

THE MINUTES OF THE 33RD AGM HELD AT THE IRISH CENTRE  
ON THURSDAY 28TH APRIL 1988

The Chairman, Mr T Dunne opened the meeting and the Secretary, Mr G O'Flynn read the notice convening the meeting. Mr T Mangan proposed that the minutes of the last AGM be taken as read and adopted. This was seconded by Mr T Dack.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Prior to the introduction of the Director's report the Chairman welcomed Council members and expressed pleasure that the President, Lord Longford was able to be present. He then bade a special greeting to Rev Fr W McGonagle OMI, Provincial of the Oblate Order and thanked the Oblate community for their continued commitment and dedication to the work of the Centre. He welcomed Rev D Cormican OMI who had been appointed to assist Fr Scully in his direction of affairs. Mr Breifne O'Reilly Third Secretary at the Embassy was warmly welcomed.

The year, he said, had been very stressful in both human and financial terms and at times the pressures on Community and Administrative services were near breaking point. Much thanks was due to the Administrator Mr P Keegan who carried a very heavy burden with aplomb and to the new Community Services Co-ordinator Mr Paul Murphy and his dedicated personnel, all of these good people showed a remarkable degree of commitment to their work.

The Hostels continue to operate to capacity and he extended sincere thanks to Fr Ryan, Sr Anthony and Sr Gertrude for a year of extreme and dedicated application to their work. The Chairman concluded by thanking the Executive and Administrative Committees for the unstinted support they had given to him throughout the year.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director, Rev T Scully, welcoming all present then made his report for the 1987 year. He said that the Centre was slowly developing in the face of many difficulties while at the same time was trying to meet the heavy demands made upon it. Various people and groups were doing very good work for Irish people all over London. As the Irish Centre continues to grow so too does the need for more personnel. He thanked Fr McGonagle for sending Father Cormican to help ease the work load.

The Director, referring to the Community Services offered by the Irish Centre stated that there were approximately 11,000 callers and nearly 3,000 new arrivals. He thanked the Hostels for helping out with accommodation - this was a major problem in London - and also expressed appreciation for the goodwill of landladies and landlords. He believed that the new Social Services Act would create problems for young people. New arrivals were coming from



all over Ireland. This was a particularly difficult year because of the Nationality Act with many people making enquiries as to its implications. Another problem encountered was the closure of the Camden Homeless Persons Unit - at the present time it is only open for phone calls. There was great difficulty in finding accommodation with the result that Camden Social Services began a policy of sending families back to Ireland. This led to the Irish Centre being inundated with newspaper journalists, reporters and TV camera crews from all over Europe because of the controversy which arose as a result of Camden's policy. He expressed his appreciation to Irish organisations for setting up agencies in cities and towns in Ireland to prepare people better for leaving the country. Regarding the hostels there is a new project under way to house 19 elderly men.

#### DAY CARE CENTRE

The Day Care Centre was completed at the end of the year and opened on Monday 25th April. Thanks is due to Camden Council for their grant of £120,000.00; to Allied Irish Banks for their deposited Covenant of £25,000.00; to the Council of Irish Counties for a donation of £20,000.00; to City Parochial Foundation for £3,500.00; to the Irish Government who authorised the involvement of ANCO and to Liam Martin, the architect. Due to ANCO involvement and the nature of the building many contractors were not prepared to undertake the work. Much appreciation and thanks therefore is due to Heritage Contracts - Mr Donie Egan and his staff. Thanks to Kieran Claffey and C M Brophy for their commitment. The Irish Centre proper was given a facelift with the painting and refurbishment of the outside of the premises carried out by Community Services Industry.

Now we regularly welcome our elderly folk who come and enjoy a nice lunch and it is obvious that the Centre is meeting a real need in the Community by encouraging them to join with their contemporaries in a friendly, caring atmosphere.

#### SOCIAL CLUB

This continues to be active - a Ceili band plays regularly - Mary Kenny with Paddy and Mary O'Brian manage the Bingo sessions. Without our voluntary workers we could not continue with our work. I am pleased to be able to report that Tommy McGuinness is back after his accident.

#### FUND-RAISING

This year we ran a Car Raffle at the Festival in Roundwood Park and a 12 Monthly Car Draw. The Car Draw was disappointing as we did not get sufficient members. This



could have brought in about £100,000. It was necessary to get as many people as possible to sell tickets for the Car Raffle at the London Irish Festival in July.

#### COUNCIL OF IRISH COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

This continues to be active in organizing the St Patrick's Day Parade and the London Irish Festival. Thanks to all for their endeavours. The success of the London Irish Festival depends on the hard work of the Committee and stewards. The proceeds are distributed between our own Welfare unit and the Counties Welfare fund.

CICA gave the Centre £20,000 towards the refurbishing of the Day Care Centre for which amount we are extremely grateful. The report was then opened to the meeting for discussion and adopted nem. con.

#### FINANCE

The Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts were then presented by Mr Paddy Keegan. The account for the year ending 31st December 1987 was presented in a new format i.e. Trading, Administration and Welfare. The Trading Account was slightly down on the previous year. A close analysis of Functions Account revealed that takings were down considerably - very little spirits were consumed. In the Kennedy, McNamara and small bar there was about a 5% increase. Bookings were also down - criticisms would be investigated and hopefully put right.

Bills for lighting and heating were very high and the air conditioning in the Kennedy and Douglas Hyde Halls was very expensive and is now obsolete. The cost of a new system would be in the region of £78,000.

Mr Keegan then went through the Accounts in detail. In particular he mentioned that the proceeds from the Car Raffle was the highest ever received. For the first time tickets were 50p each. The '2000' Car Draw yielded £20,000.00 profit and rates refund from Camden £4,652.00. Interest receivable paid to us by bank.

#### EXPENDITURE

A detailed account was given of income and expenditure. Mr Saing from Beatty & Co, Chartered Accountants was present to answer any questions related to the accounts. From the floor Pat Hegarty and Donie Egan moved that the accounts be approved.

Jim Commene queried the cost of a birth certificate. It was stated that a birth certificate cost £3.50 and he suggested that people should write for birth certificates themselves. It was pointed out that a number of people who come to the Centre are unable to read, have no money or facilities to make their own application. It is also difficult to get acceptance of a birth certificate unless



it came from places like the Irish Centre which is accepted as bona fide for birth certificate applications. Several meetings took place during the year between the Irish Embassy and the DHSS to facilitate the acceptance of birth certificates. Mr Keegan stated that last year we paid out £4,000 and had about 50% refund.

#### 6. APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Cardinal, the Most Rev Basil Hume confirmed the re-appointment of Fr Scully as chaplain under Rule 6 (iii) to the Irish Centre, and Fr Stack as Diocesan Representative. Fr Gordon and Fr Donoghue were appointed Diocesan representatives of Southwark and Brentwood respectively under rule 6 (iv). In accordance with Rule 6 (ii) the following were appointed to serve on the Administrative Committee.

Lord Longford exercised his prerogative and appointed four lay members namely:-

Mr Frank Swan  
Mr Michael O'Mahoney  
Mrs Mary Allen  
Mr Tommy Dunne.

#### ITEM 8

Frank Caulfield proposed that nominations from the floor be accepted. The following were proposed and seconded:

A Coyle  
Tom Mangan  
Mary Kenny  
Jim Myers  
Gerry O'Flynn  
Chris O'Connell  
Una Cooper  
Maura Fitzsimons

The nominations closed and the above declared elected in accordance with rule 6 (1).

#### APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Beatty and Company were appointed auditors for the coming year. Proposed by Gerry O'Flynn and seconded by Jim Myers.

#### NOTICES OF MOTION

Gort and Athenry Association. Nomination to be affiliated was adopted on a proposal by Tom Mangan and seconded by Anton Coyle.