



COMHALTAS

THE LIVING TRADITION

CEARNÓG BELGRAVE, BAILE NA MANACH, CO. ÁTHA CLIATH

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Mr. Dara Mullaly,
Principal Officer,
Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism,
Fossa,
Killarney,
CO. KERRY

23rd April, 2008.

Dear Dara,

Thank you for your letter of the 16th April in relation to the CLASAC project.

The Ardchomhairle of Comhaltas, which is elected by the general membership through the Provincial and Annual Congress structures, is charged with the proper governance of the organisation including financial matters and the rights of the individual members.

The decisions taken in relation to the CLASAC project were made unanimously by the 31-member Ardchomhairle following a professionally informed and lengthy consideration.

Our previous reference to mismanagement and financial irregularities in the project at local level in no way involved misappropriation of funds. It referred primarily to the fact that the local committee did not organise bank facilities in a timely manner to meet their building debts as they fell due. In regard to the VAT refund obtained by the local committee, we were concerned with the methodology used and that the refund would be regarded as double funding.

You will have received a letter dated 11th April from our auditors Brophy Butler Thornton certifying that all public monies expended to date on the project have been applied appropriately.

The issues which arose in relation to the management and financial matters under the stewardship of the local CLASAC committee were thoroughly investigated by the Ardchomhairle which moved swiftly and effectively to stabilise the situation. The VAT refund which had been obtained by the committee was returned to the Revenue Commissioners. The Ardchomhairle raised a bank loan to pay off outstanding debts incurred by the local committee.

The Ardchomhairle established a modus operandi to oversee and manage the project. This is chaired by the Secretary General of the organisation.

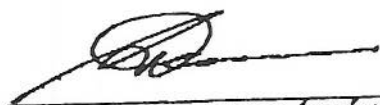
The centre will be completed in June and is scheduled to be officially opened in September. It is one of the seven Regional Resource Centres of Comhaltas under the Development Programme and will serve Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. It will also provide a home for the local Comhaltas and will be available to other community organisations.

The staff will consist of a Project Officer, Reachtaire and Riarathóir who will be supported, as is the case in the other Comhaltas centres, by a FÁS Scheme. Apart from any funding provided by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the Development Programme, the centre will be self-financing.

The modus operandi group, drawing on the experience of other successful Comhaltas centres, is at present finalising the cultural programme and services to be provided in the centre.

The new centre, drawing on the global network of Comhaltas (400 branches in 15 countries on 4 continents), will make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the region.

Yours sincerely,



SENATOR LABHRÁS Ó MURCHÚ
Director General