

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Bray Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray on Tuesday 14th October, 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Ciaran O'Brien, Cathaoirleach
Councillor John Brady
Councillor Caroline Burrell
Councillor John Byrne
Councillor Brid Collins
Councillor David Grant
Councillor Michael Lawlor
Councillor John McManus
Councillor Steve Matthews
Councillor Pat Vance

Also present: Ms. Christine Flood, Town Clerk
Mr. Stephen Fox, Executive Engineer
Mr. Dominic Gunshenan, CEO Shoreline Leisure Services

Apologies: Councillor Anne Egan
Councillor Anne Ferris
Mr. Des O'Brien, Director of Services
Mr. Sean O'Neill, Town Engineer

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Monthly Meeting dated 9th September 2008

Councillor Bríd Collins proposed confirmation of the minutes of 9th September 2008 and Councillor Steve Matthews seconded the proposal. Councillor John Brady stated that he didn't feel that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting, as he had spoken at length about the County Wicklow Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (Item 4 on the previous Agenda), and this had not appeared in the minutes. He asked that this be looked at.

2. To Discuss The Bray Swimming Pool

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan, CEO of Shoreline Leisure Services (who operate both the Bray and Greystones swimming pools) gave the members a PowerPoint presentation on the Bray Pool. He gave an overview of the timetables for the Swimming pool and for classes. He also outlined the pricing structure and gave an indication of membership numbers to date.

Mr. Gunshenan informed the members of the following:

- Aerobics classes are always a bit slower to get up and running.
- We have tried to get the balance right between public swims, lessons and group swims.
- We have 19 schools using the pool for lessons.
- We also have aqua aerobics and adult swims.
- People have asked for changes and we are reacting to that, we now have swims for €3 at off peak times.
- To date we have 997 members and we believe that we may have to cap the membership in February or March as we can only take 1,600 to 1,800 members. If we don't cap the membership it will affect the pay as you go swims. It has exceeded our expectations.
- We have to stick rigidly to the pricing structure so that the centre can hold it's own.
- Income to date stands at €300,000.
- The running costs are estimated to be in the region of 1,000,000 per year.
- Salaries will run at €600,000 and heating & electricity €180,000. I have a full list of overheads, which I can send onto anyone who is interested. We need to pay the staff well to get good staff.
- There is a sinking fund of €200,000 which will be used to maintain and upgrade the facility.
- My recommendation to the board is that this figure be set aside per year.
- We believe that the plant room will need a major overhaul in the next 5-6 years.

- To replace the gym equipment will cost €250,000 in today's prices. It will also need to be updated.

The members welcomed Mr. Gunshenan to the meeting, thanked him for his presentation and raised the following points:

- I've gotten a lot of requests regarding pool only membership. We need to cater for these people.
- The cost for heating and electricity seems very high. We will need to look at installing solar panels. The CHP system will make a difference.
- Will a café be provided?
- I support the idea of a café it will be a great source of income.
- What is the difference between an open swim and a swim for all?
- Who is the Board – what responsibilities do they have? Do they report to this council? Will they inform us of any problems? Will we be responsible for any losses?
- This is a wonderful facility and I've been getting great feedback.
- The Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism also did a great job with this.
- There are some queries regarding the costings but it is very reasonable.
- Is it possible to open up earlier than 7am? People are finding it difficult to turn right onto the Southern Cross Road after the swim at 7am due to volumes.
- It is up to the Council and engineers to look at access issues.
- I agree – the entrance only allows room for one car at any one time – there have been a number of near collisions. The gate should be widened.
- The charges on the outside pitches are very high. This needs to be looked at.

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan responded:

- We have had joint board meetings with Bray and Wicklow regarding the pool only membership. We want to do this for both centres so that they are not in competition. This will be on the Agenda for the next Board Meeting, we are open to it.
- We will react to demand, but I can't say if everyone will agree to it. The decision [on pool only membership] will be made sooner rather than later.
- The only difference between the two swims is price.
- The heating costs are a concern. The decision to install the CHP system predates my appointment. My information is that the CHP system was the best economically.
- We would be delighted to have a café. It has come up on a number of occasions. I am open-minded if anyone wants to take it on – perhaps we could go to tender.
- We are discussing the early opening issue at the moment. If the demand for this is present, we are happy to do so. It needs to be economically viable regarding staffing and overheads.
- The pitches cost €70 at peak times, which is Monday – Thursday 6-10pm and €40 off peak. The vast majority of times at charged at €40. Schools are charged less. The main issue of the charge of €70 is the lighting. This is expensive to supply.

The Town Clerk informed the members of the following:

- Bray Swimming Pool Sports & Leisure Centre is a limited company which is wholly owned by Bray Town Council. The company is trading as Shoreline Leisure.
- There is a caretaker board of the Town Manager, the Town Clerk and the Town Engineer. The board will be expanded to a model similar to that of the County Wicklow Mermaid Arts Centre, which works very well.
- We are still taking advice regarding the structure of the company and tax issues in order to have the most tax efficient way of operating.
- There is a swimming pool committee which consists of Councillor David Grant, Councillor Anne Ferris and Councillor Caroline Burrell. This committee will meet with the board shortly.
- The company produces monthly accounts which are presented to the current board. The yearly accounts will be produced shortly and will be made available to the members.
- Shoreline Greystones is a sister company and they have a similar setup regarding the caretaker board.
- Kevin Kelly is the General Manager of Bray Pool.

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan added:

- The staff also consists of an Assistant Manager, 2 Duty Managers, 7 Recreation Attendants and 20 part time staff.
- The definition of a Recreation Attendant is someone who can teach classes, lifeguard etc.
- The demand and usage figures indicate that we need that type of staff cover to operate effectively.
- I have had 7-8 years working in the private sector as well as 5 in the public sector. We are in between the private and public sector.

The members raised the following points:

- It should be an objective that every school child is taught how to swim.
- The upkeep of the facility is very important – it needs to be of the highest quality. This is a great advertisement for local authorities.
- We should look at the rates charged for groups, if they are considered too high we should see if we can accommodate them.
- Have you done a forecast on finance – the overheads seem colossal.
- Something has to be done regarding the access, the factories along the Southern Cross open at 8am and the road is very busy at this time as a result. Some pools in Dublin open at 5am for training.

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan responded:

- We believe (that overheads) will be approximately €1 million. We will know more as time goes by.
- Membership subsidises the centre and allows us to provide classes that may not be as popular.
- Any profits made go to the sinking fund so that we can maintain the pool.
- We want black and white evidence that earlier opening times are viable.

The members raised the following points:

- The pool has been very successful – the membership projections are phenomenal. Nineteen schools are using this facility whereas before they were travelling to Wicklow and other areas.
- Dominic has tried to accommodate everyone.
- Any queries I've had, I've gone to Dominic and he has tried to answer them.
- We should look at pay as you go and reductions for OAPs during peak hours.
- This is an excellent facility. The approach taken by the Council to maintain it is the correct way to go.
- The council has a duty of care to the people who will be using this facility. What kind of vetting regarding the staff has been used?
- Why is there only early morning opening three days a week?
- The reality is that anything good that has happened in this town in the past 5-10 years is by the public sector. The Mermaid Theatre has worked very well. It is on budget every year and there are no over runs.

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan responded:

- I am the nominee of the company regarding the vetting process. Application forms are completed by staff and sent to the Garda vetting unit which is based in Templemore.
- We check references of the staff members last two employers. It is a small industry so this is very easy to do.
- We have a child protection policy in place, which everyone has read and signed.
- We may extend the opening hours, we don't want to overextend ourselves. If proven demand is there, we will open.

The members raised the following points:

- I am surprised that vetting is taking place after people are employed.
- Teachers can't start work before vetting is in place. Why can't it be the same?

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan responded:

- A person in the company has to be nominated and it takes time to liaise with An Garda Siochana. The time scale of vetting is up to An Garda Siochana.
- Our initial start point is a reference. A history check is relatively easy as it is a small industry. Everyone starts work in lieu of vetting.

The Town Clerk added the following:

- One of the reasons we are having delays with getting the staff vetted is that An Garda Siochana are vetting teachers. Schools can't open without teachers. They get priority.
- The situation is not satisfactory, but is the only option open to us. Staff have been given an temporary contract until their vetting is approved. It is a small industry, so the reference checks are a good indication.

The members raised the following points:

- Having the gym as pay as you go, is a good, novel idea. It won't trap people into a contract.
- The pool has to be run on a business model in order for it to succeed. We don't want to run out of money.
- The astro turf pitches are not being used – perhaps this is due to the fee of €70. They could also be too small. We should look at taking out the centre meridian of the two pitches. It will make them more usable and we will be able to get the best use out of them. The level of demand is not as anticipated.
- The Ballywaltrim Users Committee have suffered as a result of construction works, the pitches were damaged.
- It was said that the management of the park would be addressed.

Mr. Dominic Gunshenan responded:

- I accept your points regarding the pricing of the playing pitches.
- Our focus to date has been on the swimming pool and gym and stabilising the income.
- We have structures in place now and we will look at increasing numbers using the pitches. I will discuss the Ballywaltrim site with Kevin Kelly and Councillor Grant in the near future.

The Cathaoirleach Ciaran O'Brien closed the discussion by thanking Mr. Gunshenan and remarked that to have such an experienced CEO is a great bonus. He then requested that Mr. Gunshenan pass on the compliments of the members to his staff.

3. Reports and Recommendations

There were no Reports and Recommendations arising.

4. Notices of Motion

314. Notice of motion in the name of Councillor Brid Collins (09/09/2008)

"That a yellow box be inserted at Seacrest. This area is highly dangerous and needs to be examined ASAP."

Report

Excessive queuing and delays occur on the Vevay Road due to traffic congestion on the road at certain times of the day. Generally adequate gaps occur to facilitate side road traffic movement at the junction, which therefore incur less delay and shorter queue lengths than the main traffic stream. A yellow box is therefore not considered to be warranted.

The members raised the following points:

- There was a yellow box in the area previously that has faded.
- I have had many requests from the residents of Seacrest. I ask the Town Clerk to ask the engineers to revisit this matter. It is a dangerous situation.
- There is a backlog of traffic and problems regarding access and egress.

- This report is not acceptable.
- Reinstate what was there previously. It is not a costly item.
- I agree with this motion, any time we are told we will get a yellow box, we are told how much it will cost. I ask the engineers to look at all of the yellow boxes in the town and repaint if necessary.
- I ask that the engineers look at Seacrest, Charnwood, Tesco and San Souci. We need a proper plan for the area.

The Town Clerk informed the members that issues have been raised with Bray Town Council from the retailers groups. She added that a balance has to be achieved with bringing cars into the town to encourage shoppers etc, to do this the arterial routes are given precedence over the cross routes.

315. Notice of motion in the name of Councillors Caroline Burrell & Steve Matthews (09/09/2008)

“That Bray Town Council considers using waste bins that are powered by Solar Energy that could help to transform waste collection, control, Health & Safety issues regarding waste and litter in Bray. That this Motion, if passed, would be circulated to all other Local Authorities by email.”

Report

Bray Town Council is aware of the existence of and the availability of litter bins with inbuilt compactors powered by solar energy. The council is giving their use serious consideration.

The members raised the following points:

- I am glad to hear that the Council are giving serious consideration to this. The Big Belly bin is 100% solar powered and is the same size as an ordinary bin. It only needs 4 hours of daylight – not sunlight – to charge.
- It doesn't compact rubbish completely, so recyclables can be separated.
- Roscommon County Council & Sligo County Council are conducting a trial of these bins at the moment.
- The Rejuvenation Committee has discussed this. The Senior Executive Engineer Liam Bourke is investigating further. Certain bins in Bray are emptied twice daily and are still full at the end of the day.
- We hope to have a meeting regarding these bins and to get some on a trial basis.
- I support this motion – the price is very reasonable. I hope we get these in Bray.
- On a separate note, congratulations to Bray Recycling Centre on their award. I ask the Town Clerk to write a letter of congratulations.

316. Notice of motion in the name of Councillors Caroline Burrell & Steve Matthews (09/09/2008)

“That a yellow box be placed on Vevay Road outside the Charnwood & Sans Souci Wood Estates entrances to facilitate vehicles trying to access the clinic, which are presently unable to do so due to vehicles being queued up at the lights at the Church Road junction at peak times. That this Motion, if passed, would be circulated to all other Local Authorities by email.”

Report

Excessive queuing and delays occur on the Vevay Road due to traffic congestion on the road at certain times of the day. This is not related to the operation of the signals at the junction with Church Road. Generally adequate gaps occur to facilitate side road traffic movement at the junction, which therefore incur less delay and shorter queue lengths than the main traffic stream. A yellow box is therefore not considered to be warranted.

The members raised the following points:

- I am disappointed to hear this response. People are finding it difficult to get out of Charnwood and Sans Souci at certain times. We should look at a traffic management plan and a new plan for the town.
- My understanding is that yellow boxes do not stop traffic in the same way that lights do. They do not block through traffic as the cars are stopped anyway.

The Executive Engineer, Mr. Stephen Fox informed the members that he was not familiar with the items and that he will ask the Road Engineer to provide a detailed response for clarity purposes.

317. Notice of motion in the name of Councillors Caroline Burrell & Steve Matthews (09/09/2008)

“That this Town Council would consider putting in bicycle racks at various appropriate locations around the town and that the council request CIE in consultation with the DTO to increase significantly the number of bicycles spaces at Bray Dart Station. That this Motion, if passed, would be circulated to all other Local Authorities by email.”

Report

The installation of bicycle racks at various suitable locations is part of existing council policy. There are a significant number of bicycle spaces already at Bray DART Station. It would appear from observations that some of these spaces are being used as storage locations by some bicycle owners, but CIE are aware of this issue.

The members raised the following points:

- I am happy with this response, this is something we should keep an eye on. There are not many locations around the town.

318. Notice of motion in the name of Councillors John Byrne, Anne Egan, Anne Ferris & John McManus (09/09/2008)

“That we seek funding from the OPW to urgently implement the River Dargle Flood Protection Scheme.”

Report

The OPW (by virtue of their presence on the design process Steering Group) are intimately aware of the urgent priority, significance and scale of the requirement for flood protection in Little Bray. The OPW are currently funding the construction of a model of the river in the UK. This model is being constructed to measure the effects of the various engineering measures proposed (i.e. physically test the computer simulations) and this will inform the minutiae of the design process and give a greater degree of confidence to the scheme design.

The members raised the following points:

- The reason that this resolution was placed is that we fully expected Pizarro Developments to fund this. Bray Town Council insisted that the OPW be involved in the project. We made an amendment to the Town Development Plan regarding this.
- I am concerned that in the changed economic circumstances the scheme won't go ahead as planned.
- There is urgent necessity for this scheme – flooding can rise to great height quickly in Little Bray. The Town Engineer tells us the only solution is to vacate Little Bray. This is not acceptable.
- We should say to the OPW that as a result of studies done, we are seeking funding to implement the scheme.
- I hope the developer and the OPW jointly fund this. We need to get a campaign going for funding.
- This is a very good resolution. We know the effects of flooding and need to press for a suitable and satisfactory scheme. We should try to expedite this scheme. It was a good idea to put this into the Development Plan.

- An Bord Pleanála have ruled once and may rule again regarding no building on flood plains. Pizarro may pull out. This is a good resolution and we need to get it in place as soon as possible.
- The OPW need to follow through on funding.
- I believe An Bord Pleanála will give a positive response. The OPW have recognised that there is a problem in Little Bray. If this development goes to a long period with An Bord Pleanála there is the risk that it won't go ahead.
- The Coastal Protection Scheme has been very effective. There are no problems on the Strand Road at all.
- I support movement on the scheme and I don't care who funds it, the OPW, Pizzaro or the OPW and Pizarro.
- Have we got a definite answer regarding funding?
- Since 1986, all councillors have wanted a Flood Protection Scheme. This development has enabled us to develop a comprehensive scheme which is almost in place. We are one step nearer to getting this scheme.
- Can we see the results of the testing regarding the Flood Defence Scheme?

The Town Clerk informed the members that there has been a lot of correspondence between Bray Town Council and the OPW and that there is no doubt that the OPW fully support the scheme and know the risks involved. Her understanding is that the OPW is awaiting a response from An Bord Pleanála. Testing using a hydraulic model is currently being conducted and the OPW is funding this.

319. Notice of motion in the name of Councillors John Byrne, Anne Egan, Anne Ferris & John McManus (09/09/2008)

"That we seek a change in the Planning Acts which will allow the placement of levies for the construction of flood defences in highly vulnerable areas."

Report

It would make sense that a contribution should be due for new developments which benefits from a flood defence scheme aided/financed by public funds. This is the net effect of the levy scheme and I would suggest that flood defences should be allowed for in the case of supplementary schemes under Section 49.

The members raised the following points:

- Thank you for this reply. We should send the resolution and response to the Department for consideration. Levies should be in place. We need to guard against people thinking that if they pay levies they have a right to build on flood plains.
- On a separate note, the council should send best wishes to Councillor Egan.

The members were concerned to hear that Councillor Egan was unwell and supported the request that their good wishes for a speedy recovery be conveyed to her.

5. Correspondence

Recycling Centre Award

The Town Clerk informed the members that the Bray Recycling Centre had received an award for Best Recycling Centre in Ireland by Repak, the primary body promoted by the private sector to deal with recycling.

Road Safety Week

The Town Clerk informed the members of an email received from Linda McDonald who is the Road Safety Officer with Wicklow County Council. The email stated:

'Road Safety Week runs 13th October and runs till 19th October, and the Road Safety Authority have many activities planned for the week. Two of the activities planned are:

- An RSA and Advanced Pitstop promotion commencing during Irish Road Safety Week and continuing into Winter where 'health checks' for cars will be provided free of charge at 42 Advanced Pitstop centres nationwide;
- Free Vision Screening with Specsavers which will take place at Specsavers stores nationwide during Irish Road Safety Week;

There is also a Road Safety display from Scoil Chonglais Baltinglass in the foyer of County Buildings. Also on display is a board game titled "Street Wise" designed by this school which has gone into production and will be available in shops in the new year.'

6. Any Other Business

Wolfe Tone Scheme

Councillor John Byrne requested a report from the Engineer regarding the Wolfe Tone Road Work Scheme. He stated that this went to tender in 2002 and six years later, there are still sections of the work that need to be implemented. Councillor Byrne added that the Town Engineer had informed the members that works would be delayed due to drainage works in Wheatfield but that these works have not commenced. He stated that the road is in a disgraceful condition, that ramps that were promised should be put in place and this was budgeted for. He requested that this item be placed on the next agenda.

Florence Road Car Park

Councillor John Brady stated that David Brophy of Ballymore Properties had sent a letter to the members regarding the re-instatement of the car park on the site of the proposed Florentine Centre. The letter stated that 290 car parking spaces would be put in place by 7th November 2008. Councillor Brady stated that his information was that only 125 spaces were being worked on. He informed the members that he had visited the site and half of the site is being staked off. Councillor Brady requested an update and asked that Ballymore Properties be approached in relation to this, as they only seemed to be working on half of the site.

Ballywaltrim Playground

Councillor John Brady stated that since the CCTV system had been installed in Ballywaltrim Playground it seems to be working and that there are less incidences of anti social behaviour. He stated that the playground has not been reinstated and that he consulted with one of the engineers as to when the equipment would be in place. He was informed that it would go to tender before Christmas and not everything would be reinstated. Councillor Brady requested a report on the matter and remarked that a full playground is the ideal.

AO Smith Site

Councillor John Brady asked if there had been any further developments regarding Health and Safety with the AO Smith site. He added that there seems to be an infestation of rodents and that they are coming from the site and out onto the Boghall Road. He asked that this matter be investigated, perhaps by contacting a pest control company or the owners of the site.

* * * *

This concluded the meeting.

Signed:

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:

TOWN CLERK

Dated:
