

# Northern Ireland: Committee meeting minutes, June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Northern Ireland on 15 June 2022.

## Members

- Mukesh Sharma – Chair
- Jim McGreevy
- Olive Hill
- Patricia Corbett
- Sally Montgomery
- Nikki McVeigh

## Apologies

- Darren Rice

## Committee business

### 1. Welcomes, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting at Hillsborough Castle and extended a warm welcome to the three new committee members: Patricia Corbett MBE, Dr Sally Montgomery OBE and Nikki McVeigh. A round-table introduction was made by all in the room. The Chair offered his congratulations to Patricia Corbett MBE on her recent award in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Apologies were noted from Darren Rice, Committee Member.

No declarations of interest had been received.

### 2. Minutes from the meeting held 8 March 2022 and matters arising

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

There were no matters arising.

### 3. Chair's Report

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

Highlights included:

- Visit to Antrim Courthouse for a centenary celebration drama by C21. This had a collage of clips and story pieces from people in the Antrim & Newtownabbey area playing in the background, which would then be acted out by actors at the event.
- Visit to the opening of the Grand Opera House Belfast.
- Visit to award ceremony for tour guides supported through the Lough Erne Partnership project. There was great appreciation of our funding, especially from the tour guide recipients who expressed the benefit of the training and the work opportunities it created.

**Fellow Committee Members reported the following:**

**Olive Hill**

- Attended a Zoom event in relation to the Cardinal O’Fiaich Library which was well organised and very well attended. She observed that there might be an opportunity to explore how archive projects can work together to maximise their impact and public engagement.
- Attended the excellent Jubilee event held at Hillsborough Castle.

**Sally Montgomery**

- Attended the well-attended and upbeat celebration event at Warrenpoint Municipal Park, with opportunities to speak with project volunteers.

**Jim McGreevy**

- Attended a Storytelling event at the Courthouse in Antrim which was well attended by both the public and the local authority.
- Attended the close-out celebration event at Drumnaph Nature Reserve. It was a successful and enjoyable event, with much acknowledgement of the National Lottery support received. The nature reserve and centre are a good example of a local community building from the bottom up.

**Patricia Corbett**

- Attended the launch event for the project Stories of the Estate in the Twinbrook area. The project will collate the oral history stories of the people from the area and build heritage trails, use them for education purposes as well as upskilling the local community as tour guides. The event was well attended overall with the Minister for Department for Communities and the Lord Mayor in attendance.
- Thanks expressed to the team for the briefing document that was received before the event advising that it was extremely helpful. This was echoed by the Chair.

## **4. Corporate report**

Commercial in confidence

The Committee noted the highlights of the report.

## **5. Board & Committee conference overview paper**

Commercial in confidence

The Committee noted the highlights of the report.

## **6. Country report**

The Committee noted the report.

Paul Mullan introduced the report, highlighting that there is an ongoing review happening UK-wide within the organisation, looking at the approach to reporting and committee papers and that Northern Ireland is being used as a good reporting example.

## **7. Country annual review presentation**

The Committee noted the highlights of the summary

Paul Mullan gave a summary of the last year, touching on Grant in Aid (GIA), Culture Arts and Heritage Taskforce and the strategy in development, transition from GIA to open National Lottery funding plus GIA, and team working. He advised that the team showed excellent commitment and worked cohesively during the challenges and that we wish to keep that sense of connection that developed during the working from home era now that we are moving into a more hybrid method.

Margaret Henry gave an overview of the ongoing Engagement work, advising that applications were slow at the re-opening up of our open programmes during the COVID-19 period, however, there has been a lot of interest in funding going forward.

She reflected on the Digital Attitude and Skills for Heritage (DASH) survey and follow up workshop, exploring the digital challenges over the past two years. This provided valuable data for NI.

Stella Byrne briefed the committee on spend during the 2021/2022 year, touching on the considerable volume of GIA applications and the geographic spread that they have given us, along with the Skills initiative that will continue for the next three years.

Paul Mullan commented on the end of the Decade of Centenary work and the work done by the Shared History Fund projects. Also, to be noted was the value of the dedicated post for Policy and Governance Manager for NI.

Kathryn Cochrane provided a summary of the ongoing Marketing and Communications work for NI and its progress.

## **8. Country team plan 2022/23**

Paul Mullan advised that this work was progressing well and ongoing.

## 9. Country budget

Stella Byrne presented the budget paper and provided Committee with an overview of the key points:

- The 2022/23 budget for NI is £7.6m, comprising £5.9m for Committee and £1.7m for Delegated decisions (£3k-£10k and £10k-£250k)
- Three first round applications are on the agenda with a total request of £6,104,752.

## SFF Development round application for discussion and decision

### 10. Community Archaeology Project – Engaging Communities with their local heritage

Applicant: The Queen's University of Belfast Foundation

Request: Development grant of £52,999 (77%) and potential delivery grant of £551,753 (78%).

Project: The Community Archaeology Project Northern Ireland (CAPNI) focuses on the regionwide promotion, engagement and skills development of all aspects of community archaeology. It will target new audiences, specifically people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those experiencing physical and mental health challenges, with the aim of improving wellbeing. It will deliver an extensive activity programme supporting learning, skills development including field surveys, excavations, archaeology festivals, heritage walks and a school engagement programme.

The Committee for Northern Ireland **AWARDED** a grant of £52,999 (77%) and potential delivery grant of £551,753 (78%).

### 11. Transforming the Ulster Folk Museum

Applicant: National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland

Request: Development grant of £1,048,020 (73%) and potential delivery grant of £3,951,980 (12%).

Project: National Museums NI wish to develop the Ulster Folk Museum into a "must-see" destination for exploring life and culture in Ulster. The project is an asset that has been capturing the imagination for the last sixty years, it has however stalled and increasingly needs revitalisation. This project will transform the museum's functionality, allowing it to re-establish its relevance with diverse audiences including groups, schools, tourists and volunteers with a proposed new engagement model and new and improved infrastructure.

The Committee for Northern Ireland **AWARDED** a grant of £1,048,020 (73%) and potential delivery grant of £3,951,980 (12%)

## **12. Black Heritage in NI: The Hidden History Project**

Applicant: North West Migrants Forum

Request: Development grant of £100,000 (62%) and potential delivery grant of £400,000 (62%).

Project: The project will emphasise the local stories and the contribution made by black people to Northern Ireland in the hope of fostering a more inclusive and tolerant society. Over a five-year period and working with schools and community programmes on the principle of co-creation, North West Migrants Forum intend the project to feed into the UN Decade for People of African Descent for maximum impact.

The Committee for Northern Ireland **AWARDED** a grant of £100,000 (62%) and potential delivery grant of £400,000 (62%)

## **Papers for information**

### **13. Communications report**

The Committee noted the report and Kathryn Cochrane provided a summary.

Olive Hill commented on the increased social media presence in the last year and congratulated Kathryn on her efforts.

### **14. Policy and Public Affairs report**

Paul Mullan delivered the report on behalf of Claire Flynn, advising of her temporary promotion as Interim Head of Public Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement.

### **15. Any other business**

Olive Hill enquired about possible committee member attendance at delegated decision meetings and having a committee presence in them, considered it to be a positive learning experience.

**The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 September 2022.**