

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MEMORABILIA WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillor Hendron	Chairman
	Councillor Kyle	
	Councillor McCarthy	
	Councillor McCausland	
	Councillor C. Maskey	
	Councillor Stoker	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Hazel Francey	Good Relations Manager
	Anne Deighan	Good Relations Officer
	Marie Craig	Good Relations Assistant (minutes)
	George Wright	Head of Facilities Management

1.0	Routine Matters
1.1	A Member requested that the minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2010 be revised to reflect the fact that he had not agreed with the view of the Working Group regarding the replacement of the plaques in the East Entrance area; the Working Group agreed to vary the minute accordingly. Accordingly, the reference in the report to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee which stated that the Memorabilia Working Group had agreed unanimously was incorrect. With this exception, the minutes were agreed as a correct record.
1.2	The Working Group referred to their meeting earlier that afternoon with representatives from Armagh City Council and noted that discussion of similar issues in Armagh Palace Demesne had been useful.
1.3	In the absence of the Good Relations Manager, Anne Deighan will arrange for party briefings in relation to the draft report prepared by Maureen Mackin, the Council's appointed consultant, on addressing the issue of balance and better representation within City Hall displays.
2.0	Somme Resolution
2.1	<p>The Good Relations Manager referred to the following report, which had previously been circulated to the Members:</p> <p>"Relevant Background Information</p> <p>Members will recall that the wording of the Annual Somme Resolution has been the subject of much discussion over the past year. The item was referred to Party Groups but no agreement was reached and a decision was deferred.</p> <p>At its meeting on 3 December 2009, the Memorabilia Working Group agreed to refer the matter direct to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for a decision, since it was of the view that the matter could not be resolved informally at Working Group level and would have to be determined by a vote.</p>

At the meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 11 December 2009, the Committee deferred a decision on the question of revised wording, to enable an opinion to be sought from the Somme Association in this regard.

Accordingly, the Good Relations Manager and the Chairman of the Memorabilia Working Group, Cllr Hendron, met on Monday 15 February 2010 with 4 representatives from the Somme Association: Dr Ian Adamson, Ms Eileen Bell, Mr John Coghlan and Ms Carole Walker. The Somme Association representatives stressed the cross-community nature of their organisation and said that their primary concern was to maintain an inclusive approach, to reflect the all-Ireland nature of the conflict of the Great War and to promote greater knowledge of it.

The Somme Association have always included the 16th Irish and other Divisions in their work and in any tours or ceremonies to mark battle anniversaries. For example, in 2010 the Somme Pilgrimage will follow the route taken by the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions during their service in the First World War and the Council will be sending official Party Group representatives on both the Somme Tour and the Gallipoli Pilgrimage.

The Somme Association representatives agreed that in their view the 1 July event should be inclusive, as their Association had always been inclusive, representing all sides. However, in relation to the wording to be used, the Somme Association representatives stated that ultimately, the actual text was an internal matter for the Council and would have to be determined by the political parties, since this was a Council resolution.

KEY ISSUES

The current resolution is:

That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their Province, and whose heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts.

There are some points of agreement. All 6 parties are content with the addition of the phrase "the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces" although the UUP and DUP would prefer the wording "the sons of Ulster and other forces".

Four parties (UU, Alliance, SDLP and Sinn Féin) are content with the wording changed from "Province" to "people."

The revised text would therefore read:

That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, **the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces** who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their **people**, and whose heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts.

The major point of disagreement is now in the final phrase. Three parties (Alliance, SDLP and Sinn Féin) want the text to finish after "never be forgotten". The Unionist parties do not want the final phrase "so long as the British Commonwealth lasts" to be deleted, but might agree to the deletion of the word "British", since "the Commonwealth" is the term in common current use.

	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>None</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Memorabilia Working Group is requested to note the comments above and to attempt to agree the wording of the Somme resolution for use from 1 July 2010 onwards; otherwise it will once more be referred to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for a decision.”</p>
2.2	<p>Cllr. McCausland tabled a proposed revised resolution as follows:</p> <p>That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast on the ... Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their Province.</p> <p>We also record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 16th (Irish) Division and Ulstermen who served in other forces. Their heroism will never be forgotten.</p>
2.3	<p>Members were of the view that the revised motion would need to be discussed among the Party groups in order to obtain agreement. A Member pointed out several problems that he saw with the revised motion which had been tabled. After discussion, the Working Group agreed to bring the proposed revised resolution tabled by Cllr. McCausland back to their various Party Groups for comments. It was agreed that the Party groups would arrange discussions between themselves on this issue.</p>
3.0	Memorial to Servicemen and Women
3.1	<p>The Good Relations Manager reminded the Working Group that this issue had originally been the subject of a Notice of Motion in September 2007. It had been referred to the Memorabilia Working Group in April 2009 to be considered within the overall review of memorabilia. At its meeting in August 2009, the Working Group had noted several options, ranging from £2,000 to £55,000.</p>
3.2	<p>The Good Relations Manager had reminded Members that there was no allocation within the budget for such a memorial and the matter had been referred to party groups.</p>
3.3	<p>The Member who had proposed the original Notice of Motion had now requested that the subject be considered again and the Good Relations Manager requested the views of the Working Group.</p>
3.4	<p>The Members agreed to raise the issue with their Party Groups in order to ascertain views. The Good Relations Manager will arrange to forward copies of the reports previously considered on this issue to all members of the Working Group.</p>
4.0	Any other business
4.1	<p>The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 8 April. If there is no Town Planning meeting that day, the meeting will commence at 4.30 pm.</p>