

BALTINGLASS & DISTRICT FORUM

Meeting Minutes
6th March, 2008

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|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Apologies: | Michael Keogh | Lena Byrne | Con Murphy |
| | Patricia Lawrence | Fintan Doyle | Assumpta O'Neill |
| | Martina Power | Noel Doody | Cathy O'Toole |

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read. Acceptance proposed by: Michael Coogan and seconded by Liam McGabhann.

Chairperson Noel Lyons addressed the meeting welcoming everyone and in particular Donal Kiernan our guest speaker.

3. Guest Speaker Donal Kiernan

Introduced by Cait Clerkin who first engaged with him when he was appointed as an addiction/drugs counsellor about five years ago. She was very impressed with his approach. As a parent and former Garda with a varied background both here and in London he had a unique view and understanding of the problems facing teenagers and other young people at risk in our society.

In his address Donal made some very pertinent statements.

Anti-social behaviour is about how a society conducts itself.

To define it: it is any activity we engage in that affects or annoys others.

Alcohol is the drug of choice in Ireland and is a major contributor to most public order offences.

A higher visible Garda presence gives a lower level of public order offences.

When incidents of anti-social behaviour occur then the best response is to phone the Gardai. When doing so one should make sure to get the name of the Garda informed to ensure that the call is logged. Only by logging all incidents will the powers-that-be be influenced to increase the Garda presence in the area.

Nobody knows the area as well as the residents - so you know what is going on. If you don't tell someone you're allowing it to grow until the problem is noncontainable.

Make time to listen and connect with your own teenagers.

Encourage their participation in sports as it encourages responsibility.

Peer mediation was also mentioned as a course worth pursuing.

Reference was made to a scheme which operated in Tallaght where offenders were brought back to face their victims. This scheme originated in New Zealand. Liam McGabhann mentioned that he came across a similar scheme in England.

Ann Leigh asked how to reach parents who think it is alright to "dump" their children in a play area without any supervision.

Cait Clerkin agreed that this was a serious topic and these parents are giving out the message that they don't want their children's company. This may return to haunt them.

Mai Quaid asked why it is not a requirement to produce ID. when purchasing alcohol in Ireland. In the U.S.A. it is a requirement in some states regardless of age. Donal Kiernan was of the opinion that it may be a requirement here in years to come but that currently history is against it.

The Chairperson thanked Donal for his address and said that he had been very informative and invited him to remain for the rest of the meeting.

5. Matters arising

As there were no items from the minutes needing discussion the Chairperson moved the meeting along.

6. Correspondence

The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from the Minister for Sports, Seamus Brennan acknowledging the Forum's letter of support for the proposal to fund the building of the all-weather pitches at the Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre.

Bus Eireann have replied to the submission sent by the Forum re bus stops and services. They are currently reviewing the position of all bus stops in the Eastern Region and will review those in Baltinglass as part of that process.

A letter was sent to Thomas Mulligan the Garda Superintendent inviting him to address the April Forum meeting.

Councillor Jim Ruttle wrote re meeting the delegation from the Forum about the Baltinglass Town Plan at Avon-Ri and assuring us of his support.

7. Financial report

The Treasurer Chris Murray reported on the current financial state of the Forum and with the Secretary was able to indicate the local organisations who have contributed in response to our appeal for funds.

An application for funding to be made to Wicklow Co. Council and we should be aware that a time limit exists for approaches to be entertained.

8. Constitution

Paul McGowan reported that the draft (version 9) has been distributed and is ready for discussion. A special meeting to consider it to be held on 10th April. Members should send their approval or suggestions prior to that meeting.

9. Town Plan

Each member attending the meeting had been issued with two maps of the proposed **Baltinglass Town Plan**, one showing the original suggested outlines of Employment and Residential areas and the second one the revised Co. Managers proposals following the submissions by the various interested groups, ourselves included.

They also received a copy of the **Managers Report**, a forty page document, on submissions to the Draft Town Plan.

They were also issued with a **Summary of the Managers Consideration of the Forum's Submissions**.

John Vernon presented the details from both maps and went on to outline the submissions and the Co. Managers responses to those proposed by the Forum. In summary he felt that we had scored some small victories and lost out somewhat in other areas.

The pedestrian bridge appears to be accepted.

Low density residential areas are now indicated.

The employment area has been moved to occupy *part* of the suggested area; however, the normal residential area has been reduced.

There was no apparent objection to the suggested development of a hotel or sheltered housing within the town boundaries. These are permitted in principle.

On a negative note there is no budget for the required water and sewage works or indeed the bridge work and the heritage issues will be reviewed when the plan is discussed in 2010.

Ken Brown stated that currently planning permission is passed for 350 residential units with the potential for an extra 750 residents and upwards of 450 extra vehicles. No provision has been made to cater for their requirements.

Simon Murphy is concerned that we should not accept the stated situation that no money is available. He feels that we should be more pro-active and direct in our approach. The detailed map is the situation we have to live with. The only changes likely to come are at the review in 2010 and that we should have our ideas ready for then but in the meantime we should concentrate on what is achievable now.

John Vernon agreed with Simon that we should identify one or two prime objectives and pursue these actively.

Ann Leigh agreed and said that in her experience funds could be available but unless someone detailed the point of expenditure nothing happened.

Until the minutes of the Council meeting are read and approved this plan has no legal standing.

10. Any Other Business

Mr Robert Simpson who is resident in Holdenstown told the meeting that planning permission is being sought for operation of a sand and gravel quarry at Kilmurray and asked the meeting if they would support his objection to it. He and the other residents in the area feel that the granting of such permission would create a situation where Heavy Duty Vehicles are being driven along totally unsuitable roads creating a resultant danger to local walkers and residential traffic. Any access to the proposed site would be along narrow roads where two cars have difficulty passing at present.

The Chairperson asked if it was within the remit of the Forum to undertake objections to proposed developments. It was asked at what level the Forum should get involved. We should not get involved where individual housing or similar permissions were being sought. Cait Clerkin maintained that we should get involved where there is an impact on the community or the quality of life of the residents. It was proposed that the Forum should write an objection on the basis of the impact of the proposed development on local traffic and the unsuitability of the roads.

The decision to send a submission on the subject was proposed by Noel Lyons and seconded by Paul Gorry and there were no objections from the floor.

As there is an element of urgency about the objection, Paul McGowan agreed to write it and have it agreed by the meeting.

Pavements. Ken Brown asked that we contact Jack Kelly to get the pavements around the town repaired or replaced and Paul Gorry asked that repairs to the "Lunar Craters" on the street from the church to Scoil Conglais be requested also.

The continuation of the park has not been maintained. The Tourism sub-committee was asked to follow this up.

Guest Speakers. Simon Murphy asked that a time frame be indicated to future speakers.

**Date for Next Meeting. Thursday 3rd April 2008 at 8.00p.m.
at Stratford Lodge.**