

# DÁIL ÉIREANN

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**AN COMHCHOISTE UM CHULTÚR, OIHDREACT AGUS GAELTACHT**

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, HERITAGE AND THE GAELTACHT**

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*Dé Céadaoin, 11 Nollaig 2019*

*Wednesday, 11 December 2019*

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The Joint Committee met at 1.30 p.m.

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Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair Members present:

Michael Collins,	Marie-Louise O'Donnell,
Kate O'Connell,*	Fintan Warfield.
Éamon Ó Cuív.	

\* In éagmais / In the absence of Deputy Martin Heydon.

Teachta/Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire sa Chathaoir/in the Chair

## **Business of Joint Committee**

**Chairman:** Apologies have been received from Deputy Smyth and Senator Hopkins. I ask members to switch off their mobile telephones as they interfere with the sound system and with the broadcast of the meeting. I propose that we go into private session to discuss housekeeping matters. Is that agreed? Agreed.

*The joint committee went into private session at 1.35 p.m. and resumed in public session at 1.45 p.m.*

## **Government Plans for Commemorative Events 2020-23: Discussion**

**Chairman:** This afternoon's meeting is to discuss the Government plans and plans throughout the State for commemorative events in the period 2020-23. It is appropriate since we are in the final month of this decade and facing into several years of major commemorative events. It will be of great value to the committee, and, I hope, to the public, to discuss the plans that exist for the coming years.

I welcome Dr. Maurice Manning and Dr. Martin Mansergh from the expert advisory group. Gabhaim buíochas dóibh uile as ucht a bheith i láthair, agus as ucht a dtacaíocht. From the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, I welcome Mr. Conor Falvey, assistant secretary, culture division, and Mr. Kevin Lonergan, principal officer, commemorations on cultural policy and institutions. From Tipperary County Council giving the voice of local authorities is Ms Róisín O'Grady, heritage officer and creative Ireland and commemorations co-ordinator. I hope the meeting will be of value to us, them and the wider public.

By virtue of section 17(2)(l) of the Defamation Act 2009, witnesses are protected by absolute privilege in respect of your evidence to the committee. However, if they are directed by the committee to cease giving evidence on a particular matter and they continue to do so, they are entitled thereafter only to a qualified privilege in respect of your evidence. They are directed that only evidence connected with the subject matter of these proceedings is to be given and they are asked to respect the parliamentary practice to the effect that, where possible, they should not criticise or make charges against any person, persons or entity by name or in such a way as to make him, her or it identifiable. The opening statements and any other documents that they have submitted to the committee may be published on the committee website after the meeting.

Members are reminded of the long-standing parliamentary practice to the effect that they should not comment on, criticise or make charges against a person outside the House or an official either by name or in such a way as to make him or her identifiable.

The opening statements should not exceed five minutes. They have been circulated to members and will be available on the Internet following the meeting. Tosóimid leis na experts. Glaoim ar an Dochtúir Maurice Manning chun a chur i láthair a dhéanamh.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** I thank the committee for the invitation to discuss the work we have been doing. The expert advisory group on centenary commemorations was established by An Taoiseach in 2011. The role of the group is to advise the Government on historical matters relating to the decade of centenaries and to provide guidance to inform the State's approach to the

remembrance of significant historical events of the period. The group is non-partisan, comprising independent historians, cultural practitioners, and custodians of archives from around the country. Since 2012, the group has published three papers. The expert advisory group's initial statement, published in 2012, was widely commended for providing a supportive structure of guiding principles, which underpinned the State's approach to commemorating the significant historical events that took place between 1912 and 1916, culminating with the centenary commemorations of the Rising. The commemorative programme for the first half of the Decade of Centenaries was widely acclaimed for its inclusive, measured and sensitive approach, which recognised the legitimacy of all traditions and valued mutual respect and historical accuracy. The programme remembered not only the seminal events that marked Ireland's journey towards independence and self-determination but also those which enhance our understanding of the wider international context during this period.

The second phase mission statement was published in October 2017. The guiding principles expressed in the initial statement are still significant and relevant and they are reaffirmed in the group's second phase mission statement 2017-2023. The guiding principles provide clarity and a broad template, intended to empower and support all those involved in delivering authentic, citizen-focused and appropriate commemorations at national and community level throughout the second half of the Decade of Centenaries. In this statement, the expert advisory group advocated that, "The opportunity to encourage scholarship at national and local level must be used as fully as possible, with particular emphasis on archival investment and development." This significant capital investment will ensure that our cultural institutions and archives will continue to have a central role in continuing the process of broad public engagement, creating an important, tangible legacy that endures well beyond the Decade of Centenaries for generations to come.

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht launched a public consultation process to assist the group in its work to provide guidance to the Government over the remainder of the decade. Its objective was to give interested parties the opportunity to submit their views and ideas on how the significant historical events from 1918 to 1923 might be appropriately and respectfully remembered, in line with the principles expressed in the group's second phase mission statement. Some 73 submissions were received and 20 of these were made by local authorities. The rich diversity of ideas and perspectives was of great assistance to the group as it developed its guidance to Government.

The second phase guidance statement was published in January last and addresses the years 2018 to 2023. It makes specific recommendations on how the significant historical centenaries in the forthcoming phase of the decade might be meaningfully, proportionately and sensitively remembered by the State. These centenaries include the struggle for independence, the Civil War, the foundation of the State, partition and the foundation of Northern Ireland, and concluding with the admission of the Irish Free State into the League of Nations in September 1923. The group was conscious, in formulating its guidance for this period, that the approaching centenaries present particularly complex and sensitive challenges, coinciding with significant 50th anniversaries in Northern Ireland. The backdrop of Brexit and the continued absence of agreement on operating the devolved structures in Northern Ireland also present particular challenges. The group encourages continued co-operation between the two jurisdictions where appropriate. The exploration of potential cross-Border engagement will require careful, thoughtful and sensitive navigation.

The expert group recommends a three-tier approach comprising a small number of State-led commemorations, augmented by local authority and community-led commemorative initia-

tives. This approach advocates a leading role for local authorities in supporting and driving community-led commemoration, augmented with appropriate State recognition, support and participation. The community-led model was most effective in the remembrance of the centenary of the Soloheadbeg ambush on 21 January 2019. This was a respectful, community-led commemoration, jointly organised by the Solohead Parish Centenary Commemoration Committee and the Third Tipperary Brigade Old IRA Commemoration Committee. Their plans were supported by Tipperary County Council as part of a broader commemorative programme across the county to mark the centenary of the struggle for independence, and by the State. This measured and balanced approach worked effectively in a complex and sensitive local context. It echoes the most recent guidance of the expert group, which states:

Many of the events of this period have great local significance; it is therefore appropriate for local authorities and local community organisations to be encouraged to lead the commemorative process. Some events have been commemorated annually for decades and it would be inappropriate for the State to compete with these established ceremonies ... All commemorative events should be informed by the principles laid down in the Second Statement of the Expert Advisory Group.

The group recommends that the State should continue to support local and county commemorative exercises to widen and deepen a historical understanding of the significance of the events being commemorated among the public at large. The expert group has recommended a small number of formal State commemorations over the remainder of the Decade of Centenaries. A State commemoration for all of those who lost their lives during the struggle for independence is to take place in 2021, the National Day of Commemoration takes place on Sunday, 11 July, so that might be an appropriate date. The existence of this established State ceremonial event may offer a fitting opportunity for an enhanced State contribution. The group recommends a State commemoration, focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation, to take place on a neutral date for all of those who suffered and died during the Civil War.

The group advocates that the centenary of the foundation of the State be remembered in terms of a process rather than a single event. It began with the handing over of Dublin Castle on 16 January 1922 and ended with the formal coming into being of the Irish Free State on 6 December 1922, in the midst of civil war. To these ends, two formal State commemorations are recommended, namely a State ceremonial event in Dublin Castle to mark the symbolic transfer of power to the newly emerging Irish State with the hand-over of Dublin Castle; and a State commemoration on 6 December 2022 in recognition of the pioneering leaders who helped to embed the democratic tradition in the newly emerging Irish State. The group recommends that the centenary of the partitioning of Ireland and the foundation of Northern Ireland be remembered with a significant academic conference. It is also recommended that a conference such as this could examine comparative partitions in Europe post 1918, to emphasise that Ireland's experience was not unique. Finally, the group recommends a State ceremonial event to mark the centenary of the admission of the Irish Free State into the League of Nations in 2023.

On legacy, the group highlighted the fact that the Decade of Centenaries created unprecedented opportunities for people of all ages to consider and explore some of the most significant events and themes in the history of modern Ireland. The group recommended that this positive engagement and the associated tangible, long-term benefits should continue to be supported beyond the conclusion of the decade in 2023 and that State support should be considered for specific, significant Decade of Centenaries permanent legacy initiatives. One such initiative is the Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury Initiative, which the group has endorsed as a

potentially significant and lasting Decade of Centenaries legacy, combining historical research, archival conservation, technical innovation and international collaboration. It seeks to reimagine and recreate, through virtual reality, the Public Record Office of Ireland and its archival collection, which were destroyed on 30 June 1922 in the opening engagement of the Civil War.

**Chairman:** Go raibh míle maith agat. Thank you very much Dr. Manning. I would like to welcome Mr. Conor Falvey to give the Department's perspective on it.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Given the almost total overlap between my remarks and those of Dr. Manning, I will skip them for the benefit of the committee. However, there is a series of structures in place to assist the Government on the delivery of the programme of commemorations over the second half of the decade. Primary among those is the expert advisory group itself, which has provided advice that the Government has accepted on the appropriate manner and mechanisms for commemorating these events over the next number of years. In addition to that, there is the all-party Oireachtas group, which meets regularly and has made a very important and valuable contribution to the commemoration of these seminal events.

It is important to point out that there are a whole range of stakeholders across civil society, national cultural institutions, other Government Departments and local authorities. In particular, and building on the work of the expert advisory committee over a great number of years, is the work of local historical societies and interest groups. That was very much reflected in one of the key events of last year in Soloheadbeg in Tipperary. Tipperary County Council is here with us today, and I would like to congratulate it on its recent award from Chambers Ireland for its events.

A wide range of stakeholders have come forward with proposals, and the Government has committed €2 million in the context of the budget Estimates for 2020, which is an increase of around €900,000. We have more or less doubled the resource. That has largely been applied to supporting the local authorities, the academic community and our cultural institutions and a range of other measures in 2020 that will give rise to a programme that will go to Government shortly. There is a number of strands under creative imagination, historical exploration and community. Our proposals in those areas are well developed, but they are constantly evolving as various stakeholders come forward with proposals. At some stage we will need to draw a line under that and produce the highlight for people to see. Whatever list will be produced will never be exhaustive. Events are being proposed and delivered through a whole range of stakeholders, including at a local level, and it is very difficult to capture the full value of that in a single document. If the committee has any questions, I would more than happy to respond to them.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Falvey. I call Ms Roísín O'Grady from Tipperary County Council. Déanaim comhghairdeas léi as an duais a bhuaigh sí. Ms O'Grady is here representing Tipperary County Council, but we are also anxious to get the general perspective of local authorities, because it is a crucial one.

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** Thank you Chairman. I would like to thank the members of the committee for the invitation to attend this meeting today. As we move into the final years of the decade of centenaries, and are facing the challenge of commemorating events from a very turbulent and sensitive part of our history, I would like to share today some of our experiences in Tipperary and talk about a model of collaboration which was very successful for us in 2019. We have, like our colleagues across the country, been involved in marking centenaries since 2012, through the various cultural services in the county, such as the heritage and arts offices

and the library and museum services. We also took part in the Ireland 2016 programme, which nationally generated an unprecedented groundswell of creative engagement and participation on the theme of commemorations in what was a hugely successful two-year programme. The legacy of this programme was an engaged public who had been activated, and were interested in exploring their own history and marking the centenaries of events that had happened in their localities. The challenge facing both them and us were the fact the period of commemoration we were moving into was turbulent and divisive.

Unlike the 1916 events, which had happened largely outside of our county, we were now moving into a period of time where, due to the War of Independence and the Civil War, a significant amount of activity took place in Tipperary. This included events, such as the Soloheadbeg ambush, which is generally seen as the first action of the War of Independence in January 1919 and which resulted in the loss of two lives. There is a significant challenge in commemorating events like this, not least because the historical narrative and the legacy for those involved and their descendants is so completely different. Soloheadbeg was never going to be an easy event. In June 2018, I was approached by a group of locals who had formed a committee to mark the centenary in Solohead parish. They had come together to consider an incident that had happened in their locality 100 years previously, and the tone that they were setting was respectful and inclusive, and one of remembrance.

Over the next month, I provided whatever support I could, and facilitated support from the commemorations unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. A number of activities took place around the centenary, including a project with the local primary schools. A formal commemoration took place on 20 January, at which relatives of the people who carried out the ambush, the relatives of the county council employees who were there on the day and the relatives of those who lost their lives were in attendance. An information panel was unveiled at the site of the monument at Solohead Cross, and a publication detailing the events of the day and details of all those who had been present was released and made available to those in attendance. To tie in with this, the county museum and local historical society also hosted a conference the day before this event.

Great credit is due to the organising committee for taking on this event, and for at all times adhering to the principles of respectful and inclusive commemoration. They brought together all elements of the community, and together they worked through any challenges that arose. The history books record these events in great detail, but we must also remember that the narratives that have been handed down through generations are powerful and emotive. The input of local communities on the ground is essential to navigating the path to inclusivity and sensitivity in these matters.

I would like to acknowledge the support and advice for this event. We were delighted to recently be awarded the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award in the commemorations category, and we were delighted to have the chairman of the Solohead committee with us on the night to receive this award as it recognises the importance of the partnership between local authorities and local communities in relation to commemorations.

This partnership model was also central to our submission to the public call by the expert advisory committee on commemorations in 2018. In Tipperary, we believe this is what works best for us in engaging the public in the commemorations process. The committee we worked with in Solohead certainly had huge capacity, but we would hope to grow this in other groups around the county, and encourage them to adopt the methods and approach used by this group. Resources are essential to this, and we have run a number of grant schemes since 2015 which

provide supports to groups in this area. This is something that we would hope to continue to 2023. Again, we acknowledge the support of the commemorations unit and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in helping us to do this on an annual basis. As we now approach 2020, we are again reaching out to our communities and organisations in County Tipperary, with a view to working with them and supporting them in remembering the events of 100 years ago.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms O'Grady. Go raibh míle maith agat go léir. I will hand over to the members. Deputy Ó Cuív indicated that he would like to comment. I am cognisant of the time, in trying to ensure we are efficient. I ask members to keep questions and replies to 15 minutes. If we have time at the end, we can have a second round.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** We are not over-endowed with members today.

**Chairman:** I call Deputy Ó Cuív.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** I would like to thank the witnesses for their presentations. The first point I would like to raise is an issue in relation to finance. Is the proposed allocation for local authorities €10,000? If that is so, it is a significant decrease from the allocation in 2016, which I believe was €50,000. One would have thought it would have been the other way around, because 2016 commemorated events that essentially took place in a very small number of locations. In 2020, however, we are commemorating events that took place in virtually every parish in the country. If we are going to work to a local authority model, it would seem to me that €10,000 is a very small amount to be spread across counties such as Tipperary - where there was a lot of action, Galway or Cork etc. I would be interested in hearing confirmation of what the allocation is. How much did we spend in total in 2016 and how much will we spend in 2020? Mr. Falvey says it was €2 million this year and it was €900,000 last year but the real comparison is with this year of high activity all around the country. It is much more pervasive than the events of 1916 and 2016 is the mirror of that. How does the money compare between 2016 and 2020 in total and how much are we giving to local authorities for 2020 compared with 2016?

Has consideration been given by the Department to putting a special fund aside to refurbish every monument to the period? These monuments are in every part of the country. There are many roadside monuments to engagements that took place during the War of Independence, and it was a war of independence. Has the Department considered providing funding, either through the local authorities or through any other appropriate organisation, for the refurbishment of all these monuments, many of which are suffering from the ravages of time?

I read the report of the expert advisory group on centenary commemorations and my views are known to that committee because I am on the parliamentary advisory committee. To me, democracy was founded in 1919. This is the Thirty-second Dáil and nobody disputes that across all the political divides in this country. The First Dáil was the first and this is the Thirty-second Dáil. I was gratified and taken by the fact the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recently published a book outlining the history of foreign affairs in an independent Ireland and it started in 1919 because the events of 1919 and 1921 shaped an awful lot of foreign affairs post the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The setting up of the First Dáil and everything that happened after that was to establish a native Government here. It might not have been recognised by the British but that was their problem. American Independence Day is 4 July to commemorate the day they signed their declaration of independence. I am a little disappointed there are no national commemorations or highlighting of, for example, the fact the justice system and the District Court

system in particular were set up during that time. One of the keystones of democracy is there is a Government and there is some way of adjudicating the law. I am also disappointed with the lack of commemoration of the role of foreign affairs. Extraordinarily among independence movements around the world, an independent foreign affairs process was built and put in place. It is well chronicled by the Department. That is worth commemorating because it was totally unusual. Most people thought independence would come in the field as a result of battle but these were huge innovations at that time. I have constantly argued for us to commemorate the death of Terence MacSwiney by hunger strike because it was worldwide news and had huge influence in places such as India and within Europe. I know other people died on hunger strike but that was the one that reached across the nations and had world resonance. Why did the expert advisory group on centenary commemorations not see that? There is no conflict involved in this. No weapons were used except the weapon of self-sacrifice. Why has no big State commemoration been recommended by the expert advisory group on centenary commemorations for this event? It seemed to me to be worthy of a commemoration, particularly seeing as he was the mayor of the city of Cork, the third largest city in the country.

**Chairman:** I will direct those questions go dtí an Roinn.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** On the funding for local authorities for this year, the budget for this is still in draft form and has not been signed off, but the proposal is for €10,000 per local authority. It is also proposed, where there are significant centenaries in individual local authority areas, that the Department would support local authorities to an additional level, as we would have done this year with Soloheadbeg and Knocklong, for example. The level of funding was in the order of €30,000 per local authority in 2016. The events of 2016 were more concentrated in the year in question and the commemorations for 2020 and beyond would be over a longer period. We can look at the levels of resourcing in the long term beyond 2020 in the context of normal budget and Estimate processes but, broadly speaking, that is the proposed level of funding in draft form.

The expert advisory group on centenary commemorations might come back to this but we have been in consultation with other Departments on their plans and proposals. The Department of Justice and Equality has plans to commemorate the founding of the Courts Service, the introduction of the Courts of Justice Act 1924 and the pre-1922 judicial system. As the Deputy knows, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has published a document commemorating the foundation of the diplomatic service. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has plans for the Custom House. A range of proposals is emerging across Departments and cultural institutions for the appropriate commemoration of the events. The State will be supporting those commemorations and applying resources for those purposes. Some of that will fall into this budget and some of it may fall elsewhere, depending on the nature of the event and where it is being held. There is a range of proposals across different Government Departments that go beyond the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. We have been consulting on that and an interdepartmental committee has been established and is meeting regularly to provide updates and to gather all the information on the plans and proposals across Government.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** I am all for academia and all the rest but these are not people's events. The people of Ireland are not celebrating that they independently chose to set up their justice system or diplomatic system. These commemorations involve all sorts of Departments but there do not seem to be any big public events to highlight these extraordinary developments under a Government that was operating under massive constraints but that embedded democ-



racy. I am focusing on 2020 because as far as I am concerned, we can come back to 2021, 2022 and 2023 again. I am purposely taking a short-term view of it because of the immediacy of 2020 and there could be many differences between now and next year. We will park 2021 and 2022. Another event worth commemorating is the big debate that took place in the Dáil to make the Army subservient to the Dáil. That was an extraordinary debate to take place and an extraordinary decision to make in the middle of a war. The Dáil took responsibility for all military activities as a result of that. These are major events that stood this State in huge stead into the future. The bedrock of it all were the events of 1920 and for some reason we seem to be brushing over these commemorations for 2020. We are trying to be fast with the commemorations for 2020 and trying to see if we can move on, even though it was probably one of the most significant years in the State's history, building on 1919. Having a meeting of the First Dáil was easy. It was making the First Dáil do what it said on the tin, namely become a real and effective Government in Ireland, that was difficult. Local government was taken over in that period as well but that is more relevant to the 2021 commemorations.

**Chairman:** Dr. Manning wanted to come in.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** I thank the Deputy for being such a positive member of the all-party committee and for his contributions over the past while. The Deputy made a point about 1919 and 1920 but I remind him that the key event - the foundation of Dáil Éireann - was commemorated and celebrated in a major ceremony that was widely praised. It was organised, quite appropriately, by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service rather than by the State. There is the separation of powers. The Deputy's question on the foundation of the State is very interesting, particularly as it was incremental and uneven in spots. There were some successful Departments and others that were not so successful.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** That statement could be mirrored today but we will not get into it. Some Departments are still more successful than others.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** We are totally objective and could not say anything like that.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** So am I. I want to be objective about it.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** We are very conscious of the point being made by the Deputy. We have asked all Departments, even those predating the State, to prepare official histories of their foundation. The Government has supported this request and we would like the support of the committee for it. As the Deputy states, we need to know the nuts and bolts of how all this happened, the models they adopted, their successes and where they may not have been successful. The Secretary General to the Government has sent instructions on this and much work is being done. There is a history of the local government process that is very much under way and it is being undertaken by the Department.

It may surprise people to discover that the Department of Justice and Equality is working on the early days of the justice system. The Law Library, which is not part of the State apparatus, is very conscious of what happened in the courts. There is a series of different projects in place that will try to present by the end of this period a pretty full and detailed account of how the State was set up, who were the ordinary people, how did they go about their work, what were their problems, etc. This very much fits with the Deputy's point that this must be done. He mentioned the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which has done a great job so far on that.

With regard to Terence MacSwiney, the committee is very much taken with the Soloheadbeg template because it worked. Cork very much wants to play a major role in the coming year with major ceremonies, including those marking the burning of Cork and Terence MacSwiney. We are working very closely on that with the authorities in Cork, although we are in the early stages. There is a commitment for support of a major event in Cork marking that history. Of course, there will be State participation in and support for that. Our experience demonstrates that where there is strong local leadership, it is better for the State to come in to supplement it rather than everything coming from the top down. I hope the point made by the Deputy will become a reality in the coming year.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade held a major conference in January last year to mark the 100th anniversary of our foreign policy. In the past few weeks, a book of essays on the subject of 100 years of foreign policy has been published. The Royal Irish Academy has been ahead of the posse in many ways in that it has been publishing the diplomatic documents for several years, the first volume of which covered 1919 to 1921. My perception is that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has done pretty well on the commemorative front.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** My argument is that although Departments and academia have done well, we seem much more reticent about any major commemoration that involves the public. I have always held the view that it is incredibly important for the wider public to be involved and to be educated in the facts, including that the First Dáil was not just a one-day event. The First Dáil set up a native Government under democratic control and we still enjoy that today. Traditions built in that period are still relevant. There seems to be a certain reticence to involve the public in this regard.

Dr. Manning referred to Soloheadbeg. I spoke at that event, as did Dr. Mansergh. That was fine. Aside from the date, it was just an engagement, and some would argue whether it was the first engagement of the War of Independence. The Ballyvourney people might tell us it is not true but we will not go there. That is not comparable with commemorating Terence MacSwiney because nobody outside Ireland knows about Soloheadbeg. However, people in the area are very conscious of the Terence McSwiney legacy. Dr. Manning said that Soloheadbeg can be a model but there was a State commemoration at Banna Strand. It involved the Army and the President. Will we do that in commemorating what happened in Brixton?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** We are engaged with the local authorities in Cork about the plans for 2020, which are being finalised. The formal decisions have not yet been taken on the precise nature of the events.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** It will not be like what happened at Banna Strand, which was a full State commemoration.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I should be clear in stating that no decision has been taken on the precise events taking place in Cork next year. We are engaged with the local authorities and are aware of the scale of their ambition. To reflect Dr. Manning's comments, there is a very strong appreciation of the central role of Cork in the events of 1920 and the importance of commemorating them appropriately next year. The decisions have not been taken but we are in consultation with the relevant local authorities in Cork about marking these in an appropriate fashion next year. I am mindful of the Deputy's comments on the scale of the different events.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** With all the events that took place in 1920 and 1921 in Tipperary,

will Tipperary County Council need much more than €10,000 to satisfy all the communities that will be looking for a few bob? What is the view of Ms O'Grady on the matter I raised concerning monuments at all the different crossroads and the need to refurbish most of them?

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** We are very much aware of the monuments and we are engaging with communities. Most of these monuments would hold pride of place in communities and we often find that a committee looks after each one. There are some very active committees around the county that look after ten or 12 monuments. Where possible, the local authority would provide a little bit of support. In the lead-up to the Soloheadbeg event, there was much work done by the Tipperary municipal district in making the monument presentable. It is a challenge that needs resources.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** Are more resources required on top of the €10,000?

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** We must cut our cloth to suit our measure. There is much enthusiasm in the communities. There are many events and commemorations and Tipperary is a very large county. There was much activity there during the period. With each success, such as the Soloheadbeg commemoration and similar events, we have seen enthusiasm among historical and community groups. We try to support them in whatever way we can.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** Tipperary County Council has published in the past two or three months key documents covering the period from approximately-----

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** It is *Tipperary 1917-1921: A History in 80 Documents*. That followed *County Tipperary in 1916: A History in 40 Documents*. These publications consider events in the county through primary sources, including newspapers and eyewitness accounts. It is an attempt to engage people who may not be specifically interested in history or attending historical lectures. It is an attempt to engage the wider community on incidents that happened in the county, the different perspectives on same and the way they were reported. That was done by the local studies service of the Tipperary libraries and a local historian.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** Deputy Ó Cuív spoke about the significance of Terence MacSwiney and we will bear that in mind. He made his point very well in that regard and we will see how it can be done.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** On the question of public engagement and going beyond academic examination or the work of Departments, there is a provision in the programme for a creative imagination strand which will be very important in the second half of the decade of centenaries when we will be exploring what are sometimes very sensitive issues. In the 2016 commemorative events, for example, the creative element was very important in terms of looking at sensitive issues in a way that engaged the public. Proposals in that area are still being developed but we have a provision in respect of next year to support projects that emerge and we are engaging with various stakeholders on it. We have been talking to RTÉ about looking at the period out to 2023 and developing meaningful creative experiences that will allow people to engage with the issues that are being commemorated. There will be formal ceremonial events, academic or historical explorations as well as events at community level. The Department is of the view that the creative strand is very important from a public engagement perspective.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** I thank the witnesses for attending and for a most informative presentation. I tried knocking on the door of the expert advisory group as an independent but could not get in. As Mr. Falvey said, there is a significant element of creativity and

imagination involved and I thought that I could have brought something to that but I was not in the right territory to be allowed onto the cross-party group.

In October, I chaired a session in Castlebar on Mayo's involvement in the civil war which I thought would be kind of dull and uninteresting. It was based on a book by Mr. Dominic Price entitled *The Flame and The Candle*, which is brilliant. Even though I am from Mayo, I never knew we had such an involvement in the civil war in 1921. Professor Diarmaid Ferriter spoke at the session and hundreds of people turned up to a local event organised as part of the Wild Atlantic Words literary festival. When I say hundreds turned up, they came from everywhere to hear about their fathers and grandfathers who had fought in the war and who did or did not get the pension and so on. The local is the national. It is so important. The three-tiered approach described by Ms O'Grady is a very good way forward, particularly the use of the local. As we saw with The Gathering, the creativity and imagination of the local area, town or village is so important. I commend our witnesses on that element. Anybody can organise State commemorations and I agree that we might need to rethink some of those.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht must provide sufficient funding to allow the local to be as brilliant as it can be but €10,000 would not whitewash a wall. We cannot beg for funding from other Departments either. I often visit the Department, which is wonderful. I do not mean to undermine anybody but the Department must stand up for itself financially even if it is not considered as important as other Departments. In this instance, a generous budget must be provided if we want the local to do the national and bring in all of the different elements, including the turbulence that we are trying to platform but not in a turbulent way. We are trying to expose it in the best way possible.

Is money available for partnerships with entities other than local authorities? I am thinking here of the beleaguered RTÉ, the Abbey Theatre, orchestras, museums, libraries and so on. The witnesses said that they received 73 submissions, of which 20 were from local authorities. Were there submissions that the witnesses thought were brilliant and has money been set aside for those? They all come under some local authority - they are not sitting out in the sea - but is additional money available for them? The local is the way to go. The State commemorations will happen anyway and we could be a little bit more creative about those but the local is essential. I could not believe my eyes at that event in Castlebar. Hundreds of people attended and got something out of it. They spoke, answered questions and it was just like being back in time, listening to peoples' stories. It seemed like the whole of the county turned up to what was expected to be a small event. It could have been held in the 3Arena, such was the size of the audience. There are moments when the local becomes the national. The Department is doing a wonderful job but I hope there is enough money for the best local projects. I agree with Deputy Ó Cuív that €10,000 is not enough. What is that about? Why are we begging from other Departments? Of course they have to pay their way, but why are we begging?

In Dr. Manning's opinion, what stands out from the 1916 commemorations? Is there an event where we got it completely right? Is there one whose tentacles are still alive? I am not asking in the context of something that could be replicated but am just asking a general question about any event that worked both locally and nationally. If someone asked me about 1916, I would say that the Army played a magnificent part in both the small and great commemorations. If I was asked who I was most proud of, I would say the Army. I was impressed by the way our armed forces put order and smacht on everything. I invite Dr. Manning or any of the other witnesses to answer that question. Is there anything that stays with them, an event whose tentacles are still alive?

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** What struck me was the input of the local authorities, which we had not factored in during our first meetings. The then Minister, Deputy Heather Humphreys, with her experience of local government, reckoned that there was great energy in that sector. Most councils had their own cultural officers who were only waiting to be asked to do things. The councils were presented with an entirely new experience of engaging with their people, not about bins or roads but about something that caught their imagination. The second aspect that stands out was the engagement of the people. That Easter Sunday will live in everyone's memory, as will the next day. People attended workshops, visited museums to look at the relics and so on. That engagement and the sense of people being at ease with their own history really stood out for me.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** Does Dr. Manning think that has fuelled how the committee would like to see the next celebration?

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** I think the important thing is that with the 1916 commemorations, there were not separate agendas or if there were, they were not allowed to take hold. There was no attempt to hijack it and no party tried to use it for political purposes. These commemorations were not part of a continuing debate but were part of history for most people. This was history that people were trying to understand. There is a significant educational process involved. There is a lull of sorts at the moment but when events start again, that will change. There is already engagement with the papers and there is a wealth of material still to be released. A lot is planned and I hope it will have the same impact on people.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** As a backbench Senator, I ask the advisory group to communicate a little more on the specifics of what it is doing. I sometimes feel that we do not know what is going on. I would welcome a little more openness on the communication front, although I am not saying that the group is clandestine. Perhaps the group has not started that work yet but I feel that I do not know what is happening-----

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** In the 1916 commemoration period, both Dr. Mansergh and I travelled the country, when we were invited. If the Seanad wants to know what is going on and invites us, we would be very happy to attend. What is happening is great.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** What is happening today is so important. Communicatively, generally, we could have the prospective outline of what will happen. The idea of a virtual Public Record Office of Ireland is brilliant. That archive is wonderful. Things like that, which have a tentacle, will stay alive after the curtain has come down.

The Department representatives may wish to respond to some of the points I have made.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** The Senator referred to legacy. It is firmly the case that the Creative Ireland programme is broadly a legacy item from the 1916 commemorations three years ago. It was clear that a bottom-up, community-driven artistic and creative endeavour came through. A clear message came through from this committee and in other fora.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** Then the Department hijacked it.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** My recollection is that the Department was encouraged to find a mechanism to continue to support the activities. That is in place now. We had a budget of over €7 million this year for creative communities through schools.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** The Department should have been doing it for years.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Perhaps, but it built on the legacy. That has been a permanent legacy coming out of the 1916 commemorations.

More broadly, funding is available for several different strands under the proposed budget for 2020 - although it is not yet finalised - for cultural institutions and local authorities. We are keeping that in contingency to try to support good initiatives that come forward. We have funding available for the creative strand and we are looking to engage with stakeholders, including arts practices, which come forward with proposals in that area. People are coming forward. We hope to have an ambitious and appropriate level to commemorate the events in mind with the advice of the expert advisory committee.

I will come back to my original point. In many ways, the Creative Ireland programme grew out of the project office in the Department organically.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** It was a great teacher for the Department. Was it not?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Yes.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** It taught well what to do.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** We should not make too much of a distinction between the local and national. Important local events have been attended by Ministers and other leading figures and they have spoken at the events. It is a question perhaps of who has the lead initiative. That was certainly the case in Soloheadbeg, where the local people, groups, colleges, etc., wanted to be in the lead role. However, they want the support of Government too and, depending on the event, people right up to the Taoiseach and the President. They have been getting support at that level too.

Since the whole process began, an extraordinary level of attention has been paid to leaving a legacy. One example is the community end of things. Let us consider the restoration of what is left of Richmond Barracks. It is used by the community constantly. The project was worthwhile, especially because it included the gymnasium where most of the prisoners were held temporarily. Other examples include the GPO museum, the upgrading of Kilmainham Gaol and Courthouse and, above all, the Bureau of Military History archives. School projects can use these documents, most of which are accessible on the Internet. Considerable attention has been paid to leaving a lasting legacy from this.

I might mention for the benefit of Deputy Ó Cuív that a new biography will be launched next week of Dorothy Macardle by Dr. Leeann Lane, one of the important historians of the period, albeit from a particular point of view.

One of the problems we have is that so much is going on involving so many different organisations in various counties and areas that it is difficult to have an overview of everything that is happening. People received broad guidance. We had meetings with country librarians, heritage officers, county councils and so on. Everyone is keen to participate and people are doing their own particular thing. It is by no means all centrally directed. We have been providing guidance rather than direction.

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** One of the big legacies that came through from the 1916 programme in my county was the real buy-in by communities on the ground. That has continued. It was not confined to people interested in history or the people who might have attended the local history lectures. It was broader than that.

There was a creative element to the 1916 programme. I am involved in the Creative Ireland programme as well. Many of the groups I worked with on the 1916 project are pitching creative projects that are historical through the Creative Ireland programme as well. There has been real engagement at ground level. There is an expectation of getting involved and creating something and this has lasted. I imagine that will continue. That is really good because-----

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** It is where it should be.

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** When we are looking to programme events, it is great to have people who are willing to do it.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** I think Mr. Falvey wanted to say something about opening up the purse strings.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I was going to raise another point relating to our capacity to argue effectively for arts and culture within the spectrum. In the context of the national development plan we have presented the investment programme for the national cultural institutions as an appropriate reflection of the centenary of the foundation of the State. There is a €460 million investment programme up to 2027. We have commenced the refurbishment of the east wing of the National Library of Ireland. As Dr. Mansergh noted, we are going to tender shortly for the National Archives. There are ambitious projects under way, including on the other side of this campus at the National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology on Kildare Street. That all came on the back of the involvement of the Department, in partnership with all the other stakeholders and Departments, in the 1916 commemorations. That was an important factor in terms of securing support.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** Yes, it is wonderful. When we rely on the community - we are delighted with our educated community at all levels - and then we hand out €10,000 to community projects it seems a little contradictory. I am not suggesting that the Department would not double that figure for a particular project or idea. Sometimes we rely on the people so much and expect so much of them. They give so much from a voluntary point of view and from the point of view of ideas, creativity and imagination. We might exhaust them by not paralleling that in the overall structure of the millions that get hived off.

We make too many excuses about culture. We bow down and say, "Good morning, your honour." and "Good morning, your honour's dog.", whereas we will pay millions against banks. We have to stand up for culture and the arts. I would not take €10,000 as a starting point. If I was a Minister that is what I would be arguing.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** In 1998, I was involved in the 1798 bicentenary. There were many activities in many counties, although not all of them. We had a commemoration fund at the time that ran to hundreds of thousands. I was not involved in administering it because advisers do not administer as that is the job of civil servants. I was advising the civil servants who administered the fund. We found that a relatively small amount of money went a long way. Committees were happy to receive money for the particular activities they were planning and got £2,000, £5,000, £10,000 and so on, depending on what it was. Members should not underestimate how far the money that is allocated can go. I do not dispute that more may be needed. A little seed money is of benefit. Organisers of local committees do not look to the Government to do everything for them.

**Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell:** I am aware of that.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** They want financial support almost as much for the acknowledgement of the value of what they are doing as for the money itself.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** I thank the witnesses for their contributions. Is there a framework through which people can still contribute ideas, or is that now primarily done through local authorities?

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** At our meetings, we regularly talk to groups who have come to us with ideas which they would like to be supported. There are usually two or three groups of people with concerns at each meeting. For example, Church of Ireland bishops raised with us their concerns about the way things may develop. We are open to discussion with anyone who has specific proposals to make.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** On the legacy compared with that of the 2016 centenary, I do not see a significant parallel in terms of big capital projects, some of which were mentioned, such as Richmond Barracks, Rosmuc, Glasnevin Cemetery and the pension records. Will similar projects be undertaken this time around?

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** The major legacy project which has been approved relates to the former Public Record Office. I am not aware of other such proposals but there are ongoing legacies, the biggest of which is the investment in the State archives and military service pensions. Those sorts of things are a direct outcome of the decade of centenaries. They would not have received the sort of support they have without it. I am not aware of any other major legacy project.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** The Department should commission artists to create lasting works which do not have to be like the sculptures in the Garden of Remembrance. Artists should be given their space in this round of remembrance.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Dr. Manning is correct that the major project approved thus far is the very important and positive Beyond 2022 initiative. In fairness, it has been welcomed by members of the committee. It has very positive North-South and east-west elements in terms of the engagement between British National Archives and the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, both of which attended the launch last week. Trinity College Dublin is taking the lead on the project, along with the National Archives of Ireland. In addition, the Government has made a €22 million capital investment in the Bishop Street headquarters of the National Archives which is being managed through the Department with the co-operation of the Office of Public Works. That has always been positioned as an appropriate commemoration of the centenary of the State.

On further specific capital investments, there were seven permanent reminders following on from 2016, some of which were listed by the Senator and including the GPO and the Athenaeum in Wexford. The members of the expert advisory group may have a better recollection of this than I. I do not have the precise figures to hand but I suspect the investment in the National Archives probably exceeds the aggregate investment in those reminders at that stage. That is something on which we can reflect in terms of the shape of the programme in the coming years and what would be appropriate from that perspective. The focus has been more on creativity, academic examination, community-driven activities and State ceremonials than around physical items.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** There have been art and photographic exhibitions, including art



inspired by the War of Independence. There was an exhibition in Tipperary of such art by Mick O'Dea of the Royal Hibernian Academy. A photographic exhibition from the collections of the National Library opened in the past couple of weeks in Temple Bar. That contribution is being made. There is something planned on the musical front but I do not know the details of it.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** We will work with our cultural institutions regarding next year. We are engaged with the Crawford Gallery in Cork on 2020 and many other cultural institutions are developing proposals to be delivered through the programme, including the National Theatre, etc. There is ongoing engagement with a range of stakeholders around that creative imagination strand which is an important element of the overall programme.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** The Senator raised a very interesting question regarding art, sculpture and so on. An area on which we would very much welcome his advice and that of other members of the committee is the Civil War. There is a proposal in the report that there be one major national event of commemoration and reconciliation. We have discussed the idea of a monument to commemorate all who died in the Civil War, but we have not come to any definite conclusions. One suggestion relates to the Cenotaph on the grounds of Leinster House. There are many reasons that might not or could not happen. We are considering whether the State should build a dedicated monument. The discussion could be opened up to artists and sculptors to see where it should be located. We would welcome input on these issues. We have made our recommendation but it has not yet been fleshed out. There could be an interesting debate among the public on what might best be done. I thank the Senator for his suggestion.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** The 1920 local elections were the last all-island local elections and an important barometer of public support for independence. Sinn Féin, the Labour Party and unionists took significant seats. Are there plans for those elections to be remembered nationally?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has identified two key focal points of the decade of centenaries programme, namely, the centenary of the burning of the Custom House and the local elections of 1920. The plans will be advanced under its stewardship.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** Is that noted in the submission?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** No.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** Where can I find further information on it?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I am happy to provide it to the Senator. We will publish a programme when it is finalised.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** I ask Mr. Falvey to reiterate the proposal.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, which participates on the interdepartmental committee of commemorations, is pursuing projects relating to the centenary of the burning of the Custom House and the local elections of 1920. The proposals have yet to be approved. When the programme is finalised, it will be announced.

**Senator Fintan Warfield:** I second the suggestion that there be a national event commemorating Terence MacSwiney, given his international significance. Deputy Ó Laoghaire may have something to say on that matter.

Deputy Ó Cuív referred to the restoration of monuments. There is a very obvious lack of monuments and plaques in Dublin. Dublin City Council and other local authorities should be encouraged to mark important events with plaques. As I said, there is a shortage of plaques in this city. A good example is the Bachelors Walk massacre of 1914, when the King's Own Scottish Borderers opened fire on a crowd, and they were back in Bantry Bay in 1921. That is an obvious example of the lack of a physical memorial. There is obviously huge modern potential for QR codes, audio tours and podcasts. I know historians and guides leading walking tours are often asked why there is no plaque there and in other locations.

I was listening to a podcast recently, "Three Castles Burning" by Donal Fallon, in which Lorcan Collins said that he thinks there is a Fawlty-esque policy in this city of "don't mention the war", whereby people are afraid that visitors, particularly those from England, might be offended by the fact we had some kind of revolution. I am not offended when I walk through London and I see a statue of Oliver Cromwell, so why should we not have some plaques to our revolutionaries?

I believe the Glasnevin wall will also feature those who died in the War of Independence and Civil War. Will that include the Black and Tans? Will it be in alphabetical order? I know many would be uneasy with that and, indeed, those who fought for our independence were an uneasy alliance of people anyway. Will that still be the practice?

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** We have no function at all in that matter. I suspect there is a lot of debate to take place before anything happens. It is not part of our brief.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I have no details on any proposal for a development of that nature at this point.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** I would slightly challenge the assertion that we do not remember the War of Independence. The GPO is the central monument in the city and that commemorates the Rising. Railway stations are named after patriots who died in 1916. There is a large statue of James Connolly opposite Liberty Hall and statues of various other patriots. Bridges have been named, such as the Thomas Clarke bridge. Therefore, on the idea that we do not mention the war for fear of giving offence, I am not sure I subscribe to that as being the reality.

**Chairman:** Does the Department wish to respond? There were questions on plaques and so on.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I want to come to the point on capital expenditure. There is no additional proposal beyond the Beyond 2022 project at this stage or beyond the programme of investment in our national cultural institutions. We have heard the views expressed today and Mr. Manning made reference to the broader piece that needs to be imagined over the next period in regard to some of those difficult issues and how they might be appropriately commemorated. We will carry that back into the deliberations and reflect on the contributions made today.

**Chairman:** I thank the witnesses for the presentations and I have a few specific questions. Was Ms O'Grady the heritage officer in Tipperary County Council in 2016? Would she have handled that side of things?

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** Yes.

**Chairman:** The council received €30,000 at that stage.

**Ms Róisín O’Grady:** That is right.

**Chairman:** How did Tipperary County Council administer that €30,000?

**Ms Róisín O’Grady:** The key part of the 2016 programme was that a lot of public consultation was done at the start, so we were aware there was interest in communities to take on projects. That funding supported key projects, for example, Cloughjordan had a commemoration for Thomas MacDonagh and the libraries produced a booklet. The rest of the funding was administered in a grant scheme to community groups. We put out a call for them to submit projects that were in line with the theme of the commemoration and we administered grants in both 2015 and 2016 for commemorative projects, which were hugely successful. We would have had upwards of 25 applications per year, so there was huge interest.

**Chairman:** That brings me to my follow-on questions. For a brief period, I was a member of the commemorative committee on Cork County Council and I recall we received a similar sum and we added to it ourselves. If I recall it correctly, the applications for grants amounted to about €1 million, and that was the level of demand. Was it comparable in Tipperary County Council?

**Ms Róisín O’Grady:** Possibly not as high but it would have been very high.

**Chairman:** Would Ms O’Grady offer a guess?

**Ms Róisín O’Grady:** It was a while ago. It was perhaps around €50,000 or €60,000. It was a multiple of what was available.

**Chairman:** I would reflect the point made by other committee members that the sums involved are quite modest, given the demand that will be there, particularly when there were many more local incidents. As a follow-on question for the Department, how much money was spent on commemorative events in Dublin city in 2016?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I would have to check. The overall budget for the 2016 commemorations in the year 2016 was quite extensive. There were a large number of State ceremonial events concentrated in one year and it was specifically targeted around the seven legacy projects in terms of the capital spend for that year.

**Chairman:** Let us leave aside the capital spend.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** It was in the tens of millions in 2016. I would have to check to be specific.

**Chairman:** I would say that was appropriate. However, for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, the same level of commitment needs to be reflected the scale and breadth of events, developments, trends and everything that happens right across the State and, indeed, the country. At this moment in time, the financial commitment that is outlined seems meagre, to be honest. In a general sense, I am somewhat underwhelmed by what I have heard. I will add a qualifier to that. I accept there is a programme to come down the tracks which will provide greater detail. I was personally concerned before the full programme for 2016 events came forth yet the 2016 commemoration was a success, and credit is due to the Department, the local authorities and local communities.

Extraordinary things happened in local communities. In my own area, in Ballyphehane, the streets are named after the signatories and there was a whole year of plays, walks, matches,

parades, debates and Tidy Towns events, for example, at Carrigaline. It was extraordinary and the communities really led from the front. There is huge appetite. It is incredible that a cinder block of a book, the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, became such a bestseller and they could not print enough of them. That shows the appetite that exists. I am concerned, although perhaps it is because we do not have the full detail of what is going to happen.

I will ask shortly if the witnesses can give us a timeline for that. This is a time people are anxious to commemorate and to discuss. It was a time of great passions and great developments, including in my own city. This is for the next couple of years but, as Deputy Ó Cuív stated, 2020 is nearly upon us, given we are in December 2019. Tomás Mac Curtain was killed in March 1920, the centenary of which is only three months away. We talk about Terence MacSwiney and it is one of the seminal events but, in Cork, Mac Curtain and MacSwiney are inextricably linked. Their fingerprints are throughout the city and we cannot escape the legacy of Mac Curtain and MacSwiney, which we see in the schools and everywhere else. That is coming right down the tracks and I am anxious about it. When is the programme coming down the tracks? The burning of Cork was this day 99 years ago. I was at the turning on of the Christmas lights on St. Patrick's Street a few weeks ago where everything as far as the eye could see was burned to the ground by the Black and Tans 99 years ago. Are there plans to commemorate that? These are important events. I am sure that Cork City Council is planning events but I want to know what the Department is going to do. There must be more of a financial commitment because there is no way that local authorities are going to be able to do what they want with the finance that is available. I understand that our guests are not going to be able to answer me immediately, but please take the message back to the Minister that more funding is needed. As a Cork Deputy, I would like more money for the city but money is required across the board.

When will the full programme be published?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** There is a bit for me to address in that. I said earlier in reply to Deputy Ó Cuív that the Department and Government are fully aware of these matters and a senior officials group, chaired by the Secretary General to the Government, meets to discuss them. The importance of the events in Cork will not be overlooked and we are engaged at present with the relevant authorities on marking those in an appropriate way.

The programme is being finalised at present with a view to bringing it to the Government as soon as possible. Ultimately, it is a decision for the Government but we are keenly aware of the timelines that the Chairman has outlined.

**Chairman:** When will the Government receive that programme?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Very shortly.

**Chairman:** Before the turn of the year?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I cannot say definitively at this point but we are mindful of the timelines and everything else in these matters.

The budget has been allocated for 2020 and the years that follow are beyond that. The Government has accepted the advice of the expert advisory committee and will plan a programme commensurate with that advice to meet demands and mark events in an appropriate fashion.

The issue regarding local authorities has filtered back through the all-party Oireachtas group and we will reflect on that and all the points that were made by committee members. I will con-

vey the messages back to the Minister about the timing of the announcement of the programmes and the scale of resourcing for the local authorities. Those are two issues that have consistently come up.

**Chairman:** I urge the Department to bring the programme to the Government, get it signed off and publish it as soon as possible. The Department should try and get a commitment on that and, if it can, get more money.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I was before the committee recently on a different issue when I assured committee members that the Minister was ambitious on the timelines for another matter. We are under pressure to deliver this.

**Chairman:** I will turn to Ms O'Grady. Next year, aside from commemorations, what are her functions? She is responsible for protected structures but what are her other responsibilities?

**Ms Róisín O'Grady:** The role of heritage officer is varied and broad. I am responsible for raising awareness of the heritage of the county and working with communities on heritage projects. Protected structures come under the planning function in our local authority so I do not deal with that but my primary responsibilities include advising on built heritage and biodiversity. I also do the Creative Ireland programme.

**Chairman:** The reason I asked Ms O'Grady that question is because many Departments, not just the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, seem to think that local government can do jobs akin to the miracle of the loaves and fishes. I do not know how the heritage officers in Cork City and County Council did not keel over during 2016 because of the volume of work they had to do. They are key and have librarians and all the rest of it, and work has to be channelled through local authorities, but there is a lot of pressure on local government and they need support as well as responsibility. I am not asking for a response to that but Mr. Falvey can respond, if he likes.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** We are fortunate that there is an exceptional team of people involved in the local government system in supporting the delivery of these things on the ground. People such as Conor Nelligan in Cork have been doing exceptional work for a number of years. I have met Mr. Nelligan at events in Dublin and the scale, volume and depth of his knowledge and the support the council provides are immense. The system would not work without them.

We have engaged with the local government system on the Creative Ireland programme and established creative teams comprising arts officers, heritage officers, librarians, etc. We are getting constant feedback that different people are pulling at those teams for different things at the same time. It is a challenge to think of ways to better resource those teams to help them deliver all of the things they are being asked to. I would not like to leave the room today without adding my voice to the acknowledgement of the contribution that people in the local authorities make on the delivery of all these programmes because it is absolutely essential.

**Chairman:** It is appropriate of Mr. Falvey to mention Mr. Nelligan because he is a Trojan worker.

I am going to ask the Department and expert advisory group about some issues that cannot be delivered through local authorities because they have a more national or international dimension. There may be others, but four occur to me. Is any contact being made with the Government of India about the Connaught Rangers? Is any contact being made with the Irish

embassy in Britain, or the British Government, about events there? I am thinking particularly of the death of Terence MacSwiney in Brixton Prison but there may be other events marking political activity in Britain. Is any examination being given to that?

Other organisations based across the island were significant in the background of the revolutionary era. The women's council and suffrage movement was a significant element within republicanism and the politics of the time. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, ICTU, and the labour movement also played a significant role in the politics of the revolutionary era. Those are four areas to be considered, two of them international and two domestic. Does the advisory group have views as to whether it is appropriate to, and how we can, fit those in? Are there plans to make contact and seek to organise events, debates or anything else in line with those organisations and places?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** On the role of the labour movement, ICTU and the Department supported an academic conference in NUI Galway in November on class and gender issues in the revolutionary period, which was well attended and at which the Minister spoke. I was also there and it was a good event.

The role of women is particularly identified in the advices, as is the impact on children and the role of the labour movement. I acknowledge Sinéad McCool's 100 Years of Women in Irish Politics and Public Life, which was launched about a year ago in the Coach House in Dublin Castle. It has also been to a number of venues in Limerick, Donegal and Roscommon. The exhibition is now in our headquarters in Kildare Street so if any committee members have not seen it and would like to, they are more than welcome. It will return to the Coach House in the new year.

The Minister also initiated the Markievicz award for artists to commemorate Countess Markievicz, which also leaks into the creative strand.

We are engaged with our embassies on those international elements.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had an active programme in 2016. I cannot say all embassies, but certainly the embassy in America and those in the Far East had programmes associated with 1916 lectures and the like. I gave one or two of them myself.

There is a recent book about Ireland and India by Kate O'Malley, a staff member of the Royal Irish Academy, who is also involved in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. Ms O'Malley's book was specifically on Ireland and India from the revolutionary period through to the 1950s. That is not forgotten. If it is not impertinent to say it, we have a Taoiseach who has a special connection with that part of the world.

**Chairman:** That did not occur to me but it is true. Has anyone else comments on any of those issues? The events in Brixton Prison should be kept in mind if there are no plans to commemorate them at the moment.

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** I beg the pardon of the Chairman, I will reply specifically on the international dimension. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through the embassy in India, is looking at organising an event to commemorate the Connaught Rangers next year.

**Chairman:** And in Britain?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** Absolutely. Our Secretary General was in London recently and I know that she met with the Irish ambassador there. We are looking at key events that took place in London in the period in question with regard to our creative strand.

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** My understanding is that many people represented Ireland diplomatically across the world in the 1920 to 1921 period. They obviously were not getting paid for their activities but they were appointed by Ministers from the Dáil. If I understand rightly, they were quite spread out across the globe, especially in any country with an Irish population, so they went to the southern hemisphere too. Larry Ginnell was sent to South America. Is there any effort to connect with these people and the Irish communities that they served? One thing one will find when one goes to all these countries is that many people remember that their ancestors were involved in this movement and supported it. Without the international support, there would never have been a truce in 1921. It is as simple as that.

**Dr. Martin Mansergh:** I was in Philadelphia this autumn and gave three addresses; one was just the launch of an exhibition but I certainly brought out some connections. It was hosted by the Museum of the American Revolution with people from the Irish revolution such as Austin Stack going to visit Valley Forge and so on. There are definite connections. Brendan O’Leary is a leading historian from the university in Philadelphia who has just produced three volumes on the more recent Troubles. I am reading a book from the National Library, Maurice Bric’s Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America. That is about the late 18th century. One can make the connections from then through to the Irish revolution. I find the points of comparison that could be made between the two revolutions very stimulating and that is what I was speaking on at the conference in Philadelphia.

**Chairman:** A final question that occurred to me that I intended to ask with the other four was about Bloody Sunday and the GAA. Are there plans for that?

**Mr. Conor Falvey:** There are plans with the GAA and the relevant local authorities for commemorations related to Bloody Sunday. It will be a major event next year.

**Ms Róisín O’Grady:** We have a committee that has been very active, like the Solohead committee, since mid-June this year. I have attended some of its meetings. We had a meeting in Dublin yesterday and the chairman of that committee was with me. There is a year-long programme of events in Tipperary. It will link in with Croke Park, the Department and Glasnevin. There are a number of other activities so we will have a full programme of events for Bloody Sunday. It focuses on the team too, the human side of this and the people who took part in that day.

**Chairman:** That is fantastic. Do any other members have any final observations or comments at this point? There is one item of private business that I overlooked. Members might hold on for a brief private session at the end. Do any witnesses have any final comments, observations or requests? I take on board what Dr. Manning said. I did not respond just now about the Civil War. Something as sensitive as that requires thought and consideration rather than just launching into it, but we will consider it as a committee and endeavour to correspond with Dr. Manning on it.

**Dr. Maurice Manning:** I thank the committee for having us in and giving us its time.

**Chairman:** We are very grateful for the witnesses’ time. Go raibh míle maith agaibh. If we are in any way critical or putting pressure on, it is because we share the witnesses’ ambitions for

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this year and the coming years to be as successful as 2016 was for what we and the witnesses want to achieve. We will offer whatever support we can.

*Sitting suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed in private session at 3.31 p.m.*

The joint committee adjourned at 3.40 p.m. until 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 22 January 2020.