

MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE IRISH CENTRE

HELD ON 25th MAY, 1971.

Mr. Dominic Donnelly, Chairman of the Irish Centre presided, and Mr. John Nee, Honorary Secretary, read the Notice convening the Meeting

Mr. John Branagan, Vice-President, proposed the Minutes, having been circulated, be taken as read and adopted. This was seconded by Mr. Joe McDonagh and unanimously agreed.

The Chairman of the Administrative Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and went on to say that since the last A.G.M. things had moved along somewhat, and at long last we had almost finalised negotiations. An amount of £47,500 had been agreed with British Railways for the purchase of the land. Outline planning permission has been agreed with regard to the purchase of the land. The plan is on the board to build two new hostels; to extend the present hall, and to add various committee and recreation rooms, the whole undertaking running into the region of £47,500 phased out at five to ten years, which might cost more by then.

Salient points on the balance sheet to clear the air. There was loss of income over expenditure. The reason for this was that our total expenditure for the cost of the Centre throughout the year is covered by the Social Club. Our total surplus goes to capital expenditure - and we have been obliged to reduce our capital debt by £9,000. This is where the loss of income over expenditure has occurred.

Mr. Donnelly went on to say that our Engineer, Mr. Noel O'Connell was present at the meeting, and would answer any questions that anyone cared to ask. He concluded by saying the negotiations had dragged on for many years, but such matters normally took a long time, and he felt it was opportune for a tribute to be paid to Mr. Noel O'Connell and Mr. Vernon Gibberd, the architect, for all they had achieved.

The Chairman then asked Fr. Fanning to read the Annual Report.

Fr. Fanning in commenting on the report, explained that the cost incurred in installing the soundproofing, and the air conditioning plant that had to be installed in consequence of this, was due to the court case that had arisen on the question of the noise abatement. This amounted to an estimated cost of £18,000. One of the happier features of this incident however, was the fact that we had become members of the Environment Association, and have very good relations now with our neighbours.

A tribute function to the Council of Irish County Associations had been held during the year, to which Dr. Morton made a valuable contribution in his discourse on the Centre's welfare work, and it was felt that this had cemented and expanded our relations with the Associations. Finally, the important news of the year was the National Collection which had been held on March 14th. This had raised £200,000 for Emigrant work in Britain. It has come as a stimulus to the problem of raising the money for our development programme and is most opportune. Fr. Fanning then proceeded to the Welfare and Financial Reports. He thanked Dr. L. Morton for his great assistance in the welfare field, and also Mr. Raymond Heavy, Miss Miona Hanly, and Sr. Anne-Marie for all their efforts.

Proceeding then to the Social Club activities, he drew attention to the hard work of the Social Club Committee and their splendid results. The outstanding success of the year was the result of the Charity Walk which raised £3,000, and Fr. Sheridan should be congratulated on this and the other inaugurations of the year. He and his helpers in the

Club had made great progress. The Clare Association won the John Vaughan Memorial Trophy for their direct donations to the Irish Centre during 1970, and he expressed the thanks of all concerned for their efforts, as well as to all the County Associations.

There followed some questions from the floor regarding the development programme, and Mr. Charles Gallagher asked if the members could have more details of this. The Chairman then asked Mr. Noel O'Connell to give a report, and Mr. O'Connell complied.

Further questions followed and were dealt with by Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Donnelly. Mr. John Branagan then asked if it could be placed on record, the work that Mr. O'Connell and his colleagues had achieved.

The Adoption of the Annual Report was proposed by Dr. Rory O'Moore and seconded by Mr. C. Gallagher, and the adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Dr. Rory O'Moore and seconded by Mr. C. Gallagher.

APPOINTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION:

The Chairman, proceeded to announce the following appointments:-

(a) Cardinal Heenan had appointed Father Liam Fanning, OMI as Chaplain for the coming year, and Canon Groves to continue as Westminster Diocesan Representative for the coming year, on the Administrative Committee.

(b) Archbishop Cowderrey had appointed Father Ambrose Woods to continue as Southwark Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.

(c) Bishop P.G. Casey had appointed Father Antony Mulvehill to continue as Brentwood Diocesan Representative on the Administrative Committee.

Under Rule 6 (ii) of the Constitution, the following were appointed to serve on the Administrative Committee:-

Mr. D. Donnelly. Mr. J. Nee. Dr. L. Morton. Mr. M. Casey.

Under Rule 6 (i) of the Constitution, 4 outgoing officers of the Administrative Committee were re-appointed as follows:-

Mr. C. Gallagher. Mrs. M. Foley.
Mr. T.E. Gorman. Mr. M. Moroney.

Four vacancies occurred on the Committee, as these members were not going forward for re-election. Mr. J. Conway, Mr. P. Hegarty, Mr. M. O'Connor and Cllr. P. O'Connor.

The following were elected in their place:-

Mr. T. Dunne. Mr. H. Lyons. Mrs. M. Hopkins. Miss M. Kenny.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS.

Messrs. C.F. Burton & Company were appointed Auditors for the coming year, and Mr. P.J. Keegan was appointed Honorary Auditor, on a proposal by Dr. Rory O'Moore and seconded by Mr. John Branagan.

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The Chairman then called on Fr. Woods to say a few words, and Fr. Woods spoke eloquently of the role the Irish had played in the formation of the Irish Centre, and its continuance. With the promise of this new encouragement from the Irish people in the form of a National Collection, he recalled some of the people who had started the Centre including names like Cardinal Griffin, Dr. Michael Carey, Mr. Ned Carey, The Irish Club, Mr. Pat Molloy, Cardinal Dalton, Canon Brown of Holloway, Canon Groves, Mr. Pat Spillane, Bishop Beck, and Fr. Tom McNamara. Coming to more recent times, he paid tribute to Fr. Hackett who was present this evening with us. He observed that "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water" were still with us, and would continue the work. Fr. Woods pointed out also, that while the amount raised by the National Collection was £200,000, this was for Emigrant work in Britain, and it must be borne in mind that it would not all be apportioned to the Irish Centre.

Mr. Tagh Feehan was the next speaker and he conveyed the congratulations and good wishes of the Irish Ambassador, Dr. Donal O'Sullivan. He considered the proposed development report of Mr. O'Connell was the highlight of the meeting. He looked forward to seeing the Irish Centre go forward into the seventies with increasing strength, and he was sure the Irish associations would back this new venture.

Fr. T. McNamara said this was one of the most progressive meetings of the Irish Centre. First, for the plans envisaged for the future. Secondly, it was the first time we have had three ladies on the Administrative Committee, and he was glad to see this. He was delighted to see so many of the old faces who had worked so unstintingly throughout the years, and were still here to go forward and to work harder for the next few years, than they have in the past.

Fr. Fanning announced that Cardinal Heenan was going to make a visit to the Irish Centre on November 23rd, and had shown a great interest in the Centre.

Mr. Donnelly concluded with a small point he wished to make. He hoped that in the near future, they would augment the Council of the Irish Centre to cover a wider representation of Irish Societies and that a committee would be set up to implement this.

A vote of thanks was then passed to the Chairman and the Administrative Committee by Dr. Rory O'Moore, and this was seconded by Mr. Joe McDonagh.

The meeting concluded at 10.00 p.m.