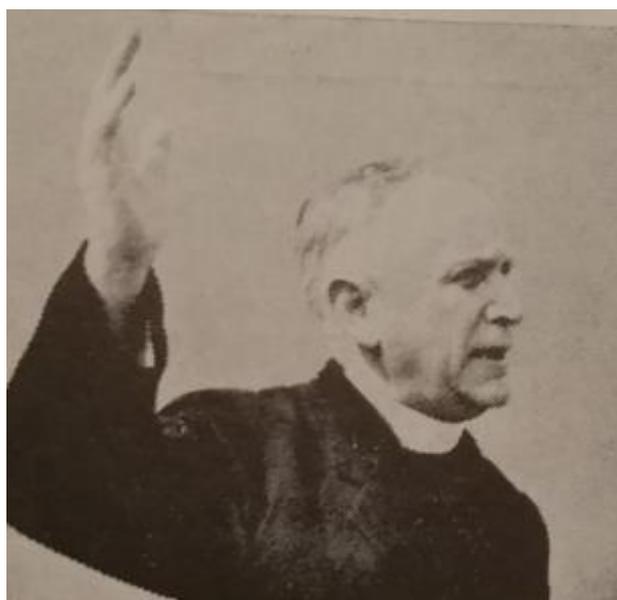


MUINTIR NA TIRE GUIDE

First Guide



FR. JOHN HAYES [1937-1957]

MUINTIR NA TIRE RURAL PUBLICATIONS, TIPPERARY.

S.P. No. 11

MUINTIR NA TIRE

MUINTIR NA TIRE is a Movement for the promotion of the welfare, spiritual, cultural and material of Ireland and, in particular of its rural people, through the application of Christian local principles. Its aims include social, educational, economic and recreational objects. It encourages and assists the rural people in obtaining additional technical knowledge in their various callings, in developing rural industries, and securing the cooperation of urban people for these purposes, thus building up to strong and contented rural population and so guaranteeing the national well-being. Over 400 Parish Guilds have so far been formed.

If you want to know more about the movement, please write to the honorary National Secretary but read this Guide before you write.

MUINTIR NA TIRE GUIDE

(Re-issued 1965)

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MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL CHAIRMAN.

Helping the neighbour and all that - 1965 style.

“The giving of alms is a greater thing than the laying up of treasures of gold. For alms giving delivers the soul from [r0111 death. purges away sin, and obtains for us mercy and life everlasting”.

The late President Kennedy liked to introduce quotations from Scripture into his speeches, so following his example, I quote the above passage from the book of Tobias It is but one of the many passages in the Bible where almsgiving is recommended to us.

In Biblical times almsgiving was often the only way by which a person could help his less fortunate fellow citizen. There was often little else he could do to improve the economic lot of his neighbour To-day, however, society provides us with a variety of ways by which we can contribute to the welfare of our neighbour, and no doubt the blessings promised to the giver of alms will descend also on those who work in the spirit of self-sacrifice for the welfare of their community.

One form of charity is to give alms A higher form of charity is to provide a man with a day's work, because now his human dignity does not suffer. The highest form of charity is to provide a man with a permanent opportunity of earning his livelihood and this we do in modern times by developing agriculture, promoting tourism building up industry Perhaps this was the view of things taken by the late President Kennedy when he said in his now historic inauguration speech: “ Let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help but knowing that here on earth Gods work must truly be our own”

Here is YOUR Guide.

RAYMOND BROWNE. C.C.,
National Chairman.

MUINTIR NA TIRE GUIDE.

Part I. Parish Guilds and Councils.

I. The Parish is Organised.

The Guild is the large body which includes all in the parish who accept the Constitution and aims of Muintir na Tire and are willing to take part in its work. It may include men, women and those who have left the primary school.

Sections are formed for the purpose of selecting the Parish Council, if local conditions recommend such a division in order to secure representations for the principal important interests. In a rural parish it has often been found useful to have separate Sections for: (a) Farmers, (b) Labourers. (c) Business and Professional, (d) Women and (e) Youth.

Representatives are selected by each Section to form the Parish Council. The number of representatives varies from three to six, but each Section must have equal representation. The selection may be made by ballot, if this is found necessary. The number of representatives from a Section should be decided by the Guild as a whole, and the ultimate size of the Parish Council should be kept in view in making this decision. A Council of more than twenty-five members is not desirable.

The Parish Council holds office for a term of one year. It should have at least three officers, namely: Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. It should meet at least once a month. A few simple rules of procedure and rules for a quorum should be adopted by the Parish Council. A sub-committee may be appointed by the Parish Council for a particular project, e.g., a parish hall, or for a special branch of activity, e.g., educational work.

2.--The Organised Parish at Work.

In a Guild, we want ACTION. Little will result if a Guild confines itself to talking, gossiping or passing resolutions, while neglecting to tackle the local problems which are crying out for attention. Some Guilds get the right idea at once and give their energies to the work nearest to hand. Others seem to be more attracted by big issues which are beyond the scope of a local group; very often their achievement is the passing of 1 resolution which is sent to some Department or local authority. At times, also, people are enthusiastic about starting Muintir na Tire but do not appreciate the point that success even in small things depends mainly on their own energy and willingness to work together.

It is not to be wondered at if there is some difficulty in getting people to work on lines which are new to them. A summary of projects which Guilds can tackle is presented here. It is quite likely that many of these have occurred to members already and have been mentioned at Parish Council meetings. Again, there may be some local matter well worthy of attention which is not covered in this list. Do not be dismayed if the list seems a long one. A Guild is not asked to carry out this programme at once. It is expected, however, that it will endeavour each year to carry out a balanced programme which will include some projects from each of the main groups indicated below, and also that the broad outlines of the present summary will be accepted as a guide for future years. Even a modest project, if carried through in many parishes, gives an over-all result which is of national importance.

Begin with easy projects, suitable to your parish. At the end of each year check up on what has been done -herein lies the value of your formal Annual Report. If some project has succeeded, and it is of the kind which can be undertaken again, then the successful technique may become part of a regular yearly programme. With success comes self-reliance and confidence to attempt something more ambitious. If failure, or partial failure comes your way, be ready to accept it and to use the salutary experience. Failure may teach that other methods are necessary to reach objectives; it may show that objectives are unattainable in the circumstances; it cannot teach that all efforts to do good are useless, for this is not a lesson but a surrender, a council of despair.

If we do not follow the vision of a Christian social order based on charity and justice, labours will be sadly misdirected.

Some projects here listed require study of the situation beforehand and painstaking preparation. Others are of the kind which will take several years to accomplish. Do not be afraid to make plans ahead, but keep working at something tangible meantime.

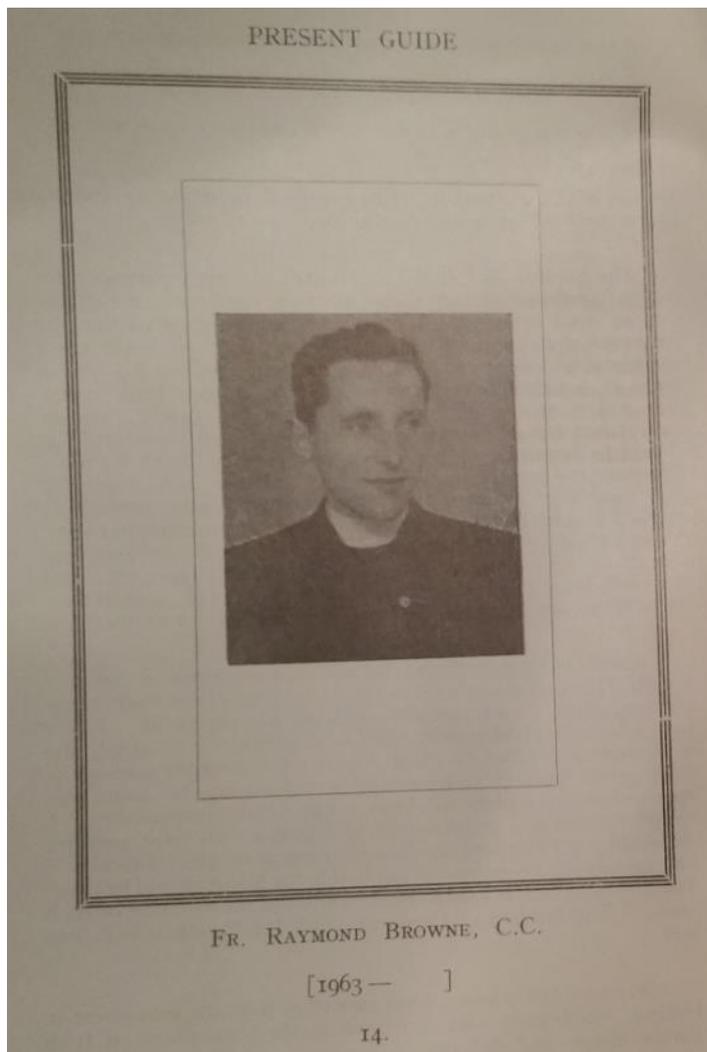
Is fear saor sior-bhuailteach na saor sar-bhuailteach.

The activities of a Guild may be classified under three principal headings: (a) Educational, Social and Cultural; (b) Economic; (c) Recreational. The aim should be to carry out a balanced programme which would take into consideration local needs and the interests of the different sections. The quest is not for the perfect, but for the best programme.

A. EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL PROJECTS.

1. For All - If the members have not a knowledge of Christian social teaching there is little use in appealing to basic principles. A number of lectures on social topics should be held by the Guild each year. Every effort should be made to secure that important principles are explained again and again. Some Guilds may feel able to arrange debates, or the less formal Fireside Chats, or to organise a Social Study Circle. A competent director is needed for these. Attention should be paid to the local library to see that it contains books on national, social and rural topics. Muintir na Tire publications provide articles which are useful for discussions and debates. If we do not follow the vision of a Christian social order based on charity and justice, labours will be sadly misdirected.

The first big job of a Community is to secure a parish hall. if none exists already. A centre is vital for educational, economic and social purposes. Any parish worthy of itself will try to build one. While difficulties over sites, materials and finance are being overcome, the Guild should obtain the temporary use of some building. When the hall is available the Parish Guild can really get down to its work.



Part II - County and Provincial Structure.

Constituent Guild.

- 1, A Guild which is duly registered and currently affiliated is a Constituent Guild. Affiliation is renewed annually and the Affiliation fee is payable before March 31st.
2. The Constituent Guilds of a County Federation are the Guilds belonging to the County: the Constituent Guilds of a province are those belonging to the province. The Constitution states that: "Where a parish lies partly in one county and partly in another. the Parish Guild of that parish may opt to belong to the Federation of one or other of each counties". A Parish Guild may not belong to more than one County Federation at the same time. Where a Guild has; opted, in accordance with the Constitution, to belong to an established County Federation, such a Guild may not Change to another County Federation without the sanction of the National Executive Committee. A Guild may not change the number of sections as registered without sanction from the County Federation.

COUNTY FEDERATION.

3. A County Federation is a federation of the Constituent Guilds belonging to a particular county, established under the authority of the National Executive Committee. Its first Council is made up of two representatives from each Constituent Guild affiliated to it and the members of the National Executive residing within the county. The first or inaugural meeting is summoned under the authority of the National Executive. There must be at least one meeting of the Council of a County Federation each year, the Annual General Meeting. Officers and a County Executive are elected at the Annual General Meeting and hold office for one year. The County Officers are also members of the County Executive. The County Executive should meet, at least, quarterly.

4. The function of a County Federation in general is to promote the aims and objects of Muintir na Tire within the county in accordance with the Constitution of the Movement and subject to the direction of the Central Council and National Executive, and shall include

- (a) extending and consolidating Muintir na Tire within the county;
- (b) using means to secure that policies decided on by the Central Council and the National Executive are implemented by the Guilds;
- (c) arranging for the election of representatives of National Executive Committee;
- (d) exercising supervision over the holding of Annual General Meetings by Guilds, the election of Officers and Parish Councils and the renewal of affiliation;
- (e) co-ordinating the activities of Guilds, including the promotion of joint projects by Guilds and the formation of Regional Councils where advisable;
- (f) making representations to local authorities and other bodies on issues affecting all or several Guilds in the county;

(g) sanctioning a change of structure by a Guild (e.g. a change in the number of Sections as registered);

(h) advising the National Executive regarding the granting, continuation or withdrawal of recognition to Guilds.

5. A County Federation should have at least two officers, Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer. It is advisable that the County executive should consist of from 10 to 20 elected members, with power of co-opting not more than 5 others. It may be useful to arrange for Regional Councils so as to provide organisation for different areas or regions in a county.

6. The County Secretary, in addition to keeping the minutes of County Executive meetings and records of attendance, should keep, for reference: (a) a list of the parishes in the county, (b) a list of the Guilds in the county, and (c) records of the Guilds in the County. 16.

7. The Officers and County Executive members should act as voluntary organisers to form new Guilds within the county. They should assist the National Organiser when he visits the county and should keep in close contact with the Organising Committee at Headquarters in this work. They should pay particular attention to Guilds which are meeting with difficulties. A Guild which fails to hold its Annual General Meeting (presentation of annual reports, election of officers and parish council) is not in a healthy state and the County Officers and Executive should help by providing visiting speakers for Guild Annual General Meetings.

8. The County Executive shall be financed by a small levy on the Guilds within the county.

PROVINCIAL FORMATION.

A Provincial Federation of county units has as its council two representatives of each County Federation within the province and members of the National Executive Committee residing within the Province. This body should hold an annual meeting at which a Provincial Chairman and Secretary are elected and such other officers as shall be deemed necessary.

The functions of a Provincial Federation shall be:

(a) to promote the objects of Muintir na Tire within the Province

(b) to arrange and promote inter-county activities;

(c) to assist counties in the carrying out of the objects of Muintir na Tire;

(d) to promote the extension of the Movement within the Province.

Provincial Federations shall provide for their own financial commitments.

CENTRAL COUNCIL.

The Central Council shall consist of (a) two representatives of each Constituent Guild; (b) two representatives of each County Federation; (c) two representatives of each Provincial Federation; (d) outgoing members of the National Executive Committee. Central Council meets once each year during Rural Week and this meeting is termed 'Annual Congress'.

Part III - Further Notes for Parish Councils and Officers.

GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING MEETINGS.

A general meeting of the people in the parish may be needed for some matter of interest to all. Included under this heading is the Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.).

Each Muintir 11a Tire guild must hold a monthly Parish Council Meeting on a fixed day or date, e.g. first Friday of the month.

Special Meetings may be held for special projects arranged at a General Meeting, or a Parish Council Meeting, or a meeting of a committee or group

A committee appointed at a general or other meeting should immediately appoint its own chairman and secretary whose duty it will be to convene meetings direct activities and report back to the monthly Parish Council Meetings

PREPARATION FOR MEETINGS.

Preparation is very important. For a general meeting, there is a need of wide publicity by means of: (a) local newspapers; (b) posters; (c) circular from secretary to each house-holder; (d) pulpit announcement. Persons with special skill and experience may be invited also For Parish Council or other meetings the Secretary must send notice, with agenda, to the members, at least three days before meeting.

The meeting place should be checked for seating, heating, lighting and ventilation, in good time before the meeting.

The Chairman and Secretary should be in the meeting-place in good time and when necessary should welcome and entertain the important visitors. They should lead speakers to the top table.

A punctual start is most important.

A committee or Parish Council meeting can be started when a quorum is present, that is, generally, a quarter of the members.

THE MEETING.

The agenda, or programme of things to be dealt with, should be prepared beforehand by the chairman and secretary. It should be concrete and definite.

In the Annual General Meeting a normal agenda will be: (1) Chairman's address; (2) Minutes of Last A.G.M.; (3) Matters arising from the minutes; (4) Correspondence; (5) Hon. Secretary's report; (6) Hon. Treasurer's report; (7) Address by visiting speaker; (8) Election of officers and Parish Council. The date of Parish Council meetings should be fixed. There could also be discussion concerning plans for the coming year.

For a Parish Council Meeting a suggested agenda is: (1) Minutes of last Parish Council Meeting; (2) Matters arising from minutes; (3) Correspondence (NB. Correspondence from Headquarters and Co. Federation must be read); (4) Treasurer's report; (5) Reports and discussions of activities; (6) Planning for future activities, (7) Other business.

A meeting should not be too long. An hour and a half should suffice for the usual meetings.

The venue should be comfortable, and heated in winter.

THE CHAIRMAN.

The chairman conducts the meeting, sees that all items on the agenda are dealt with and decisions taken. He needs tact, firmness, impartiality. The success of the meeting depends on him.

He should avoid these faults: 1. tendency to monopolise discussion; 2. lack of alertness in detecting 'red herrings' and wandering from the point; 3. favouritism; 4. confusion over motions and amendments; 5. lack of patience.

He should cultivate these virtues: 1. ability to listen; 2. guiding of discussion into profitable channels; 3. impartiality towards people and viewpoints he dislikes; 4. clear-cut decisions, especially on motions and amendments; 5. evenness of temper and sense of humour.

He opens with addressing people in proper order. (Some Guilds start their meetings with a prayer). He welcomes them, He introduces the points on the agenda. He is not to relax then but keep alert for the mood of the meeting, points of order, points of information and amendments to motions.

SOME FURTHER POINTS ON PROCEDURE.

A "Point of order" draws the chairman's notice to some irregularity in procedure such as accepting a motion that has not been seconded. A "Point of information" requests clarification of a definite nature. The above two points may be brought in to annoy or upset a speaker but they must be considered by the chairman. They are the only occasions in which a speaker who has the floor should be interrupted. A motion refers to a plan or suggestion for action. It must be proposed and seconded and then accepted by the chairman. He enquires if there is an amendment. If there is, the amendment must be taken before the original proposition. If there is none, the chairman allows proposer and seconder to speak to the motion, and requests other views. If there is no dissenting voice, he can accept the motion as passed. If the motion is challenged, he must allow further discussion and then take a vote. A simple majority for or against will decide. If at a later meeting an attempt is made to rescind a motion which was previously carried, a two-thirds majority must be in favour of rescinding.

An amendment means a change or modification of a motion. There may be a motion such as: "I propose we run a parish sports". An amendment to this motion would be: "I propose we run a juvenile parish sports". An amendment must be proposed and seconded. The chairman then allows discussion on the amendment and takes a vote on it. If the amended motion is passed, it is now the motion before the meeting and it has to be discussed and voted on. There can be more than one amendment to a motion, but each amendment has to be proposed and seconded and discussed and

voted on before another is accepted. A direct negative to a motion is not an amendment and should never be accepted as such.

ORDER OF SPEAKING.

If the chairman calls on the secretary or someone else to speak or give a report, then the person so called has the floor and no one else can speak while he is speaking, except the chairman himself, or someone rising on a point of order or information. If no one is called on to speak, the first on his feet has the floor. If the chairman rises, the Speaker having the floor must sit down, but he may continue when the chairman resumes his chair. If the chairman decides that a person has no right to speak, such a person is not allowed to join in the discussion.

The chairman must ensure that all decisions taken by the meeting are clear-cut and that the secretary has noted the decisions taken, the function and personnel of any sub-committee appointed the duties allotted to various individuals, the dates, venues, activities etc., agreed upon.

THE SECRETARY.

On the secretary's patience, hard work and obedience depends the success or failure of the Parish Council or Committee. We have dealt with his duties as regards preparation for meetings.

In addition, the secretary should provide himself with two books at least. He should have a note-book for taking notes at meetings, and he should have a minute-book, which gives his official account of the proceedings of each meeting. He should have a case or box of some sort so that the correspondence and records may be kept safely.

The secretary has to write up the minutes of the last meeting, and ensure that these contain: (a) list of those present and apologies for non-attendance (b) decisions taken on each major item on the agenda; (c) the personnel and function of any sub-committee appointed; ((1) the wording of any motion plus the names of its proposer and seconder; (e) brief account of reports read; and (f) any other point of importance arising from the meeting. His minutes should be brief and clear, and the first item on the agenda of every meeting should be the reading by the secretary of the minutes of the previous meeting.

He must deal with all correspondence imposed on him at the last meeting, and bring to the meeting a copy of his own letters along with all important correspondence received in the meantime. He will file all outgoing and incoming correspondence (including circulars from Headquarters, County Federation, Government Departments and semi-state bodies) on a simple alphabetical system. When needed, he should prepare a press handout, prepare a report for Headquarters, book halls, bands, artistes, and make contacts as instructed at the last meeting. Notepaper with Official Heading should be obtained from Headquarters, Tipperary.

The good committee man is the man who knows the rules and abides by them.

THE TREASURER.

His work is very important. A keen treasurer will keep the needs of the guild as regards finance before the members. He should provide himself with the books he needs, and keep these safely, in a case or box. He presents a balance sheet at the A.G.M. He also gives an account of the nuances at the monthly Parish Council Meetings. He keeps a record of all monies received, and from what sources obtained; of all monies spent, and on what. By keeping a passbook with separate pages headed: 'Stamps', 'Stationery', 'Socials', etc., he can then note under the appropriate heading the way the money came and went, If, in addition, he pays all bills by cheque and receives receipts, he should have no problems in preparing a simple balance sheet at the end of the year. Normally, properties such as a typewriter, stage props, etc. need not be included in the balance sheet, but the treasurer should know of their existence and have a rough estimate of their value.

ASSISTANT-SECRETARY AND PUBLICITY OFFICER.

Their duties should be assigned by the Parish Council, and the limits of their duties arranged with the secretary.

THE COMMITTEE-MAN.

The good committee-man will take his duties seriously. He should attend all meetings regularly, be on hand for Special work, such as stewarding at concerts, etc. The good committee-man is the man who knows the rules and abides by them.

OTHER MEMBERS.

They may undertake special tasks such as the following:

- (i) Speaking on a 'special interest' subject;
- (ii) Reading a report;
- (iii) Proposing or seconding a vote of thanks;
- (iv) Standing up and making a point.

ii) The speaker on a special subject will normally have expert knowledge on that subject (i.e., the farmer on some aspect of agriculture). Provided he has done some thinking and has prepared some notes, he should be able to make a simple contribution of information, and even ask for questions.

(ii) Reading a report is also a simple job as all the reader has to do is prepare his material with care and check its accuracy. The actual reading is no problem.

(iii) The proposer of a vote of thanks should complement-through the chair-the speaker in question, comment briefly on one or two points in the speech, and wind up (after a few minutes) with something like "It is an honour for me, Mr. Chairman, to propose, on behalf of all here this vote of thanks to Mr. B. for his talk", He should never say "I thank you, Mr. B., for your excellent talk", as it is

the chairman's job to pass on the vote of thanks to the speaker. The seconder needs only a couple of comments before formally seconding the vote of thanks.

(iv) It can be an achievement requiring courage and initiative for a beginner to stand up and make his point. He may rise on the spur of the moment, or speak from notes he has made or may, before the meeting, ask the chairman to call him to speak on the item in the agenda in which he is interested. The latter seems the best way for introducing the beginner.

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