

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations

Monday, 25th April 2017, from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm
Room 301, Department of the Taoiseach

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (Chair)
Dr Martin Mansergh (Vice Chair)
Dr. Sandra Collins
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Mr Jerry Kelleher (D/Taoiseach)
Ms Orlaith Lochrin (D/AHRRGA)
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Ms Sinead McCoole
Mr Feargal Ó Coigligh (D/AHRRGA)

Apologies:

Professor Mary Daly
Mr Francis Devine
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Dr Mary Harris
Dr. Leeann Lane
Dr Éamon Phoenix
Mr Gabriel Doherty

Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting (6th March) were agreed and there were no issues arising.

A progress update was provided to the group concerning forthcoming commemorations, including;

- plans to commemorate the Battle of Messines in Belgium and on the island of Ireland;
- plans to commemorate the death of Major Willie Redmond in Wexford;
- the official commemoration, in Slane on 24th June, to mark the death of the poet Francis Ledwidge; and
- the State-supported event on 17th June to mark the centenary of the establishment of Leopardstown Park Hospital as a hospital for the treatment of injured members of the British Armed Forces.

The Vice Chair raised a number of matters and it was agreed that:

- Commissioner John McMahon would be invited to brief the group at its next meeting concerning OPW's plans for the Irish National War Memorial Gardens;
- The Director of the National Archives would be invited to brief the group before the summer on matters pertaining to the 1926 Census records; and that
- Representatives of Glasnevin Trust would be invited to brief the group regarding their approach to commemorating key events of the Decade of Centenaries to date as well as their future plans for the remainder of the Decade.

It was noted that these briefings will be extremely helpful to the Group in its work to provide clarity and guidance to Government around the commemoration of significant events, such as the Civil War, War of Independence and the Foundation of the State.

It was agreed that the group would reflect further on the broad principles of the Second Statement and associated matters. It is intended that this consideration will be practical and focused; moving away from general principles to reflect instead on specific issues, where the advice of the Group would be particularly important.

It was agreed that this consideration would be a key focus of the Group's final meeting before the summer.

It was noted that many of the historical events of this period took place outside of Dublin and are already commemorated annually. The Group will be required to provide guidance to Government on the State's approach to commemorating this period. The complexities around this role were explored. It was agreed that the focus of any discussions should remain on history and that the requirement for commemorative events should be informed by historical fact and archive material.

The date of the next meeting was agreed – Monday, 29th May at 1 pm.

Ends.