

## Virtual Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 1.15 pm

### Minutes

#### Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)  
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)  
Dr Sandra Collins  
Professor Mary Daly  
Dr Anne Dolan  
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter  
Professor Patrick Geoghegan  
Dr Mary Harris  
Mr Jerry Kelleher  
Dr Leeann Lane  
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin  
Dr Sinéad McCoole  
Dr William Murphy  
Dr Éamon Phoenix  
Mr Conor Falvey *D/TCAGSM*  
Ms Sinéad Copeland *D/TCAGSM*  
Ms Muirne Lyons *D/TCAGSM*  
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/TCAGSM*  
Ms Pauline Kiernan *D/Taoiseach*  
Ms Lisa McGann *D/Defence*  
Ms Bernie Maguire *D/Defence*

#### Guest Attendees:

Ms Barbara Walshe, *Chair of the Board of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation*  
Ms Naoimh Mc Namee, *CEO*  
Mr Pat Hynes, *Community and Political Dialogue Programme Manager*  
  
Ms Eithne Bowen, *Operations Manager, Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, TCD*  
Professor Michael Cronin, *Professor of French (1776) and Director, Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, TCD*  
Professor Margaret Kelleher, *Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama, UCD and Board Member, MoLI*  
Mr Simon O'Connor, *Director of the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI)*

#### Apologies:

Mr Francis Devine  
Mr Gabriel Doherty  
Professor Eunan O'Halpin

#### Key Points:

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, who outlined their strategic objectives and work programme for the coming period, including proposals for two initiatives to mark the centenary of the Civil War, focused on themes of reconciliation. Ms Walshe stated that the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was born and grew out of the suffering caused by the Civil War and has continued working for peace for almost 50 years. The Chair commended Ms Walshe and her colleagues for a very engaging presentation, noting that one of the aims of the Expert Advisory Group is to create meaningful living legacies for the Decade of

Centenaries. He advised that the Group will reflect further on the proposals to consider how they may be able to assist. It was noted that the events leading up to the Irish civil war were complex - in developing commemorative initiatives, a careful, nuanced approach which avoids oversimplification, would be very helpful.

The Chair welcomed Professor Margaret Kelleher and her colleagues, who outlined a collaborative proposal between Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, Trinity College Dublin and the Museum of Literature Ireland, for a new initiative - *23 Words*. The objective is to raise awareness of the multi-lingual nature of that crucial revolutionary decade, and its significance for contemporary Irish society, through various imaginative initiatives and engage audiences of all ages.

The Chair thanked all involved for their presentation - the Group will reflect further to consider how they may be able to advise, within the scope of the Decade of Centenaries Programme.

The minutes of the previous meeting (19<sup>th</sup> October) were agreed and there were no matters arising.

Dr Mary Harris provided an update in relation to NUI Galway's plans for a conference in April, in partnership with Elaine Martin and Patrick Nevin, on the theme of *Travellers and the Irish State, 1922 – 2022: The Continuing Quest for Equality*.

The Chair provided an overview on matters arising at the All Party Consultation Group meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 – particularly concerning recognition of high profile figures associated with this period in our history and the forthcoming centenaries of the handover of military barracks around the country.

It was noted that a significant amount of scholarship and associated academic activity is being undertaken to explore and highlight the role of key figures involved in this period. It's recognised that relatives and local commemorative committees also have a leading role and a particular interest in this regard. Significant activity is happening organically at community level, assisted by the local authorities, and supported by significant State funding under the Community Strand of the Decade of Centenaries Programme. The Group agreed that this supportive engagement from the State is an appropriate and proportionate response at present.

Comdt. Stephen Mac Eoin provided an overview to the Group concerning the draft Defence Forces plans for the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries, noting that any observations from the Expert Advisory Group would be welcome. The Chair commended the very comprehensive proposals, reflecting that they address key events and associated themes in an imaginative, inclusive and politically neutral manner. He suggested that further consideration and discussion may be helpful and that the Group could revisit this topic at the next meeting.

An overview was provided regarding the State's Decade of Centenaries Programme for 2022, noting significant progress across a range of partnerships and initiatives under the four thematic strands. The programme will be launched early in 2022. It was noted that plans to mark the centenary of the Handover of Dublin Castle are well advanced, notwithstanding the challenges presented by the evolving COVID-19 situation.

The Group welcomed the very comprehensive briefing provided by the Military Service Pensions Collection project team and commended all involved for the very substantial and significant achievements to date on the project – a really important legacy for the Decade of Centenaries.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

*Ends.*