

Virtual Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Tuesday, 25th January 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
Dr Mary Harris
Mr Jerry Kelleher
Dr Leeann Lane
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Dr Sinéad McCoole

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*
Mr Kevin Galligan, *D/Agriculture*
Ms Lisa McGann, *D/Defence*

Apologies:

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr William Murphy
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Dr Éamon Phoenix

Key Points:

The minutes of the previous meeting (7th December 2021) were agreed and there were no matters arising.

The Chair noted that the recent conference, hosted by Trinity College Dublin to mark the centenary of the Handover of Dublin Castle, was very well received and widely commended. He expressed his appreciation to Dr Anne Dolan and all involved in the arrangements for this event. The Chair will write to the Provost of Trinity College Dublin to thank her for her support and partnership in hosting this event.

It was noted that the Taoiseach, at the State Commemoration on 16th January, acknowledged the very important contribution of the Expert Advisory Group and the care and balance with which the Group has approached its work during this very sensitive and complex phase of commemorations.

The Chair advised that plans for 'The Irish Civil War National Conference', hosted by University College Cork to mark the centenary of the Civil War, are progressing. It is also anticipated that University College Dublin will host a conference later this year or early in 2023, focused on themes relating to the foundation of the State.

The Group discussed the records of the Irish Land Commission and associated matters. Responsibility for the Land Commission records lies with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The Department is examining plans for digitising certain key search aids which will enable electronic searches to be carried out by members of the public in order to ascertain if specific records exist. It was acknowledged that this is a complex and challenging matter. It was agreed that the Group will revisit this subject at a future meeting, which Professor Paul Rouse and officials from the Department of Agriculture will be invited to attend.

An update was provided regarding plans to announce the Decade of Centenaries Programme for 2022, which will be published online in the coming weeks. The Department (D/TCAGSM) expressed its great appreciation to the Chair and members of the Group for all of their advice and assistance in the development of the 2022 programme.

An update was provided regarding plans for the State Commemoration in remembrance of all those who died during the Civil War, which will be hosted by the Department of the Taoiseach.

Comdt. Stephen MacEoin outlined the plans under development by the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence for the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries, including proposals to mark the centenaries of the handover of military barracks. The Chair noted that this is a very engaging and interesting programme and commended all involved. Careful consideration will be given to the language used in describing community events to mark the handover of local military barracks, in order to respect the complex history of these sites and sensitivities involved. It was recommended that the Defence Forces keep relevant local authority Decade of Centenaries co-ordinators apprised as plans progress, so that these initiatives can be aligned with local commemorative programming.

Dr Mary Harris provided an update concerning plans for a conference, to be hosted by NUI Galway later this year, on the theme of *Travellers and the Irish State, 1922-2022: The Continuing Quest for Equality*. A small launch event is envisaged in April, with the conference due to be held in September.

Arising from the most recent meeting of the All Party Consultation Group, consideration was given to whether the commissioning of new statues to commemorate key political figures would be appropriate. It was noted that this is a matter for the Houses of the Oireachtas. The advice of the Expert Advisory Group is that initiatives which will serve as ‘living legacies’ for the Decade of Centenaries would be particularly beneficial, such as those that highlight the importance of original research and scholarship at national and local level, and promote free, public access to authentic historical sources.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Ends.