

MINUTES OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING.
HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 1992.

PRESENT: T. Dunne Chairman, Jim Myers V.C. Monseignor G. Stack, Fr. D. Cormican O.M.I. J. Kirby, D. Curley, M. O Boyle, Una Cooper, M. McCormack, M. Kenny, M. Allen and M. Fitzsimons.

IN ATTENDANCE: J. Coote, J. Reynolds and P. Murphy.

APOLOGIES: T. Mangan.

Minutes of the previous meeting having been circulated were taken as read, adopted on the proposal of M. Kenny, seconded by J. Myers.

MATTERS ARISING: E. McCormack asked whether the incident in the Bar had been resolved. The Chairman said the matter had been discussed - a decision was taken, that the member of the Social Committee would be kept off the scene. Eddie asked, whether everyone was happy - assured that they were.

WELFARE REPORT: Presented by P. Murphy.

Monthly report copies circulated Increase of 20% on workload January, February. Work-wise busy. Majority of the work was helping people, callers were predominately Irish - Recession - Homeless families in difficulty. Mental Health people, for referral, and re-referral. Good co-operation amongst new staff. More statistics needed on return callers. D.I.O.N. visit, New Chairperson to familiarise with day to day situations.

Travelling Community: Query re visits to welfare requesting Birth Certificates (Mostly) Some of their children born in England, Ireland and Scotland, Information they need to produce in D.S.S.

Welfare Advisory Committee - reduction in members. The Chairman Raymond Hevey and T. Dunne have asked that the position of Vice-Chairman be clarified and filled.

Job Contracts, final drafting completed.

Una Cooper asked Paul whether it would be feasible to visit lunch club perhaps once a month to answer queries. Paul replied it would be more convenient if they could go to his office where telephone and other facilities are at hand.

Chairman extended thanks to Paul for his hard work - including his staff.

HOSTELS: Full - Conway House. St. Louise experienced some vacancies. An Caislean full. New development in Kentish Town work commencing 26th February by Fitzpatrick & Company. A further project for Flat re development, Willesden Lane, under negotiation.

FINANCE REPORT: Presented by J. Reynolds. Copies circulated. January - a further loss of £6,149. Heavy overhead costs. Catering down. Suggestions for improvement invited, Chairman asked whether we can expect more business in the next few months to rectify gross deficit. Advertising a possibility. J. Kirby asked whether any appeal had been made to encourage counties back. Mary Allen said, some Counties numbers were high, and Saturday night required - October to January, not available.

Chairman asked whether a letter to each County would have any effect, it was felt to be a worthy consideration.

Efforts to reduce wages - The problem Cause.

SOCIAL CLUB: Mary Kenny reported that Chairman said - some action is being taken. J. Reynolds - Wages high, Five full-time and part-time waitresses - Insurance cover etc. Strict control on personnel employment needed. Chairman considered prices are too low. M. Allen said prices are being dropped in Hotels and Restaurants. Una Cooper asked whether taxi fares for waitresses were still being paid - This has ceased.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Presented by Fr. D. Cormican - who stated that because of deficit, he is worried Irish Centre in a precarious position, situation serious. He had tried to make efforts to alter the situation. Finance sub-committee had concluded - there was no choice but to make a member of the Catering staff redundant. Catering expenditure £14,000 - Income £12,000 loss of £2,000. Catering Manager - notice given last working day 29th February, a decision dictated by events. A Maintenance Man - on a small salary has accepted a pay cut of 50% and will continue to work. A further step has been taken, negotiations on going with outside companies to take over catering and Bar. It will take considerable time to get information. Letter sent out to eight companies and direct contact with two others. One in close negotiation - hopes may be raised to have something concrete very soon.

Company would take over total Bar and Catering. Chairman asked, in sharing this information within an administrative meeting, that it is kept in honour, as there are staff involved, and respect towards staff vital.

WELFARE FUND: A separate issue from Irish Centre Limited is financially solvent. Cheques received from London Irish Festival £2,500 - a further £1,000 allocated to Welfare specifically for families from C.I.C.A. Welfare Fund. £10,000 from Lawlor Foundation £1,800 from Irish Youth Foundation.

Christmas Draw realised £4,500, less ^{IN} ~~than~~ previous years. Contact from J.Brien Clare whether Irish Centre interested in receiving sponsorship from London Marathon - per Fr. Harry Bohan. Fund raising needed. If insufficient funds for salaries, one welfare may be redundant D.I.O.N. funding may be cut. Fr. Cormican praised Social Workers, who make extreme efforts under difficult circumstances to solve problems. Camden Social Workers on strike for 9 months.

Una Cooper said she was dumbfounded by laying off of Catering Manager. She was sad that E. Killeen and his wife were not given the opportunity to succeed. Housekeeping was not done properly. Lack of economy in Kitchen e.g. Tinned Soup in lieu of home made soup, from stock pot. J. Reynolds considered this is perhaps - for outside restaurants but would take action.

SOCIAL CLUB: Mary Kenny reported that meeting was amicable. As Counties Bar sign requested.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: E. McCormack, having requested referral of his contribution to this final item, referring to his comments at November 1991 meeting - a finance committee was set up. He had joined in July 1989. Fr. Scully had left the Centre in 1990. During his time as Chairman/Director there were regular Sub-Committee meetings.

Irish Centre Ltd (1) Charity (2) Trading. With the departure of Fr. Scully - Finance Committee ceased to function. He assumed it was in reasonable shape. He had raised the issue in November - since then he has attended 7 different meetings. A major crisis now exists in London Irish Centre - Poor performance - Management and control of staff negligible. Irish Centre Charity in existence for many years, has never had a reserve of finance. Catering and Bar never makes any money. Trading side never generated any degree of confidence - Majority of accounts show no improvement. Problems with Charity side. Everything seems to cost a lot of money - a lot of people have donated.

Trustees do not attend meetings, a fact Eddie has been raising, meeting now arranged. He has grave misgivings re quality of Committee no strength, too large. If Management is responsible for finance - not managing finance, probably rubber stamping what!

Fr. Cormican, T. Dunne, J. Coote have tough decisions with rising costs, controlling costs. Information strictly confidential. Business has drifted away. Proper marketing needed. Advertising will not help. Even in recession London Irish Centre can survive.

The Chairman thanked Eddie for candid comments, and said that legislation has put us in this situation. Advice taken and people employed to help. Eddie - Formation of Company - problems existed long before setting up of London Irish Centre Ltd. Chairman said that lots of people are advising - people anxious for survival. No decision will be taken until some definite solution - then notification to Management. A Dublin organisation interested - Efforts will be made to ensure that Charity will survive, long and tedious discussions.

J. Kirby queried - separation between Charity and Trading Company. Charity £20,000 in Bank. Grant from Camden. ?£10,000 and Car Raffle forthcoming Festival. Business side should be making a profit. Can Fr. Cormican be more specific at this stage Fr. Cormican - a proposal. Considered the most workable - a Concession Rent Range between 10% and 15% of turn-over another alternative, lease the property, which some advisers have opposed. As it could transform the whole area of Irish Centre.

Monseignor Stack, said there is a short term and long term problem. Income/Expenditure deficit. How do you wipe out deficit? Servicing of debt. Oblates have cushioned us. Westminster Cathedral have been "Down this Road". Franchise?. Lease a good idea, look at your plant, your needs, clients needs why are they not coming? Whether Irish Centre is answering today's needs. What service are we providing that other industries are not. Evaluate Management structure. What is this business doing that no other business is doing? What is the purpose of this Institution? Are we there to fund - Occupancy? Unless clients feel that they can get something here, they will not come. We cannot carry the burden at a semi-professional level - Service - To whom? Why? The Chairman assured Monseignor that the people interested know about marketing etc.

John Coote said we have agonised - Irish Centre real question has not be addressed. Irish population is diminishing. If the I.C. is to continue as an I.C. we must establish the reason for being here.

J. Kirby In appeal, can we go out on a limb, and in dire straits - need for fund to go public - advertise in Irish papers.

T. Dunne would accept Jim's comments - had written several letters to Irish Companies in the past to no avail.

John Coote - said Irish people must decide whether they want I.C. as a Cultural Centre. If they do not, then what to do with the asset.

(1) Sell it.

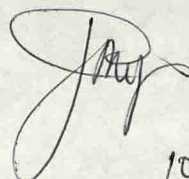
(2) Maintain and market. Profit covenanted to Charity. it is very difficult to manage one's own affairs. Recession is there to be fought and overcome. Management have failed, failure is inability to attract custom. Not being supported. Assets may be too grand for position to-day. If loyalty to here would be here. The feedback seems to lack demand.

Chairman, we respect the prerogative, asked for a show of hands in proposals as aforesaid - Majority - Unanimous agreement. Monseignor Stack requested that when negotiations are completed - Result is brought back to Management for validation.

The probability of increasing % - Concession Rent. Only a short term solution.

There being no further business, relevant the Chairman closed proceedings 10.00p.m.

Date of next meeting 10th March 1992.


10/3/92