

Sandymount Green Conservation Study Public Meeting 26th November, 2014

The meeting held on 26th November in Scoil Mhuire, Gilford Road was well attended and provided an open forum for the expression of general comments and specific ideas in relation to Sandymount Green. The meeting was attended by local residents and members of the local community and by several elected representatives. The meeting was generally informal and the notes below represent a summary of the meeting and the range of comments that were expressed.

Notes

- The Assistant South East Area Manager, Frank Lambe, welcomed everyone and introduced Fergal McNamara of Howley Hayes Architects, who have been hired by Dublin City Council's Parks Department to carry out a conservation study in Sandymount Green.
- *Fergal gave a slide presentation on the history and development of Sandymount Green, and reported that as conservation architects, Howley Hayes would like the layout of the green reverted back to the formal design of the 1900s, would like a formalisation of the sign usage at the railings, suggested several designs to lessen the visual impact of the ESB substation, and proposed the creation of a playground area for younger children. Fergal also spoke about the issue of child safety regarding the gates to the green.*
- FL stated that this presentation was just the beginning of the process and opened the floor to questions and suggestions.
- *Councillor Kieran Binchy stated that he had attended an earlier meeting regarding the conservation study and can see that DCC officials are serious about consultations as there are changes in the draft plan already. He also stated that traffic around the green needs to be dealt with.*
- Questions were asked regarding self closing gates. What are they? Can something be done with the original gates?
- *FMcN said the original gates could be retained and a counterweight used so the gate closes slowly. FL said the gate is an issue that needs a lot of time, DCC were approached by parents concerned that their children could run out on the road and get knocked down. DCC hope to find a solution acceptable to everyone.*
- The high percentage of older persons and people with disabilities living in Sandymount was mentioned.
- *Has a decision already been made to do something? The green is tiny, why waste money on changing it? FL stated that no decisions have been made or plans drafted. This is a report commissioned by DCC, not a development plan. This is only the beginning of the process.*
- Would like to support the upgrading of the green, but does not want a kids' playground. Does not agree with putting the kids in the corner. Child minders would not be able to socialise with each other.

- *Where does the initiative come from? Is it a case that money has to be spent?*
- Michael Noonan, Senior Executive Parks Superintendant stated that the conservation study was being undertaken in keeping with best practice and similar to studies undertaken for similar parks in the South East Area which allowed Parks Department to allocate scarce resources to these parks.
- *Amazing park, brings kids to it all the time, has personally stopped 15-20 other kids from running out the gate. Cars all round the village, dangerous for kids. Elderly woman knocked down recently. Three essential things: 1) self closing gate at least on one side, 2) speed ramps around green, 3) pedestrian crossing at Bennet's Auctioneers. Can't put a price on safety.*
- Security barriers installed outside gates don't work. Bars are too big. Security barriers should match existing railings.
- *Would welcome pedestrian crossings. Sod in the green is not good. Suggested a toilet area in the green, children are going behind bushes. Reluctant to see the Yeats statue moved. Doesn't want playground. Workmen leave gates open.*
- Have you considered removal of ESB substation? FL reported that ESB will not remove it as the cost would be very significant.
- *Traffic is critical. Representations made to DCC 2-3 years ago. DCC were very negative. Surface of green is deteriorating. Leave park alone. It is the people's park, the people of Sandymount. Keep it simple.*
- Councillor Paddy McCartan raised the possibility of putting the sub-station underground like in St. Stephen's Green, or cladding the exterior like Merrion Square.
- *The essential message is leave well enough alone. Hide the ESB sub-station by erecting four poles and putting a pitched roof on top. No need for cladding. Work on railings is great. Soil is contaminated with broken crockery and glass. There were five flower beds, now there is only one. Keep original gates, repair the latches. Path has been raised and edging loses it's effect. Two yield signs will solve all traffic problems. Recently published road priority guidelines which give priority to pedestrians are the opposite to what we have.*
- Accident waiting to happen. At minimum, the west gate needs to have a self closing mechanism. Safety has to be considered. We can't have a trade off between safety and heritage. There has to be compromise. One gate could be left open to accommodate disabled people. Happy that work is ongoing to railings, child climbed through a loose railing before work began. Not in favour of a playground.
- *Everyone is concerned about safety. You could be lulled into a false sense of security if one gate was closed.*
- FL stated we would report all points raised to DCC's Traffic Department and will request recommendations.
- *Why aren't bins emptied?*
- FL stated that this is a city wide problem due to lack of staff resources in the Parks Department, but we could look into the matter.
- *Is presentation available online?*
- FL expressed concern that if some of the drawings from the presentation were available online, members of the public could interpret the drawings as being part of

a development plan, which they are not, but we could look into making the presentation available.

- *Councillor Dermot Lacey said that everyone agreed 1) That Sandymount Green is important to the identity of the village. 2) The environment must be made better. Upgrade the quality of grass and railings, but people don't want a playground. 3) The issue of the gate must be addressed. A lot of people have contacted him with safety concerns. Councillor Lacey is not in favour of a one way traffic system, but is in favour of speed ramps. Spend a little on upgrading the green and a lot on the environment.*
- *Railings being repaired at present, is there money to repair the latches on the gates?*
- *MN stated that latches simply don't work in this day and age. The only options when using this method are to leave the gate either in the open position or the closed position at all times or else to have a slow moving self closing gate. He also spoke about the reduced resources in Parks Department and the substantial level of waste generated daily in the city's parks. Parks Department are looking at having bins placed outside outlying parks in order that they may be emptied more regularly by Waste Management Section.*
- *Councillor Frank Kennedy stated that the park is very well utilised by people from a wide geographical area.*
- *Deputy Lucinda Creighton feels that safety and conservation can be worked together, and suggested if there is a further public meeting it be held on a Saturday so more people could attend.*
- *Please don't build a shelter on the green, it leads to anti social behaviour.*
- *FL finished by saying this is only the beginning of the process. Notes from the meeting will be circulated. He asked attendees to complete and return the questionnaires. DCC will look at simple things first, and suggested a further meeting in January/February to be arranged by SEA staff.*