

Sandycove & Glashule Residents Association Newsletter

No. 7 September 2002

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AGM - ALL WELCOME

Date: Tues 24th Sept 2002
Time: 8pm
Venue: The hall at the back of Presentation College, opposite St. Joseph's, Glashule.
Parking available.

Our guest speaker will be Paddy Treanor, the well known local Veterinary Surgeon and TV Presenter. We would like to take this opportunity to urge as many people as possible to attend.

Chairperson's Review

At the 2001 Annual General Meeting the following were elected:

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| CHAIRPERSON | Bob Waddell |
| SECRETARY | John Elliot |
| TREASURER | Derek Leahy |

The following were elected as members of the committee:

Sean Coakley, Ursula Maguire, Wesley Curran, James Howley, Tom Fitzgerald, Michael Mullins, David O'Neill and Kay Gleeson.

At the first meeting of the new committee, it was agreed that we would hold our meetings on the second Wednesday of every month, excluding August and December. It was agreed also that all those serving on the committee would have a specific portfolio.

These portfolios were agreed as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Sean Coakley | Vice Chairperson - Planning |
| Ursula Maguire | Vice Chairperson - Tidy Towns Liaison, Newsletter Distribution, Meeting Arrangements |
| James Howley | Newsletter |
| Wesley Curran | Public Order |
| Kay Gleeson | Recycling, Litter, etc. |
| Michael Mullins | Road Safety and Parking |
| David O'Neill | Seafront Area |

Meetings have been held to date with very satisfactory attendance.

Planning

We have taken a particular interest in the proposed development of the Forum Cinema, the Dun Laoghaire Baths, the Link Road and the Motor Dealer in Glashule Village. Your association has been very much involved in the proposed development on the corner of Link Road and Newtownsmith, which would involve the demolition of three existing houses and the erection of 19 apartments and a retail unit. The Council's decision was to refuse, but on 11th March 2002, Developers appealed this to An Bord Pleanala. We are still awaiting the final decision.

An Bord Pleanala have deferred their decision to October 2002

Public Order and Seafront Area

We have been reasonably successful in the area of unacceptable behaviour, particularly during the summer months on Sandycove Village and Seafront area. We would like to express our thanks for the

cooperation of the Gardai from Dalkey and Dun Laoghaire for all their help. We would urge residents when they become aware of unsocial activities to contact the Gardai.

Recycling, Litter etc.



We feel there have been definite improvements in the area of litter and the removal of dog excrement. There is still a long way to go. Wheely bins are finally in service having been promised two years ago, but are only in a small area of Sandycove and Glashule. We understand that there are difficulties with the inability of the large bin lorries to enter the narrower roads aggravated no doubt by the extent of parking in the area.

Road Safety and Parking

This has become a major problem and has caused much frustration among the residents and visitors alike. We welcome the introduction of the parking meters although there were some reservations on the modus operandi. This is dealt with in more detail later in this newsletter.



Seafront



The villages of Glashule and Sandycove are quite unique, but the jewel in the crown must be the seafront of Dun Laoghaire, in particular the area stretching from Dun Laoghaire Baths to Sandycove Beach. We are pleased that this whole area has been renovated over the last two years and are appreciative of the monies that have been expended.

We are unhappy that there remains an area which has been lying unfinished for the last six months and it is hoped that the Parks Department will complete the grassing and whatever other landscaping ideas they have in mind.

Tidy Towns

We would like to congratulate the Tidy Towns Committee, which was so successful in 2001 and wish them well for this year. Two members of your Residents Association Committee are involved on the Tidy Towns Committee and task force. Many of the members of the Association assisted on the clean up days, keeping their gardens and the area

in front of their homes and businesses swept and weed free.

We regret very much the passing of Jack Smith, Chairperson of the Tidy Towns Committee who carried out such trojan work on behalf of Sandycove and Glashule. Likewise George Stirling who was a very loyal member of the Residents Association and personally very active in environmental areas.

We take this opportunity to thank the Parks Department of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown for the constant attention to the grass cutting of the Green where the Denis Burton memorial was erected and also the Eden Park area where the trees were planted recently to commemorate Jack Smith.

Meeting with County Officials

A deputation from the Residents Association Committee, Bob Waddell, John Elliot, Sean Coakley, Derek Leahy and Wesley Curran met with County Officials and Councillors. The agenda, which we put forward, was extensive and covered all of the areas to which residents had drawn our attention over the past year. This is reported on in more detail later in our newsletter. We feel this is a good exercise in communications between the residents and the County Officials. The key to success will be in the follow up by all concerned and we would like to hold further meetings in the not too distant future.

We take this opportunity to appeal to all residents in the area to become members of the Association.



Committee Members photographed recently at the memorial bench erected in May 2001 in memory of Denis Burton. L-R Front Row: Sean Coakley, Bob Waddell, Ursula Maguire. Back Row: David O'Neill, James Howley, Kay Gleeson, John Elliot and Derek Leahy. In absentia: Wesley Curran and Michael Mullins.

Ursula's Bits and Pieces

Shopping

Welcome to Denise Ladies Fashions. Glashule Road and Menswear Adelaide Road.

Welcome to SOUL, who bring their Shoe Fashions to Glashule Terrace.

HOUSE OF SHOES have relocated to Glashule Road. We wish them continued success in their new home.

Proposals included in the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Council COASTAL PLAN:

- A traffic management scheme to direct cars away from the Sandycove Harbour area.
- Upgrading the Beach to BLUE FLAG standard.

All residents may not be aware that in our first entry for the National Tidy Towns Competition for Glashule / Sandycove area we achieved an award for the Best New Entry for Most Improved Main Street. We also won an award in the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Competition.

We are again entering the Competition in 2002 and hopefully, with everyone's assistance we shall achieve a higher placing.

However challenging the Tidy Towns Competition is, we believe that the coming together of all the Community in an effort to create a happier close knit welcoming Community is more important than winning the Tidy Towns competition.

1. In 2002, we are hoping to install an Imogen Stuart Sculpture.
2. We want to obtain planning permission from Dun Laoghaire Corporation to use the new road signs, adding a plaque below the street name with a welcoming invitation from Sandycove / Glashule Tidy Town

Glashule Buildings

Have you seen Glashule Buildings? It is a place we, the people of Sandycove and Glashule can be proud of. Over the past year the residents have been busy giving the place a new look. A number of them have painted all the houses. The floral arrangements, including the hanging baskets, they did themselves. All the work done has been paid for by the residents. Well done.

Traffic and Parking

It may seem perverse to pose problems for which there would appear to be no definite solution, but Sandycove and Glasthule's traffic and parking difficulties are worsening and are likely to become intolerable. These problems are endemic throughout the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown area and ours are only a part of the overall difficulties facing the County Council. That said we have particular problems that need to be addressed.



Sandycove and Glasthule were developed at a time when private cars were not imagined, nor the growing volume of traffic and parking visitors. Many of our roads function as main commuter routes, residential areas and permanent parking lots. Those parking are residents with no or limited off road facilities; visitors, tourists, retail customers; employees; DART commuters and service vehicles. Each has legitimate and different requirements. Commuter traffic in and out of the city is especially impatient when negotiating roads congested by parked cars and is a real danger to children.

The County Council is addressing the problem by introducing "pay and display" where deemed possible, with concessions for residents. This would appear to be a necessary part of any compromise solution but needs care and foresight. A recent instance involving the removal of fresh parking lines does not instill confidence that the necessary homework has been done.

Careful analysis is required of the quantity and type of parking; present and possible traffic flows and the feasibility of one-way systems. Some infrastructural changes will be required, hopefully not such as to change the amenities of the area, though some harm may have to be accepted.

Regarding enforcement of parking regulations, Sandycove / Glasthule has been a "no go" area with cars parked illegally both day and night on footpaths, at intersections, on double yellow lines and on continuous white lines. Fine weather weekends are a total free for all.

Enforcement of regulations would create uproar so a blind eye has been the pragmatic policy to date. This imbalance between the law and practice applied in many other suburban areas of Dublin and even in the city up to a few years ago. However, a more rational approach is being slowly introduced and accepted.

Introducing "pay and display" meters will require wardens to police them. Those not paying or overstaying their time can hardly be fined while more serious parking and misdemeanours are ignored. The choice cannot be to feed a meter or park for free on double yellow lines. It is essential that an overall approach is agreed and implemented. This will require compromise and sensitivity and the realisation that one person's solution may make another's problem. There is no substitute for some sensible hard thinking.

Resident's Gathering November 2001

The last resident's gathering in Presentation College on 22 November 2001, proved to be another enjoyable evening. Chairperson Bob Waddell ran through the various activities undertaken by the committee since the AGM and outlined our plans for the months ahead. An open debate followed where residents had the chance to raise their own concerns and suggestions, and were as usual not short of opinions. This was followed by an excellent illustrated lecture by Pat McAfee, author of Irish Stone Walls and Irish Stone Buildings. Everyone present was spellbound as Pat took us through the history, constructional methods, materials and regional variations on our vernacular buildings and field boundaries. He was also able to show examples of traditional Irish stone walls that he had photographed in Virginia built by Irish immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century.

Dogs on the Beach

Many residents find it extremely frustrating when dog owners walk their dogs on the beach at Sandycove Harbour, and worse when they are let off the leash to run freely and chase sticks or balls into the water. This can sometimes be quite frightening for small children, especially when the beach is crowded and they do not see the dog approaching until the last minute. Equally offensive is when dogs foul the beach, which is extremely unpleasant with so many children digging and making sandcastles. When dogs appear there is often a quick response from parents requesting the dog owner to keep their dog off the



beach, while pointing to the sign on the wall beside the slipway, erected by the Ports Authority, which asks dog owners to refrain from walking their dogs on the beach. Unfortunately there are now two signs erected by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, stating that dog owners are not to allow their animals on the beach between 10.00am and 7.30pm, during the months of June and September inclusive. It is not clear why the county council decided to contradict the long-standing directive of the Port Authority; certainly there is no support for dogs appearing on the harbour beach at any time of the day, summer and winter. The two signs are confusing and we would like the council to make very clear signs banning dogs from the beach at all times, which residents and other concerned visitors could point to for support when unreasonable dog owners persist on bringing their animals onto the beach. It should be said that most dog owners when asked politely, remove their dogs immediately, but unfortunately some do become quite upset and confrontational, which is not in anyone's interest.

Profile of Membership

Something that repeatedly surprises us is how few younger residents take any active part in the association, or even attend the open meetings. While everyone with small children knows how demanding life becomes at this particular stage, the time demands of a more active involvement need not be so great. We believe there is so much that could be improved within the area to provide better facilities for children, which does not necessarily require great expenditure by the county council. The playground in the People's Park is excellent and often overcrowded on a sunny day, so there is an excellent precedent to set the standards. Some simple inter-active landscaping on Sandycove Green would be very welcome. This need not be anything very elaborate, when you see how much fun children get from the two sculptures The Sea Urchin and The Archer.

Some dog-free lawns would also be very welcome; and would be worth having even if it meant fencing areas off. If we had a lot more parents of young children in the association it might help to strengthen the lobby for a more child friendly neighbourhood and convince the local and national politicians to act.

Recycling

It is now three years since the waste collection charges were introduced to the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown area, and many remain frustrated that so few improvements are evident. Litter and dog excrement in public places seems to have reduced only marginally, despite promises that we would see improvements due to the appointment of litter wardens and more street cleaners, freed up by the new highly efficient wheely bin system of collection. Despite this parts of the county, including much of the Sandycove area, are still awaiting delivery of their bins. Door to door collection for recycling has only been introduced in a few limited areas and the range of materials collected, paper, light card, aluminium and steel cans, is unambitious to say the least. We do not yet have a Civic Amenity Centre, where we can bring a wide range of waste material ourselves, the nearest being the South Dublin centre at Ballymount. If we wish to dispose of our own garden waste materials, we are told to go to Lucan. When compared to the progress made in other areas such as Galway, where up to 50% of household waste is recycled, and Navan that has had an excellent and convenient Civic Amenity Site for some time now, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown is totally unacceptable. The only processing is a shredder for garden waste and a simple compacting machine. Why, one of the wealthiest areas in the country, which probably produces more waste than the national average, does not have such a facility in a convenient, central location is a mystery. Very few people would object to waste charges if they could see some noticeable change in the current poor standards.



Meeting with Councillors and Officials

Earlier this year members of the Committee of the Association met with County Councillors and officials to discuss key issues of concern to residents of Sandycove and Glashule. The meeting was chaired by An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Betty Coffey and the other Councillors present were Councillors Andrew, Cosgrave, McDowell and O'Malley. Copies of the Association's constitution and latest newsletter were circulated to the meeting.

We asked what is happening in relation to the Dun Laoghaire Baths. We were told that the Council is negotiating to buy the freehold from the Department of the Marine and will then invite proposals for development of the site. The Councillors wish the site to be developed as a community facility, not as apartments or for commercial use. The idea of a public-private partnership is on the agenda. Councillor Andrews referred to the plans of a company called Oceantec. Councillor McDowell said that any development must be based on public swimming baths. We referred to potential parking problems of any development. Councillor Cosgrave said we would be consulted when there are proposals.

We referred to the safety concerns with the seafront railing. We were told that this was an issue for the Parks Department and would be referred to them. The Parks Department has since told us that the railing will be replaced when funds become available. We also referred to the cracking in the seafront pathway and the fact that the seafront seats have been removed and not replaced. We have subsequently been informed that the cracking of the pathway will be made good during the Spring/Summer season and that seating has been installed in the first part of the promenade. We referred to the need for waste bins and for the railings to be painted. We were told that funds were in the estimates to continue with the required work.

In relation to planning we were told that a coastal plan is being prepared which would be presented to the Council and would be on public display. We stated that there was a constant concern about the risk of excessively dense or high development being allowed and that the character of the seafront needed to be protected against the risk of a creeping increase in height. We were assured on behalf of the Council that, as a broad principle, no four-storey development would be permitted, but each application must be considered on its merits and there could be no guarantee of what decisions might be made by An Bord Pleanála. We were told

that the Council will revisit the development plan and that the question of a height limit could definitely be addressed in the development plan in a way that would bind the Council. It was suggested that we could make specific representations on this issue in writing.

We asked for an update on the wheely bin situation and plans in relation to recycling. The Environmental Education Officer, Lorraine Murphy, spoke on the subject of litter and waste management. We were told that wheely bins were now in all areas where they were possible, that while there were facilities for recycling paper and tin cans it had not been possible so far to obtain recycling facilities for plastic and that it was very difficult to get recycling sites. We pointed out that, although the Tidy Towns initiative had cleaned up the DART bottle bank site, there was still a problem with litter there and the litter warden had to cover too wide an area. We were told that the Council had to rely on too few contractors for recycling and that standards had been poor but were improving.

With reference to road maintenance and with their permission, we tabled a detailed audit of the area carried out on behalf of the Tidy Towns Committee. This audit listed every piece of necessary road repairs in the area. We were told that lack of funds prevented much needed road repair from being undertaken, but that the officials were willing to consider suggestions.

The meeting concluded by examining the maps which showed the parking controls which, at the time of the meeting, were about to come into force. The need for control of parking to be extended to Sandycove Avenue West was put to the officials and questions were asked in relation to whether Newtownsmith was wide enough for controlled parking.

All the issues raised at the meeting will continue to be followed up in appropriate ways over the coming year.

It is important that the County Council hears, not only from the Committee of the Association, but also directly from residents. The more the Council hear of our concerns, the more likely it is that improvements in local services will take place. We urge all residents to write to the County Manager, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, County Hall, Dun Laoghaire to make their views known.

We are pleased that we have been granted a further meeting with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on Wednesday 11th September at County Hall. We will report on that meeting at the AGM.

DON'T FORGET OUR AGM ON TUESDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER. PLEASE COME ALONG.