



**Thursday 21 May 2015**

**Hilton Templepatrick**

**MINUTES**

**In Attendance**

Mitch Bresland  
Alex Bunting  
Liz Clark  
Violet Craig  
Stephen Gault  
Peter Heathwood  
Irene Kerrigan

Jennifer McNern  
David Scott  
Jeff Smith  
Ann Travers

**Apologies**

Eibhlin Glenholmes  
Roberta Holmes

Fiona Kelly  
John Loughran  
Jude Whyte

**Present**

John Beggs (Chair)  
Adrian McNamee  
Tina McCann

**1. Minutes from Forum meeting: 23 April 2015**

The minutes from the meeting held on the 23 April were checked for accuracy and amendments and no changes were made. Minutes were proposed by Ann and seconded by Violet.

**2. Matters Arising**

John gave an update on Action Points and matters arising. This included informing members that the Stormont House Agreement Principles had now been issued to political party leaders and that we are currently scoping a date for the Forum members to meet the new appointees to the Victims and Survivors Service Board. Tina gave the final arrangements for the scheduled visit to Seapark on the 28 May and the Forum meeting in the Irish Secretariats residence.

Adrian gave an update on the discussion on the EU from the 23 April. Martina Anderson MEP advised him that there were not any plans for Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights to return to NI in the foreseeable future.

However, she has told Adrian that Commissioner Muižnieks Annual Report refers to the issues in regard to Northern Ireland and the legacy of the conflict/Troubles and that she had held a follow up meeting in Strasbourg on 27 April 2015.

Ms Anderson said they were trying to secure a return visit for 2016 and that her office would continue to liaise with the Commission.

A discussion followed with members stating that there is currently a remote relationship between the EU and victims and survivors and this is an avenue that needs to be explored. Members proposed that the Commission give them an independent and impartial overview on the directorates and remit within EU that could have a direct impact on the issues of victims and survivors from a legal, financial and social perspective. They also asked the Commission to consider how best to advance the interests of victims and survivors within EU.

**AP: Commission to prepare an impartial and independent briefing on the role of EU and interests of victims and survivors TMC/AMN**

### **3. Feedback on Stormont House Agreement Model Implementation Bill**

John gave an overview of the Draft Model Implementation Bill as proposed by CAJ (Committee for the Administration of Justice) at its event held on the 18 May. John talked members through the draft model legislation and informed members that it was currently out to consultation.

Members agreed that this model legislation could be used by the Forum as a framework for preparation for the actual consultation on the proposed Westminster legislation on the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU) which is anticipated to go out for consultation soon.

As the model Bill looks at some of the challenging issues, it was agreed to circulate this to members in advance of a discussion at the next meeting on the 2 July.

**AP: Tina to forward Draft Model Implementation Bill on Stormont House Agreement to Forum members for consideration and preparation for discussion as an agenda item at July meeting.**

### **4. Commissioner Update**

John updated members on the recruitment process for a Commissioner. Interviews have now been held and the Commission assume that a list has now been passed to Ministers for appointment.

Members asked John what would be the implications for the Forum if the Stormont institutions were to collapse?

John said this could present two problems: the potential delay in appointment of a Commissioner which is the role of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister and, further reductions to the budget of the Commission for Victims and Survivors and its ability to meet its statutory duties including convening the Forum.

Members commented that if an appointment is not made then it is indicative of the regard that Ministers have for the interests of victims and survivors

## **5. AOB**

Alex gave feedback on the Orange Order film 'Strong to Survive' that he and several other Forum members viewed on 20 May and thanked David for the invite. David Scott added that he would try and organise a screening of the film when Forum members come out to the visit the Museum of Orange Heritage.

Mitch raised a query on Forum representation at a meeting he attended in Stormont with the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister in March.

He asked for the purpose of the meeting, how groups were selected and what the purpose of the meeting was and if the Forum was invited to send a delegate to this meeting. If so what was the process used to nominate a representative?

Tina advised that as Forum Manager, she had not received a request for an attendee to this meeting. John will follow up with the department to establish the detail.

**AP: John Beggs to follow up with Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on the purpose of the meeting, attendance and Forum representation.**

## **6. Date and Time of next Meeting-**

The meeting was closed for Adrian to give a presentation on the Pilot Project for Personal Budgets.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 2 July, Irish Joint Secretary Residence, Belfast