

BALTINGLASS & DISTRICT FORUM

Meeting Minutes
7th February, 2008

- 1. Apologies**
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|---------------|-----------------|
| Frances Lee | Orla O'Sullivan |
| Monica Brophy | Fintan Doyle |
| Martina Power | Ned Keogh |

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read. One omission from the minutes was noted by Paul Gorry i.e. the request to Bus Eireann to increase the frequency of service. Adoption was proposed by Cait Clerkin and seconded by Cathy O'Toole. Chairperson Noel Lyons addressed the meeting welcoming everyone.

3. Elections

John Vernon agreed to operate as P.R.O. on a pro-tern basis and Fran Quaid as Minute Secretary pending the return of Martina Power. This was proposed by Noel Lyons and seconded by Paul Gorry.

4. Guest Speaker Alison Fox

Alison Fox the Youth Officer with Wicklow Vocational Education Committee addressed the meeting on the changing population situation in the County and the need to increase facilities and activities for the growing youth population and to give them a voice through involvement in a youth council. She is meeting with all the local sports associations and volunteer groups and attempting to get funding to support their projects from private and state sources.

At a local level the Outdoor Education Centre, which operates under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committee, could be expanded to include various other facilities such as Astro-turf pitches, dance studio, café, climbing wall etc. These facilities, while intended for youth activity, would be available to other groups, or to commercial interests on a hire basis.

Liam McGabhann enquired about the limitations of the term "youth". Currently 10-25yrs.

Assumpta O'Neill reminded the meeting that some people who attended school there were made to feel quite old when the building is referred to as decrepit.

As yet the only part in place towards the setting up of a Youth Council is the National Youth Officer framework.

Paul McGowan asked if a specific request from the Forum would help with the application for funding for the Astro-turf facility. The Forum agreed to support the application.

The Chairperson thanked Alison for her address and invited her to remain for the rest of the meeting.

5. Blessington Forum

Mai Quaid reported on a visit to the Blessington Forum by John Vernon, herself and Noel Lyons and how their experience could help us be more effective. They adopted a more formal attitude to some things but generally held themselves open to discuss any topics pertinent to the community.

The ideas discussed included a reward scheme for local achievement, a sponsored election programme for Lord Mayor of the community, American tea parties, Quiz nights, Mock weddings etc. among other fund-raising ventures and also the items of community import.

The appointment of a local Environment Officer was mooted and it was also suggested that the local Forums from Dunlavin, Blessington and Baltinglass should meet jointly about every six months to ensure coordination of effort on matters of joint concern.

6. Tourism Meeting

Following the invitation by Tom Kyne, Wicklow Tourism, issued at the Blessington Forum to attend the Avon-Ri on 23rd Jan. and the interesting points made at that meeting it was agreed that we should invite a spokesperson from that organisation to address the Forum and allow us to put our viewpoint. Note that a change of attitude is required in relation to West Wicklow.

Cait Clerkin said that in the past we were to liaise with the Historical Society to list the historical sites in the area.

A sub-committee to pursue local objectives in tourism was suggested and the following volunteered: Liam McGabhann, Michael Cogan and Assumpta O'Neill and any assistance possible offered from the Historical Society by Paul Gorry.

Simon Murphy mentioned the group in Tinahely who have had success with creating walkways, among other projects. They have developed a working arrangement with local landowners re access.

Worth noting that Frederic Verdier is appointed as the overall co-ordinator of Wicklow Tourism. E-mail: fred@wicklowct.ie. There will be a web site with a heritage page. An on-line newsletter updated every two months. Any items of interest should be sent to Wicklow Tourism.

7. Town Plan

John Vernon reported that the Plan was posted on Wicklow CC website (despite the minutes of the Co. meeting not yet being approved) but due to Fintan Doyle's unavailability discussion will have to be put off until the March meeting. W.C.C. plan was the subject of a petition reportedly listing 600 signatories.

Paul Gorry was of the opinion that the signatories were ill-informed about our intentions and also the list was made up of all household occupants.

Simon Murphy asked that the group examine the plan and come back to the next meeting.

8. Constitution

Paul McGowan said that a draft will be available for discussion at the March meeting.

9. Agenda

Liam McGabhann wanted to know how items were decided for the Agenda and it was pointed out that anything relevant could be suggested by any member of the Forum. It was suggested that we include "Correspondence" and "Treasurer's Report"

10. Anti-Social Behaviour

Cathy O'Toole reported for the sub-committee that there had been a series of burglaries in the area recently and suggested that we need to get information on the incidence of crime and also the level of uneasiness felt by residents. One way to collect this information was through a box in the public library. Various other ideas were put forward to establish the facts about the level of disquiet felt locally. Questionnaire, leaflet drop, press articles, or door to door calling.

John Vernon stated that non-anecdotal information would be more effective in getting the case across to the Gardai.

Donal Kiernans to be invited to address the Forum in March on the subject of drugs in the community and the local Garda Superintendent be invited to address the April meeting. This would give time for the sub-committee to gather the required facts.

The census appeared to be in favour of a questionnaire which could be distributed through businesses, churches and schools in the area and collated to give some representative data.

11. Any Other Business

Bank Account: The Credit Union Account for the Forum has been activated and contributions received from Drs Clerkin and Carolan, Active Retirement group and The Parks Committee.

Fair Trade evening: Paul Gorry reported that on 27th February Baltinglass Fair Trade are having an evening in Horan's Pub at 8.00p.m. to receive their Fair Trade status and invited all to attend.

The County Wicklow Community Partnership: This group is holding a further meeting in Donard Community Hall on Tuesday 19th February at 7.30p.m. and our support would be appreciated.

February Speaker: Secretary to write and invite Donal Kiernans to speak at the March meeting.

Date for Next Meeting. Thursday 6th March 2008 at 8.00p.m. at Stratford Lodge.