

**Minutes of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum
and Historic Centenaries Working Group
Friday, 18TH October, 2013**

Present:	Councillor Hendron (Chairman), Aldermen Ekin and Rodgers; Councillors Attwood, Hanna and McVeigh.
In attendance:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive; Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager and Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.
Agenda Item 1	Apologies
	Apologies were received from Alderman Smyth.
Agenda Item 2	Minutes
	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 th September were agreed.
Agenda Item 3	Declarations of Interest
3.1	Councillor McVeigh declared an interest in item 9 in so far as he was a Member of SIPTU.
Agenda item 4	Language Policy – Revised Draft
4.1	The Group considered a report in relation to the revised Language Policy. A copy of the report is appended to the minutes.
4.2	After discussion, the Group agreed: (i) to defer consideration of the main language policy for one month to allow the political parties to consider it further; and (ii) that the current guidelines should be extended to incorporate Irish versions of the official logo and branding since this would regularise the current position and that it be left it to Corporate Communications to devise an appropriate design to align with current fonts and style. The Irish version would then be available for use by individual Members and organisations.
Agenda item 5	Decade of Centenaries – Proposed Programme: Hedge School - Volunteers 1913

5.1	The Joint Group was reminded that, at its last meeting, it had noted that a preliminary programme was being developed for the period 1914-1918 under the <i>Decade of Centenaries</i> theme.
5.2	The Group agreed that specific events could be incorporated into the programme if they were of sufficient relevance to the Council's own approach.
5.3	The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that the <i>History Ireland</i> group had organised a "wandering series" of four Hedge Schools in 2013. The Hedge School was a panel discussion of about 75 minutes duration, involving four speakers—each an expert on an aspect of the topic under discussion, with substantial audience participation.
5.4	The Hedge School format appealed to a wide audience—the mixture of an expert panel and active audience participation in the debate made a lively, entertaining and informative event. <i>History Ireland</i> had now piloted a number of such events in conjunction with the National Library, local museum and community groups, as well as festivals and summer schools over the last three years.
5.5	Hedge Schools have been presented on a wide range of topics—of international, national and local interest. They provided a novel and interesting way to bring historical topics to life, appealing both to special interest groups and to a wide range of audiences.
5.6	<p><i>History Ireland</i> was proposing to organise a Hedge School in Belfast on the evening of Tuesday, 10th December, 2013 on the subject <i>Volunteers in 1913: two traditions or one?</i></p> <p>It summarised the content as follows:</p> <p><i>"A century ago the imminence of Home Rule provoked the founding of two private armies in Ireland: the Ulster Volunteers (January) to oppose it and the Irish Volunteers (November) to defend it. Both went on to become part of their respective communities' subsequent 'narratives': the UVF in the 36th (Ulster Division) at the Battle of the Somme and after 1920 in the Ulster Special Constabulary; and the Irish Volunteers in the 1916 Easter Rising and the subsequent War of Independence. But do these divergent paths obscure certain commonalities—in inspiration (the Volunteers of the eighteenth century?) and in the day-to-day experiences of the rank-and-file. Was the volunteering phenomenon unique to Ireland or were there parallels elsewhere in Europe? "</i></p>
5.7	Since the subject matter of the event sat well within the Council's own set of principles for the <i>Decade of Centenaries</i> and complemented our own approach, in terms of perspectives and breadth of topics, the Good Relations Manager proposed that that could form an element within the Council's own programme for that period and that the City Hall would be an appropriate venue, with small scale hospitality would being provided from within existing budgets.
5.8	The Group agreed to include the Hedge School event as outlined in the Council's own programme and allow the use of the City Hall for that purpose, subject to the agreement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Agenda Item 6	International Brigade – Correspondence from Local Secretary
6.1	The Group was advised that correspondence had been received from the local Secretary of the International Brigade Commemoration Committee requesting the Council to provide a memorial or commemorative piece, in the City Hall or its grounds, to commemorate the Belfast men who fought fascism in Spain and those who supported them.
6.2	The letter pointed out that the organisation had already placed a memorial at Writers’ Square in the city.
6.3	The Group was reminded that the issue of memorabilia in the City Hall was the subject of ongoing work and that a draft project plan was being prepared.
6.4	Accordingly, the Group was requested to consider whether this suggestion was of sufficient priority to be included within this draft project plan.
6.5	The Group agreed that the request from the International Brigade Commemoration Committee be considered within the context of the overall review of memorabilia in the City Hall and its grounds.
Agenda Item 7	Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth
7.1	The Group was advised that a request had been received from the Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth organisation asking that the Council fly the Commonwealth Flag on Commonwealth Day on 10 th March, 2014.
7.2	The Group agreed to defer consideration of the request to enable further information to be obtained and for a further report to be submitted in due course.
Agenda Item 8	Community Covenant – Correspondence Received
8.1	The Good Relations Manager advised the Joint Group that a letter had been received from a local support organisation enquiring whether the Council had signed up to the Community Covenant and giving general information about the Covenant.
	The letter pointed out that Community Covenants complemented the armed forces covenant and aimed to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area by promoting understanding and awareness among the public about issues that affected the armed forces.
8.2	The Group agreed to defer consideration of the request to enable further information to be obtained and for a further report to be submitted in due course.

Agenda Item 9	Request from SIPTU – Wreath Laying Ceremony
9.1	The Group was advised the correspondence had been received from SIPTU seeking permission to lay a wreath at the Staff Memorial Fountain in the Courtyard of the City Hall on Friday, 25 th October at 11.00a.m.
9.2	The wreath-laying would part of a series of Commemorative events planned by Council workers on that date on the occasion of the 20 th anniversary of the deaths of two members of SIPTU who were civilian victims of the troubles.
9.3	The Group agreed to accede to the request.