



## FORUM MEETING

Thursday 20<sup>TH</sup> February 2014 @ 10.30am

Hilton Hotel Templepatrick

## MINUTES

### **In Attendance**

Michael Arlow

Alan Brecknell

Mitch Bresland

Alex Bunting

Lesley Carroll

Liz Clarke

Violet Craig

Stephen Gault

Eibhlin Glenholmes

Peter Heathwood

Roberta Holmes

Fiona Kelly

Irene Kerrigan

Errol McDowell

Jennifer McNern

David Scott

Ann Travers

### **Present**

John Beggs (Chair)

Adrian McNamee

Neil Foster

Tina McCann

### **Apologies**

Kathyn Stone

Jeff Smith

John Loughran

Jude Whyte

Briege Voyle

Sandra Peake

### **1. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were checked for accuracy and no amendments were recorded.

## **2. Matters Arising**

An update of last month's action points was given. John acknowledged receipt of feedback on the Commissions Complaints Procedure and advised that these have been considered in the review. The conference would be discussed under a separate agenda item today

## **3. DWP Conference 25<sup>th</sup> February-role of VSF members**

Adrian shared the conference details and agenda with the Forum. A discussion was had on the role of Forum members in the conference agenda. Adrian also advised that the conference was now full with 220 delegates but this did not include staff, speakers, facilitator's and contributors which finalised numbers at 280.

Adrian requested that any Forum members who did not wish to attend should notify Tina today.

**AP: Forum members to inform Tina if they are not attending Dealing with the Past Conference.**

It was agreed that Forum members would assist in the workshops and contribute to the presentations Adrian advised that the Commission had consulted with the sector on the design of the Conference.

Members asked for confirmation that listeners would be present. John advised that there would be listeners and that although there was an element of risk associated in convening an event such as this, the Commission was confident that it had implemented plans to manage the risk.

## **4. Residential meeting and Urban and Rural visits**

Tina advised that the residential meeting would be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> March in the Slieve Donard Hotel and that agenda and papers would follow in due course. She also advised that the Commission would not be planning the requested urban and rural trips until after the residential.

## **5. Update on Services to victims and survivors**

John advised that both reports had been submitted to the ministers along with advice from the Commissioner identifying key issues. Kathryn had also recommended that the reports are made public. Ministers have welcomed these reports and accepted the recommendations in full. John advised that a key message from the assessment of the VSS was that the VSS should work in partnership with both the Forum and the Commission.

John asked Alex to comment as the Forum Services Working Group representative on the Services Programme Board. Alex advised that ministers and Programme Board had accepted all of the 55 recommendations and that the Programme board will provide the oversight in their implementation.

A discussion was had and issues discussed included publication of the reports and recommendations. It was agreed that it was critical that victims and survivors were aware of recommendations and able to monitor progress. It was agreed that in order to gauge if the VSS was implementing change, there would need to be measurable progress and clearly defined success criteria.

## **6. Commissioners Update**

John advised that Kathryn would be travelling to Washington DC to partake in the Annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations. An extensive and prolific engagement plan had been devised for her to optimise this prestigious opportunity to maximise the profile and importance of victims' issues, the Commission and the Forum. He apologised for the inconvenience in having to reschedule the Forum residential in order to facilitate the Commissioner's trip.

John also gave feedback on the recent successful presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Good Friday Implementation Committee during which they gave an update on the Commission's Work Programme.

## **7. Steering Committee Update**

Lesley gave an update on issues discussed at the recent Steering Committee. This included discussion on the second reading of Jeffrey Donaldson's Victims Bill in Westminster, Urban and Rural fact finding trips and a request by Dr. Braniff at the University of Ulster asking members to visit and share their knowledge with students.

It was agreed that there were many demands on Forum members at the moment and any more request should be postponed until after the Conference and residential.

## **8. AOB**

Tina gave an update on Forum membership post March 2014 and asked any members who had not yet expressed their intentions to confirm with her before Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February.

Members raised concerns over the representativeness and demographics of the Forum in the absence of members who could not commit to staying post March 2014 until September 2014.

John advised that the Commission were aware of this as a possible emerging issue but that the proposed plan was an interim measure. He advised that Cavanagh Kelly

Consultants could attend the residential to brief and consult with the members on their findings regarding future plans for the Forum. John added that the Commission appreciate the huge commitment from Forum members and that the Commission wants to consolidate the momentum, credibility and achievements of the Forum in recent times.

Members also advised that the Commission should be mindful of excluding employed victims who may experience difficulty in being released from their place of work in order to fulfil their Forum commitments. John advised that the Commission would explore Forum membership as a civic duty which may fall under a corporate social responsibility remit.

**AP: Commission to consider comments made on Forum demographics and facilitating victims who may need an employee release scheme.**

**AP: Cavanagh Kelly to attend residential on 26<sup>th</sup> March and brief Forum members on business case for future of the Forum.**

## **9. Date and Time of next meeting**

The meeting concluded to allow RSM McClure Watters to present on Pensions Research.

The next business meeting will be held at Forum residential on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014.