

These are the meeting notes from the **64th Annual General Meeting (AGM)** of the **Sandymount and Merrion Residents Association (SAMRA)**, based on the transcript of the event.*

Meeting Overview

- **Organization:** SAMRA (64th AGM).
- **Location:** Sandymount Hotel (hosted by John Healy).
- **Key Attendees:**
 - **SAMRA Committee:** Dave Turner (Chair); Niall McElroy, Karl Anderson (Media & Communications); Jessica Ryan (Community Centre); Ciaran Arthur (Treasurer); Tom Hill (Membership); Joan McArthur; Irene Duffy Lynch; Audrey Hanley (Website & Digital Media)
 - **Public Representatives:** Minister Jim O'Callaghan (arrived later); James Geoghegan TD; Ivana Bacik TD; Eoin Hayes TD; Cllr Dermot Lacey, Cllr David Coffee
 - **An Garda Síochána:** Sgt John Healy and Danielle Cassidy.
 - **Guest Speakers:** Yvonne Farrell, Philip O'Sullivan, and Shane Tui from **Grafton Architects**.
 - **Apologies :** Dr Paddy Smyth – retiring SAMRA Treasurer; Claire Wheeler SAMRA (Sustainable Energy Committee SAMSEC); Dr Medb Ruane; Hugh McDermott; Dermot McArdle; John O'Neill

1. Garda Síochána Update

Sgt John Healy provided a brief report on local crime trends:

- **Thefts from Cars:** High frequency late at night. Residents were urged to lock vehicles and keep keys away from hall tables.
- **Letterbox "Fishing":** Thieves are using letterboxes to "fish" for car keys left in hallways.
- **Bogus Tradespeople:** A major issue where residents have been intimidated and defrauded of five-figure sums for unnecessary home repairs.
- **Reporting:** Residents must report all incidents via **999** to ensure the local station receives adequate resourcing based on call volume.

2. Strategic & Community Updates

Karl (Communications Director) presented updates on several key local issues:

- **Flood Alleviation Scheme:** Designs are currently being prepared by Jacobs Engineering; design options will be revealed by the end of June, a decision will be made by end September and submission of a planning application is expected by the end of 2027. This was recently confirmed at a DCC planning meeting.
- **Sewage Discharge:** Uisce Éireann informed SAMRA that sewage dumping at St. Alban's beach during heavy rain will not be resolved for **7 to 10 years**. They have not moved forward even on suggested, immediately available easy actions, which will

mitigate public health risk. SAMRA finds this to be unacceptable, Public representatives Ivana Bacik and Eoin Hayes are engaged and SAMRA and is seeking further help from members to help unlock this.

- **Glass Bottle Site:** The forum is monitoring the development, which will eventually house **10,000 residents**. SAMRA is actively engaged and has requested a report on the social and economic impact on existing infrastructure.
- **Dublin Port Expansion:** SAMRA successfully campaigned against a three-story container yard; they are now opposing a proposed trailer park in favour of a nature reserve.
- **Planning:** Over many years SAMRA have reviewed Planning Applications in the Sandymount area to decide if we should intervene and lodge submissions to Dublin City Council or the Planning Board (formerly ABP now ACP). We review the Applications made, generally monthly, and the SAMRA Committee decides whether to intervene in any Application, against various objective criteria based on community interests, which are documented on our website. Over the last year SAMRA, made 2 interventions : 1) siting of the Dublin Port Container site, from overlooking the UNESCO Bay and Sandymount village to the north (river) side of the peninsula. The overall ACP hearing is still ongoing (2) submission on the proposed demolition of Wilton house in the centre of the Village ACA. This is not now going ahead.
- **Parking :** Parking has been very constrained in Sandymount over many years for residents, businesses and visitors. In the Village Ideas project, SAMRA examined various proposals to increase parking opportunities around the village, including consideration of various means to encourage a relatively short turnover of shoppers' etc parking on the business streets to discourage day long parking for anyone except residents. In November last, SAMRA met Dublin City Council parking officials to discuss these proposals, and for various reasons including Bye Law regulations, they saw no prospects in these opportunities to improve the situation. In January, SAMRA examined further opportunities, primarily considering various locations where road markings could be adjusted to provide more parking spaces. We have requested DCC to consider such changes through their Traffic Services Request process. We identified an additional 13 spaces. It remains to be seen what their responses will be.
- **Sutton to Sandycove (S2S) :** SAMRA fully and enthusiastically supports the S2S Group's call for a promenade with a cycle way extending our promenade from Merrion Gates all the way along the shoreline to Dun Laoghaire. We are joined in that support by the community groups of Booterstown and Trimleston, and are united with the communities of Blackrock, Monkstown and Dun Laoghaire in calling for such a promenade to be incorporated into the proposed Merrion Gates to Dun Laoghaire rail line enhanced flood defences project.
- SAMRA believes that the proposal presents a once in the lifetime opportunity to provide such a facility
- **Sandymount Sustainable Energy Community (SAMSEC) :** is currently in the process of commissioning an Energy Management Plan for Sandymount. The Steering Committee has engaged Michael Hanratty of IHER as consultant to draw up

this plan in co-operation with the committee, which will be funded by our SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities grant of 25,000 Euro.

- The Energy Management Plan will consist of an audit of energy use in Sandymount, together with a “Register of Opportunities”, or list of ways that residents, community groups and businesses can save energy and improve our area's carbon footprint. The focus will be on retrofitting houses. The Steering Committee has selected 15 homes as 'Domestic Participants, representative of Sandymount house types, to undergo various types of SEAI energy assessments. The reports will be published, anonymously, in the Energy Management Plan, to share all the useful practical information about retrofitting, with householders in similar properties.
- **New Logo** : Karl explained the origin of the new SAMRA Logo, with the help of a visual animation. It evolved out of the thinking from the Village Ideas work, where the proposals and road network around the Village Green emulate a star fish. As the Village Ideas website took shape, the thinking developed further with colours at the centre reflecting the grass of Village Green and Blue and Beige of the sea and beach of the adjacent Dublin Bay. Result : a new logo for SAMRA, which is believed to be distinctive and has received a lot of public support.
- **Sandymount Community Centre** : Jessica highlighted the centre's role in the community as like the "bricks and mortar" providing a varied programme of activities, across the community age range, noting new initiatives for creative teens and a playgroup for new parents.

3. Committee Business and Financials

- **Committee Election:** The Chair gave thanks for the enormous amounts of work and effort that the committee members have made, particularly over the last year against ambitious targets. The goals of mutual collaboration with STTCA, the Sandymount Community Centre, achieving long range planning influence have been well met.
- The committee for the upcoming year was formally proposed with a focus on continuity, though it included several key changes:
 - **New Treasurer: Ciaran** was appointed as the new Treasurer, taking over the role from **Dr. Paddy Smith**, who stepped down as he was moving to a new area.
 - **Digital Lead: Audrey** was formally introduced to the committee to continue her "ferocious" work on the organization's new website and digital presence.
 - **Departures:** the committee also saw the departure of **Nick Seymour** (who previously represented SAMRA on the acclaimed IPAS work) and **Jeremy Humphries** (who was previously Treasurer and set up the original website).
 - **Chair Dave thanked the departing members for their significant voluntary contributions**
 - **Village Ideas Subcommittee:** This group, led by **Niall McElroy**, includes members Karl Anderson (Media & Communications) Ciaran Arthur (Treasurer), Rita Collins (Chair of Tidy Towns), Dave Turner (Chair SAMRA)

and Bronwyn Thompson (representing Sandymount businesses) to ensure collaboration across local organizations.

- **Vacancies:** As of the meeting, the committee still held **two vacancies**: one for a **youth member** and another for any interested community volunteer.
- The election of the 2026–27 committee was formally moved and endorsed by members of the floor:
 - **Proposed by: Ciaran O’Loughlin**
 - **Seconded by: Finola Cassidy.**
- **Financial Report:** Status was reported; with the following key notes :
 - Stable income from membership subscriptions comparable with last year
 - Significant item DWtE CGLC grant to appear in ‘26/27 statement
 - ****Acknowledgement for the €15k grant awarded from "Dublin Waste to Energy" CGLC (facilitating the Sandymount Village Ideas and CEP)****
- **Membership:**
 - The association is transitioning to a digital-first payment system via Stripe on their new website to streamline renewals
 - Featuring a selection of plan and payment by card. Annual renewable will be an option only.
 - The Paypal subscription system will be closed 1st June and an email will be sent to all subscribers shortly after the AGM, to advise on renewal date and further instructions

4. Special Item: "Village Ideas" Project Launch

Niall McElroy and Grafton Architects presented a vision for improving the public realm of Sandymount. This is all available interactively via the new Village Ideas website : <https://www.sandymountvillageideas.ie> to be found linked to the SAMRA website : <https://www.samra.ie>

Go to the CONTACT page which provides for individual member feedback against each individual project <https://www.sandymountvillageideas.ie/contact>

This lies at the heart of the Community Engagement Programme as elements of the Village Ideas Project move forward

As an introduction, Niall explained the journey that SAMRA has been on over the last 36 months (updates reported at previous AGMs) from **Concept**, to **Engagement with DCC Executive**, now to the **Community Engagement Plan**.

- **Concept:** The plan focuses on three areas: **The Village**, **The Green**, and **The Promenade**. 12 Project Focus areas have been identified
- **Current Status:** Dublin City Council (DCC) is moving forward with a first phase, focussing on enhancements to the northeast side of the Green, following public consultation, detailed design by DCC City Architects and progression through the DCC Part 8 Planning process: with construction expected to begin in **Q1 2027**.

5. Open Discussion / Q&A : Chair Dave Turner

The presentation was followed by a vigorous debate among residents and representatives:

- **Village Ideas** : As a Community Engagement tool, the website has been designed with a contact page, which permits individual resident feedback on EACH and EVERY project element.
- The hope is that this process will enable the Village Ideas to be moved into a multi-year programme of improvements, to be implemented by and/or endorsed by DCC
- Overall the feedback was strongly positive, albeit with one dissenting voice who viewed it to have been a waste of money and resource, working to produce only superficial improvements. This however, was robustly countered by many more positive voices. Residents must now have their say and each were asked to make their feedback comments which will be received directly to the committee email and in due course reported back to the community.
- **Flood Insurance:** It was noted that this is the No1 Priority for the area and Residents identified the lack of available flood insurance as a top priority. TD Eoin Hayes noted he is engaging with the Department of Finance on a state-backed reinsurance scheme, like what is being adopted in EU and UK. Ivana Bacik has previously raised PQs and a response from the Finance Department. SAMRA (DT) noted that so far this has been viewed as totally inadequate from a residents perspective and requires further challenge. SAMRA is about to launch a residents Questionnaire to get actual data, on insurance availability, to feed into the debate, rather than rely on bank and insurance company provided data. The insurance industry is a competitive market and with flood defences now progressing, there is an expectation of relief in this top priority, which will feed back into availability of flood insurance at competitive prices. Ivana Bacik and Eoin Hayes both committed to continue to work this forward.
- **Traffic and Parking:** Many residents expressed concern that traffic congestion on Tritonville Road and Newbridge Avenue is already at capacity. There was a strong call for a comprehensive parking strategy to support both residents and local businesses. SAMRA noted that the absence of a parking strategy for the area is a root cause of the problem, a draft had been prepared and provided to DCC. This is under review, whilst DCC examine the complexities but with Traffic Calming at the core of their objectives for the area. SAMRA has also identified potential additional parking spaces around the village, by sharpening the pencil on existing provisions, these are under review via the formal DCC process
- **Cycle Lanes:** The potential for a cycle lane on Strand Road remains a contentious "zero-sum game" for some, with fears it could lead to one-way traffic, congestion in the village and restricted access for residents. It was reported by Cllr Dermot Lacey that some financial provision has been made but there is no information available on what decisions are likely to be made.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Considerable Frustration was voiced regarding the ongoing sewage discharge onto Sandymount/Merrion Beach and the perceived lack of accountability for Uisce Éireann and from the EPA. SAMRA (DT) explained in more detail about the clear lack of accountability by the Uisce Éireann department, despite the challenge in the Public Accounts Committee by TD James Geoghegan 6th November 2025, regarding the St Alban's sewage outfall and the subsequent meeting at Uisce Éireann offices 4th February 2026. The CEO and Sean Laffey (Senior Asset Executive) did not show up at all and his alternate left shortly after the introductions had been made. UE who are 100% responsible for the system and

illegal raw sewage discharges, which occur 12x year have declined to even progress the immediately available actions of Hazard Notification (per discharge), Signage of Hazard area, cleanup of an area 70m x 200m. These simple actions would almost immediately mitigate public health risk from the toxicity of the discharges, whilst studies and engineering takes their course and a mechanism has to be identified to bring Uisce Éireann into action. It was asserted (SAMRA DT) that these frequent and ongoing sewage discharges specifically from the St Alban's outfall are one of the principle reasons for the loss of the Blue Flag bathing status previously enjoyed by Dublin Bay Sandymount and Merrion Beach up to 5 years ago, now relegated to the **2nd lowest performing beach**, in terms of pollution, **across Ireland**.

- **Sandymount Beach Swimming Baths** – were discussed briefly but had been specifically left out of the Village Ideas scope and debate, owing to the complexity of issues surrounding structural viability, water cleanliness etc, but to leave the potential option for future development. Cllr. Dermot Lacey undertook to get feedback on a recent structural survey which has taken place

The meeting closed at 9:30pm

.....END.....