

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 3rd March 2020, 1.15 pm

Irish Architectural Archive, 45 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Mr Conor Falvey *D/CHG*
Mr Kevin Lonergan, *D/CHG*
Ms Orlaith Lochrin *D/CHG*
Mr Jerry Kelleher *D/Taoiseach*

Guest Attendees:

Ms Lynn Scarff, *Director of the NMI*
Dr Audrey Whitty, *Head of Collections and Learning, NMI*
Ms Lorraine Comer, *Head of Education, NMI*
Mr Breffni O'Malley, *Head of Exhibitions, Learning and Programming, NLI*

Apologies:

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

Key Points:

The Director of the National Museum and the Director of the National Library outlined their respective plans for the forthcoming period of the Decade of Centenaries.

Dr Lynn Scarff highlighted the principles and concepts that will continue to underpin the National Museum's approach to programme development and content. The focus on collaboration and co-curation will continue, through initiatives such as iCAN and partnerships with the network of local authority museums. Schools remain a key target audience.

The Museum's key priority is to complete, by 2023, the design and installation of a new floor of permanent exhibitions - the 20th Century History of Ireland Galleries at NMI - Decorative Arts and History.

Mr Breffni O'Malley advised that the National Library's on-going cataloguing and digitisation project - *Towards a Republic* - will remain a very significant contribution to mark the second phase of the Decade of Centenaries (2018-2023). An exhibition to commemorate the Civil War is also envisaged for 2022, in the National Photographic Archive, with an associated programme of public engagement activities.

The Library will continue its programme of travelling exhibitions and engagement with key partners, including local libraries and archives. Its public lecture programme will continue, with a series of seminars in development for Autumn 2020.

The National Cultural Institutions will continue to have a very significant role in delivering unique commemorative initiatives for the forthcoming period. They offer easily accessible, reflective spaces, owned by the people of Ireland and, as such, are ideal for encouraging broad citizen engagement. It was noted also that there is a growing public appetite for online resources and engagement, with associated digitisation initiatives.

D/CHG noted the on-going very substantial programme of capital investment in the National Cultural Institutions, which will deliver very important and positive impacts. The Chair reiterated that the Expert Advisory Group would be very happy to offer any support or assistance that may be helpful to the National Cultural Institutions.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, with no matters arising.

Following from the previous meeting of the Group (14th January), the Chair had a further discussion with representatives from the Department of Justice and Equality. The Chair reiterated the recommendations of the Group, to proceed with developing plans for a conference exploring the origins of policing in Ireland.

The Chair provided an update regarding the plans led by Queen's University Belfast to mark the centenary of Partition, with a conference on 3rd/4th December 2020. Good progress has been made. QUB, following consultation with members of the Expert Advisory Group, is considering how best it can incorporate themes in the conference programme that will have broad public appeal, including cultural and literary aspects.

D/CHG provided an overview to the Group regarding the Government's plans for a major commemorative programme in Cork City and County in 2020.

The Group considered further its advice to Government concerning the commemoration of the centenary of the Civil War. It is proposed that the Group will now explore specific ideas to inform the State's plans to commemorate the Civil War, including cultural elements.

The next meeting is provisionally scheduled for 24th March (subsequently postponed due to the COVID-19 emergency).

Ends.