

Centenary bodies meet to discuss plans for Northern Ireland's anniversary



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The Centenary Forum announced by the Prime Minister on his visit to NI in August meets to discuss plans to mark the 100 year anniversary

Secretary of State and Minister of State welcome views from all communities on marking this important milestone for the United Kingdom

Lord Bew and Historical Advisory Panel provide independent advice and insight to inform preparations for the centenary

The NI Centenary Forum met today to progress plans to mark 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation.

The Forum, whose membership was publicly confirmed today and which is chaired by NIO Director of Communications, Andy Pike, is composed of statutory, political, business, community and civic voices, from a wide range of perspectives and interests.

The inclusion of these diverse perspectives is vital to facilitate respectful discussion around this key moment in our shared history. Whether through the Forum, or through wider engagement, every effort will be made by the UK Government to ensure these perspectives are included and respected.

At today's meeting, the advisory group discussed a range of proposals to facilitate national recognition and international awareness of the anniversary, that will reflect on the past and importantly, build for Northern Ireland's future. The centenary can be an opportunity to showcase what is best about Northern Ireland around the world; this programme of centenary events

will reinforce the UK Government's commitment to a prosperous Northern Ireland and levelling up through economic development and investment opportunities. It will also celebrate Northern Ireland's people, business, culture, arts, and young talent, looking forward to a positive future.

The Centenary Historical Advisory Panel has also started work, bringing together a range of expertise and perspectives. It is independently chaired by Lord Bew, Emeritus Professor at Queen's University, Belfast.

This Panel will provide advice to the Forum, and to the Government, on the historical facts of the centenary, and its work will be guided by the Principles for Remembering. As part of its role, the Panel will seek to develop and curate accessible content which encourages a deeper public awareness of the history of the centenary.

Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Robin Walker MP said:

"The Centenary Forum provides a fantastic opportunity for a broad spectrum of people, including those from across the political parties, business, tourism and the voluntary and community sectors, to come together to shape the delivery of an ambitious programme of events to mark this significant national anniversary.

"I want to see the whole of our society represented on the Centenary Forum, so that together we can progress this unique and exciting opportunity to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland.

"I thank the Historical Advisory Panel, chaired by Professor Lord Bew, for their contribution in bringing strong and independent academic rigour to our approach to marking this important anniversary."

Professor Lord Bew said:

"It is important that the centenary is marked in such a way that recognises the historical facts of the period. This Panel, which will be academically rigorous and independent in its

research, includes a range of perspectives and research interests; I am also eager to collaborate more widely with historians and researchers across these islands. I look forward to working with them to develop key themes and collectively enrich public understanding of the events of 1920-22, and their implications.”

Notes to editors

Composition of the Centenary Forum:

Doug Beattie MC MLA

Eileen Chan-Hu, CRAIC NI

Stephen Farry MP

Rev. Mervyn Gibson, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland

Ivy Goddard, Inter-Ethnic Forum

Peter Harbinson, Invest NI

Howard Hastings

Jacqueline Irwin, Community Relations Council

David Jackson, SOLACE NI

Ian Marshall

John McGrillen, Tourism NI

Paul Mullan, National Lottery Heritage Fund

Luke Patterson, NI Youth Parliament

Canon David Porter

Gavin Robinson MP

Cormac Savage, NI Youth Parliament

Jonathan Stewart, British Council

Liza Wilkinson, TIDES Training

Richard Williams, Northern Ireland Screen

Composition of the Centenary Historical Advisory Panel

Professor Lord Bew MRIA, Emeritus Professor, Queen's University Belfast

Dr Brian Barton, FRHistS, Independent Historian

Dr Marie Coleman, FRHistS, SFHEA, Reader in Modern Irish History, Queen's University Belfast

Dr Niamh Gallagher, Lecturer in Modern British and Irish History, University of Cambridge and Fellow of St. Catharine's College

Dr Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, University of Sheffield

Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Reader in History and Politics, Queen's University Belfast

Professor Henry Patterson, Emeritus Professor of Politics, University of Ulster

Professor Graham Walker, Professor of Political History, Queen's University Belfast

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