

Jim Reynolds spoke about his leaving the Irish Centre. Jim appreciated the problems that the Centre is having. He highlighted the confusion in the accounts and that Fr. C. Cormican presented us with a bill of £30,000 to sort out a proper audit. This bill was reduced to £12,000. There was also a tax bill of £12,000. He had to carry the can for all this as well as computerise the accounts. He would sincerely hope that the Committee would take into consideration that my starting salary was £15,000 plus a car. He would appreciate if the committee took into consideration what he, Jim, had done for the Centre.

MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH JUNE 1993.

PRESENT: M. Sills (Chair) Una Cooper, Tom McAssey, Bridie Shaw, Mary Allen, Fergal Collins, Fr. C. Cormican, Rev. Fintan Phelan, Jim Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: E. McCormack and Mgr. G. Stack.

1. Tenants and Residents Association. Did not attend.

2. Appointment of seven members to Social Committee. There were only seven nominations from the Social Committee: J. O'Brien, Peggy Finnucane, Mary Kenny, John Gavin, Mona Rowan, Paddy O'Brien and Mary O'Brien. Appointment of the seven members proposed by M. Allen and seconded by Una Cooper.

3. Nomination of four lay members to Administrative Committee, Outgoing members, Jim Kirby, Eddie McCormack, Declan Curley and the late Tommy Dunne R.I.P. Jim Kirby withdraws his nominations but is prepared to help the Centre. We expect that the local branch of the A.I.B. Bank to nominate a replacement for Declan Curley. Nominations will be concluded at our July meeting.

4. Finance Report: Accounts for two months April/May. Concession fee to 24th May, 1993 of the £4,445 due we have only received £1,000 which leaves a balance of £3,445 outstanding. Discounts received is of-invoice discount that was outstanding from Courage. Social Committee profits for two months approximately £700.00. Net profit for period £4,077. Bank Balance £3,800. T.T.P. Publishing are prepared to pay us £100.00 over two years to clear their debt. This is a result of the Court Action. This is to be paid directly into our Bank. To be monitored by Jim Reynolds. No accounts available for the Charity due to Jim's involvement in the Festival. There is £44,500 in the Charity accounts. An additional £18,280 due to be received by the Charity by the second week of July - Camden £8,780, Festival £5,750, A.I.B. covenant £3,750. This doesn't include income from car raffle.

Jim Reynolds spoke about his leaving the Irish Centre. Jim appreciates the problems that the Centre is having. He highlighted the confusion in the accounts and that Touche Ross presented us with a bill of £30,000 to sort out a proper audit. This bill was reduced to £12,000. There was also a tax bill of £23,000. He had to carry the can for all this as well as computerise the accounts. He would sincerely hope that the committee would take into consideration that my starting salary was £15,000 his predecessor was on £21,000 in his last year plus a car. He would appreciate if the committee took into consideration what he, Jim Reynolds has done for the Centre.

Jim suggested a termination date of 23rd July as this was the date his rail ticket ended.

A discussion took place about Jim's involvement in the Festival. As Accountant here he is automatically the account for the Festival and would therefore have to prepare the accounts for audit. Jim was thanked for presenting the accounts and for all he had done for the Centre. He then left the meeting.

5. President's Visit.

It is important to record the visit of President Mary Robinson to the Irish Centre on 22nd May 1993, where she met 40 agencies serving the Irish Community in London. There were lots of people we would have liked to invite to meet her but due to her tight schedule allowing only thirty minutes at the Centre this was not possible.

The Chairman thanked all those who voluntarily prepared the Centre for her visit. It was also requested that a letter of thanks be sent to those volunteers who were not on the Administrative Committee i.e. Jim Cunnane, John Flaherty and Paddy Dunning.

It was a great honour to the Centre to have her visit us.

6. Welfare Report:

Geoff Holland, Co-ordinator, prepared a written report which was presented by Fr. Denis. There has been an increase in new arrivals as compared with May 1992 with total enquiries up from 849 to 1211.

Two new Social Workers have been appointed. John Glynn started yesterday and Joanne Wallace will begin on 7th July.

The performance to date was regarded as unsatisfactory. General Holiday project for poor families is being organised in conjunction with the Family Welfare Association. The Irish Centre has to raise money for fares and pocket money. The staff have organised a monster Set Dancing Ceili on 20th June at the Irish Centre and also a Mary Coughlan Concert in the Camden Centre on 26th July.

The Irish Centre will have a stall at the Fleadh in Finsbury Park and also a stall at the London Irish Festival.

Maureen Rynne should be returning on the 19th July 1993 after her maternity leave.

7. Special Meeting 22nd May 1993:

Jim Reynolds prepared a comprehensive set of minutes but Donie hasn't had time to study them. Donie presented us with copies of his notes. Low attendance at the meeting, this made it impractical in getting work done. Four areas looked at - Trading, Welfare, Charity and Administration.

Trading: Looked at the relationship between Directors and the Administrative Committee. Recommendations were made which will have to be adopted either at an Administrative Committee Meeting before the A.G.M.

It was recommended that the Board of Directors should be expanded to 5 and that 3 of these should be members of the Administrative Committee which should include preferably the Chairperson of the Administrative Committee. Retirement and re-election takes place by rotation annually with at least one retiring every year. The Admin Committee should have prior notice of that and approved the re-election of the retiring Director. It was noted that there was a lack of goodwill between the Board and the Admin. through lack of meetings and communication. The Board of Directors should address the Administrative Committee at least once a year where the normal admin meeting would be suspended for London Irish Centre Limited.

It was also noted that Saxon Inns had declined to come to a meeting and also declined to respond to any correspondence. They had offered to pay £1,000 still £796 outstanding for the period ending 24th April 1993. The next accounting period ending 22nd May which should leave £2,992 according to Jim Reynolds calculations.

The performance to date was regarded as unsatisfactory. deemed not capable of operating the Catering operation, they were actually learning from Pat O'Dwyer. They came in with no image and now have a lousy image.

Two options looked at to mutually resolve the dispute:

1. Agree with Saxons to set aside agreement.
2. To terminate their involvement.

Management of Saxon Inns was criticised. We should investigate the grounds for their losses. We should audit their returns to date and demand a meeting with the Directors by a formal notice, a copy of which should be sent to A.I.B. This has actually been done.

Regarding licence: It was reported that a phone call was made to Sgt. Hills by a J.J. O'Brien saying that Saxon Inns had no rights to Social Club Bars. It was noted that the current Club licence runs to 1994. The Justice's Licence had been re-scheduled in 1989 including the Club Bars, namely Douglas Hyde and Lounge. We have sought legal advice. Present Justice's Licence is in the name of the late Tommy Dunne R.I.P. Jim Myers and Pat O'Dwyer.

Fr. Denis to speak to J.J. O'Brien to establish had he made the phone call to Sgt. Hills and invite him to attend Administrative Meeting on June 1st 1993. Social Club A.G.M. to take place on June 10th. It was noted that the Club does not have proprietary rights. They could equally be the Irish Centre Club in Archway.

2. Charity - 51/52 Camden Square:

Regarded as draining funds and producing negligible returns. The bulk of the Camden Grant is for Welfare covering the wages of the Co-ordinator. £1,500 towards Irish Language and remainder for administration. The D.I.O.N. grant is to cover salaries of Welfare staff. Day Care costs are £300 per week with returns of £100 per week losing about £10,000 per annum. Meals £2.75 with pensioners paying £1.25. This will be increased to £1.50 from next Monday. We are not supported by London Borough of Camden as a Luncheon Club. London Borough of Camden closed a number of Luncheon Club's when we opened in 1988. London Borough of Camden needs to be lobbied to get funding.

Submitted by Social Committee to Administrative Committee for Social Committee A.G.M.

On question of development urgent repairs are required in various parts of the building. Any development would have to be phased according to what fundraising could support. Fundraising either in the form of seeking Housing Corporation Grants or L.B.C. or an entrepreneur on a 21 year lease. Previous negotiations with Chaplaincy Scheme had failed. Fr. Denis had taken advice from McHugh Estate Agents and Peter FitzPatrick. It was recognised that office space was not viable at the present time.

The question of the purpose of the Centre was addressed. Its relevance to the Irish Community and the affordability of such a huge structure. It was suggested we should assess the usage of the Centre in the form of a survey. Donie referred to a survey done in his own parish competition from outside is bearing down heavily on the Centre, distance of Centre from users line, rise of local Catholic Clubs. Migrant Training Company here three years not paying rent, question of insurance not clarified satisfactorily. Charity has obligation to let its property at commercial rates. F.I.S. are extending their offices.

3. Welfare:

Should it continue to operate in a building bigger than is actually needed; should one consider re-location. Should one consider an alternative use of No 50, Camden Square. Co-ordinators appointment was discussed and the important fundraising aspects of the position.

Publicity and Service: Service is good but the publicity is not adequate. Out of hours service limited both in need and provision.

4. Administration:

Fr. Denis felt strongly about permanent chairman - the absence of such left him in a difficult position throughout the year. He would find it hard to continue after A.G.M. if this matter was not resolved. We would seek out an Irish businessman. Rota basis is inconsistent. Two trustees had been verified, Lord Farnham and Peter Fitzpatrick. An additional trustee from C.I.C.A. would be a useful link with Administrative Committee. The constitution is with Lawrence & Co. Draft should be circulated before A.G.M. with a list of Council and Irish Centre members. A sub-committee of three should collate comments.

Fundraising - Festival car raffle and Christmas Draw are main sources. Toyota contributions will end shortly. We should consider a major draw pursue E.C. funding. Social Committee saw themselves as having authority but not responsibility - a relationship issue to be resolved with Saxon Inns. Seven names to be submitted by Social Committee to Administrative Committee for Social Committee A.G.M.

Role Of Priest Very frank and open discussion. Fr. Paul Byrne re-affirmed the commitment of the Oblates to Irish Centre. He saw it as an on-going mission. If the structure of the administration was right we could possibly have a second man. The day to day administration would have to be removed from the Priest. Oblates need job specification for the Directors if he is to be chief executive and responsible for welfare or the pastor with welfare duty only. Mgr. Stack said that the Centre as a Mass centre was at times working against the thrust of parish work.

In conclusion it was a very good meeting providing we have a follow-up.

Holding the A.G.M. on 13th July puts us under pressure and it was suggested to put it off until September. A lot of issues have been raised and they must be addressed.

8. Saxon Inns:

Letter sent to Barry Pitcher A.I.B. Director on Saxon Inns. He is on holiday received a reply from his secretary saying matter would be attended to on his return. We wrote two letters to Saxon Inns first letter dictated by Solicitor but sent from the Director of the London Irish Centre Ltd. No response from Saxon. This was followed by a letter from our solicitors to Saxon Inns Solicitor requesting a formal response from Saxon Inns within seven days. Again no response. What we want to do is mutually resolve the situation: set aside the agreement by renegotiating the Agreement or terminate the Agreement. Money outstanding at the moment is £3,445. No progress to date. John Connell does not see the point of a further meeting. A discussion then took place as to where we felt Saxon Inns were at. It would seem that they would like us to take the initiative on proposing a way out of this impasse. Fr. Denis stated that he was not willing to move on any initiatives to adjust the Agreement. Saxon's strategy is probably to renegotiate or terminate.

It was noted that Saxon have not received unqualified support. It was suggested that we not only look at the Agreement from our point of view but also from Saxons viewpoint. The Agreement has created tremendous divisiveness in the community and in the Committee. It would therefore seem almost impossible for the agreement to succeed because of the way it has been carried through in the way that it has been supported and not supported.

It was also noted that Saxon Inns had made a Faux-Pas of several functions. Despite this there is commitment on the part of the County Associations despite the fact that Saxon's have expressed the fact that they don't want such functions. Reference was made to the Offaly A & D and the Clare B & C and the lack of any response from Saxon and ultimately an inadequate response. Still have not replied to Clare who are prepared to pay the costs of the meal. This shows them as bad businessmen. Saxon's attitude would seem to be if you don't pay us we will not pay you, or the option being that we will tell them to get out.

A letter was sent by Clare to Saxon's and a copy was sent to Jim Kirby who was chairman for the month and also to Fr. Denis. Saxons was annoyed that the copies should be sent to the Chairman and the Director; you should have sent it to the Evening Standard and then everyone would know. There were also several excuses as to why Offaly had not received a reply to their letter written in February.

The Directors have not moved forward in resolving the outstanding payments by Saxon Inns. The Director's of London Irish Centre Limited were requested to attend the Administrative Meeting on June 1st. This meeting was cancelled and therefore it was expected that they should be at this meeting tonight. Both Jim Myers and John Coote were unavoidably detained tonight.

The bottom line is that Saxon Inns want to re-negotiate the terms of the Agreement. Question for us is are we prepared to make any changes to that Agreement. If we decide to get rid of Saxon we are once again into insolvency since the £25,000 premium has been used to pay off our debts. This brings us back to square one. How can we re-negotiate an agreement with people who are not even professional, and not doing anything right since they came and who won't even agree to meet you. Saxon Inns have been invited to meet us and have refused. First a letter was sent by Fr. Denis on behalf of the Directors. This was followed by a letter from our solicitor to Saxon Inns Solicitors calling them to a meeting within seven days. No reply. A copy of both letters and a covering letter have been sent to Barry Pitcher. Unfortunately he is on holiday and we are still awaiting a reply. A further letter inviting Saxons to the monthly operational meeting should have been sent to Saxon's but this letter has not been sent. There are two different issues - outstanding arrears and attending meetings.

Date of next meeting 13th July at 8.00p.m.

The Directors of London Irish Centre Limited were invited to attend our meeting on the 1st June which didn't take place and again invited to attend this meeting and have failed to do so.

It was again reiterated that Saxons would be seeking renegotiation and this is the fear that the Directors of London Irish Centre Ltd have had. It was suggested that the Directors meet that head on. Donie Egan said he would be glad to attend such a meeting. It was expressed that the County Associations were not welcome and that dinner dances are finished. A meeting should be called within seven days. Those present should be Donie Egan, Bridie Shaw, Eddie McCormack and the Directors. Meeting to take place on the 15th at 6p.m.

9. Jim Reynolds situation:

Difficulty is we are not in a position to pay him. It was suggested he be paid from the Charity. It was the Limited Company that decided to get rid of Jim., It was discussed how we could fund the post of Administrator. Much of Jim's time since Saxon Inns came in has been preparing accounts for audit.

Fr. Denis suggested it would be a lot more comfortable to have Jim here all the time.

We need a job specification drawn up within a specified time that is agreeable to him. It was decided that he should be kept on and that he would be informed of this to-morrow. Fr. Denis will inform him that we discussed the role of Administrator and that we define that role in a job specifications and in the light of that we will decide whether he will be kept here in full time employment or not. Mgr. Stack, Donie, Fergal, Eddie and Fr. Denis should be involved in drawing up the job specification. This should take place after the mass for Dick Butler next Tuesday.

10. A.G.M. Date:

Fr. Denis said his main reason for having the A.G.M. sooner than September was to get a permanent Chairman. For the good of the Centre we need a full time Chairman. Having the A.G.M. doesn't guarantee that you'll get a full time person. We need an effective Chairman. It was decided to postpone the A.G.M. until September.

11. Any Other Business:

Regarding the appointment of President Mary Robinson as Honorary Patron of the Centre Brendan O Caollai suggested we should write to her after her visit and invite her to become Patron. Fr. Denis had written to her thanking her for her visit but didn't invite her to become Honorary Patron.

12. Date of Next meeting 13th July at 8.00p.m.