

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations

Monday, 25th September 2017, from 1.15 pm to 3.00 pm
Room 308, Department of the Taoiseach

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (Chair)
Dr Martin Mansergh (Vice Chair)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr Mary Harris
Ms Sinead McCoole
Dr Éamon Phoenix
Mr Jerry Kelleher (D/Taoiseach)
Ms Sinéad Copeland (D/AHRRGA)
Ms Katherine Licken (D/AHRRGA)
Ms Orlaith Lochrin (D/AHRRGA)
Mr Feargal Ó Coigligh (D/AHRRGA)

Apologies:

Mr Francis Devine
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Dr. Leeann Lane
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Professor Eunan O'Halpin

Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting (11th July) were agreed and there were no issues arising.

The Chair noted the recent publication of *The Atlas of the Irish Revolution* by Cork University Press and commended all who contributed to this very significant project. It was also noted that the official record of the State's 1916 Centenary Commemorations, *Centenary*, will be launched on 18th October 2017 by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D.

The Chair provided an update concerning plans to commemorate the centenary of the death of John Redmond next year. A State commemorative programme will be developed over the coming months, comprising a symposium on 6th March 2018 which takes place in collaboration with the NUI and RIA, local events in Wexford and Waterford and other ceremonial events as appropriate. The Chair circulated the draft symposium programme. D/AHRRGA will follow up with the Wexford and Waterford local authorities to ascertain their plans and to explore possibilities for collaboration.

The Group considered initial ideas for a conference focusing on how other countries experienced civil war and its aftermath. D/AHRRGA confirmed that it would make appropriate resources

available to support a conference on this theme. It was suggested that UCC might be willing to host such a conference given the role of Munster during the Civil War. Enquiries will be made with UCC to seek their views in the matter.

It was noted that the Advisory Group's Second Statement of Principles was presented to Government before the summer recess. It is intended that this publication will be launched at an event in the GPO on 18th October for the *Centenary* book.

The Group recommended that a broad public consultation process, which invites submissions from interested parties and members of the public, would be helpful in stimulating public debate and alleviating concerns around the State's plans to mark significant historical events over the remainder of the Decade of Centenaries.

Consideration will be given to announcing the commencement of the public consultation process at the event on 18th October. The Department will draft a 'public call for submissions' document, which will incorporate a list of some of the significant historical events of the period.

It was noted that the role of the Expert Advisory Group is to advise the State as to the significant historical events where attention should be focused and on forms of appropriate remembrance or commemoration for those events.

It was agreed to draft a broad listing of significant historical events between 1917 and 1923 and to invite public comment, via the public consultation process, on how those events might be remembered.

It was noted that the centenary of the partitioning of Ireland is already generating significant public interest in communities across the island of Ireland, with events such as exhibitions, lectures and dramatic performances already being planned by interested parties.

It was re-iterated that the events of the Struggle for Independence and the Civil War were multi-dimensional and that, even with a great distance in time, the approach taken to the commemoration of those events has the potential to evoke strong emotion and hurt. It is hoped that all parties will be able to transcend their differences and approach the commemorations over this period in accordance with the ethos and principles expressed by the Advisory Group.

It was agreed that it would be fitting to end the Decade of Centenary Commemorations by marking Ireland's entry to the League of Nations.

Constructive engagement with relatives, local authorities, media and other stakeholders will be important building on the good will generated from the *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme*. These relationships will also be important in supporting public awareness and maximizing citizen engagement over the remainder of the Decade.

The dates and venues for the forthcoming meetings will be confirmed shortly.

Ends.