

Conference Report Sheet 1

<b>Councillor Name</b>	Mary Freehill
<b>Conference/Seminar Name</b>	AILG annual training seminar
<b>Conference/Seminar Topic</b>	
<b>Venue/Location</b>	Ennis
<b>Date (s) of Conference</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
<b>Brief Summary</b>	

Conference opened by President Pat Daly on Thursday evening he talked about the challenges for rural villages and the achievements of AILG.

Friday morning started with Fr Harry Bohan he said the market economy was leading society and bemoaned the role of the family and community held in society. He went through his efforts since 1968 to promote Regional Development and growth centers, the role banks played and lack of reinvestment in the community. It was rather like a basic sociology lecture that could have delivered 20 years ago. It was very much about FDI investment drives the economy how and social values and meaning of life are at the bottom of the pile

Pat Dowling Clare County CEO. He talked about enterprise hubs e working hubs. He said while its fine to have vision it requires team work to deliver and cross cutting themes. He outlined how their participative democracy works. Citizens networks

Pat McDonagh Economic boom and bust changed our international influence. He said that councils play a hugh role in defining people and communities. People connected to their place can fight back for rural Ireland and try and turn around villages. He emphasized that the Development Plan is very important to identify areas for strategic development. He also talked about tourism how every parish has a story to tell which can be connect to how emigrants want to find their roots.

We then had Pat Spillane who gave a very invigorating speech about action plan for rural Ireland. The need for people to move back into towns. He gave examples of how football managers motivated their teams and only focused on the team not the opposition.

Noel Kinahan spoke of Local public banking in Ireland. A considerable amount of work has been done to sell the idea of a Community Bank, meaning that profits are plowed back into the community. This is a system that has existed in Germany for over 100 years. He said that credit unions and post offices are too small in themselves but together could form a network throughout Ireland. This would give an opportunity to give mortgages and help SMEs start ups. The German model works on a regional basis. He said it started in Spain but that the moved away from the regional model and got too big so that is why it failed there. He was backed up by Harald Felzen who is project manager Savings bank foundation for International Co-operation from Germany. It's a very interesting concept and one that we badly need in Ireland.

Later that evening the Minister for Environment Simon Coveney spoke of his plans for housing. The most annoying aspect of this was that he spoke at us and we didn't have an opportunity to ask questions. He said there is legislation on the way for local government reform! Halleluiah

**Recommendations**

I would like that AILG had more of a balanced focus between rural and urban Ireland. Nonetheless the speakers were very interesting, especially the idea of the community Bank I also realized that the community networks spoken about by the Manager in Clare made me question what is going on in that regard in DCC?

**Declaration**

I certify that I attended the above-mentioned Conference/Training Seminar.

**Signed by**

Mary Keehill

**Date**

18 April 2017