

Northern Ireland: Committee meeting minutes, March 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Northern Ireland on 8 March 2022 at The Mount Conference Centre, Belfast, and Hybrid Teams meeting.

Members

- Mukesh Sharma (Chair)
- Angelina Fusco
- Darren Rice – via Teams
- Jim McGreevy
- Olive Hill
- Sheila McClelland

Apologies

- Jacqueline Irwin

Committee business

1. Welcomes, apologies and declarations of interest

Jacqueline Irwin had sent her apologies.

2. Minutes from the meeting held 23 November 2021 and matters arising

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

3. Chair's report

The Chair updated the Committee on his activities since the last Committee meeting.

Two highlights from the Chair were:

- A great online event hosted by the Jewish community highlighted a project through the Shared History Fund. Upwards of 60 people attended, many from around the globe and who had previously lived in NI.
- Caledon Woolstore – a social enterprise investment that is already having a considerable impact in the village. Great enthusiasm for the project locally and ministerially. Great example of how our investment can make a huge difference in a village setting.
- Brownlow House – An underground HQ war museum. A very interesting project with a great story to tell.

Committee members who had attended events provided an update on their own event activities. Feedback from Committee members on positive experiences of working with Heritage Fund team informs all visits.

Gifts of appreciation were presented to the three departing Committee members – Angelina Fusco, Sheila McClelland and Jacqueline Irwin.

Thanks were made for their time and commitment during their seven year period with the Heritage Fund.

4. Corporate report

Commercial in confidence.

The Committee noted the report.

5. Country report

At this point the Chair and the room congratulated Paul Mullan, Director of Northern Ireland at the Heritage Fund, on his recently presented Honorary Professorships.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and key updates:

- A conference on the Decade of Centenaries, which remembers the events that took place from 1912 to 1922, was held at the end of February in conjunction with the Community Relations Council. The event was facilitated

by the Speaker's Office at the Assembly. There will now be a period of review with every expectation that this work will continue. A conference later in 2022 will look forwards towards more recent anniversaries.

- The Committee commented positively on the work that had been undertaken and on the great variety of groups that have been able to avail of the funding and asked about what may happen next.
- Paul Mullan responded that it is an ongoing process with segments of the population looking more at diversity related issues which reflect the social changes we've seen in NI. The Engagement team is working to ensure our pipeline reflects those changes and we are beginning to see new organisations applying to us.
- There is a need to reflect on how far we have travelled and the importance to many of telling their stories. The Heritage Fund will continue to work collaboratively to champion Principles for Remembering and the work that has been already undertaken with the Shared History Fund. Contested heritage remains part of this place and the Heritage Fund will continue to work with a range of partners to ensure the challenges are met and the work delivers public benefit.
- The Committee were reminded that many of the events across the past 10 years were recorded and are available to view on www.principlesforremembering.com.

6. Country budget

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the key updates:

- The Chair had represented Committee at the Delegated meeting for decisions to ensure due diligence and governance.
- The pressure on the pipeline remains on applications received under the £250k ceiling level and those above Committee threshold of £250k.

SFF Development round applications for discussion and decision

7. Saintfield Heritage Community Park

Applicant: Saintfield Development Association

Request: Development grant of £135,947 (88% of total project costs) and potential delivery grant of £709,033 (87%).

Project: The creation of a community park on the outskirts of Saintfield village, currently known as Windmill field. The project aims to enhance the environmental and habitat value of the field, stabilise and provide access to the scheduled monuments on site, in addition to delivering projects to engage with the local community. This park will provide free access to a wide range of people, improving its condition whilst having the potential to improve biodiversity. The applicant intends to merge with a local charity who run the adjacent Community Centre, which would benefit the project and its sustainability.

The Committee for Northern Ireland **awarded** a grant of £135,947 (88%) and potential delivery grant of £709,033 (87%).

8. The Strand, the lasting picturehouse

Applicant: Strand Arts Centre

Request: Development grant of £254,931 (85% of total costs) and potential delivery grant of £548,069 (15%).

Project: The project will see the repair and refurbishment of The Strand Cinema, Northern Ireland's only pre-war picture house, and for it to be transformed into a relevant authentic and valued heritage asset. Activities will include 'Pop-Up Picture house' and STEM events and workshops. A wider range of people will be involved in appreciation of the heritage.

The Committee for Northern Ireland awarded a grant of £254,931 (85%) and potential delivery grant of £548,069 (15%).

9. St Joseph's Glenullin - Exploring and restoring our heritage!

Applicant: Derry Diocesan Trust

Request: development grant of £29,500 (76% of total project costs) and potential delivery grant of £584,000 (79%).

Project: Derry Diocesan Trust present an application for repairs to St Joseph's Church Glenullin - Garvagh (Grade B1), at risk due to water ingress. Repairs are needed to safeguard its future. Additionally, they wish to develop a community hub to leverage interest in local heritage by delivering an event programme on

various heritage themes.

The Committee for Northern Ireland awarded a development grant of £29,500 (76%) and potential delivery grant of £584,000 (79%)

10. Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage - Organisations and Individuals

The Committee considered the report and the key updates:

- The Covid Recovery Programme is being distributed on behalf of Department for Communities (DfC) to support the recovery and renewal of the heritage sector from the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage Individuals
 - Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage Organisations
 - Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative
- Just under £3million is available with all funding to be allocated by 31 March 2022.
- There was seen to be a reasonable geographical spread of applications across NI although noted that two council areas had no applications.

Papers for information

11. Policy and Public Affairs report

The Committee noted the report.

12. Communications report

The Committee noted the report.

13. Any other business

The members were advised that an announcement was due imminently on HMS Caroline. Thanks were made to colleagues in the Legal and Governance team for their time and valuable input.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 15 June 2022.