

Clonroche Development Association Ltd

Working for the Community

Report on Public Community Meeting

Twenty-three people attended the public meeting held at Clonroche Community Centre on the evening of March 22nd 2010 under the auspices of the Clonroche Development Association. This attendance did not measure up to the more optimistic expectations but, conversely, the attendance of this number of people does indicate a commitment to the good of the local community. The crowd might have been slightly higher if the (in the opinion of some) newsletter given into each home had more explicitly invited the occupants to come.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this publication is to sum up the main points covered in the meeting and to concisely convey proceedings to the community,

:

As a Community the area has no public forum to raise issues concerning the district. This meeting was called to redress this perceived need but this may have been misunderstood

Lorcan Dunne chaired the meeting and in a short and articulate script told the crowd that it was their meeting and that he would enable everybody there to contribute as he or she wished. He made allusions to the nature of village and local communities in celebrated political and cultural statements. In his contribution Diarmuid O’Sullivan outlined the good work of the Development Association but, also, quietly indicated that “it does not claim to be the official representative of the area”.

There remained throughout the meeting a certain confusion as to what it involved: the sub-text to some of the observations was that it was a meeting of the Development Association. Most of the contributions to the meeting related to local problems, indeed, to quite a diverse set of problems. This is not necessarily an exhaustive list of these issues: speed ramps at the National School; parking at the school plus the possibility of a cycle lane; seeking a FAS worker for the School; vandalism and crime; a green area for the village; public lighting on the road going down to St Clement’s Church at Cloughbawn and parking problems there and the

condition of local roads, especially after the grim weather in January.

Some of those present felt that these issues were intractably resistant to resolution and that they were regularly discussed at monthly meetings of the Development Association. There were references to the difficulty of obtaining public funding for any project in this time of economic recession.

The Chair’s opening address hinted at the possibility of a wider discussion of the role and purpose of local communities in a complex modern world but these cues were not responded to. Some debate did take place, however, on the function of the Development Association, itself: the inclusion of the word “Clonroche” in the title it was suggested by at least one speaker was limiting its appeal to the village. It was, moreover, suggested that people might not be interested in attending meetings of the Clonroche Development, as they would consider that their involvement with other organisations took precedence over any other voluntary effort. In relation to the latter assertion it is relevant to point out that this was not a meeting seeking to re-

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Recommendations on Outdoor Playing Space were first formulated in 1925, soon after the Association's formation. This helped ensure that 'every man, woman and child in Great Britain should have the opportunity of participating in outdoor recreational activity within a reasonable distance of home during leisure

The above is taken from an article from the National Playing Fields Association of the UK.

Ireland is very backward in the provision of open public spaces. And the provision of a Community Field is one of the aspirations of Clonroche Development Association for the village

quire or influence anybody into applying for membership of the Development Association. The meeting was open to all contributions, including ones that queried the role of the Development Association.

The Chair proceeded on that basis.

Another persistent difficulty throughout the proceedings was that of distinguishing the precise remit of the Clonroche Development Association; for example the desirability of getting an industrial estate in the area. How does an organisation devoid of statutory power to raise revenue undertake costly projects? Many of the issues raised could be dealt with via the democratic political process and in that context it is very possible that there may not be any kind of consensus as to the proper response. The Chair pointed out that the statutory authorities such as the County Council interact with the local community via the Development Association. The Association may, of course, make representations to these authorities but its influence would be significantly increased if the local community gave it more visible support.

The Association is supported at a less visible level by a considerable number of people who work most unselfishly to ensure that events like the Vintage Rally are efficiently carried out. Local business people contribute, financially, on a constant basis to these events. All that support is most appreciated. One speaker, late in the meeting, decried all the gloom and doom about the Development Association and pointedly referred to its achievements, especially, in regard to its success in the Tidy

Towns competition.

After about two hours discussion fatigue set in and it was felt appropriate to finish proceedings. There were suggestions that a further meeting be held but one man suggested that the decision of the March monthly meeting was that there should be only this meeting and after a further brief discussion the aforementioned speaker intervened again to assert that a further such meeting could result in a parallel organisation and meeting fatigue! There is no law or rule to stop people on their own initiative calling such a meeting but, under its own resolutions, the Development Association would have no function in doing that.



Chairman's Opening Speech to Community Meeting

In 1960, as the era of the village pump ebbed away, you could still think of a village as a world in itself. Nearly fifty years ago Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian expert on communications, predicted that the "The Medium is the Message" and the world would become a Global Village

The problems of this recession blighted time are obvious; unemployment, increased social instability, signs of increased crime & substance abuse

Hillary Clinton wrote on an occasion "It takes a Village". That is my cue to ask you what you think this village and surrounding community should do. What may Clonroche Development Association do?

The world is now a Global Village and conversely the village may become microscopic

Tom McDonald will be the recorder of the suggestions, without attributions, and in so doing will be prevented from making any of his unmannerly speeches and untimely interruptions.

Our meeting to-night is to enable **you** to suggest how we, as a community, should respond to the XX potentialities and bracing challenges of this time in the social, cultural and economic spheres

I will assure you anyone wishes to speak will have the opportunity and I hope everyone here this evening will avail of that opportunity.

This is not a meeting of Clonroche Development Association: it is **your** meeting to speak as you wish about your own locality. We would like to hear your ideas, needs & aspirations

I will finish with a quotation from US President Barack Obama:

The people of this area has traditionally felt a strong sense of themselves as a community: the crowd on the village street for the St Patricks Day parade, plus the floats of the numerous voluntary organisations and business enterprises is solid proof that we still have sense of kinship. I'm proud of that

"Our greatness as a nation has depended on individual initiative, But, we also know that there are some things we can't do on our own. We know that there are some things we do better together".

I would never

belong to a

group that

would accept

someone like

me as a mem-

ber.

GROUCHO

MARX