

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 9th July 2019, 1.15 pm
Sycamore Room, Department of the Taoiseach
Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly (*Acting Chair*)
Mr Francis Devine
Dr Mary Harris
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Mr Kevin Lonergan, *D/CHG*
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/CHG*
Mr Jerry Kelleher *D/Taoiseach*

Guest Attendees:

Professor Briona Nic Dhiarmada
Mr Stuart Switzer
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer (*connected remotely*)

Apologies:

Dr Maurice Manning
Dr Martin Mansergh
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Mr Conor Falvey *D/CHG*
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr. Leeann Lane
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Dr Éamon Phoenix

Key Points:

The Chair welcomed Professor Briona Nic Dhiarmada (University of Notre Dame), Mr Stuart Switzer (COCO Television), and Professor Jane Ohlmeyer (Trinity College Dublin). The guest attendees outlined their proposals for a new documentary series, '*From that Small Island – The Story of the Irish*', including a short video. After a roundtable discussion concerning the project proposals and parameters, the Chair thanked the guest presenters and wished them well in their endeavours.

The Expert Advisory Group noted that this project is an admirable one, although it appears to be outside the remit of the Decade of Centenaries Group in a number of respects. It was agreed that the proposals and the associated request for State support may be more appropriate to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the context of that Department's Global Irish remit.

The minutes of the previous meeting (14th May) were agreed and there were no issues arising.

The Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provided a brief report of key themes arising from the meeting of the All-Party Consultation Group on 3rd July. The All-Party Consultation

Group proposed that the efforts to build an alternative government, - which could encompass the republican courts, local authorities, the land bank, and the raising of finance through republican bonds – could be appropriately marked with an exhibition. The All-Party Group also referenced the forthcoming significant centenaries in Cork in 2020, including the death of the Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney, and the need for Cork to be supported appropriately in their plans.

The matters raised by the All-Party Consultation Group will be brought to the Inter-Departmental Working Group for consideration. This Group comprises officials from relevant Government Departments and is due to meet again in the Autumn. The Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is encouraging other Departments to play a leading role in developing and supporting initiatives within their areas of responsibility.

The Group considered the proposals submitted by Queen's University Belfast to mark the centenary of partition. It was suggested that consideration could be given to strengthening potential cross-border cultural and community elements and exploring potential roles for local museums and other organisations. It was noted that the guidance of the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will be helpful in this regard. It was agreed that a small working group will now be convened to progress matters.

The Group endorsed the proposals from University College Cork for a national conference to commemorate the civil war. It agreed that it was very appropriate that a civil war conference should take place outside of Dublin, led by an academic institution. It was noted that UCC has an excellent standing in revolution and civil war scholarship – including the publication in 2017 of *The Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. It would be appropriate for the State to provide funding and support, without becoming involved in decisions regarding the programme content and for UCC to host and organise the conference - an approach, which has already many precedents and which would safeguard the academic integrity and independence of the conference programme. It was agreed that a small working group will now be convened to progress matters.

The Group noted, with interest, proposals from Maurice Fitzpatrick for a Civil War documentary series. It agreed that it would not be appropriate for the Group to endorse individual proposals for a specific film or television production, such as this one. Such matters were more appropriate for consideration by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

Regarding the CAIN archive, (<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/>), it was noted that the Northern Ireland Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of the Taoiseach are engaging with the issues involved. Jerry Kelleher will advise relevant colleagues that this is a matter of concern to the Expert Advisory Group.

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place in October – provisionally scheduled for Tuesday, 8th October and to be confirmed.

Ends.