

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE IRISH CENTRE ON 9th DECEMBER, 1986

PRESENT:

Rev. T. Scully, O.M.I., Rev. B. Gilmore,
Rev. J. Gordon, Rev. J. O'Donoghue, M. Duggan,
M. Hannon, M. Kenny, T. Mangan, J. Myers,
C. O'Connell, F. Swan, G. O'Flynn.

APOLOGY:

T. Dunne,

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rev. F. Ryan, O.M.I., P. Keegan.

In the absence of the Chairman T. Mangan, Vice-Chairman, presided.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated, were adopted on a proposal by J. Myers, seconded by M. Hannon.

MATTERS ARISING

The nominations to represent the Irish centre on London Irish Festival Working Committee were J. Commene, T. Mangan, J. Murphy, and E. Nolan.

The accounts for 1985 Festival have now been completed.

WELFARE REPORT

The monthly welfare report was given by N. Murray. It showed that during November 201 new applicants and 188 repeat visitors called at the Community Services Department. These figures show an increase of 27% on October 1986 and 76% on November 1985. Their needs were much the same as previously i.e. accommodation, employment, help to approach Social Services and repatriation.

N. Murray outlined a typical Wednesday at the Community Care Centre.

From 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. he entered up records for the previous day. At 10.00 a.m. attended staff meeting and then continued to complete records.

At 2.00 p.m. open to public. At that time there were 15 clients waiting at the door. He attended 10 clients between 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m. Many of the clients are the responsibility of Statutory Agencies. Interviewing of clients to ascertain their needs can be very time consuming, as does the effort to obtain the necessary help. Pressure of work is a big problem for staff. This is the reason that the public are not seen until 2.00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Many of the clients come here only after failing to get help from DHSS where lack of documentary proof of identity causes problem (30% of those interviewed in November had no identification).

In reply to a suggestion that our Solicitor should be asked to liaise with DHSS in an effort to improve services, it was pointed out that the Irish Embassy had a high-level meeting with DHSS on the previous day. The result is awaited.

M. Duggan said that a clear protocol arrangement between us and the statutory bodies is necessary and we should arrange a meeting to progress procedural discussions with London Borough of Camden Welfare Workers - Housing and Welfare.

Fr. Scully agreed and said that we must decide where our responsibility ends. There is a general feeling that many cases are being off loaded on to the Irish Centre.

T. Mangan reminded the meeting that the Kerry Hostel in Harlesden is always willing to help with accommodation and finance for natives of Kerry.

HOSTELS REPORT

St. Louises

At the moment there are 130 girls resident. Of these 12 are unemployed. There are no serious problems.

Redecoration work is in progress and is going ahead satisfactorily.

Conway House

There are a few vacancies just now. 90% of residents are unemployed. - some are unemployable.

A former resident was recently wrongly convicted of the Chelsea Bombing and was jailed for life. Police evidence against him was fabricated and as a result of their operations in this case, future practice will be to deal directly with the Home Secretary.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Fr. Scully announced that the next fund raising meeting will take place on Sunday 18th January, 1987.

He requested members to return the weekend duty rota forms as soon as possible.

In company with Pat O'Brien of ACOT Fr. Scully has had a meeting with the Architects and Quantity Surveyors regarding refurbishing work to be carried out on nos 51 and 52 Camden Square. He was not satisfied with some of the proposals and has asked for an investigation into the structure of the building and a report on the condition and then an estimate of the cost of the work. Plans are not as far advanced as we had been led to believe and refurbishing work will not commence for quite sometime.

Continuation Sheet 3. - Directors Report contd.

Fr. Scully said that the Irish Centre is a completely strange experience to him. He does not understand the finances. Both the bars and the catering department are making good profits. The stocktaker is happy with stocks. Yet a loss is shown at the end of the year. He considers that overhead costs are phenomenal. Lettings must be questioned. He will continue to ask questions on this side. He will also continue to ask questions on the welfare side.

From the records he has noted that the number of clients interviewed in 1973, 1974, 1975 were 1791, 1828, 2356 respectively when there were two social workers. Problems then were very different from what they are today.

A big problem now is uncertainty and lack of knowledge about what welfare workers should be doing. It is very important to remember that voluntary workers are just that - and they must be supported.

We are still a voluntary organisation. We must limit ourselves to our capabilities and to the facilities at our disposal. We cannot be compared to local Statutory Welfare Bodies.

A lot of internal planning work remains to be done. We must plan to deal with new arrivals, the elderly and the young which present many problems.

He was alarmed at a bill for £935.30 received from Tara Traval Ltd for repatriations. His approval for this expenditure was neither sought nor given. In future costs to be incurred for repatriation must first receive his approval.

A letter of thanks for the presentation made to him on his transfer from Conway House was received from Bro. Charles Gallagher.

Mrs. B. Rooney is leaving the Welfare Department on 4th January 1987.

Fr. Scully recently met Rev. Gordon Kendall of Community Industry who may, as a result, supply labour to paint the outside of the buildings.

The Offaly Association complained that outsiders were allowed into their function after the meal was over.

Fr. Ryan complimented Fr. Scully on his report which shows that he already has his 'finger on the button'. He has spotted the problems. Fr. Ryan agreed that clients catered for in the early 70's cannot be compared on an equal value basis with those of today. The problems are now much more severe. New arrivals now are not as fit for work as were their predecessors, less work is available, accommodation is more difficult and more

Continuation Sheet 4. - Directors Report contd.

expensive. The forecast is that numbers arriving from Ireland will increase drastically. He said that the Irish Government offer of £150,000 is ridiculous - we are being conned. They and the local authorities must give us a lot more help. The County Associations are also sitting on the sideline. He said that only a small minority of the 30,000 immigrants cause problems.

M. Duggan agreed with everything that Fr. Ryan had said. She emphasised that welfare callers in the main are not fit. She wished it to be noted that she objected in the strongest possible terms to a statement that young people arriving here were spoiled at home. She also asked formally for a statement regarding the role of the Welfare Advisory Committee.

Other points were made as follows:

1. The Irish Government should pay repatriation costs.
2. A charge should be levied for the use of meeting rooms.
3. Present charges for hire of function rooms should be increased.

APPOINTMENT - SOCIAL WORKER/CO-ORDINATOR

The Welfare Advisory Committee submitted a report which the Executive Committee discussed.

Fr. Scully confirmed that there is pressure of work, caused more by the type of work and how it should be done than by the numbers. It requires someone of experience to look at the situation, to co-ordinate activity, to work on the job and to report to the Administrative Committee.

G. O'Flynn proposed and M. Duggan seconded a motion that we advertise for a skilled experienced Social Worker to supervise and to co-ordinate activity and to report as required. This was agreed unanimously.

DISCO - COMPLAINTS, DAMAGE

Fr. Scully reported that there has been trouble at every disco. Inconvenience has been caused to other users of the Centre and annoyance and aggravation to neighbours. Police have had to be called more than once. Despite warnings to the organisers and to the parents and youth at a meeting trouble has persisted. In view of this and of the unsuitability of the premises Fr. Gilmore proposed and C. O'Connell seconded a motion not to allow any more discos. This was agreed unanimously.

COMMITTEE - DUTY ROTAS

So far only one member has returned the form. Fr. Scully would like to know how many members can commit themselves and for how much.

MANAGERS REPORT

As Mrs. D'Arcy was fully occupied at a function in the McNamara Hall no report was available. There are vacancies in the McNamara Hall during January and February. Complaints have been received from neighbours about noise late at night after functions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Miss M. Kenny reported that the Irish Centre Club wished to increase the annual membership fee from 50p to £1.00. This was approved on a motion by J. Myers, seconded by M. Hannon.

Fr. Gilmore proposed and G. O'FLynn a vote of thanks to Mrs. B. Rooney for her sterling services during her period of employment here.

Fr. Gordon complimented members on the high standard of the meeting and he wished success to all.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13th January, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.

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