

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 12th March 2019, 1.15 pm

The Irish Architectural Archive

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Vice Chair*)
Professor Mary Daly
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr Mary Harris
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Ms Sinéad McCoole
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*

Guest Attendees:

The Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of
Cork, Cloyne and Ross
George Woodman
Dr Kenneth Milne
Earl Storey
The Venerable Robin Bantry White
The Venerable Ricky Rountree

Apologies:

Dr Sandra Collins
Mr Francis Devine
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Dr. Leeann Lane
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Dr Éamon Phoenix

Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting (5th February) were agreed and there were no issues arising.

The Chair welcomed the Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, and other representatives from the Church of Ireland Historical Centenaries Working Group. Dr Colton outlined the Group's mission, objectives, and achievements to date in the remembrance of the significant historical events during the first half of the Decade of Centenaries. The Group is now considering how it plans to address the approaching anniversaries over the remainder of the Decade and would welcome engagement with the Expert Advisory Group in this regard. The Chair noted that this has been the only Church group to seek a meeting with the Expert Advisory Group to date.

It was noted that the centenary of Partition presents particular challenges, requiring a careful and sensitive approach. The Chair advised that a significant academic conference is envisaged, which would examine the fates of communities on both sides of the border. Possibilities will be

explored also for the development of a complementary programme of appropriate shared cross-border events and broader cross-border cultural engagement. The Expert Advisory Group would welcome the input of the Church of Ireland Historical Centenaries Working Group in this regard.

The Chair advised that the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is hosting a Decade of Centenaries Forum for local authorities on 13th March. In his address, he will emphasise the importance of adopting an ecumenical approach to the remembrance of significant events at community and county level.

It was noted that the forthcoming centenary anniversaries will coincide with significant 50th anniversaries in Northern Ireland. The backdrop of the ongoing Brexit negotiations and the continued absence of agreement on operating the devolved structures in Northern Ireland also present particular challenges and the exploration of potential cross-border engagement will require careful, thoughtful and sensitive navigation. It was noted that the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht remains committed to engaging culture and heritage across the island of Ireland.

It was agreed that representatives from Queen's University Belfast would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Expert Advisory Group, with a view to exploring plans to mark the centenary of Partition. It was noted that the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is supportive of this engagement and representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will be invited to attend also.

It was agreed that Dr Anne Dolan would be invited to join the next meeting of the Group, with a view to exploring issues arising from the release of the Military Service Pensions Collection 1916 – 1923.

Under Any Other Business, it was noted that the Military Archives will require additional staffing resources to equip it to effectively deliver its work programme for the coming years and to build on the significant achievements to date.

The Group strongly recommended that consideration be given by the Department of Education to the development of an educational resource pack for schools, based on the Brigade Activity Reports released by the Military Archives. It was noted that this would provide an invaluable learning resource to support history teachers and students in navigating this challenging period in our history at national and local level. It was further noted that a similar resource, previously commissioned by that Department to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, was widely commended and very well received.

Concerns were raised regarding the future sustainability of the website, <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/>, and it was noted that the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade are examining this issue.

Tuesday, 14th May 2019, is proposed for the next meeting of the Advisory Group.

Ends.