

MINUTES OF THE 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE IRISH CENTRE HELD ON TUESDAY 10th MAY 1983.

In the absence of the President, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Longford, the meeting was chaired by Mr. D. Egan. Mrs. D. Daly, Hon. Secretary, read the notice convening the meeting. Mr. D. Egan requested that the meeting of the last A.G.M. be, adopted as read, proposed by Mr. H. McCormack seconded by Mr. B. Aulsbury.

The Chairman welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending this the 28th Annual General Meeting of the Council for the Irish Centre.

1. HOSTELS

THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

The Chairmans report was brief and to the point. He reflected on the hostels and its origin and development. The Hostels under the title, Irish Centre Hostels Ltd., were separate but under the umbrella of the Irish Centre. A very dedicated and qualified staff effectively manages the day to day running of the Hostels. The Hostels were constantly full and supply a great service to the single young persons leaving home perhaps for the first time. They were safe and comfortable places to live in.

2. WELFARE

The Welfare Community Services, have settled down well in it's new premises at 50 Camden Square. The staff were coping effectively with the work load. The Welfare Sub-Committee gave useful and effective administration to the enterprise.

3. THE IRISH CENTRE

The target of planning and building had been achieved and the new entrance opened 4th November 1982 to schedule. However, the reality of the debt had to be faced. This would be covered in detail in the Director's Report. The following points were put to the floor for thought and reflection:

1. TRADING TURNOVER:- must be doubled to make the commercial side of the Centre a viable proposition.
2. A BROCHURE:- A brochure now available produced to market and advertise the Centre, should be distributed.
3. THE NEW SOCIAL CLUB SUB-COMMITTEE:- Firstly, tribute was paid to the out going committee for their work, appreciation and loyalty to the Social Club and for the up keep of the Douglas Hyde Lounge. The new committee had pledged themselves to the success and up keep of the Social Club. Irish Cultural Activities would be fostered with particular attention to Youth Activities. The second generation would be particularly catered for and encouraged to use the facilities.
4. FUND RAISING:- Particular note was made of Fr. Jim Butler's efforts to raise funds in Ireland by a Marathon Cycle tour this Summer. An appeal was made to the County Associations to lobby

their home ground for publicity and sponsorship with local press and business men.

e. THE COUNCIL OF THE IRISH CENTRE:- The role of the Council was vital to the survival of the Irish Centre. The Council members had responsibilities:-

1. To elect an Administration Committee.
2. To attend quarterly meetings.
3. To attend the A.G.M.

The Chairman concluded his address with an appeal for a concentrated effort for fund raising in the coming year.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report followed. His report was proposed by Mr. M Morrissey and seconded by Miss M. Kenny.

AUDITORS REPORT

Mr. T. Beatty the appointed Auditor presented the accounts and explained any queries in detail. Turnover must be doubled to break even. It was hoped that support would increase from the Irish Community in the coming year. At present many avenues were being explored with a view to alleviate the Centre of the huge debt.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

1. Engage a full time P.R.O.
2. Fund Raising in the U.S.A. to be explored.

APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

Letters of appointment for the following were read by the Chairman.

- a. The Archbishop of Westminster has appointed Rev. C. Malone, O.M.I. as Chaplain for the coming year and Rev. J. Fullam as Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.
- b. Archbishop Bowen of Southwark had appointed Canon A. Woods to continue as Diocesan Representative for the coming year.
- c. Bishop Thomas McMahon of Brentwood had appointed Rev. Fr. J. Gordon as Diocesan Representative for the coming year on the Administrative Committee.

In accordance with Rule 6 (ii) of the Constitution, the following were appointed to serve on the Administrative Committee, Sr. Anne-Marie O'Boyle, Mr. J. Kennedy, Mr. D. Ambrose, and Mr. T. Dunne.

Proposals for the election of eight lay members in accordance with Rule 6 (i) of the Constitution were put forward and votes were taken by Secret Ballot. The Tellers appointed were Mr. T. Beatty and Mr. J. Branagan. Votes were cast and the following eight members were elected for the Committee for the forth coming year:- Mrs. D. Daly, Mr. M. Moroney, Mr. D. Quinn, Mr. P. Judge, Miss M. Kenny, Mr. D. Egan, Mr. F. Aherne, and Mr. J. Troy.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Beatty and Co., were unanimously appointed Auditors for the coming year.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was proposed that the Council of the Irish Centre should be extended. The present Administrative Committee of the Centre wishes to invite organisations who have supported the Centre through their use of our facilities for their functions.

Mr. M. Morrissey felt that the Welfare Department should take a more active role in visiting Hospitals etc.

Mrs. B. Shaw referring to the heading in the Accounts, Sundries, - she wished to have it recorded that money raised during Progressive Card Drives had been used in supplying paint for the outside of the building.

Mr. D. Egan requested that the Priests role in the Irish Centre should remain unchanged. Fr. Frank Ryan spoke on the role of Priests in society. Welfare is an essential insurance for the Sons and Daughters of those who are to come after us. Social Workers are very necessary to our Irish Community especially during this point of time in recession. He expected Immigration to increase. Realistically the Irish economy cannot absorb its youth into employment, therefore, they are going else where. The County Associations will have to be aware of this and prepared to help out with shelter and jobs. The Irish Centre must be geared to cope with this influx.

Fr. Malone replied that he saw his role as a Priest firstly and Social Worker secondly. Fr. Mee made a plea to foster youth and younger Irish persons and encourage young Irish persons to use the premises.

Mr. B. Auslbury put forward the case for the lonely Irish, the retired, the down and out who are neglected and forgotten. Political means should be sought to alleviate suffering and ignorance of social benefits.

Mr. S. Troy, Chairman of the C.I.C.A., replied to Mr. Beatty's remark about the Irish Community not helping the Irish Centre. He wished to have it recorded that the C.I.C.A. through the London Irish Festival had contributed vast sums to the Irish Centre and that individual Counties had supported and at times been the sole support of the Irish Centre.

Mr. Jerry Corr, Under Secretary at the Irish Embassy, apologised for the Ambassador's absence. He referred to the economic climate preventing the present Irish Government from overcoming the crisis of unemployment. A recent census showed that the Irish Community in Britain were retired or near retiring age. He paid tribute to the Welfare work being carried out here at the Centre. Unemployment is a fact of life, the Irish Centre had a role to play here. Welfare is a most important feature of the venture.

The meeting closed at 10.25pm.