

Virtual Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 14th July 2020, 1.15 pm

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Dr Mary Harris
Dr Leeann Lane
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Dr Éamon Phoenix
Mr Conor Falvey *D/CHG*
Ms Sinéad Copeland *D/CHG*
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/CHG*
Mr Jerry Kelleher *D/Taoiseach*

Guest Attendees:

Evelyn Flanagan,
Head of Special Collections, UCD Library
Dr Lucy Collins, *Associate Professor,*
School of English Drama and Film, UCD

Dr Martin Maguire, *Visiting Research*
Fellow, Centre for Contemporary Irish
History, TCD
William Derham, *Collections, Research and*
Interpretation, OPW Dublin Castle

Apologies:

Mr Francis Devine
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Ms Miriam Dollard *D/Taoiseach*
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Professor Eunan O'Halpin

Key Points:

The meeting opened with a presentation from Evelyn Flanagan and Dr Lucy Collins on behalf of the Irish Poetry Reading Archive, UCD Library. Poetry and other art forms have already very effectively supported the remembrance of significant anniversaries throughout the Decade of Centenaries, including the centenaries of the ending of World War I and the 1916 Easter Rising.

The Irish Poetry Reading Archive advocates a prominent role in the forthcoming commemorations for poetry, particularly the creation of new work. It is proposed to draw on the wealth of archival and historical sources available, to inspire the creation of new poetry in remembrance of the events that occurred during the Struggle for Independence and the Civil

War. The intended output will be an enduring and significant Decade of Centenaries legacy. Public engagement and participation is a key tenet of the proposal and it is envisaged that this could be facilitated through various interactive forms, such as public readings, a symposium, podcasts, production of a publication and an exhibition.

The Chair re-iterated the commitment of the Expert Advisory Group to ensuring that poetry and other forms of creative expression feature prominently in the forthcoming commemorative programme. He expressed his appreciation to Ms Flanagan and Dr Collins for a very thoughtful and engaging presentation. A discussion took place following the presentation, and it was agreed that Departmental officials will follow up with the Irish Poetry Reading Archive to explore further the various elements of the proposal, and whether there may be potential to broaden the scope of this very worthwhile initiative, in collaboration with other partners such as Poetry Ireland. The possibility of a related schools' initiative was also raised.

Mr William Derham provided an overview of proposals to mark the centenary of the Handover of Dublin Castle in January 2022. It was noted that plans are at an early stage and that the proposal is very much a living document. As part of these proposals, Dr Martin Maguire elaborated on plans for an academic symposium to be held in Dublin Castle.

Members of the Group reflected on the symposium proposal and noted that this is a very important and worthwhile initiative. The Group offered various observations regarding its proposed format and scope - advocating the prominent recognition of the significance of the historic events that occurred leading up to and on 16th January 1922. Dr Maguire proposed to reflect further on the draft programme arising from the Group's advice and suggestions. The Chair indicated that the Expert Advisory Group is very supportive and would be happy to offer any assistance that may be helpful.

It was noted that responsibility for the organisation of the State commemoration to mark the centenary of the Handover of Dublin Castle, (envisaged for 16th January 2022), will be wholly a matter for the Department of the Taoiseach. The protocols and formality associated with a State commemoration will not permit the inclusion of a re-enactment of the events that took place during the Handover of Dublin Castle in 1922. This element could, however, perhaps be incorporated into the broader programme of cultural and public engagement initiatives.

The minutes of the previous meeting (12th May) were agreed, with no matters arising.

It was noted that Queen's University Belfast has postponed its planned conference to mark the centenary of Partition until next year, arising from the ongoing COVID-19 public health protective measures. It is envisaged that a small, possibly online, event will take place in December 2020. The State's participation in this regard will be led by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Chair invited members to reflect further before the next meeting on potential proposals to mark the Centenary of the Civil War; including ideas around the format and timing of a State commemoration.

It was noted that a new All-Party Consultation Group will be convened as expeditiously as possible.

The Chair reported that Áras an Uachtaráin intends to organise and host a series of Autumn lectures/webinars, exploring various aspects of the Struggle for Independence and featuring emerging scholars and established historians. The Expert Advisory Group is very supportive of these plans.

It was noted that the Creative Imagination strand of the Decade of Centenaries programme will be further enhanced in the coming months, as emerging proposals are further developed.

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed in due course.

Ends.