018/2019.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm.

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