

Virtual Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 1 September 2020, 1.15 pm

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Dr Anne Dolan
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr Leeann Lane
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Dr William Murphy
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Dr Éamon Phoenix

Mr Conor Falvey *D/TCAGSM*
Ms Sinéad Copeland *D/TCAGSM*
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/TCAGSM*
Mr Jerry Kelleher *D/Taoiseach*

Apologies:

Mr Francis Devine
Dr Mary Harris
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin

Key Points:

The Chair welcomed two new members, Dr Anne Dolan and Dr William Murphy, who were recently appointed to the Expert Advisory Group by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The minutes of the previous meeting (14th July) were agreed, with no matters arising.

The Chair provided an update to the Group following recent engagement with Áras an Uachtaráin regarding proposed initiatives for the forthcoming period of commemorations. This engagement was welcomed by the Group and further updates will be provided as plans are confirmed.

The Chair outlined to the Group some of the substantive proposals that are under development by the Department (D/TCAGSM), to mark the centenary of the Civil War. It was noted that many of these proposals are at an early stage and have still to be discussed with stakeholders and fully appraised.

The Expert Advisory Group endorsed the general approach proposed, which is aligned with the principles and guidance previously laid down by the Group. Various observations were made and these suggestions will be incorporated into the proposals. Over the coming weeks, the Department will work through the relevant official channels and consult with potential partners to progress matters.

It was agreed that initiatives to encourage young historians and new research, focusing on the Civil War period, will be very helpful and this proposal will be considered further by the Group.

The Group also endorsed, in principle, proposals for an academic conference exploring military aspects of the Civil War and related themes, to be developed under the joint auspices of the Military History Society of Ireland and the Military Archives.

The leading role of the local authorities in developing and supporting appropriate community-led commemorative initiatives was highlighted. Plans for the forthcoming period under the Community Strand of the programme will be considered in advance of the next meeting of the Group.

The Group discussed recent announcements in the UK and Northern Ireland concerning the forthcoming centenary of the foundation of Northern Ireland. It was noted that this is a particularly challenging and sensitive centenary. Within the broader Decade of Centenaries programme, appropriate opportunities for cross-border co-operation will continue to be explored in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

An update was provided to the Group regarding plans for forthcoming centenaries over the remainder of this year, including the execution of Kevin Barry and Bloody Sunday.

The Group endorsed the approach proposed, which recommends appropriate representation by the Government at the various community-led events scheduled to take place, without the State having a leading role in their organisation.

It was noted that the GAA is leading the development of plans to mark the centenary of the events that occurred in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday. A thoughtful, measured, non-partisan programme has been developed, which will include a ceremonial event in Croke Park on 21st November (COVID-19 public health protective measures permitting). The Expert Advisory Group endorsed this approach and acknowledged the leading role of the GAA as significant stakeholders.

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed in due course (subsequently agreed for 3rd November 2020).

Ends.