

## Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 1.15 pm  
Room 308, Department of the Taoiseach  
**Minutes**

### Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)  
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Vice Chair*)  
Dr Sandra Collins  
Professor Mary Daly  
Mr Gabriel Doherty  
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter  
Professor Patrick Geoghegan  
Ms Sinéad McCoole  
Professor Eunan O'Halpin  
Dr Éamon Phoenix  
Mr Conor Falvey *D/CHG*  
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/CHG*  
Mr Kevin Lonergan *D/CHG*  
Mr Rónán Whelan *D/CHG*  
Mr Jerry Kelleher *D/Taoiseach*

### Apologies:

Mr Francis Devine  
Dr Mary Harris  
Dr. Leeann Lane  
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin

### Guest Attendees:

#### Philatelic Advisory Committee/ An Post Representatives:

Felix Larkin, *Chairman*  
Mick O'Dea, *Chairman of the Stamp Design  
Advisory Committee*  
Aileen Mooney, *Manager of Stamp Design*  
Anna McHugh, *Head of Corporate  
Communications, An Post*

#### D/CCAIE Representatives:

Patricia Cronin  
Barbara Leeson

#### OPW Representatives:

Commissioner John McMahon  
Myles Campbell  
William Derham

### Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting (20<sup>th</sup> November 2018) were agreed, with no issues arising.

Representatives from the Philatelic Advisory Committee (PAC) and An Post outlined their plans and considerations concerning the programme of commemorative and special stamps for 2020 and subsequent years of the Decade of Centenaries (to 2023). The Advisory Group commended the PAC for its balanced and responsible approach in addressing significant anniversaries throughout the first half of the Decade.

It is anticipated that there will be a broad public expectation that specific, significant historical events and centenaries over the coming period would be marked with an appropriate commemorative stamp. The challenges inherent in responding appropriately to particular anniversaries over the forthcoming period were discussed. It was acknowledged that a balanced, sensitive and authentic approach, which does not avoid the difficult issues but which considers and responds to the historical significance of particular events, will be very helpful. During the discussions, the Group recommended that particular consideration could be given to the inclusion of stamps to mark the Dáil Courts and also the Government of Ireland Act.

It was noted that decisions on particular stamps and themes is ultimately a matter for consideration by the Government, upon receipt of the recommendations from the Philatelic Advisory Committee. It was agreed that ongoing engagement and consultation between the Philatelic Advisory Committee and the Expert Advisory Group will be very helpful in navigating the period ahead, with further meetings taking place as required.

Representatives from the Office of Public Works presented an overview of their proposals to mark the centenary of the handover of Dublin Castle on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1922. These ideas were developed in the context of the OPW's custodianship of Dublin Castle and they focus specifically on the significance of what happened in the Privy Council Chamber on that date. It is proposed to transform this space, which currently houses offices of the Revenue Commissioners, into a commemorative museum, with various complementary centenary initiatives also taking place.

The Advisory Group endorsed this project as an important and symbolic recognition of an important and previously untold chapter in our national history and in the narrative of Dublin Castle. It was noted that the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is supportive of the proposal also and that the National Library would also be very happy to assist.

The Group noted the great success of the Houses of the Oireachtas *Dáil 100* and *Vótáil 100* centenary programmes and commended all involved for their vision and commitment in developing these plans.

Dr Martin Mansergh provided an overview of the events that took place on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January to mark the centenary of the Soloheadbeg Ambush. The broadly positive response to the official event confirmed that this community-led model recommended by the Group, which is supported appropriately by the local authority and the State, is the correct approach to the observance of the sensitive and complex anniversaries over the coming period. This measured and balanced approach worked very effectively in a complex local context.

It was noted that a local authority forum will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> March and that funding allocations for the local authorities in 2019 will be confirmed shortly.

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019, is proposed for the next meeting of the Advisory Group.

*Ends.*