

MEETING OF HISTORIC CENTENARIES WORKING GROUP

~~Strategic Policy and Resources Committee~~

Monday, 7th February, 2011

Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, 7th February, 2011

~~MEETING OF HISTORIC CENTENARIES WORKING GROUP~~

Members present: Councillors Adamson, Hargey, Hendron, Kelly and Rodway.

In attendance: Mr. C. Quigley, Town Solicitor and
Assistant Chief
Executive;
Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. A. Deighan, Good Relations Officer;
Mr. R. Corbett, Records Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairman

The Members agreed that Councillor Hendron be elected Chairman of the Working Group for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections to be held in May, 2011.

Councillor Hendron took the Chair and thanked the Members for her election.

Election of Deputy Chairman

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Hargey be elected Deputy Chairman of the Working Group for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections to be held in May, 2011.

Councillor Hargey thanked the Members for her election.

Background Information and Principles

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Members that, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 10th December, had agreed to establish a Historical Centenaries Working Group on the undernoted terms:

“That an All-Party Working Group be established, which would be convened from representatives of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to consider historic centenaries which the Council might wish to consider over the next decade; the principles which should be applied to consider those issues and the actions that the Council might wish to take itself, carry out with others or support the celebrations of others.”

The Good Relations Manager referred to [the need to develop](#) principles that could ~~guide~~~~oversee~~~~the role of~~ the Working Group and referred to a report entitled: 'Reflecting the People', which had been compiled in 2010 by Mrs. M. Mackin, who had undertaken work for the Council in respect of a review of memorabilia within the City Hall. She suggested that the principles outlined within this document could assist the Working Group as a basis for progress. She then referred Members specifically to an extract within the report, viz., - 'Principles for Shared Space and Programming' in which Mrs. Mackin had suggested that the Council should seek to 'enhance the overall sense of shared experience and community involvement; to promote maximum participation by all communities and to provide access to attractive, high quality and unique services within the City Hall'.

2 **Historic Centenaries Working Group,**
Monday, 7th February, 2011

The report had also suggested that the Council could facilitate the exploration of differing perspectives in respect of the historical, political and cultural interpretations of history and develop the notion of a shared future whilst acknowledging the diversity of the City.

In addition, the Good Relations Manager referred to a speech by An Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen T.D, which had been delivered at University College Dublin in May, 2010 during which he outlined the principles which the Government of the Republic of Ireland would wish to utilise in its consideration of the decade of centenaries. An extract of that speech is set out hereunder:

“We want to see full acknowledgement of the totality of the island’s history and the legitimacy of all the traditions on the island that draw their identity and collective memory from our shared history. We want the process of commemoration to recognise the totality of the history of the period, and all of the diversity that this encompasses. We believe that mutual respect should be central to all commemorative events and that historical accuracy should be paramount.”

Councillor Adamson, wished to place on the record that he acted as the Chairman of the Somme Association; was a member of the Pan-Unionist Centenary Committee; was the Honorary Historian of the Ulster Unionist Party; and acted as an advisor to the Rev. Ian Paisley in respect of the decade of centenaries.

After discussion the Working Group noted the information provided by the Good Relations Manager.

Proposed Terms of Reference

The Good Relations Manager outlined the proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group, a copy of which is set out here-under:

“To consider historic centenaries and commemorations which the Council might wish to consider marking over the next decade;

to establish a core set of principles to be applied in considering those centenaries and in identifying appropriate events to be commemorated;

to consider what actions the Council might wish to take itself, carry-out with others or support the celebrations of others in the marking of those centenaries;

to give consideration to how a budget might be developed to support any actions agreed; and

to make recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee regarding the issues above.”

In addition, the Working Group considered a list of events which occurred between 1911 and 1925 which had been prepared by the Records Manager, which might be considered for commemoration during the period. A copy of the list is set out here-under:

Chronology of Historic Events: 1911 – 1925

21 st August 1911	Formation of Irish Women's Suffrage Federation Formed
28 th September 1912	Ulster Covenant/Declaration signed
31 st January 1913	Ulster Volunteer Force formed
26 th August 1913	ITGWU strike begins in Dublin <u>(Lock-Out) runs until January 1914</u>
19 th November 1913	Irish Citizen Army formed <u>(J Connolly etc)</u>
25 th November 1913	Irish Volunteers <u>(IVF)</u> established <u>(split when WW1 begins)</u>
24/25 April 1914	UVF gun-running <u>(Larne, Donaghadee, Bangor)</u>
26 th July 1914	Irish Volunteers gun-running <u>(Howth)</u>
20 th – 21 April 1916	‘Aud’ vessel carrying arms for Irish <u>Volunteers</u> intercepted – Roger Casement arrested, <u>later hanged</u>
24 th April 1916	————— Easter Rising begins
3 rd – 12 th May 1916	Execution of leaders of Easter Rising
1 st July 1916	Battle of Somme begins
1918	Conscription Crisis
December 1918	General Election – <u>massive v</u> ictory for Sinn Féin
21 st January 1919	First meeting of <u>Dáil Éireann</u> in Mansion <u>House,</u> <u>House,</u> Dublin. <u>Two policemen killed by Irish Volunteers (IRA)</u>

marking beginning of War of Independence ('Troubles')

December 1920

_____ Government of Ireland Act passed

_____ establishing 26-county parliament in
_____ South and 6-county parliament in
North.

22nd June 1921

_____ Opening of NI Parliament by George V

9th July 1921

Truce between IRA and British

4 Historic Centenaries Working Group,
Monday, 7th February, 2011

6th December 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty signed

7th January 1922 Treaty approved by Dáil Éireann
Sinn Féin
split leading to Irish Civil War, 1922 - 3.

November 1925 Recommendations of Irish Boundary
Commission leaked.

Border between Irish Free State and
Northern Ireland confirmed."

A number of Members referred to the list of anniversaries and welcomed the fact that it was an all-encompassing list and had included women's issues.

Councillor Adamson referred to the 1500th anniversary of the founding of Bobbio Abbey in northern Italy by St. Columbanus in the year 614. He indicated that the foundation of this monastery had been invaluable in the spread of Christianity throughout Europe and, although given that St. Columbanus had a direct linkage to Bangor, County Down, his impact on the wider area around in which Belfast was founded was also immense. He suggested that this anniversary could also be considered by the Working Group.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference and agreed to note the information which had been provided in respect of the anniversaries which would take place throughout the decade.

Proposed Workshop/Seminar for Members

The Working Group agreed to host, on ~~on~~ 28th-28th February, a briefing session, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, at which the local historians Eamon Phoenix and Gordon Lucy would provide an overview of the forthcoming decade of centenaries within their historical context.

Miscellaneous Correspondence

The Working Group noted information which had been provided on the hosting of a conference by the Community Good Relations Council on 21st-24st March in the City Hall in respect of the decade of centenaries. In addition, the Working Group noted that the Royal British Legion would be hosting a 'fun day' at The King's Hall Complex, Balmoral, on 4th June to mark its 90th-90th anniversary.