

Seminar on the Management of Community Facilities
Members Room Ballymun Civic Centre
2.00pm to 5.00pm - 22nd January 2009

Senan Turnbull – Director of Services Fingal Co Council

Senan Turnbull made the following points about the Management of Community Facilities in Fingal Co Council:

- In the past community groups had a geographic connection operating from parish or convent halls with no or very little cost to the group. Costs like insurance etc were paid by the owners of the facility.
- Today groups have no geographic identity, need subsidies to pay costs for renting community facilities and have to take Health & Safety and Child Protection issues into account.
- Staff is a problem for Community Facilities now with the withdrawal of CE Schemes.
- Fingal Co Council are working on a Manual for Good Practice for the Management of Community Facilities.
- Fingal are not going down the route of managing community facilities but the Co Council do own a lot of community facilities and sit on the Board of Management where the Council only get involved when there is a problem.
- Some community facilities are under used.
- The Co Council give advice, guidance, support and mentoring to groups, groups are also facilitated to network in order to learn from each other.
- The Co Council give grants to Community Facilities on condition that they have a business plan, are open at least 80 hours a week and accommodate as many groups as possible
- The Co Council work with groups to keep their costs down for example exempts them from rates and water charges unless it is a commercial operation.
- Groups need more financial support now as local fund raising is gone, only clubs can fund raise.
- Fingal Co Council have a five year strategy with the Department of Education & Science where the Department must include a community facility in all new school buildings. These multi-use buildings are available to the community from 4.00pm, Monday to Friday and at weekends. The Council pays the extra amount to enlarge the size of these buildings and provide changing rooms and adult toilets with a separate entrance from the school. A Caretaker is employed jointly.
- Buildings designed for the Arts only are not sustainable, Fingal Co Council are only interested in subsidising multi-purpose buildings.
- All community buildings are struggling financially with exception of the GAA clubs.
- There is a meeting planned with the four Dublin Councils to come up with a model for the Management of Community Facilities.

Caroline Molloy – Manager Santry Community Resource Centre

- The Santry Community Resource Centre opened in May 2007 after thirty years of fund raising and planning.
- The centre is run by the Santry Community Association, which includes a representative from DCC, Fingal Co Council, Woodford Development and two members from all Residents Associations and Clubs on the committee.
- The two anchor tenants, Art School and Playgroup pay the wages of the Manager and three partime workers, who each work twenty hours per week.
- The Café also provides an income and can be used as an extra meeting room.
- The centre is open from 9.00am to 10.30pm, Monday to Saturday, it is closed on Sunday for cleaning by two volunteers, who are retired Dublin Airport cleaners. They are given free access to the Active Retirement activities.
- The centre is used for one hundred hours per week.
- Putting a ‘London Wall’ in the hall has doubled the yearly income of the centre
- The centre charges commercial and community rates.
- There is no application form for use of the hall but users sign a contract with the centre.
- There is a lot of back ground support from the DCC representative on the Committee.
- The Manager and the four staff run the centre on a daily basis, they meet the Committee once a month and can call an emergency meeting if required.
- The catchment area was canvassed to see what activities the people wanted in the centre.
- Larger clients advertised on banners on the railings.
- Every three months a Newsletter is delivered to 1,600 homes showing a timetable of events.
- Three new clients are using the centre since Christmas, also a ‘Working Hub’ for tradesmen in the area is being set up and ‘Club 4 U’ Garda Youth Club targeting 15 to 17 year olds is also being set up.

The following groups use the centre:

Commercial
Playschool
Art School
Salsa Dancing
Line Dancing
UNISLIM
Yoga
Ballet School

Community
Youth Club
Active Retired Group
Red Cross
Karate
Fun & Games for Kids
Irish Dancing
AA

Hugh Kilbride – Leisure Services Manager- Culture, Recreation & Amenity - DCC

- All Sports and Leisure Centres now come under the Culture, Recreation and Amenity Section in DCC.
- There are eighteen Sports and Leisure Centres in the city at present and three more will be added shortly, Ballybough, Poppintree and Rathmines.
- The centres are managed by DCC staff.
- There is no standard model of management at present but progress is being made towards a standard model.
- There are no Management Committees in the older buildings that are thirty to thirty five years old, there are informal local Management Committees.
- In new buildings these local committees are replaced with Local Advisory Groups consisting of representatives of the anchor tenants like School Principals, VEC and primary users, other Community Representatives can be added if identified.
- The DCC Management meet the Advisory Group every two to three weeks to update them and discuss finance etc., this is proving beneficial.
- In the past DCC had no input into the design of Sports and Leisure Centres, Management was brought in late in the day.
- The Culture, Recreation and Amenity Section now have input into the design brief.
- The usage of the new centres is dedicated by funding for example the Young Peoples Facility Fund provides services for ten to twenty one year olds.
- There are sixteen Sports Development Officers and FAI Development Officers assigned to centres through the city.
- There are citywide projects on Saturday and Sunday for example the Mid-night Soccer League in Marrowbone Lane that has had an effect on the anti-social behaviour in the area.
- The young people must buy into talking to Drugs Counsellors etc. in the centre.
- Centres are closed when young people need them most.
- There are different rental rates, Community €5/€10 per hour and Commercial €50/€60 per hour.
- DCC makes up the shortfall in the funding of many centres, this is a huge cost to DCC that is going to prove difficult in the future with the current recession.
- The sustainability of the new Poppintree Community Centre will prove difficult.

Larry O'Neill – Economic Development Co-ordinator – Clondalkin Partnership

The Clondalkin Community Property Development Company (Oatfield Trust) was established as an independent legal entity Company Limited by Guarantee in 1996.

The Aims are as follows:

- To Provide Affordable Premises for Community & Voluntary Sector
 - To Assist the increase of Service Provision Locally
 - To Develop an Asset Base for the Stakeholders
 - To provide premises for those unable to rent from private sector
 - Each project must pay for itself – little or no cross subsidy
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- The tenants must be a community group, that's the only criteria.
 - The group works with the company to develop the space required.
 - Groups need to have one year's funding in place.
 - The Company does property management not project management.
 - The Company find Irish Banks too expensive, they use the Triodas Bank, UK Based Dutch Bank, specialists in third sector, Environmental and Community Projects.
 - Funders don't want to know about funding for rent.
 - The lack of childcare is a big problem in the area, adults cannot get training, 62% of the local population are Lone Parents.
 - Fingal only allow Government Departments to bring a laptop into the offices they rent, office not locked up at 5.00pm, change of use can happen within 20 minutes.
 - Capital funding easier to secure than revenue funding.
 - If Community don't own a building it gets wrecked.
 - The company are looking at Community Enterprise Units Project in Liverpool.
 - The purchase of Crag Terrace is the first venture into industrial property.

The following are Directors of the Company:

- Manager, Clondalkin Partnership – Chair
- Economic Development Co-ordinator Clondalkin Partnership

Directors with specialist knowledge and experience:

- Lecturer in Maynooth and Urban Planning Specialist
- Local Solicitor
- Local Resident and Lecturer in Communications in DIT
- Local County Councillor

Property Portfolio

Buildings purchased:

- Unit 2 Oakfield Industrial Estate - 2000
- Unit D Nangor Road – 2006
- Crag Terrace – 2007

Buildings leased:

- 15 Tower Road – October 1997
- Unit 3 Oakfield Industrial Estate – 1998
- Units 5, 7 & 8 Oakfield Industrial Estate – 1998-2000

Current Tenants

- Tower Road – Clondalkin Intercultural Centre
- Unit 2 – Clondalkin Citizen Information Centre, Clondalkin Women's Network, Volunteer Bureau
- Unit 3 – Family Functional Therapy Project, Local Employment Service
- Unit 4 - Archway Childcare Development
- Unit 5 – Clondalkin Youth Support & Training Unit, Clondalkin Drugs Task Force
- Unit 7 & 8 – National Council for the Blind in Ireland
- Crag Terrace – Clondalkin Community Recycling Initiative
- Unit D Nangor Road – CPLN Area Partnership

Future – a Balancing Act

- To provide accommodation for community organisations while ensuring that the property company operates in continuous surplus in an economic environment of rising interest rates, uncertain property market at rent levels below the market norms.
- To develop Oakfield Trust to the extent that it will be viable to provide a significant annual fund to be used in development of community sponsored projects.
- To buy buildings instead of leasing them.
- To keep as much funds within community sector.