

Virtual Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 2 March 2022, at 1.15 pm

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Mr Francis Devine
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Dr Anne Dolan
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr Mary Harris
Mr Jerry Kelleher
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Dr William Murphy
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
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*

Guest Attendees:

Dr Peter Crooks, *Director of the Beyond 2022 research project*
Dr Ciarán Wallace, *Deputy Director of the Beyond 2022 research project*
Professor Paul Rouse, *School of History, UCD*
Conor Gallagher, *D/Agriculture*
Alison O'Donnell, *Collector Coin Specialist, Central Bank of Ireland*

Apologies:

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Dr Leeann Lane

Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting of 25th January were agreed and there were no matters arising.

The meeting opened with expressions of condolences following the passing of Professor John A. Murphy, noting his scholarship and significant contribution in the field of modern Irish history.

The Chair welcomed Dr Peter Crooks and Dr Ciarán Wallace from the *Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury* research project. They provided an overview of the significant project milestones achieved to date and a preview of the virtual tour of the Record Treasury, noting the Expert Advisory Group's endorsement of the initial research concept and ongoing support. A programme of free public events will be organised leading up to the launch of the Virtual Record Treasury on 27th June, beginning with *'Inside the Railings: Life within the Public Record Office of Ireland'* on 14th April, which is jointly hosted by Beyond 2022, the National Archives, and the Courts Service. The strength and generosity of the engagement from the international and all-

island core archival partners and participating organisations was highlighted. In accordance with the terms of the Phase II Performance Delivery Agreement, discussions are underway with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to explore options for the long-term sustainability of the project, following the conclusion of Phase II at the end of this year. This was welcomed by the Group, who strongly endorsed the continuation of the research project as a meaningful and permanent legacy for the Decade of Centenaries. The Chair commended everyone involved in this very exciting and ambitious project and reiterated the ongoing support and assistance of the Group.

Professor Paul Rouse gave an overview to the Group concerning the significance and content of the records of the Irish Land Commission from a historian's perspective. He outlined the position in Northern Ireland, whereby records relating to estates in Northern Ireland were deposited in the PRONI Land Registry Archive and are accessible to support research and scholarship. Conor Gallagher from the Department of Agriculture, outlined the complex nature of the Land Commission's work and the legal structures governing its operations. He reflected also on the practical challenges involved in taking steps to open some of the Land Commission files to the public. Work has begun, with plans to digitise search aids, which will be a significant guide for finding individual documents within the extensive, separate sets of records.

The Group welcomed this discussion and the steps being taken to make the records of the Land Commission as accessible as possible, noting the value of this archive within the field of social and local history studies particularly. The Chair noted the significant challenge ahead and commended the enthusiasm and commitment of all involved. He advised that the Group would be happy to assist in any way that would be helpful and undertook to ask some members of the Group to keep in touch and share any information and expertise that may be helpful.

Alison O'Donnell gave a synopsis concerning the Central Bank of Ireland's commemorative coin programme for 2022/3 and requested the Group's assistance in reviewing the proposed wording which would be used on the packaging and associated materials. The Chair invited Ms O'Donnell to identify any areas where there may be particular queries and the Group will revert with any suggestions that may be helpful.

The Department (D/TCAGSM) provided an overview of plans for a new programme for the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries, in collaboration with the Arts Council called *ART: 2023*. This will comprise a large-scale commissioning programme and a new community-led engagement programme. An information pack and a series of seminars are planned to assist artists who may be interested in participating in the programme. Any advice or suggestions from the Group would be very much appreciated, particularly concerning the proposed themes, content and speakers.

Under AOB, it was noted that the previous minutes of meetings of the Expert Advisory Group from 2016 to end 2021 are all published here; <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/minutes-from-meetings/>.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Ends.