

Oireachtas Consultation Group on Commemorations

Meeting October 30th 2014

Minutes

Attendance:

Minister Heather Humphreys (Chairman)

Minister Aodhán O’Riordáin (Vice Chairman)

Deputy Aengus O’Snodaigh

Deputy Catherine Murphy

Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan

Deputy Michael Conaghan

Senator Mark Daly

Senator Jim D’Arcy

Dr Maurice Manning

Dr Martin Mansergh

Officials:

Mr Joe Hamill, Sec Gen, DAHG

Mr John Kennedy DAHG

Mr Terry Allen, National Monuments Service

Ms Mary Hurley, DAHG

Ms Sara Denny, DFAT,

Mr George Moir, OPW

Mr Ray Yeats, Dublin City Council

Mr George McCullough, Glasnevin Trust

Mr Jerry Kelleher, D/Taoiseach

Apologies:

Mr PJ Bradley; Deputy Anne Ferris

Observer

Ms Lorraine Hall

1. Introduction

Minister Humphreys was welcomed as the new Chair of the Group and with the members acknowledged the significant contribution and commitment to the Group's work of the former Chair Minister Jimmy Deenihan T.D .

Minister Humphreys introduced Minister of State Aodhán O'Riordain as Vice Chair of the Group together with Senator Jim D'Arcy as the new Fine Gael representative on the Group.

2. Minutes

Re-Broadcast of "1966 RTE Insurrection" documentary

- RTE Representative advised Senator Daly that a report is due on a review undertaken with regard to broadcast quality and rights. He explained that the same issue arose in relation to the production of Strumpet City.
- Senator Daly
 - asked for copies of the 2016 outline plan to be circulated and
 - raised the issue of arrangements for the Arbour Hill commemorations.
- It was agreed, in response to Deputy O'Snodaigh's re-iterated proposal that an Abbey Theatre representative would be invited to address the Group.
- Deputy O'Sullivan was assured that contact is ongoing with Fr. Joe Mallin, who is in Hong Kong, re the 2016 commemorations.
- The question of a single representative to speak on behalf of the National Cultural Institutions will be considered.
- Minister Humphreys' proposal agreed that future minutes of Groups' meetings be published on the commemorations website.

3. Events

- The significant volume of commemorative events that had taken place in the July-Sept period was noted. The Howth/Asgard commemoration was seen as a success and the fact that community and voluntary groups, along with the National Museum and Cultural Institutions ran complimentary events including at Kilcoole, was regarded as a positive outcome.
- Events commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of World War One at home and in Europe included:-

-Dedication of the Cross of Sacrifice at Glasnevin in July by President Higgins and HRH the Duke of Kent,

-National Ceremony held in the Pro Cathedral, presided over by Archbishop Martin.

-Completion and dedication of a monument to Wicklow's war dead at Woodenbridge in Co. Wicklow, including the anniversary of John Redmond's address to volunteers. The Department indicated that it would continue to engage with local elected representatives and other groups in respect of on associated commemorative possibilities.

- The presentation by Lord Ahmed, representing the British Government, of the first memorial stone (in memory of Lt. Deace) commemorating the first of the 35 soldiers from the island of Ireland awarded Victoria Cross medals during WWI.
Group members invited to provide views in terms of the appropriate final destination of these stones.

Other events noted.

- Official commemorations for Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith held at Glasnevin for the first time, with a separate commemoration held for Roger Casement.
- Launch of biography 'Judging Cosgrave' at the Royal Irish Academy; The Glasnevin Trust representative joined with Group in expressing concern at the damage inflicted on the grave of WT Cosgrave and others in Goldenbridge cemetery and reported that the Trust was actively monitoring and reviewing the security situation and would engage with local representatives and groups to enhance the protection of this site.
- Deputy O'Snodaigh reported on the unveiling of a plaque to the memory of Mary Spring Rice in County Limerick and asked the Group to support and publicise initiatives particularly relating to women.
- Minister Humphreys referred to the newly opened Cumann na mBán exhibition currently on display in Ballina.
- Group agreed with Deputies Daly and Murphy regarding need for improved advance notice to the Group and public for upcoming events;
- Senator Daly also raised the need to have appropriate traffic management plans in place for solemn events and also suggested that closer engagement with RTE could be pursued.
- Deputy Murphy suggested that a formal engagement with the relevant Oireachtas Committees might serve the purpose of raising the profile of Commemorations.
- Dr Mansergh asked the Group to note the performance of 'Silent Night' and 'Joyeux Noel' in Wexford on October 24th and to assist in publicising the World War 1 related National Opera events.

- The Glasnevin Trust Representative reported on a forthcoming Kevin Barry commemoration in early November similar to the Collins/Griffiths events and undertook to advise the Group of the programme of events at Glasnevin.

4. Projects

- **GPO Project**
Written report from An Post reviewed; agreed Group to visit site in due course;
- **Kilmainham Courthouse**
OPW representative reported good progress with project on schedule; options under consideration to accommodate larger numbers of visitors at the site, particularly in 2016. Deputy O'Snodaigh asked if OPW could consider extending the opening hours from suitable date during the summer months, particularly in 2015 and 2016 for April-October period, including consideration of midnight tours. The OPW official indicated that longer opening hour's scheme had been piloted in Dublin Castle this year and was considered a success.

- **Military Service Pensions Archive**

Second release of material from the MSPA online was noted – comprising 50,000 records including significant material relating to the civil war. The Archive would have 300,000 records available by the centenary of the Rising. The conversion of the infirmary building in Rathmines for the new visitor facility and reading room is planned for completion by end 2015. Profile of material to be released to be provided at suggestion of Deputy O'Snodaigh.

Dr Mansergh noted the increased print media reference to the Archives.

Dr Maurice Manning mentioned that the title 'Military Service Pensions Archive' did not encourage greater public accessibility and wondered if ways could be considered to improve audience appeal. RTE representative agreed to examine how this aspect might be progressed.

- **Richmond Barracks**

Deputy Conaghan welcomed the public launch of the project and the securing of the necessary funding to restore the gymnasium building, which is now subject of a tendering process. He indicated that the Richmond Barracks group would work with Glasnevin Trust to maintain Goldenbridge cemetery.

Deputy O'Snodaigh drew attention to two book launches (Liz Gillis & Liam O'Meara) at Richmond Barracks shortly and agreed to circulate details of these events. Mr Ray Yeats,

Dublin City Arts Officer, stressed the need for joined-up narrative in relation to Richmond Barracks and the other projects being advanced. The Group agreed with Mr Yeats that the cultural and emotional resonance of events should be considered in parallel with the literal events themselves.

Deputy Murphy asked Mr Yeats and the OPW to consider the continuous history of sites including the social history of, for example, Keogh Square at Richmond Barracks. Mr Yeats indicated that the continuum of events was important to DCC in their consideration.

- **Moore Street.**

The DAHG National Monuments official reported that Chartered Land had accepted the revised plan previously approved by Minister Deenihan and agreed to proceed with this revision. This was understood to end Minister Humphrey's legal function in regard to this site. It was noted that a proposal was due before Dublin City Council whereby the national monument site would pass into the ownership of Dublin City Council.

5 Presentation

At Senator Daly's invitation, Rev. Michael Cavanagh of the Thomas F Meagher Foundation introduced his proposal to present tricolours to schools and for a programme of education including scholarships that would enhance students' understanding of the tricolour and its symbolism.

Rev. Cavanagh indicated that the Foundation wished to draw attention to the original symbolism of the tricolour as a symbol of peace and indicated that the Foundation had the support of a number of sponsors for their goal

In response to Minister O'Riordáin's query as to whether consideration had been given to the maintenance and upkeep of flags over the medium term, Rev Cavanagh agreed that the flagpole and brass represented the major cost, but that this would have a long service life. Rev Cavanagh also suggested that an annual 'flag week' would provide an opportunity for maintenance and renewal as appropriate. Senator Daly stressed that the flag proposed was for internal rather than outdoor display.

Dr Mansergh highlighted the relationship of the Irish tricolour to the French, and the 1848 rebellion as a symbolic act – and asked Rev Cavanagh to consider this aspect and the potential to use sites including 'the War House' in Tipperary that a national monument in OPW ownership.

In thanking Rev Cavanagh for the presentation the Group indicated they would consider the project together with proposals for the presentation of proclamations to schools.

6. Stamps

Minister Humphreys asked that consideration would be given to acknowledging the ordinary volunteers who served in the Rising alongside the leaders. The Group agreed to pass this view to the representatives of the Philatelic Advisory Group.

7&8 – Budget 2015 and plans for centenary commemoration.

Minister Humphreys indicated that she proposed to continue following the historical timeline of centenaries and anniversaries, with 2015 to feature centenaries of the Gallipoli landings, the sinking of the Lusitania and the O'Donovan Rossa funeral, alongside other anniversaries including Columbanus 1400, and the Yeats 150 project.

In relation to the Budget, Minister Humphreys indicated that €4m had been committed by Government for use in 2015, to support a range of events at a local and national level, with emphasis on educational and cultural projects.

Minister Humphries advised the Group that an outline plan for the 2016 centenary would be presented within the next two weeks at a public launch to which the Group members would be invited, to be followed up with opportunities for public consultation and submissions and stressed her commitment to ensure that these plans would be respectful, inclusive and appropriate.

In response to Group's comments/queries re funding allocations, Departmental representatives stressed that there would be many calls on the €4m. made available in the Budget and that a framework would assist in providing a guideline for the allocations of funding. It was noted that costs relating to, for example, a parade on O'Connell St, organised by OPW, could be substantial.

Deputy O'Sullivan, Murphy and O'Snodaigh strongly supported the provision of funding for local and community groups as small grants to such recipients could produce economically efficient projects. It was pointed out Senior Departmental Officials had considered this aspect and had concerns that limited funding could result in a large volume of applicants being disappointed, but agreed it was important to support and develop relationship with local and community groups. Deputy O'Sullivan noted the success of local groups organising

events in the case of the 1913 Lockout centenary and asked if that model could be followed. Mr Hamill indicated that the Department.

Senator D'Arcy recalled the example of 'The Gathering' project where small funds were put to good use by community groups. Senator D'Arcy also asked if schools could be given particular consideration as part of the framework, citing the success of the 1966 commemorations.

Deputy Murphy highlighted the need for consultation and stressed that the needs of the National Cultural Institutions in arranging and organising relevant events would be highlighted. The potential for commercial funding, when appropriate was also raised, or the possibility for non-exchequer supports for local communities.

It was agreed that the Department would advance consideration of these once the framework plan was launched, and that the Department had pursued relationships where appropriate, citing the recent example of Google's involvement in digitisation and publication of Flanders war records. Engagement with the cultural institutions would be included.

Deputy O'Snodaigh:-

- welcomed the news that the plan for 2016 was being published after he first raised the need for this in 2006;

- re-iterated the need for the provision of small grants;

- reminded Minister Humphreys that determinations on projects would be needed in a timely manner, to enable groups who may be refused central funding to pursue alternative approaches and noted that quality events required to be properly funded;

- suggested that an assurance of funding for 2016, even if no monies were available in 2015, would enable bodies including schools to plan submissions with timelines for completion by 2016;

- suggested that funding could be diverted from elsewhere – e.g. the National Lottery – if required to ensure that events of appropriate calibre be provided.

Deputy Conaghan recommended using the Arts Officers' network and the Local Authorities structure in general in involving local communities' events, which would also ensure consistency of quality and coherence to the programme.

Dr Manning, in welcoming the notice of the launch of a plan, suggested that consideration might be given to the idea that external funding, including commercial funding, would be sought where appropriate, outside of the core programme., as commercial entities have potential to support activities.

Minister Aodhán O’Riordáin stressed the need for public participation and engagement and said that he would seek to ensure that historical documents were treated as living documents, and that initiatives relating to schools should include practical activities as well as one-off topics. Other suggestions were discussed including a ‘schools day’ to fall in April 2016.

Senator Daly asked that the ‘plan’ under discussion be referred to as a ‘draft plan’ to reinforce the fact that this was open to consultation and also mentioned that relatives need to be accommodated in the centenary programme in a way that was appropriate and inclusive. Minister Humphreys agreed that such inclusivity was important.

Next meeting:- date to be confirmed.

Activities/events undertaken since last meeting

[23 October 2014: Evening of remembrance for those affected by the First World War, Pearse Street Public Library, Dublin](#)

[22 October 2014: Publication of Irish Times supplement on Ireland and World War One](#)

[21 October 2014: Launch of ‘Judging W.T. Cosgrave’, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin](#)

[17 October 2014: Launch of ‘Irish Anzacs’ database, University College Dublin](#)

[16 October 2014: Lecture on ‘Captain Henry Gallagher DSO: from Finner to Flanders’, Donegal Co. Museum, Letterkenny,](#)

[16 October 2014: Launch of online Monica Roberts Collection, Dublin City Library and Archive](#)

[16 October 2014: Announcement of funding allocation for centenary projects in Budget 2015](#)

[10-11 October 2014: ‘Great War roadshow’, Loughrea, Co. Galway](#)

[9 October 2014: History Ireland ‘Hedge School’: ‘Limerick at war, 1914-18’, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick](#)

[9 October 2014: ‘The Iron harvest’: World War One exhibition, Farmleigh, Dublin](#)

[9 October 2014: Minister Humphreys opens online WW1 project at University of Limerick](#)

[9 October 2014: Beginning of lecture series on Howth gun-running and the Asgard, Dublin](#)

[7 October 2014: Beginning of lunch-time lecture series on ‘Dublin and the Great War’, Dublin City Hall](#)

[6 October 2014: Roy Foster lecture on 'The revolutionary generation in Ireland, 1890-1923', Royal Irish Academy, Dublin](#)

[2 October 2014: Second release of files from Military Service \(1916-23\) Pensions Collection, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin](#)

[2 October 2014: Minister Humphreys announces plans for renovation of Richmond Barracks, Dublin](#)

[1 October 2014: Church of Ireland Gazette for 1914 made available online](#)

[30 September 2014: Irish Research Council announces funding for 'Decade of Centenary' projects](#)

[25 September 2014: Catriona Pennell lecture on 'Ireland's entry into war, 1914: Acceptance or refusal?', Ulster Museum, Belfast](#)

[24 September 2014: 'Remembering World War One: the Donegal story', Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny](#)

[21 September 2014: Rededication of WW1 graves, Deans Grange Cemetery, Dublin](#)

[20-21 September 2014: "'Their name liveth for evermore": Cahir and World War One, 1914-18', Cahir, Co. Tipperary](#)

[19 September 2014: World War One event for Culture Night, Holy Cross College, Drumcondra, Dublin](#)

[19 September 2014: 'The road to Woodenbridge', Culture Night, UCD Newman House, Dublin](#)

[18 September 2014: Opening of Wicklow World War One memorial, Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow](#)

[18 September 2014: Pauric Travers lecture on 'Ireland's Home Rule Bill and John Redmond, MP', Wexford Library](#)

[18 September 2014: Home Rule seminar, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 2](#)

[13 September 2014: World War One conservation open day, Newry and Mourne Museum, Co. Down](#)

[10 September 2014: Speech by Amb Daniel Mulhall at 'Ireland, Wales and the First World War' conference, Cardiff University, Wales](#)

[4 September 2014: Minister Humphreys opens Cumann na mBan exhibition, Ballina, Co. Mayo](#)

[4 September 2014: Launch of 'Centenary Mayo' website, Castlebar, Co. Mayo](#)

[29 August 2014: Ecumenical service of remembrance for the dead of the First World War, Portarlington, Co. Laois](#)

[28 August 2014: Elaine Callinan lecture on 'Ireland and the Great War', Bunclody Public Library, Co. Wexford](#)

[23 August 2014: Commemoration to mark first Irish Victoria Cross winner of World War One, Glasnevin Cemetery](#)

[18 August 2014: Opening of exhibition on First World War, Glasnevin Cemetery Museum, Dublin](#)

[17 August 2014: Roger Casement lecture, Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin](#)

[17 August 2014: Annual commemoration of the deaths of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, Glasnevin Cemetery](#)

[16 August 2014: Minister Heather Humphreys attends Royal British Legion commemoration, Armagh](#)

[11 August 2014: Roy Foster lecture on 'The revolutionary generation in Ireland', Waterford](#)

[10—14 August 2014: Parnell Summer School, Avondale, Co. Wicklow](#)

[9 August 2014: Decade of Centenaries conference, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim](#)

[7 August 2014: William Mulligan lecture on 'The road to war', Ulster Museum, Belfast](#)

[5—6 August 2014: Launch of exhibition on 'Ringsend seamen in the Great War', Dublin City Library and unveiling of memorial](#)

[4 August 2014: President Higgins attends ceremony to mark outbreak of World War One, Liège, Belgium](#)

[4 August 2014: Minister Heather Humphreys attends centenary commemorations of the outbreak of WW1 in Glasgow and Belfast](#)

[4 August 2014: Beginning of Cavan commemorative programme to mark centenary of outbreak of World War One, Cavan](#)

[4 August 2014: Lecture series and exhibition on First World War, Féile an Phobail, Belfast](#)

[3 August 2014: Official state commemoration of outbreak of World War One, Pro-Cathedral, Dublin](#)

[1—3 August 2014: Commemoration to mark outbreak of World War One and associated events, Castlebar, Co. Mayo](#)

[31 July 2014: Dedication of Cross of Sacrifice, Glasnevin Cemetery](#)

[30 July 2014: Launch of Irish Life and Lore oral history collection on 'The Irish country house and the Great War', National Library](#)

[28 July 2014: RTE programming schedule for First World War centenary begins](#)

[27 July 2014: ASGARD commemoration at Howth](#)

[26—27 July 2014: Heritage weekend to mark centenary of Kilcoole gun-running, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow](#)

[26 July 2014: 'The Howth gun-running: 100 years on', National Museum, Collins Barracks](#)

[26 July 2014: 'Great War Roadshow', Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin](#)

[25 July 2014: Saint Patrick's Cathedral World War One exhibition available online](#)

24 July 2014: Release of World War One commemorative stamps

17 July 2014: 'Great War Roadshow' concert, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

16 July 2014: Presentation of replica 'Asgard' dinghy and announcement of Howth gun-running/Bachelors's Walk commemoration, Howth,

13 July 2014: National Day of Commemoration, Royal Hospital Kilmainham

12 July 2014: Annual ceremony of remembrance and wreath laying, National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge

12 July 2014: 'World War One Roadshow', Trinity College Dublin

1 July 2014: Irish Government represented at Somme commemoration, Belfast

1 July 2014: London event marks centenary of the Irish Home Rule Bill being signed into law

1 July 2014: Publication of History Ireland special issue on 'Ireland & WW1'

29 June 2014: Ecumenical service of remembrance for Ireland's World War One veterans, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

27-29 June 2014: Byrne-Perry Summer School, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

26 June 2014: Launch of 'Out of the dark: 1914-1918: South Dubliners who fell in the Great War'