

**GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP
ELECTED MEMBERS' MEETING
COMMEMORATIONS & MEMORABILIA IN THE CITY HALL
FRIDAY 29 MAY 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillor Long Councillor McCausland Councillor C. Maskey	Chairman Deputy Chairman
IN ATTENDANCE	Hazel Francey Marie Craig George Wright Peter McKay Andrew Todd	Good Relations Manager Good Relations Assistant (minutes) Head of Facilities Management Facilities Management Section Tandem Design
APOLOGIES:	Councillor Stoker	

1.0	ROUTINE MATTERS (MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 MAY 2009)
1.1	The minutes of the meeting of 15 May were taken as read and signed as correct.
1.2	Arising from the minutes Hazel reported that in relation to members of staff marking 11 November, she had contacted Human Resources who don't envisage any major issues with this. However, Human Resources will check what the NI Civil Service policy is and will raise the issue with the JCC and the Trade Unions.
1.3	Brian Morrison, former Head of Leisure, is involved with organising a display on sporting legends, which will include information on Belfast Celtic. It would be possible for the exhibition to be displayed in the City Hall on a suitable date following the re-opening.
1.4	The Art College was organising an exhibition to mark their 160 years anniversary and it was likely that this would be displayed in the City Hall around the re-opening programme.
2.0	PRESENTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR COFFEE SHOP
2.1	George Wright reminded the Group that although the initial proposal for the coffee shop had been based on the Titanic, the Council had decided to theme it around Belfast's industrial history. After a standard competitive procurement exercise, Tandem Design had been commissioned to undertake the design work and Andrew Todd from Tandem was in attendance at the meeting to outline their proposals. George was keen to get the Group's agreement that the proposal was in accordance with the original concept and also to hear their views on the proposed names.
2.2	Andrew Todd briefed the group on the main theme of the exhibition - the development of industrial Belfast, celebrating and illustrating the contribution of ordinary working people. He outlined the main narrative of the exhibition as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17th century – from the King James 1 Charter in 1613; population only 1500 at this time • 18th century – The beginning of the development of industries and the establishment of the shipyard in 1792. Population increased to around 20,000 • 19th century – Industrial Revolution was led by the linen industry; shipbuilding expanded and service industries began; City boundary extended and population increased to 349,000 • 20th century – Belfast was a world leader in many industries, with many thousands employed in the shipyards and shipyard suppliers.
2.3	Andrew concluded by emphasising that the main theme will be the people who worked in the industries, rather than the business owners. Although the exhibition will cover 1613 to the present day, the main focus will be on the years 1820–1970, the 150 years of industrialisation.

2.4	<p>Andrew then gave the group an overview of the layout for the coffee shop. He proposed the following 4 names for the coffee shop and exhibition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Linen • The Bobbin • The Foundry • The Blackstaff
2.5	<p>The Chairman, Cllr. Long, thanked Andrew for the presentation and invited any comments or questions. Cllr. C. Maskey asked if any exhibition space was available to community groups. George replied that external exhibitions might not fit well with the main theme of the coffee shop, however the East Entrance would be open in future and there would be ample space in the East Entrance area for exhibitions/displays on a rolling basis.</p>
2.6	<p>Cllr. Long felt that the presentation was very helpful and was happy with the general overview. Councillors C. Maskey and McCausland also endorsed this view. However, Cllr. Long was keen that Belfast should be shown as a working, living city at the forefront of many developments and that this should be reflected and explored a bit more. Andrew stated that this could be acknowledged through the touch screens, which can be continually updated. Cllr. McCausland was of the opinion that there should be more emphasis on 1792 as a seminal date and asked if that could be a feature. Andrew stated that there would be a focus on this at the end of the 18th century section.</p>
2.7	<p>The Working Group agreed that the Tandem proposed interpretative display accurately reflected the original concept for the coffee shop exhibition area and was in line with the views of the Members.</p>
2.8	<p>During discussion around the suggested names for the coffee shop, it was decided that <i>Blackstaff</i> would not go forward for further consideration. After discussion, the group agreed that George Wright should contact Eamon Deeny in Corporate Communications to examine the feasibility of a public vote on the 3 other suggested names, using the website. If not, the names will go out to staff for a vote.</p>
3.0	<p><i>NO MEAN CITY</i> EXHIBITION - UPDATE</p>
3.1	<p>George referred to a report, copies of which had previously been circulated, seeking the Working Group's decision on several proposed amendments to the <i>No Mean City</i> exhibition before work commences. The report listed those people already in the exhibition and suggested additional names for inclusion.</p>
3.2	<p>However, many of the additional suggestions were not born in Belfast. After discussion, the Working Group agreed that the criteria for inclusion in the exhibition should strictly remain those with a real or recognised bond with Belfast.</p>
3.3	<p>The Group were also asked to consider whether contemporary local political figures should be included in the exhibition. The Group agreed that contemporary politicians should not be included. Any additional suggestions should be forwarded direct to George.</p>
3.4	<p>As the principal audience for the interactive touch-screen facility will be tourists, the Group were asked to make a decision on languages to be used. The current proposal is English, Spanish, German, French and Chinese. Cllr. Long proposed both an Eastern European language and Japanese, in view of the spending power of Japanese tourists; Hazel suggested Polish and that Irish should be considered, in view of recent requests; the Group agreed.</p>
3.5	<p>Cllr. McCausland noted that he would not object to Irish, but would like to reserve the right to add an Ulster Scots version in the future.</p>
3.6	<p>After discussion, the Group agreed that George will research a contract for the initial cost of translating the touch screen into 7/8 languages.</p>

4.0	ARTEFACTS IN CITY HALL DISPLAYS – UPDATE
4.1	George reminded the group that the Council had agreed to the rationalisation of the City Hall displays into 7 main themes and we were now at the stage of designing and installing relevant furniture and display cases etc. The vast majority of the artefacts will be going back to their original position or moved to a more appropriate location, to fit in with the themes. However, a small number of items did not “fit” easily within the themes and he referred to a list of around 10 items, which could be put into storage.
4.2	Hazel suggested that one particular item, the <i>Accounts of the Paymasters General of 1690</i> , could be offered on loan to the Grand Orange Lodge. She had already spoken to 2 Councillors who were Orangemen and they supported this suggestion. Members stated that this would be an appropriate location. The Group agreed that this book be made available on long-term loan to Schomberg House, subject to an appropriate arrangement being drawn up by the Legal Services Department.
4.3	There was some discussion around the YCV flags. Cllr. McCausland asked if there was some way that the significance of these flags could be recognised as the YCV organisation had historically had a strong connection with the Council and City Hall. Other members of the group felt that contemporary connotations surrounding the flag were very negative and that a more permanent display would not match the aim of achieving more balance within the City Hall. The Group agreed that the current policy of displaying the YCV flags one day per year on 1 July should continue.
4.4	One other item which did not “fit” well with the themes was a large red flag in the Banqueting Hall. Originally from the London Cenotaph, this had been presented by the NI Girl Guides to the City Hall sometime in the 1930s, but there was no direct Council connection. Cllr. McCausland requested that this should be checked to make sure that it is not from the Merchant Navy, which George undertook to do. If this was not the case, the Group agreed that this be offered to the Girl Guide Association, on similar long-term loan conditions.
4.5	The Group agreed that other items listed should be put into storage.
4.6	Cllr. Maskey asked about the possibility of providing visitors with audio tour facilities. George replied that this is only possible where tourists can walk around a location unattended, whereas in the City Hall, the tours are organised as it is a working building with regular functions and events.
5.0	IRISH LANGUAGE ISSUES
5.1	Hazel reported that there had been substantial recent correspondence from the Irish language community regarding the re-opening of the City Hall and she tabled copies of a list summarising various suggestions that had been received.
5.2	Hazel had also had a recent meeting with Janet Muller from the Irish language umbrella group <i>Pobal</i> , who had stressed the Council’s obligations under the European Charter on Minority Languages. Ms. Muller had asked that all the suggestions made should be considered formally by the Working Group. The Pobal representative had also asked that the Council consider in particular their request for bi-lingual signage within the City Hall and consider reviewing its language policy.
5.3	In relation to the Irish language issues raised, the Working Group noted that some suggestions made are <u>already</u> in progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tour information is already available in Irish and will be up-dated and reprinted on return to the City Hall; the Group acknowledged that there was a need for wider publication of the fact of its availability • tours for Irish medium schools have been and can be facilitated • the Welcome Guide has already been translated into Irish and can be downloaded from the Council’s website

	<p>The Working Group also agreed to proceed with the following <u>new</u> proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish will be included in the multi-lingual Welcome Sign at Reception • Irish will be included in the <i>No Mean City</i> exhibition information • a 16th century Irish manuscript presented to Cllr. Alex Maskey, when he was Lord Mayor, can be displayed in the 'Gifts to the Lord Mayor' section as an illustration of Irish heritage • an Irish language event can be included in the official City Hall re-opening programme, to be designed in association with Pobal.
5.4	Hazel advised that some of the other suggestions received would be very difficult to implement e.g. making it an essential recruitment criterion that tour guides and receptionists speak Irish.
5.5	Cllr. Maskey was a strong advocate of Irish signage in the City Hall on doors, directional signage etc and was also open to including Ulster Scots in this. However, the Chairman, Cllr. Long felt that there would be a danger in changing the current language policy and that bi-lingual signage could be divisive and create difficulties, since it is important that no-one feels excluded and that all citizens feel comfortable in the City Hall. Bi-lingual signage could also be unwieldy and very costly. Cllr. McCausland also saw difficulties in bi-lingual signage but would have no objection to Irish signage on individual Party Rooms in the City Hall if requested.
5.6	After discussion, the Group agreed to re-affirm the current policy on language and to develop some of the suggestions received, as listed above.
6.0	MEMORIAL TO SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN
6.1	Hazel referred to a report, copies of which had been previously circulated, asking the Working Group to consider a number of options to implement the Council decision of 3 September 2007 " <i>... to construct a fitting memorial to the Servicemen and women who helped to maintain peace and law and order during the duration of Operation Banner.</i> "
6.2	Hazel reported that there were already 3 stained glass windows in the City Hall dedicated to various arms of the forces, including the UDR, British Army and the RUC/George Cross. She recommended that the Group consider alternative options at a similar cost to a stained glass window. She suggested that as the City Hall is sometimes crowded and busy during functions and events, a memorial placed outside the building might be more appropriate as it would allow members of the public to pay their respects quietly and have time for private reflection.
6.3	After discussion, the Working Group agreed that the memorial should be located in the City Hall grounds, preferably in the Garden of Remembrance and made several suggestions, including a bench with a suitable memorial plaque, tree planting etc.
6.4	The Group agreed that the Good Relations Manager should proceed to investigate various options and associated costs.
7.0	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
7.1	Friday 12 June at 11.00 a.m. – immediately prior to the Good Relations Partnership meeting.