

**Draft Minutes of SCA Annual General Meeting, 15th June 2023.
Little Theatre, Skerries Community Centre.
Started 8.06pm. Finished 9.30pm**

Recorded by BMS

Attendees:

SCA Board: Jane Landy (Chair), Michael Fay McKenna (Company Secretary), Mary Conway (Treasurer), Brendan Sherlock, Shay Fanning, John Coleman, Brendan Friel, Helen Scullion, Brid Grimes, Ger O'Mahony, Eric Byrne, Eithne O'Connell, Breda Shankey (BMS)

Minister Joe O'Brien, Councillor Karen Power, Cormac McDonagh (FCC Community Officer) and approximately 30 residents of Skerries, including three ladies who had recently arrived as International Protection Applicants.

Agenda

1. To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
 2. To receive and adopt the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31st Dec 2022.
 3. To elect Directors to the Board of Skerries Community Association CLG
 4. To elect Members to Skerries Community Centre Board of Management
 5. To reappoint Dempsey Mullen as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration. To also thank Dempsey Mullen.
 6. To transact any other business proper to an Annual General Meeting of the Company: Committee and SCLC reports.
 7. Volunteering in Skerries and Jim Quigley award.
 8. Open forum for discussion.
 9. Conclusion.
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1. To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

These were published on the SCA website and were also notified via the Webflash. Copies were available at the AGM.

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first in-person AGM since 2019

Adoption of Minutes:

Proposer: Sabine McKenna

Seconded by: Mary Conway

Signed by Chairperson Jane Landy

Date: 15th June 2023.

2. To receive and adopt the Directors Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31st Dec 2022.

Copies of these were posted on the SCA website and left at the Community Centre.

The Chair explained these to all present. On page 2 there was an explanation of an overpayment of EWSS Wage Subsidy Scheme by Revenue of €74,142 to the Skerries Community Centre. This has been fully repaid to Revenue.

She pointed out the statement on page 8, which shows a surplus of €50,449 for 2022.

Liquidity is very good, liabilities are modest and total assets amount to more than €1 million.

On page 16, the entry on the 4th column was manually corrected to Old School and not Computer Equipment as recorded.

The report and statements were adopted as presented.

Proposed by: Shay Fanning

Seconded by: Helen Scullion.

3. To elect Directors to the Board of Skerries Community Association

As per the procedures of electing board members to the SCA, existing members Mary Conway, John Coleman, Jane Landy, Brendan Friel and Helen Scullion retired by rotation and put themselves forward for re-appointment. The Chair suggested that all five be taken as one proposal, and this was agreed.

Proposed by: Eithne O Connell
Seconded by: Karen Power

Since last year's AGM three new Directors have been co-opted to the SCA Board. These are: Ger O'Mahony (Skerries Autism Friendly Town), Eithne O'Connell (Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative) and Eric Byrne (BoM Community Centre). The Chair suggested that all three be taken as one proposal, and this was agreed.

Proposed by: Martin Russell
Seconded by: Michael Mullan Jensen

4. To elect Members to Skerries Community Centre Board of Management

The Community Centre BoM has 10 members, 5 of whom are appointed by SCA and 5 elected at the AGM. At each AGM 2 from each five are rotated.

(i) SCA appointed members of Community Centre BoM:
Sheila Fogarty and Sharon Lynch are both willing to go forward for re-appointment

Proposer: Shay Fanning
Seconded by: Karen Power

(ii) SCA elected members of BoM whose term is complete and are willing to go forward for re-appointment:
Michael Mulryan
Clare Fox

Proposed by Ger O'Mahony
Seconded by: Brendan Friel

(iii) Eric Byrne, who was co-opted to the Community Centre BoM since the last AGM, is now nominated for election.

Proposed by: Tony Murray
Seconded by: Karen Power

5. To re-appoint Dempsey Mullen as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.

The Chair formally thanked Dempsey Mullen for all their help in preparing the annual accounts. Dempsey Mullen were re-appointed and the Directors duly authorised.

Proposed by: Michael Mullan Jensen
Seconded by: Shay Fanning

6. Short reports from SCA Committees:

- **Skerries Community Centre (Shay Fanning, Chair BoM):**
SF referred all to the Community Centre report in the pre AGM flyer. Their 40th birthday celebrations in August 2022 were very well attended and were a great success. Plans are underway for an Autism friendly family fun day on Sunday 23rd July. They are also planning a Volunteer Appreciation evening in the main hall, date to be decided. It is hoped that this event will improve networking among the various voluntary groups in Skerries. Energy conservation measures continue and the solar panels and heat pumps have been installed. All lights have been changed to LED. SF thanked Charlie and Marion Heasman for their help with the Bee Garden in the grounds. Work continues on the upgrading of the All Weather pitch, which should be completed in 3-4 weeks.

- **Tidy Towns (Maeve McGann):**

Skerries gained 11 extra marks last year and a gold medal. We are in the top ten nationally. Their entry has been submitted for this year and is a huge amount of work. It depends on help from our schools, clubs, Skerries News and Fingal Co. Council for this. It's a town entry, not just Tidy Towns.

The work required is diverse, including maintaining bollards, seats, railings etc. The Adopt a Patch and Beach Clean-up initiatives continue and TT continues to maintain the various flower beds after their planting by FCC.

The SEALS (Skerries Everyone Against Litter) initiative started with 3rd class students in St Patrick's school in 2022 and has now extended to 3rd class in Réalt na Mara.

TT has strong links with Sustainable Skerries and the Carder Bee project and the Biodiversity Corridor at the Ballast Pit were mentioned.

TT try to keep street kerbs clear and appealed to all residents to help by maintaining their own. This is in order to show the edge of paths to visually impaired people.

Work parties meet every Monday afternoon at 2pm in Quay Street.

- **Sustainable Skerries (Sabine McKenna):**

SMcK reminded all present of the climate crisis and extreme weather which is happening now and how we all need to tell our politicians that this is our priority.

We need to share these views, and take action, with others. They believe that every town should be an Eco town or at least moving that way. Sustainability is about minimising our damage. We can aim for regeneration if we change our ways.

Activities by Sustainable Skerries included:

- The production of a Pollinator Bee Map of Skerries
- Guided walks with Birdwatch Ireland and with Charlie and Marion Heasman, the next one taking place on 18th June.
- Creation of open mini orchards of fruit and nut trees, with over 100 planted this year in 8 locations.
- Organisation of the Skerries Eco Town course, which included a visit to Cloughjordan Eco village.

- Holding three Eco nights in November, April (on Biodiversity) and upcoming in September (on Water).

An Eco Festival is planned for September with a water theme.

They work closely with Tidy Towns and the Cycling Initiative, other groups are welcome. See their website for more information.

- **Skerries Age Friendly Town (Brendan Sherlock):**

Skerries is the only designated Age Friendly Town in Fingal. They are part of the Older People's Council in FCC and Age Friendly Ireland.

They facilitated the running of two smart technology classes for older people in conjunction with Age and Opportunity. These were very successful and attended by 24 people. They hope to have another one next year.

The Community Car has been very useful to many people, with many hospital trips and even some social trips. They are on the look-out for more volunteer drivers and also more service users. Thanks to FCC for all their support.

Skerries Cycling Without Age Trishaw:

John Coleman brought the new Trishaw, for people who are mobility impaired, to outside the AGM and told everyone about the service and gave out information cards to make bookings. They have negotiated a deal whereby all passengers are given a free 99 ice cream in Storm in a Teacup.

JC also mentioned that the path from the playground at Red Island to the Lifeboat Station is very uneven, making for a rocky journey at that point. FCC to be contacted.

They are looking for more 'pilots' and training will be provided. Official public launch of the Trishaw will take place on the South Strand on Friday 7th July.

Any new Age Friendly projects will be advertised locally in advance.

- **Town Twinning (Brendan Friel):**

It is almost 30 years since Skerries twinned with the Canton of Guichen. This has been one of the most successful twinings in Ireland.

The Canton of Guichen, in turn, is twinned with Srem in Poland. Srem has hosted many Ukrainian people who have been displaced by the war. There was a fund raising concert in Guichen last November to raise funds for Srem, and people from Skerries attended.

Last Christmas, four candles were lit in Skerries, Guichen, Srem and Lviv, in Ukraine as a sign of friendship and solidarity. Other European twinned communities from Sweden down to Portugal joined in lighting candles of support and friendship for the people of Ukraine and to remember all who live in areas of conflict.

Town Twinning is all about people meeting people, extending the hand of friendship, of doing and giving without expecting return.

The next group of people going to Guichen will depart on 29th June until 3rd July.

- **Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative (Michael Mullan Jensen):** SSECI were originally part of the Sustainable Skerries group. They are linked with SEAI, and with their help, they commissioned the Skerries Energy Master Plan (EMP).

The research was conducted by the consultancy firm, Plan Energy, and the full document plus a summary were launched at a public meeting in September 2022.

SSECI are investigating funding to conduct a feasibility study into the production of 5% of our energy supply in Skerries from renewables. The committee is also engaged in raising public awareness of the need for better insulated homes and businesses and the opportunities offered by energy-saving techniques and new, more efficient technologies. They have published articles in Skerries News and also have a YouTube channel. They hope to soon have a Home Energy Box to be loaned to households to help them figure out energy 'hot' and cold spots in their houses and what action to take.

The EMP has information about home upgrades and retrofits on the SSECI website, which can also be accessed via the SCA home page.

New members are always welcome to SSECI.

- **Skerries Cycling Initiative (Conor Keegan):**

SCI has engaged with FCC in the Active Travel plans and the proposed Fingal Coastal Way. As there is no longer a bike shop in Skerries, SCI have started repair sessions at their shed behind the Community Centre, where people are shown how to mend their bikes themselves. They are also refurbishing donated bikes to pass them on to people who don't have one. They had monthly fun cycles around Skerries last summer until September and started again in May 2023. The priority is safe accessible cycle routes.

Several members of SCI have been trained as pilots for the Cycling Without Age Trishaw.

SCI will take part in the Eco Festival in September.

- **Skerries Autism Friendly Town (Ger O'Mahony)**

The aim of SAFT is to enhance the lives of people with Autism and their families. They are affiliated with the charity ASIAM, and received a Community Engagement and Inclusivity award from them in December. They have very good links with local sports clubs. Activities include sailing, creative cooking, Gaelic football in the Harps All Stars, Hockey and Soccer. Last year the Sailing Club won a national award for their sailing programme for young people with disabilities.

With LEADER funding, and support from Skerries Business Association (SBA), SAFT plans to install a sensory garden quiet space in Floraville by the end of this year.

SAFT wished to express their thanks to Skerries Tidy Towns for their donation last year of €500 from their Tidy towns prize money. SAFT will continue to raise awareness of Autism and aim for more inclusion.

Report from Skerries Community Liaison Committee (Breda Shankey)

BS described the work of SCLC, which is a 3-4 monthly meeting attended by SCA reps Jane Landy and BMS with local County Councillors, FCC staff, reps of SBA, Skerries Tourism, Tidy Towns and a Loughshinny community rep.

The SCA reps had raised concerns about the lack of lighting in the Mills car park, which is very busy in winter evenings with children and adults at classes there. FCC have agreed to install low level lights in the carpark, which will be done with other planned

upgrades to the access there. The lights will be low level to minimize disruption to the local bat population.

The meeting was also informed of planned works on the pier and resurfacing in Strand Street. The new library extension is expected to be completed by the end of the year. There are also plans to restore the Red Island Martello tower and use it as a small exhibition space.

The SCA has also represented local swimmers at these meetings and are pursuing much needed improvements in the Captains and Springers. New composite seating has been installed in the Captains and the Competent Swimmers sign and safety ring have been reinstated. Hooks to hang swimmers bags on have been promised.

The SCA reps continue to campaign for regular power washing or other safe algae removal from both areas by the council and have pointed out how treacherous the steps can be and how many accidents have happened. They have to date agreed to twice yearly cleaning but this is obviously insufficient. We cannot keep relying on the good will of local swimmers to keep both areas safe. We have expressed our thanks for the improved safety rails for entering and exiting the sea in both places and also pointed out that the rails on the way down to the Captains are very rusted and unsightly at present. With the support of Cllr Karen Power we have been deemed eligible by FCC to apply for Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) funding for more expensive upgrades of the swimming areas, including extension of the changing areas, especially for times of high tides when the usual parts are under water, and the installation of cold water showers. Further showers could perhaps be installed on the South and North beaches. The next SCLC meeting will take place on 12th Sept 2023.

7. Volunteering in Skerries

The Chair paid special tribute to some very special Skerries volunteers.

This year SCA nominated Maeve McGann of Skerries Tidy Towns for a special FCC award for outstanding women leaders in our community. As a result, she featured in a photographic exhibition with other outstanding women leaders, called 'Fingal She Leads'. It was launched on International Women's Day and travels around between FCC libraries.

In May, two Skerries volunteers, Sabine McKenna and Jenny Brady Byrne, received Community Champion awards from the Mayor of Fingal. There were 24 winners from 230 nominees. Sabine was recognized for her great work with Sustainable Skerries and Jenny for her tireless work with Skerries Autism Friendly Town.

Tribute was also paid to Paul Deans, who died suddenly, and who had contributed so much to enhancing life in Skerries for so many, through his various activities. Condolences were expressed to Paul's wife Fidelma, his family and many friends.

The late Jim Quigley, without whom we would not have a Skerries Community Centre, was another volunteer who left us a great legacy, and in whose memory the Skerries Volunteer of the Year award is presented each year.

This year our independent judges have recommended that two awards be made, one for an individual and the other for a group.

The individual Jim Quigley Skerries Volunteer of the Year award was awarded to Gráinne Enright, who unfortunately was abroad on the night of the AGM. Gráinne has been instrumental in helping many Ukrainian refugees to settle in Skerries. She found homes for them and also hosted many in her own home. She helped with paperwork, looking for jobs, learning English, finding a GP, sourcing clothes, furniture, and other items they needed via a Facebook group. She also arranged a meeting place for them in the Scouts' den and encouraged some refugees to join in this year's St Patrick's Day parade. She was a member of the Soundwaves Festival committee for many years and instigated many well loved events such as the Lego competition and "Skerries got Talent" show. The award was presented to Gráinne prior to her travels.

Skerries Meals on Wheels was awarded the Jim Quigley Skerries Volunteer of the Year award for a group. The MoW team each week organises a team of drivers to deliver meals to those who need them. They must ensure that 4 drivers are available each day. Each day the team leader must liaise with the HSE, who prepare the meals, to ensure that the correct number and type of meals are delivered to the right people and that special dietary needs are taken into account. Their role is not just to deliver the meal but to provide social contact to vulnerable people who may otherwise feel isolated. Records must also be kept of who received which meal, and any cash paid must be accounted for and lodged to the HSE's account each week.

All volunteers must now be Garda vetted and the committee must ensure this happens and that the drivers and volunteers insurance is up to date. This wonderful operation

has been in place since the early 1970s and even continued during Covid, ensuring all regulations were complied with.

The organisers, and some of the volunteers of Meals on Wheels were presented with the award.

8. Open forum discussion:

- Martin Russell congratulated Skerries Business Association on the lovely new Christmas street lights last year. Special thanks to the late Kay Coleman for all her work.
- Catherine McMahon (CMcM) thanked SCA for their help in improving Skerries swimming areas, through the SCLC. They appreciate the new seating in the Captains and the safety rails in both Springers and Captains. The swimmers continue to have concerns about inadequate cleaning of algae from all surfaces and steps, and especially with Water Safety Week coming in August.
- Michael McKenna responded to an earlier comment by Martin Russell about cyclists not using the cycle lane from Mourne View to the sea. MMcK said cyclists would use lanes if they are fit for purpose. Karen Power said that some other places have special covers over drains on cycle paths to make cycling smoother.
- Máire Jones asked if there was any Assisted Living plan for older people in Skerries. JL replied that Skerries Sheltered Housing group had campaigned for this some years ago, to no avail.
- EO'C said there is support available through FCC to make home adaptations.

CMcM asked if SCA covers street parties. JL replied no, that all SCA groups have to apply for their own insurance for activities outside the Community Centre.

- Cormac McDonagh, FCC, said that if a Residents Group is registered under PPN, they would be eligible for grant funding of up to €3000, which could be used to cover the cost of insurance.
- Sabine McKenna reminded all of the Skerries Neighbourhood Network, which is a member of PPN, and advised all resident groups to join it, sharing information via WhatsApp. They may be able to help with Insurance for Street parties.
- Niamh Quigley offered thanks on behalf of all present to Jane Landy for over 20 years of unstinting work with SCA.
- Minister Joe O'Brien said the "Fingal She Lead"s exhibition may be viewed online. He said he may be able to support the proposed Volunteer Appreciation event in the Community Centre, if it also includes our new international protection residents. His department is responsible for the 'Street Feast' initiative and they may be able to help with insurance.

- Minister O'Brien supports the call for Skerries Sheltered Housing and is pursuing a meeting with FCC Head of Housing about this.
- His dept also oversees the ORIS applications, as mentioned earlier. Minister O'Brien commended all volunteers present at the AGM.

9. Conclusion

The Chair concluded the evening by thanking all the committees and their volunteers, Sharon Guinane and her staff in the Community Centre, and all the directors on the SCA board. Special thanks to Michael McKenna, Company Secretary, for organising the AGM, to Sabine McKenna for producing the flyer and to Treasurer Mary Conway and the Finance Working Group for overseeing the production of the accounts and assisting the auditors Dempsey Mullen. Many thanks also to Máire Jones (last year's Jim Quigley award winner) for maintaining our website and to Dee Langton for running the Newsflash.

The evening finished with tea and biscuits for all present.

