

Secretary Report

AGM of Ballydehob & Area Community Council December 7th 2019

INTRO/ GOVERNANCE

According to its constitution, our Community Council's main objective is the "promotion of education, cultural and economic welfare of the whole community."

Since our last AGM members of the Community Council and countless volunteers in addition to the committee have given their time, energy and creativity to run projects that meet this objective.

Much of this energy is spent in and around Bank House.

BANK HOUSE

Earlier this year the loan for the purchase of Bank House was paid off. Congratulations to our previous committee who put their necks out for such an auspicious acquisition.

Congratulations must also be extended to the entire community who bought this premises through their support of the Ballydehob Lotto.

EVENTS

Many of the events that are brought into the Bank are made possible by our events manager, Deborah Beale. She enthusiastically opens the premises up to accommodate classes, lectures, fundraisers, and more.

Deb and her team of volunteers open bank house to our many festivals for workshops, as a box office, and as a music venue. She is also in the process of meeting with the festival organisers to see if there are additional supports Bank House, or indeed the Council, can offer them. At the moment, Deborah is organising and planning for the annual late night Christmas Shopping Evening and leading volunteers in charge of Bank House celebrations after the annual blessing of the crib. Thank-you Deborah for all you do!

TOURIST OFFICE

Bank House also is host to our tourist information centre, an important amenity for the village. Again, Deborah Beale manages and organises the tourist office with a great team of volunteers and our capable CE worker Susy Cremers from May through August. The tourist office of course offers information about the locality but also keeps valuable tourism-based records. Also, when the tourist office doors are open it means the museum doors can also be open.

BALLYDEHOB ART MUSEUM

This summer's exhibition was even more impressive than last year's having enlisted help from visitor experience expert Marc Roosli of Mirador Media. This museum celebrates the history of arts in West Cork and the impact artists have had on the fabric of our society. It is well thought out and so capably put together that I am very proud that the Community Council will continue supporting, for the sake of posterity and tourism, the Ballydehob Arts Museum. Congratulations to Brian Lawler, Eugene McSweeney, and Robert Harris for their expertise and dedication to this fine artistic and community enterprise.

TALKS AT THE VAULTS

Since 2017, Eugene McSweeney, joined by a team of articulate historians, teachers, and artists, has brought to Bank House this series of lectures about local heritage known as the Talks at the Vaults. I wish to thank Eugene for his steadfast commitment to these well attended events.

CHARITY SHOP

The Community Council Charity shop across the road is also run completely by volunteers and has become an important stream of income for the Community Council. Where would we be without Paula Frye and her team?! Not only is it an attractive bustling business on our main street; it is a hub of community activity. I would like to thank Paula and her volunteers for the immeasurable support they offer the community. Their windows are so beautiful and their seasonal spirit is an inspiration! Halloween was an especially spooky treat this year.

LOTTO

The weekly LOTTO is the other important source of income that makes all of our projects possible. With these funds the council can run Bank House; make improvements to the premises; fund various events in Bank House and the village; make donations to local festivals and other organisations; run the Ballydehob website; and organise the Christmas trees that adorn our main streets each year.

Unfortunately, we have found that buying Ballydehob LOTTO tickets is not as popular these days as it had been years ago; so there will be a thrust of added PR in the coming year to help promote this fun and easy way of funding our community projects. Thanks must go to our committee members who take turns to run the lotto draw every Saturday night and to Billy O'Regan who organises the printing of the tickets.

ST PATRICKS DAY PARADE

The parade takes an extraordinary amount of planning and organising. Last year's subcommittee took the job, with no experience of having done it before, with both hands and ran with it. Fair play to Joanne Cassidy, Francine Thurnheer, and Josephine Jefferies for playing a blinder. Everyone had to do their bit of course - whether it was decorating or stewarding or setting up the band stage - and next year it will need to be all hands on deck again. Organising will start in January for this popular community event.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Now that Bank House has been paid off the Community Council will have more energy and funding available for projects outside of Bank House again. Of course, there is much work to be done yet on the property (the upstairs and back garden for example still need developing)– and in the new year we will create a mission plan and list of priorities to keep that momentum going.

We are happy to report that we have forged an excellent working rapport with our new County Council Area Engineer, Niall Chamberlain. He has shown support for our requests to improve road safety in the village. He has suggested that we can have a radar-controlled speed sign and broken yellow lines installed on the western approach from Schull; and also a pedestrian crossing on the eastern approach to facilitate access to/from the playground. Additional funds may need to be raised by the community for these projects. We will keep the public up to date as we make progress on this.

We have also met with Cork County Councillors, Danny Collins and Holly McKeever Cairns, who are on the Coastal Management Committee. As you may know, our estuary is overcome by silt and the barrage is in disrepair. Both councillors have agreed to speak on our behalf so that Ballydehob may be shortlisted by the Coastal Management Committee to get the works done. There are of course limited funds and only one or two Coastal Management projects can be completed per year – but we will keep in close touch with our representatives and push for Ballydehob to get listed for works to be done as soon as possible.

GOVERNANCE

At last year's AGM we were fortunate to start 2019 with a full committee of 17 members. Unfortunately, due to conflicts with scheduling and commitment our members now number 13. People interested in joining the committee should contact us at council@ballydehob.ie.

As secretary I have spent the year updating our constitution and policy documents to bring them fully up to current charity regulation standards. I have been in consultation with our accountants to ensure accuracy. This has been slow work but I hope to finalise these

documents and bring them to committee for adopting in the first half of 2020. Once we have adopted these documents they can be submitted to the Charities Regulator for their approval.

According to current regulations and good governance practices each member of the executive committee of an organisation like ours shall be registered with the Companies Registration Office; so, do please keep that in mind if you intend to go for one of the officer positions.

CONCLUSION

I wish to thank our CE workers as they are so busy getting important things done in the background that we just about couldn't manage without them. Susy Cremers came on board in September and is responsible for helping me with correspondence, filing and other administrative work. She is also a great support to BAM and to the tourist office keeping track of their figures and making posters and updating FB. She was also responsible for the super cool haunted House in Bank House this past Halloween. Thank you also to James who also started working with us in September. He is handy at just about anything that needs doing in Bank house and we are so grateful to have him here painting and maintaining the premises each week.

Thank-you Liam Twomey for serving with great integrity as treasurer and assistant treasurer since this organisation's inception. I think the treasurer position is one of the busiest, most difficult and most important to get right jobs on any committee. It can also be the most under-valued. On behalf of this Council I would like to offer sincere gratitude for your service, for your diligence and for your reliability throughout your tenure.

Thanks also to our Chairman William Swanton. William works busily all year long on many tasks for the council, for Bank House, for the charity shop and for other organisations in the village as well. As Chair he has been careful and steady, guiding us with a genuine love for his community.

Thanks also to Jason Lee for running the Ballydehob Twitter page. Thanks to Margaret McSweeney and Susy Cremers for running the Ballydehob Facebook page. Thank-you Kitty O'Mahony for keeping up with personal correspondence such as mass cards and for organising the annual collection days.

It is my wish that in the new year we will come together to agree on a common set of goals and to organise ourselves into more working sub-committees so that we can become an even stronger force for progress in our community.