

THE IRISH CENTRE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE IRISH CENTRE ON 14th SEPTEMBER, 1982

PRESENT: Messrs Donie Egan, Jim Troy, Frank Aherne and Tommy Dunne, Frs.C.Malone, J.Gordon and F.Ryan, Sr.Anthony, Mrs.Doris Daly, and Miss Kathleen Fitzsimons.

Mr.D.Egan reported on the health of Mr.Martin Maroney. The committee sent their best wishes for his recovery.

Mr.D.Egan thanked the committee for the wedding gift he and his bride Rosemary received from the Irish Centre. He also thanked the individual members who sent greeting telegrams and good wishes on his recent wedding day.

1. APOLOGIES:

Miss Mary Kenny and Fr.J.Butler.

2. ABSENT:

Mr.Declan Quinn

3. MINUTES:

Mr.T.Dunne proposed that the Minutes be adopted as read, seconded by the secretary Mrs.Daly, who would take the present minutes.

4. MATTERS ARISING:

The Director Fr.Malone reported on the state of the Centre. Maintenance was in progress, cost bourne by donations and the labour from the excellent voluntary workers.

5. APPOINTMENTS:

An Administrative Officer was now recruited and would start work in two week's time. The Post was a temporary one and would be for six months contract initially.

An Assistant Manager was appointed recently to work under John O'Shea. This post went to Mr.Eddie Hickey who had already done a wonderful job on maintenance and structural decoration and repairs. Fr.Malone asked the individual committee members to make a point of thanking the voluntary workers at the earliest opportune time.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence was in the main bills and letters pertaining to.

7. PROMOTIONS AND PUBLICITY:

A brochure has been prepared by the ad-hoc committee and would be in production as soon as the forecourt and new entrance were fit to be photographed, two weeks at the latest.

8. THE SOCIAL CLUB A.G.M.:

Billed for October 6th. A good social committee is essential to the Centre and suitable and talented people would be recruited to sit on the committee before this date.

9. URBAN AID:

A draft statement prepared by the Community Services sub-committee was handed around for scrutiny.

The draft outlined the areas of work and service the Irish Centre Community Services might contribute to the community and environs. It set out facilities for the elderly, activities for youth, a one-parent family's support network: with meeting place accommodation, games and TV rooms, bar and refreshment access, and a location for Borough Councillors to hold Surgeries. The Council Architect and the Borough Valuer supplied the realistic figures forecasting an estimate of salaries and costs for 1983. This figure was in the region of £40,000.

After discussion the secretary expressed the fear that the Irish Centre Community Services would lose its Irish identity and be swallowed up in an all-embracing cosmopolitan organisation. The Chairman replied it would integrate the Irish Community not assimilate it.

As time was of the essence on this issue, Mr.T.Dunne proposed that the draft be accepted as it was and presented for Urban Aid. Seconded by Mrs.Daly.

Fr.Malone informed the committee that in fact the following day was the latest deadline, and hopefully it would be successful.

10. THE DEBTS:

The current bank account was "in the red" to the displeasure of the bank manager.

The most pressing debt was the Brewers' account. Fr.Malone recounted the efforts he had made to stave off the day of judgement. He had requested a loans interest freeze, "a moratorium", but the bank refused as they found this procedure to be without precedent. However, on observation other organisations had been able to secure one. It was impossible for the Centre to get Credit, and this was a very limiting factor to trade.

Messrs Murphy did not press for the £300,000 owed to them so far!

* Returning to the Brewers, Fr.Malone explained that one original loan had been secured on unrealistic targets for beer consumption, and further negotiation altered the "barrelage" to a realistic figure. However, this mortgaged the whole complex of buildings to the hilt.

The best the Director could do was make ends meet in the everyday or mundane running of the Centre, but the debts were not touched nor was the interest paid. The Director as treasurer had therefore to inform the committee that we were under serious financial stress and that deadlines had to be met.

11. THE OPENING:

The arrangements for the opening of the new entrance were outlined. The Cardinal and the Ambassador had accepted invitations to attend this function on Nov. 4th. The blessing of the new entrance would take place at 2.30p.m.

Invitations would be extended to the CICA in time for the meeting on 26th September. Refreshments would be available up to 7.00p.m. to cater for those who could not get to the afternoon function. Invitations would be sent out to ministers of State or civil servants under the guidance of the Embassy so that protocol would be seen to be done and correct for the occasion.

Mr.T.Dunne accepted responsibility for contacting the Media and publicising the event.

12. COMMUNITY SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE:

Fr.Malone paid tribute to the sub-committee working on the Irish Centre Community Services project, for generating interest in youth work and the Irish Language classes, and in all the items outlined in

the draft.

The Meath Association would fund the shelving of the Reference Library which would be located at 50 Camden Square. The Irish Embassy had made a grant of books to the value of £500.

Certain items of equipment were now provided at No.50: overhead projector, screen, items of furniture and soft furnishings.

The Councillors' Surgeries were now in full swing.

There will be an active marriage guidance advisory service, and Fr.Kennedy gave housing advice at his evening Surgery on Fridays and all day on Tuesdays.

The shortfall of around £30/week in stock turnover gave cause for concern.

13. THE HOSTELS:

Fr.Ryan gave a résumé of the work carried on at Conway House. The building project would be completed by February 1983. At present there were 91 young men resident in the hostel. It had 100 beds and there had been a full house all year. On average the residents were between the ages of 17-19 years, 90% were without funds on arrival and were in the main unemployed. There was no burden of debt on the hostel at this time. However, the repairs and structural alterations to the fabric of the building would reduce accommodation by 2/3 and thus reduce revenue over the early part of 1983.

Although control of the hostel came from the Irish Centre, an appointed separate administrative committee directly governed the hostels. Members bought a nominal £1.00 share. The hostels are run as Irish Centre Hostels Ltd. and funded by the Housing Corporation, and therefore government standards had to be maintained.

The hostels are a facility for the Irish people arriving alone to this city. A recent survey carried out in West Cork showed that there was an increase in emigration, and that an upsurge might be expected in the late '80s. However, research at the Irish Centre recently did not indicate an increase in immigration at the present time. However, now that EEC regulations allowed ease of movement within Europe, London was merely a stopping off point en route for the Continent.

Fr.Ryan made a plea for fund-raising in Ireland. He stressed this as essential that priorities should be

established and targets set. Personal and positive approaches to fund-raising should be our priority. The committee agreed with him and invited him to attend the meeting on 29th September to pursue this theme.

Fr.Ryan recounted the unwelcome police activity and obvious surveillance of the hostel. There was also a history of residents being taken to the police station for questioning on suspicion. This was all very distressing and further discussion would take place at a later date.

Sr.Anthony gave a report on St.Louise's Hostel for young women. The hostel is now 18months old. At present there were 133 girls in residence: 78 Irish, 21 British, 34 Overseas. All were under 25 years of age. Many were students who found the hostel ideal for private and serious study. The residents were happy and comfortable.

Funds were barely adequate, payments were just met and it was a struggle to make ends meet. The rates bill of £9000 was the heaviest debt.

There had been some teething problems, and the fabric and structure of the buildings presented problems but there was no immediate worry.

Fr.Malone proposed that our committee should hold a meeting on the hostel premises at a future date. This was agreeable to all members.

Sr.Anthony and Fr.Ryan were thanked for attending the meeting and were excused from the rest of the proceedings.

14. THE SUB-COMMITTEES' 1982-83 WORKLOAD REDEFINED:

Fr.Malone outlined the reality of management of the Irish Centre by defining his role. The Cardinal appointed Chaplains to the Centre. At this time the Oblate Fathers were appointed - Fr.J.Butler and his good self. The Roman Catholic Church did not own the Centre. The true fact of the matter is that the management committee is indeed the governing body by CONSTITUTION.

Because the Chaplains were available and on the spot it became traditional for them to deal with the administration and the treasury. Frs.Malone and Butler did not receive a salary, they were provided for by the Oblate Fathers Provincial, who also made provision for them in sickness and old age. At an earlier meeting Mr.J.Troy proposed a salary for the Fathers

but this offer was waived because the Centre could not afford it.

As a commercial unit the Centre should be self-funding, therefore targets must be redefined for the units, and reached.

The following sub-committees were set up with specific targets and duties. Fr.Malone would sit on all committees.

FUND RAISING: Fr.J.Butler, Canon Woods, Fr.J.Gordon, Fr.F.Ryan and Declan Quinn.

PROMOTIONS AND PUBLICITY: Mr.T.Dunne, Mrs.D.Daly (ad-hoc committee working on the brochure).

LIASON WITH IRISH SOCIETIES: Mr.J.Troy, Mr.F.Aherne (to attend quarterly meetings).

LIASON WITH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: The diocesan representatives were sufficient. Fr.Gordon, Canon Woods, Fr.Malone and Fr.Fulham.

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT: Mr.D.Egan, Mr.Liam Martin ARIBA to act as consultant architect.

MAINTENANCE AND STANDARDS: Mr.E.Hickey, Mr.M.Doyle - both voluntary workers at the Centre.

SOCIAL CLUB: The AGM on October 5th would secure talented personnel to sit on this sub-committee. Mrs.D.Daly would be this committee's delegate.

WELFARE: Mr.T.Dunne and Mr.F.Aherne.

THE HOSTELS: Sr.Anthony and Mr.T.Dunne.

IRISH CULTURAL AFFAIRS: Mr.P.Judge for comhaltas and Mrs.D.Daly for drama; this would cover all aspects of the Performing Arts.

YOUTH: Miss Kathleen Fitzsimons and Fr.Malone would draw up guide-lines and suitably experienced personnel co-opted on.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT: Mr.J.Troy, Mr.F.Aherne and Mr.D.Egan.

There would be a Lunch meeting to get the preparatory work done prior to co-opting personnel on to the sub-committees on September 22nd, arrangements to be made later.

15. THE IRISH FESTIVAL:

The Festival committee and Fr.Malone as anchor-man. The next meeting is this Thursday, Sept. 16th, at 8.30p.m. with Mr.J.Troy as Chairman.

16. THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING:

The next meeting is on September 29th at 5.30p.m. at the Irish Centre.

17. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:

The next meeting as on Thursday October 21st at 8.30p.m. at the Irish Centre.

Dy Egan