

Minutes of Youghal Town Council held on 12th July 2011 in the Mall House, Youghal at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Eoin Coyne, presided.

Cllrs. Revins, Linehan Foley, Burke, Hennessy & Murray.

Apologies were received from Cllr. Flanagan, Beecher and O'Connell.

Officials Present: Mrs. Patricia Power, Town Manager.

Mr. Liam Ryan, Town Clerk.

Mrs. Helen Mulcahy, Staff Officer.

Mr. Paul Murray, Executive Engineer.

Opening Prayers: The members and officials recited the opening prayers.

Suspension of Standing Orders:

On the proposal of Cllr. Linehan-Foley which was seconded by Cllr. Burke, the Members unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders in order to facilitate a presentation given by Patrick McCarthy in relation to the proposals to downgrade Youghal Ambulance Service. Following the presentation the Members were unanimous in voicing their concerns at th

e proposals and it was agreed that every effort must be made to prevent and downgrading of the service. Cllr. Hennessy said she would be in contact with Sandra McClellan T.D. in relation to putting a motion to the Dail in relation to the matter.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 14th June 2011:

The minutes of the monthly meeting held on 14th June 2011 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Revins, seconded by Cllr. Linehan Foley and unanimously adopted by the Members.

Report of the Town Clerk on Matters Arising since the Monthly Meeting of Youghal Town Council held on 14th June, 2011.

Fergal Quinn's Town Project; Fergal Quinn is searching for an Irish Town whose citizens and business community are willing to unite and determine their own economic destiny. This six part TV series will be produced by Amino TV for RTE One television. They are looking for Towns who would like to work with Fergal and a team of experts to capitalise on their resources, talent and innovation with the intention of creating jobs for their town. Fergal and his team want to ignite that change and help Irish communities to help themselves.

Fergal is looking for a town with ideas and is willing to provide that town with the experts and resources to help these citizens to make their town a better place to live and work. This selected town will serve as a microcosm of what is possible throughout the rest of the country as old habits are thrown out and new ideas are fostered and encouraged. I have forwarded you a copy of the application that has been made through the Youghal Socio Economic Development Group and will let you know the outcome in due course. It would be a wonderful opportunity for Youghal and it's entire community if it were selected.

Here is a brief synopsis of what we have included in sections of the application;

- What is your town known for?

Youghal is famous for its built and natural heritage. Located at the gateway to the stunning Blackwater River, the town is blessed with 5km of white sandy blue flag beaches which adjoin an internationally recognised landscape. Youghal has become known for being a multi-faceted tourist town catering for families of all ages, having recently been designated a "centre of excellence" in

Family Fun by Failte Ireland. The town's built heritage; including its magnificent 13th Century Medieval Town Walls, the internationally renowned "St. Mary's Collegiate Church" have become a must-see for any domestic or international visitor to the East Cork/West Waterford region.

However, the town has suffered the loss of 2,500 jobs in the manufacturing sector over the last ten years. This has contributed to a higher than average rate of long-term unemployment. RAPID status is testament to significant areas of disadvantage in the town. Consistent national media coverage of Youghal's manufacturing demise has unfortunately seen Youghal become known more as an unemployment "black spot", rather than the beautiful tourist resort it was once synonymous with.

As this application will demonstrate, the local community, business community, key stakeholders and policy makers have in fact developed strategies and put structures in place to enable Youghal to re-develop and regenerate itself. This task however has been consistently hampered by overly negative publicity which continues to focus on its manufacturing losses.

Tourism has been accepted as being Youghal's future, with strategies in place which seek to develop the physical and non-physical heritage and natural resources of the town and to use them as a catalyst in urban regeneration and tourism growth.

- Does your town have any cultural/historical attractions?

Youghal possesses an internationally recognised built heritage, with twelve archaeological sites and monuments in state or local authority ownership. Youghal is one of the key members of the "Irish Walled Towns Network" which has funded significant investment in the town walls, bespoke heritage trails and annual heritage events.

In 2005 Youghal Town Council together with the Heritage Council of Ireland developed a "heritage – led" regeneration strategy to address a number of issues concerning the economic and physical regeneration of the historic centre of the town, through measures which are primarily aimed at the protection, conservation and enhancement of the built heritage of the town. Issues which are being addressed in the plan include the high levels of retail vacancy in the town centre, the erosion of the physical character and the lack of adequate visitor facilities.

Some of the more significant built heritage attractions include:

1. Myrtle Grove: is a rare Irish example of an unfortified, late medieval Tudor style stone house. The building may be late 15th Century and was the home-place of Sir Walter Raleigh. A conservation plan was recently undertaken by Youghal Town Council on the property).

2. Town Walls: The construction of Youghal Town Walls can be dated to approximately 1250 A.D. Significant resources and investment from both the local authority, Youghal Town Council and The Heritage Council of Ireland have demonstrated the commitment to investment in Youghal's Heritage offering and as a key attraction in the development of Heritage Tourism in the town.

3. The Clockgate: together with the lighthouse, the Clock Gate is probably the main landmark which makes a lasting impression on any visitor to Youghal. The Clock Gate served the town as a jail and public gallows until 1837. A feasibility study, conservation plan and business plan are now completed on the building which has been earmarked as a key visitor experience as an interpretive centre in the heart of the town

- What are the biggest challenges faced by your town?

The biggest challenges facing the town of Youghal include:

1. Combat continued negative publicity:

Despite on-going efforts to build relationships with the media nationally, by feeding through positive (and truthful) reports on Youghal's regeneration, Youghal's image is being "dragged down" by the "over sensationalising" of Youghal's economic outlook. The fact that Youghal did not experience a

significant “boom” throughout the “Celtic Tiger” years is not in dispute, and while the rest of the country was experiencing unprecedented growth, Youghal was in fact experiencing its own “down-turn”. This resulted in strategies and structures being put in place a number of years ago which are now being rolled out to overcome this. These include the development of (i) The Heritage-Led Regeneration Strategy for Youghal (ii) The setting up of The Youghal Socio-Economic Development Group (where key Government Agencies meet and work alongside the local community, Chamber of Commerce and Local Authorities in addressing the economic and investment deficiencies in the town). (iii) The role out of The Public Realm Plan for the town.

The challenge therefore of the town is to reverse the negative reporting on the town, not to be deterred by “dated” reporting on the town’s manufacturing demise and continue to implement its well developed strategies for the town’s regeneration.

2. Address the lack of confidence in the business community:

A significant high level of retail vacancy exists in the town due to the fact that the resident population does not appear to be investing in retail property within the town. This points to a lack of confidence among the business community in Youghal, and is evidenced by the fact that a number of businesses are opening and closing within the same year. The challenge is to make it the vibrant, attractive, and high quality space that it should be, and improve the quality of the public realm.

3. Address above the national average unemployment rate:

The decline of manufacturing jobs has been a long-term feature of the town with over 2,500 jobs being lost in the sector over the last ten years. The challenge therefore lies in replacing these manufacturing jobs, with sustainable industry.

• What are the best aspects of your town/community?

1) Unspoilt Landscape:

Although Youghal did not benefit as much from the “Celtic Tiger” years in the same way that other towns did, a significant benefit of this is that the town has remained unspoilt, and has not seen the “over development” that other towns have experienced. As a result Youghal’s natural resources of the sea and its built heritage have maintained their integrity which is a major asset to the town and in marketing it to the visitor going forward.

2) Structures in Place:

Youghal, having experienced its recession earlier than other similar sized towns, is better positioned to see itself out of recession with structures and strategies in place already. Key personnel are in position to roll out these strategies. The establishment of the Youghal Socio-Economic Development Group Ltd. has seen relationships develop between the local authority (Youghal Town Council and Cork County Council), business community (Youghal Chamber of Tourism & Commerce) and key agencies including Failte Ireland, Local Leader Programme (SECAD), South Cork Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland and FAS, which has put funding in place for the development of tourism, heritage and enterprise resources.

3) Strong Community Spirit:

Despite all of it’s setbacks, the community spirit among the people of Youghal has been undeterred, including Cumann na Daoine (Community Project), and the Youghal Residents Network. The most recent development has been the establishment of a “Concerned Citizens of Youghal” Group, who rather than focus on the negatives of the employment situation, are actively undertaking activities to enhance Youghal’s reputation as “Ireland’s Finest Coastal Resort”. A “meet and greet” facility has been developed by the group for tour buses to the town, and most recently the group organised for 19 of Youghal’s finest restaurants to enter a competition to develop Youghal’s seafood signature dish. This activity has received extensive positive media coverage in the National paper The Irish Examiner and also regional press.

The Business Community through the Youghal Chamber is continuously lobbying and developing initiatives to further enhance the town centre.

Are there any initiatives or support available for the unemployed in the town/community ?

1. FAS CE Scheme: The FAS Community Employment Scheme employs over 55 people in the Youghal area alone. This scheme has proven to be of huge benefit not only to the participants involved who receive training and up skilling, but also to the companies and community groups who could otherwise not afford to employ anyone. Participants are employed to work in : Tidy Towns Committee, Youghal Chamber of Tourism & Commerce, Youghal Radio, GAA Soccer Club, Pitch & Putt etc.

2. Rural Social Scheme: This is managed by The South and East Cork Area Development which allows for participants to work the scheme around their work (which may be seasonal). Eg: Fishermen.

3. Tus (Community Work Placement Initiative); this scheme is about to come online in Youghal as various bodies have made applications.

4. Youghal Adult Education Group: Organise an integrated delivery of training for the unemployed and underemployed in the area.

• Are there any plans in place for generating business in the town over the coming months/years?

1. Heritage-Led Regeneration Strategy: Medium – Long-term Plan: Youghal’s Heritage-Led Regeneration plan is one of the first of its kind in the country and has been used as a blue-print for the other towns throughout Ireland. Youghal Town Council has undertaken a major commitment to the regeneration of the town through this plan and is now recognized as a town of major significance in Ireland. This is aimed at rebuilding confidence among the business community.

An example of works already rolled out in this plan includes:

- Placing of unsightly overhead wires underground
- Improved access to physical and interpretive heritage sites
- Development of bespoke heritage signage (6 languages) throughout the town centre.
- The roll-out of a subsidized “Heritage Painting Scheme” whereby shop owners would receive 50% of costs of paint and labour when choosing a “heritage pallet” of colours chosen by the Town Architect. This scheme has proven to be hugely popular and successful.

2) The Establishment of the Youghal Socio-Economic Development Group:

This group was established in 2007 to “develop the social, economic, historical and maritime potential of Youghal. Members of the group include:

Youghal Town Council, Youghal Chamber of Tourism & Commerce, Cork County Council, RAPID, Youghal Residents Network, Community School. Advisory members include: Failte Ireland, South Cork Enterprise Board, South & East Cork Area Development, Enterprise Ireland, FAS.

Some of the main achievements to date include:

- Employment of a full-time tourism and marketing officer for the town.
- Accessing funding for various projects: including: an “Eco-Board walk” linking The Quality Hotel to the town across the miles of blue flag beach.
- Funding to undertake capital works on the Clock Gate Building in the town (landmark building)
- Management of events: Arts, Musical, Theatre
- Development of a “Youghal Brand”
- On-going PR strategy – establishment of relationships with media and press.

3. Youghal Chamber of Tourism & Commerce Initiatives:

(i) Youghal Chamber introduced a hugely innovative “Youghal Chamber Voucher Scheme”, aimed at getting the community to “keep Youghal business in Youghal”. Businesses are encouraged to five “Youghal Chamber Vouchers” as “Christmas Bonuses”. It has proved a life- line to the business community at Christmas time.

(ii) Youghal Chamber Loyalty Voucher Scheme: This is a new incentive introduced for students whereby they built “points” on production of their loyalty voucher card. This is an incentive to get students and young people to start and introduce the idea of “shopping locally” which hopefully they will continue.

What other events, if any, are planned for the town between now and Christmas 2011? (e.g. Book fairs, Festivals, etc.)

The following are some of the major events planned for the remainder of 2011 in Youghal:

- Youghal “Queen of the Sea” Family Fun Festival 15th – 17th July 2011 (FREE EVENT) (This is the second year of this festival; the inaugural event was attended by in excess of 5,000 visitors). Rachel Allen will open the Food Festival side of the event.
- Youghal Maritime Sailing Regatta; 6th – 7th August 2011 A weekend filled with exciting water and land-based activities for all ages to enjoy.
- Tag to Youghal Rugby Festival and Pubfest: 12th – 14th August 2011 Tag rugby tournaments, free open air concerts, food and craft fair, crab- catching and sandcastle competitions, face-painting, art exhibitions and more
- Youghal Medieval Fun Celebrations 21st August 2011 St. Mary’s College Gardens. A day packed with free family fun events, medieval battles, archery displays, food stalls, bouncy castle, circus workshop, etc.
- Youghal Celebrates History Conference; 24th – 25th September 2011 “Politics and Culture in the 19th Century”. Local Heritage Buildings are open to the public, poetry readings, wine tasting, drama and music events.
- Halloween Family Fun! Florence Newton’s Witches of Youghal Festival! October 31st 2011.

The Members congratulated the Town Clerk and all involved in relation to the work that went into preparing this application.

Votes of Congratulations

The Members passed a vote of congratulations to the following:

1. Team Youghal on their success in the Race Across America. The members also requested that a letter of ‘well wishes’ be sent to both Tommy Roche and Eoin Flanagan.
2. Youghal GAA for the recent Feile Tournament.
3. Bill Cooper on his selection to play for the Cork Senior Hurling team.
4. St. Raphael’s on their very successful annual open day.

Vote of Sympathy:

The Members passed a vote of sympathy to the following:

1. Geraldine O’Connell on the death of her sister, Catherine O’Callaghan.

Town Foreman’s Report:

The Town Foreman’s Report on works carried out from 7th June to 8th July was brought to the attention of the Members and noted. Arising from the report the following items were raised:

1. Potholes at Nealons Quay.
2. Gates at the Graveyard need painting.

3. Repairs to slipway at Buttimer's Dock.
4. Concrete blocks dumped mid-way up Jail Steps.
5. Relocation of benches from fenced off section of Lighthouse Hill. Cllr. Linehan-Foley complimented both the Town Council and Tidy Towns on the wonderful display of flowers around the Town.

Cork County Council Items:

ENGINEERS REPORT ON ITEMS RAISED AT THE JUNE MEETING.

1. Road repairs @ Tesco and Claycastle are complete.
2. Ponding issues at South Abbey have been attended to.
3. Concealed entrance sign at Summerdale Lawn has been dealt with.
4. Contractor has been appointed for the Tallow Road overlay.

County Council Items:

1. Condition of roadway at Copperalley.
2. Dangerous section of footpath at Tallow Street/Dr. Kennedy Place.
3. Potholes O'Rahilly Street & Browne Street.
4. Condition of footpaths at South Abbey & Strand Street.
5. Advance warning signs for height restrictors at Claycastle.
6. Ponding at Ballyvergan.
7. Provision of mesh on Bins at Claycastle to prevent birds from taking out rubbish.
8. Boy racers at Claycastle. It was agreed to place the matter on the agenda for the next JPC Meeting. The Mayor also agreed to liaise directly with the Gardai prior to that meeting.
9. Planning application for treatment of Toxic/Hazardous waster at Foxhole. The Town Clerk informed the Members that Cork County Council granted permission to Eras Eco for the treatment of toxic/hazardous waste at the Foxhole. This was appealed to An Bord Pleanala by Youghal Chamber of Tourism and Commerce and the judgement was awaited. The Town Clerk stated hat in addition the facility was licensed by the EPA who would ultimately decide on the application.

Managers Orders:

Managers Order no's 77 to 91/2011 were brought to the attention of the Council and noted.

Planning Applications:

P. 11/58004 & P. 11/58005 were brought to the attention of the Members and noted.

Further Information Received:

The Members were informed that no further information was received.

Disposal of properties:

On the proposal of Cllr. Revins, seconded by Cllr. Burke the members unanimously agreed to the leasing of the Clock Gate to Youghal Socio Economic Development Group subject to Notice pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2011. The lease period will be for a period of 10 years at a yearly rent of €200.

Mayor's Business:

1. The Mayor congratulated everyone involved in the very successful Youghal Bay Fish Pie Competition.
2. The Mayor informed that Members that the recent visit of Minister Phil Hogan to Cumann Na Daoine was very successful.
3. The Mayor sent well wishes to all those participating in the Queen of the Sea 2011. 4. The Mayor informed the Members that all the Members were invited to the Michael Hacketts' Book Launch to be held on Friday 15th July at 8.30pm.

AMAI:

The Members noted correspondence in relation to The Case For Town Local Government and the 98th Annual AMAI Conference. On the proposal of Cllr. Linehan which was proposed by Cllr. Revins the Members unanimously agreed to nominate Cllr. Coyne as the 3rd AMAI Delegate (with non-voting rights).

Walled Towns Friendship Circle:

The Members noted correspondence in relation to The Walled Towns Friendship Circle AGM.

Traffic Management Plan Church Street, DeValera Street, Ashe Street & Emmet Place:

On the proposal of Cllr. Revins which was seconded by Cllr. Linehan-Foley the Members unanimously agreed to put the Draft Traffic Management Plans to public consultation.

Taking in Charge of Cnoc Aoibhinn:

On the proposal of Cllr. Linehan-Foley which was seconded by Cllr. Burke the members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of 209 liner metres of the public roadway at Cnoc Aoibhinn.

Taking in Charge of Hillcrest :

On the proposal of Cllr. Murray which was seconded by Cllr. Burke the members unanimously agreed to commence the taking in charge procedure for the public roadway at Hillcrest, Cork Hill.

Proposed Heritage Asset Management Plan for St. Mary's Collegiate Church.

The Heritage Asset Management Plan was unanimously adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Burke and seconded by Cllr. Linehan-Foley.

Motion in the name of Cllr. Murray:

'That Youghal Town Council conduct a harbour audit with a view to maximizing the potential of the harbour for sea faring visitors. The audit should address issues such as visitors moorings, landing, launching, dock area usage and ancillary services.'

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. Murray, seconded by Mary Linehan Foley in the absence of Cllr. Beecher and unanimously adopted by the Members.

Motion in the name of Cllr. Hennessy:

a) 'To call on the Minister for Health not to replace Ambulance vehicles with First Responders cars in the East Cork Area'.

b) To call on the Minister for Health not to reduce the Southdoc GP out of hours service from 3 to 2 doctors covering the East Cork area'.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. Hennessy, seconded by Mary Linehan Foley and unanimously adopted by the Members.

The members agreed to send Part B of this motion to Cork County Council, Fermoy, Midleton & Cobh Town Councils. Cllr. Murray also asked if the Town Clerk could get clarification from Southdoc on the breakdown of coverage and the usage of cars for the area.

Correspondence:

1. An In Grateful Appreciation card received from the family of the late Fr. Declan J. Hennessy P.P.
2. Motion received from Monaghan Town Council: "That this Council calls on the Minister for Environment, Phil Hogan, T.D. to address as a matter of urgency the crippling cost of rates on

commercial properties’.

3. Notification from Omagh District Council re Benedict Kiely Literary Weekend to be held in Strule Arts Centre, Townhall Square, Omagh on 8th – 11th September, 2011. 4. An In Grateful Appreciation card received from the family of the late Nellie and Jackie Coughlan.

5. Letter of thanks from CRY 104fm for grant received from Youghal Town Council.

6. Notification re Trevor/Bowen Literary Summer School, 2011.

7. Motion received from Killarney Town Council: “As business in Killarney and practically all town centres throughout the Country are in serious decline over the past decade or so, due to the unequal position of parking charges in these centres compared to retail developments on the perimeter of towns and as the viability of these towns are in jeopardy in the short to medium term, we call on the Minister for Local Government as a matter of urgency to include in the Local Government Reform or Review Programme, mechanisms that will allow Town Councils together with Central Government to introduce an “Equalisation Plan”, town centre versus town perimeter across the country. This proposal if passed to be sent to the Minister, the AMAI and all Town Councils”.

8. Letter from Boyle Town Council regarding the disbandment and re-establishment of An Bord Pleanala.

9. Notification re upcoming seminars: a. Irish language course for councillors, b. The Councillor and the Local Government Environment Service, c. The Local Government Arts Service, d. The Local Government Planning service

10. Motions received re NPPR and Postal votes for Emigrants.

11. Youghal Station.

12. Environmental Fund 2011 – application – St. Mary’s Collegiate Church, Youghal.

This concluded the business of the meeting.