

## GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

### MEMORABILIA WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2010

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Councillor McCausland	Deputy Chairman
	Councillor Ekin	Nominee of Councillor Hendron
	Councillor Kyle	
	Councillor McCarthy	
	Councillor C. Maskey	
	Councillor Stoker	
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Hazel Francey	Good Relations Manager
	Anne Deighan	Good Relations Officer
	Marie Craig	Business Support Assistant (minutes)
	George Wright	Head of Facilities Management
	Maureen Mackin	Consultant
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Councillor Hendron	

<b>1.0</b>	<b>ROUTINE MATTERS (MINUTES OF MEETING OF 03 DECEMBER 2009)</b>
1.1	In the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Councillor McCausland, took the chair.
1.2	The minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2009 were taken as read and signed as correct.
1.3	<b>Arising from the minutes</b> Hazel advised that the closing date for submissions for the commission for artwork to reflect Irish history and heritage was 12.00 noon the following day. There has been huge interest in this, with over 30 submissions already received and around 300 enquiries made. The selection panel will meet on Tuesday 9 February at 4.30 pm to draw up a shortlist.
1.4	Hazel reported that she will meet with representatives of the Somme Association on 15 February to discuss the Somme resolution, as requested by the SP & R Committee in Dec 2009.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>PLAQUES IN THE EAST ENTRANCE</b>
2.1	Hazel referred to a report, copies of which had been previously circulated, outlining the background to the display of plaques within the City Hall. They had originally been located in the Reception Hall and Robing Room and moved to the East Entrance in 1999, grouped under 4 themes. In 2002, an Advisory Panel had recommended that they be archived, as they were "of little historical or artistic value and could be replaced by items of greater merit". In 2004, the Policy & Resources Committee had decided to archive the plaques themed under <i>Cities</i> and <i>Organisations</i> , but had deferred a decision on the <i>Naval</i> and <i>Regimental</i> themed plaques.
2.2	All the remaining plaques had been removed during the City Hall refurbishment and the question of their re-instatement had been the subject of substantial recent discussion at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.
2.3	The Good Relations Manager reported that she had sought the advice of two local experts, recognised as being authorities in their own particular specialist fields i.e. naval and regimental memorabilia. The experts were aware of the sensitivities of the issue and were requested to identify those plaques which were of greatest importance or which had the closest relationship to the city of Belfast.

2.4	Each expert had submitted a list highlighting the significant plaques and the Good Relations Manager therefore recommended that the 39 plaques so identified (list attached as Appendix 1) should be retained and replaced permanently on the East Staircase area, with appropriate explanatory signage.
2.5	Members pointed out that 2 additional plaques – from the <i>Royal Sussex Regiment</i> and the <i>Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas</i> – also had significant local connections.
2.6	The <i>Royal Sussex Regiment</i> had been formed in Belfast in 1701 and was originally known as the Belfast Regiment; in addition, the Regiment had been granted the Freedom of the City of Belfast in 1961. The Gurkhas had been founded by General Frederick Young, from Culdaff in Donegal and have strong connections with the predecessors of the Irish Fusiliers.
2.7	<p>A Member expressed concern that replacing the plaques in the East Entrance at this stage would restrict options for additional items in the future. He asked if consideration could be given to delaying the replacing of the plaques in the East Entrance until a location for all items had been agreed in totality. After discussion, the Working Group agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reduced number of plaques identified as having a close or significant relationship with the city of Belfast, with the addition of those from the <i>Royal Sussex Regiment</i> and the <i>Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas</i>, should be retained as being of greatest value and interest, to be replaced in the East Staircase area on a permanent basis, with appropriate explanatory signage. A caveat was added that a re-location of the plaques will not be ruled out in the longer term.</li> <li>• the remaining plaques be offered on long-term loan, or donated, to an appropriate external agency, as outlined in the report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>MEMORABILIA IN THE CITY HALL – ‘REFLECTING THE PEOPLE, A CITY HALL FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY’ – DRAFT REPORT BY MAUREEN MACKIN</b>
3.1	Hazel reminded the group that Maureen Mackin had been commissioned to prepare a report (copy attached as Appendix 2) to address the issue of balance and better representation within the City Hall displays. Her draft report had been circulated to Members, including recommendations, an anticipated time scale and estimated costs. Hazel welcomed Maureen to the meeting to give an outline of her main recommendations, stating that the report should be regarded as a draft, providing a general framework for the way ahead.
3.2	Maureen thanked members who had contributed to the report by speaking individually to her or by attending the brain-storming session in November 2009 which had been arranged for all members of the Council. She had recommended that the Council should take a broad approach to the development of balance within the City Hall through commissioning of additional artworks and implementation/hosting of a high quality and diverse programme of events.
3.3	There were certain actions that could be completed quickly i.e. amendments to tour scripts and the promotion of the East Entrance exhibition space. There are also opportunities for external funding, for example, Heritage Lottery Fund and Peace III funding. Maureen has also recommended that, subject to receipt of external funding, a dedicated officer should be appointed to support the development and implementation of the programme in order to deliver an ambitious and high quality programme. This programme would need a strong marketing and communication strategy and would also need to link in with other Council strategies such as cultural tourism and city of festivals.

3.4	Councillor McCausland thanked Maureen and invited comments and questions from Members on the report. Members were generally in agreement with the recommendations of the report in principle and were happy to agree that an application should be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund under this general framework. The Good Relations Manager reported that additional information on resources, delivery framework and timeframe would be required before the application reached a final stage.
3.5	A Member enquired if a catalogue of City Hall artefacts would be available on-line. Maureen replied that on-line resources will be examined at some stage and the Heritage Lottery Fund would be keen to see this implemented, as access is one of their key considerations.
3.6	A Member noted that although the Council was keen to encourage greater use of the building there might be security concerns if the City Hall is to be used more frequently. Maureen reported that the Council could develop partnerships with other organisations and offer the City Hall as a venue. The report stated that all citizens were encouraged to use the City Hall and not just cultural elites; initiatives would be suggested which would have broad appeal to all the population.
3.7	After discussion, the Working Group agreed the draft report in principle and supported an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to be submitted under this framework, with more detailed reports being submitted to future meetings of the Working Group. They also agreed that party group briefings should be held in parallel with the application being prepared to the Heritage Lottery Fund – these briefings would help to inform the application.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
4.1	The Good Relations Manager reminded the Working Group that the Council had agreed at its meeting on 1 October 2009 that a Trade Union flag should be displayed in the City Hall as soon as possible. Hazel advised that the flag had now been cleaned and framed and was ready for display. A suggested location was opposite the Dockers' Strike Window on the ground floor as the two items had clear links. The Group agreed that the TU Flag should be displayed there.
4.2	Hazel informed the group that a local restaurant had recently been flooded and Mr M Deane had offered to lend some notable Oliver Jeffers drawings to the City Hall for temporary display, pending the restaurant re-opening. The Group noted that these would be located temporarily along the corridor outside the Chief Executive's office.
4.3	The Good Relations Manager reported that she had received a request from representatives of Armagh City Council to meet with the Working Group. They were examining similar issues round the question of attempting to achieve greater balance, in their case within Armagh Palace Demesne. It was agreed that they will be invited to meet the Group on Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March at 4.30 pm – an hour before the start of the next scheduled Working Group meeting.