

Press Releases - Millennium Committee Millions Insult - 27/07/00

£33 million has been spent by the National Millennium Committee to date under the chairmanship of TD Seamus Brennan.

Where did it all go is the question many people have asked. "Very little of it was seen in our County" according to Councillor Eoin Costello. Councillor Costello believes that Dun Laoghaire Rathdown was comprehensively ignored in the multimillion-pound bonanza.

"When I received a booklet from the Millennium Committee entitled "Lasting Legacies. Sharing in the Millennium Millions", I was incensed. £33 million has been put into every kind of project imaginable. The Newsletter identifies the national distribution of candles, a second footbridge beside Dublin's Halfpenny footbridge, restoration of light houses in some of the remotest parts of Ireland, planting of 1.2 million trees (surely the responsibility of Coillte) and £700,000 for a private showing of the pop opera Messiah XXI to Dublin's well heeled, as the lasting legacies the committee has given to the nation. In July I put a question down to the Council asking the Council to investigate possible reasons why our County did not receive funding for any of the worthy projects we submitted."

The council report stated that the council had made applications for funding for 3 Millennium Projects;

1. Restoration of Marlay House.
 2. Re-development of Kilbogget Park
 3. Upgrade of Dun Laoghaire to Sandycove seafront area.
- According to the report funding was refused for all three projects.

The Council was so surprised that it did not receive any help from the Millennium Committee on any of the above that it wrote to the Millennium Committee registering its extreme disappointment. The reply from the Millennium Committee stated that notwithstanding the quality of the proposals submitted by Dun Laoghaire the Millennium committee did not find it possible to include them in its recommendations to the Government.

According to Councillor Costello Dun Laoghaire Rathdown lost out in every department.

"Even if you take the crudest measure of £33 million divided by 34 local authority areas = £970,000 per county. Of the £33 million our county will receive £70,000 which is a standard amount that all counties received from the fund."

The "Lasting Legacies" Newsletter states;

- On the page headed Sharing in the Millenium Millions
- Community Support Projects funded (extract):
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown is the lowest in receiving support, 33 projects funded
- Roscommon 93 projects supported

The area represented by Mr. Brennan, Dublin South, had 46 projects funded

- Millenium Recognition Awards funded (extract):
- Dublin had 40 projects funded
- Dun Laoghaire 0 projects funded.
- According to Councillor Costello "Our County Council is deeply in debt.

"Sharing in the Millenium Millions" rings very hollow for the people from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown who haven't even really shared in the millenium thousands. I wrote to Mr. Brennan registering the disappointment of the people of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown with the work of his committee.

I stated that work on Kilbogget Park, a resource used by families and sports clubs from a large area around the park, cannot progress without significant funding.

Mr. Brennan's only comment on this in his letter to me was that it's not the job of the National Millennium Committee to assist projects which would normally be carried out by local authorities.

"In my view Mr Brennan is setting out one set of rules for the area he represents and a different set for other local authorities. He was quite happy to help fund projects in his own area which would normally be carried out by local authorities if one reads the report in the Southside People (19/4/00)"

"TD and chairman of the National Millennium Committee, Seamus Brennan confirmed a £30,000 grant for Rathfarnham Castle from the National Millennium Committee. The council has announced its own major development plans for the castle and surrounding grounds but is struggling to come up with money for the project."

"It is clear that the spending of this £33 million fund illustrates the degree to which the government has lost touch with the people. Long after the candles, champagne pop operas and firework fests are forgotten the people of our county will be using Kilbogget Park in its semi-derelict condition." According to Councillor Costello "One

has to respect Mr. Brennan for looking after his neck of the woods but you have to ask where were the senior members of the current government that represent our county when the millennium millions were being dished out? The people of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown are deeply disappointed and are still at a loss to understand why they have been ignored for substantial funding of any of the worthy projects submitted for the establishment of genuine "Lasting Legacies" in our county.