

London Irish Centre

Administrative Committee Meeting 12.12.95

Present: A Finan, J. Kivlehan OMI [Director], P. Carolan OMI, M. Allen, T. McAssey, M. Sills, T. Ganley, M. Kenny, Rev Phelan, M. Fitzsimons [Sec], J.J. O'Brien, J. Higgins [Trustee], D. Egan in attendance.

Apologies - none.

Welfare Report - presented by C. Mohan copies circulated.

Hamper Appeal: response slow, successful applications to share a Capital Christmas for food and toys.

Introductory meeting with commissioner from Camden & Islington Health Authority - Black and Ethnic Minority Development Worker briefing around health needs of Irish Community and specialist posts for which funds are being sought. Negotiating specifications for Rehabilitative Alcohol Assessments centre to be funded for with Principal Officer for Mental Health in Camden Social Services.

Team member attendance at Camden Homelessness Forum, Camden Race Equality Council Meeting on Housing White Paper and children & families Liaison Group meeting to facilitate on-going net-working and profile raising of Community Services with voluntary and statutory bodies in Camden.

Aims: to provide 20-30 hampers for vulnerable Irish families/elderly. Each team member to continue work in their specialised projects.

Fund Raising

Bridge House Estates Trust - schemes to facilitate elderly people to stay in their own homes/transport and access for elderly and disabled people.

Innovative projects for young people. Applied for 3 years funded posts of volunteer Co-ordinator and on-costs to develop.

Volunteer/Befriending/Good Neighbours Scheme for isolated elderly Irish.

Irish Youth Foundation £16,000 applied for. Guidelines vague.

Applied for funded part-time counselling post to facilitate one to one counselling and family support groups e.g. around parenting skills.

Camden Social Services - Children and family division New Initiatives Budget.

Applied for funded post of Irish Children and Families Social Worker to develop preventative work as well as practical support e.g. enabling self-help groups around parenting skills, budgeting, conflict management etc.

Camden Social Services - children and family division, small grants - Christmas and Easter playschemes.

Deirdre applied for resources to facilitate Irish Children's drama and theatre workshops.

Sir Harold Hudd Trust. Priority Office equipment for Christian organisations. Mossie and Andrew applied for funding for two computers and printers.

Telephone stats November 95 - 1092. Client Visits - 339.

Chairman welcomes Teresa Ganley as New Committee member also D. Egan and J. Higgins.

Matters arising from community services report.

Fr. Jerry notified a meeting in new year to discuss welfare policies and how these affect personnel and roles. Some areas will have a reduction in skills.

Christine offered to prepare briefing paper a brief. Funding difficult. Fr. Jerry said the reality is changing times, planning needed for the future.

Money harder to get, even hamper money. Christine to do some research and produce stats ready to approach the Health Authority.

Fr. Jerry - political goodwill in the area needed for a forthcoming meeting to make necessary application for funding.

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

Director's Report

Entertainment Licence - objected to by local residents and members of EHA the latter later withdrawn. The meeting was poorly managed.

Licencing hours reduced Friday, Saturday. Not acceptable. An appeal going through.

EHA not satisfied with measures for reduction of noise bricking of the door not acceptable.

Consistent evidence of lack of supervision of people leaving the premises. One neighbour had collected a variety of events over 5 years, condensing it to give the impression that it all happened recently.

A condition that there would be a responsible person on the premises.

Fr. Jerry said restrictions would present great difficulty for Dinner Dances - not a hope of survival in present set-up. Probably anti-Irish bigotry, the impressions given, including racist remarks.

M. Kenny - whether New Year eve a problem. Management had requested letter from users re extension.

Douglas Hyde & Kennedy Halls - licence not affected.

Saxon Inns - serious efforts being made to re-finance the company. During this period they have written, pleading not to pursue too vigorously.

Total Amount now received - 3 cheques, some post-dated - up to date.

J.J. O'Brien - expressed concern re lack of progress.

Chairman - in an extremely difficult situation

Fr. Jerry will act as he deems necessary to resolve.

Data Protection: in a delicate situation informal information re-photo copier. Contact with solicitor, advice that if we stay where we are position risky - continue to pay rent.

J. Higgins - similar situation in Irish Chaplaincy they refused to pay requested confiscation of equipment - no further problem.

Day Care - to be closed after Christmas lunch for elderly for a period of time.

Dion Committee - Letter from FIS to nominate someone to sit on Dion Committee

Fr. Pat said there is a conflict of interest following discussion - proposed D. Egan who wondered if a stronger case for someone from Welfare.

Dion Committee Labour Controlled

M. Allen proposed A. Finan, seconded by M. Sills. Austin stated he may not be available and not au fait with the role.

D. Egan considered the most eligible - proposed by Fr. Pat seconded by M. Sills. Accepted. Support offered by Fr. Pat and T. Ganley.

Strategic Planning

In collaboration with Bank of Ireland, someone has been proposed not yet confirmed. Whatever future plans must be determined by need,

Fr. Jerry no consensus, needs careful handling by outside consultants.

Fr. Pat - increasing problems maintaining the building.

J. Higgins - considerable changes in recent years. No strategic planning - we need someone from outside a professional approach which would satisfy everyone - Forte a few years ago made a lot of wrong assumptions.

EC funding - feeble application for grant in basically to install TV with facility of video-telephone link to Ireland.

Representative from St. Pancras housing Hunter & Partners - joined the meeting submitting plans for feasibility report. E. Keelehan, Lucy Nuttall.

Initial discussion with planner. Copies of suggested plans circulated. The background look at extremes - do little or nothing or be radical maintaining as much amenities as possible - no easy answer. Need to meet continued housing need.

Designs submitted consisted of a 1-2 bedroom flat complex encircling a community hall - surrounded by a green area.

Estimated rough costing

Hall £300,000 - construction £1.6million. Rough assumption on the land in the region of £800,000 - community care hall taken from that.

Housing Association Grant - worked on that assumption £1.5million.

In the hall there could be provision for a bar and counter food.

Opinions and comments invited.

D. Egan - his initial reaction not happy would like a variance.

J. Higgins queried rentals. £1,500 pw target rent?

T. Ganley asked whether Irish people would get priority.

In reply, Camden Council would consider this as racial discrimination. Total units 30.

M. Sills we need a second quiet bar.

Lucy: could be a special allocation. Design flexible.

Chairman thanking reps. for their contributions, said the Administrative Committee would discuss the details and follow up at a later date.

Discussion - benefits and failings.

Benefits £300,000 to be spent. Balance £500,000. Loan - £245,000 profit.

D. Egan - queried what we would own - would it be lease with Peppercorn rent?

Fr. Pat - insist on freehold, valueless - lease.

J. Higgins - noise problems would continue.

T. Ganley - the Irish Centre would be smothered with flat complex encircling community hall. The licence in jeopardy.

M. Allen - there would be problems with Camden Council allocation which would be unfair.

Chair - we need advice, another input. T. McAssey: Asked about previous planners.

D. Egan: said the scheme was worthy of merit as was the previous one. Another scheme should be looked at

Phased development and re-development; outside consultants not satisfactory.

D. Egan Administrative Committee should make the right decision, and not be told what to do by consultants.

M. Allen said finance a problem.

Chair: we need assistance to put together a plan.

D. Egan: sub-committee to seek and report back.

Fr. Pat: the present plan may be a problem in future, we could be closed down in 5 years.

D. Egan: no conclusion reached, ID and recognition of problem needed.

Fr. Jerry: two previous meetings held. Planning may be a problem and the fear of objection to a licence.

Fr. Pat: we should move from the Irish Centre which was originally intended for Welfare and the provision of Social Activities

Chair: a final decision a priority

J. Higgins: have the site valued

Fr. Pat: only valued if you can get housing

J. Higgins: get planning permission with something in view

D. Egan: we need a 'twin track' approach.

J. Higgins: perhaps a leisure centre

Chair: in any feasibility specific terms of reference needed

Fr. Jerry: referring to Tony Platt's idea retaining MacNamara Hall - expensive deal

J. Higgins: queried whether he may do it on a success basis.

D. Egan: can we get the Denubal Consultancy involved

Fr. Jerry: constitution and infra-structure in place.

Fr. Pat: what do we mean by strategic planning?

M. Sills: should we see the site?

Fr. Pat: suggest sell the site and move elsewhere.

M. Allen: would now agree - that we move elsewhere

Fr. Jerry: there is great potential for an Irish Centre, existing site too big, not paying its way and losing its distinctively irish outlook. Overheads high - sub-committee must meet.

Date set: 4th January 6pm.

Finance Report: copies circulated, items discussed.

Welfare working to budget

Legal Costs: J. Higgins asked whether claim for legal costs could be put to Saxon Inns

Fr. Jerry: in reply they have agreed to pay £2,400

A.O.B.

Rev Phelan asked whether recent dance Gay/Lesbian at Irish Centre was supervised/

T.McAssey/M.Sills assured it was under control.

Fr. Jerry said they were the pulse for Irish action on Aids and would not make a personal judgment.

Chair in conclusion - wished members a Happy Christmas. Meeting closed 10.45pm

Date of next meeting: 9th January 1996