

# Centenary bodies meet to discuss plans for Northern Ireland's anniversary

- The Centenary Forum announced by the Prime Minister on his visit to NI in August meets to discuss plans to mark the 100 year anniversary
- Secretary of State and Minister of State welcome views from all communities on marking this important milestone for the United Kingdom
- Lord Bew and Historical Advisory Panel provide independent advice and insight to inform preparations for the centenary

The NI Centenary Forum met today to progress plans to mark 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation.

The Forum, whose membership was publicly confirmed today and which is chaired by NIO Director of Communications, Andy Pike, is composed of statutory, political, business, community and civic voices, from a wide range of perspectives and interests.

The inclusion of these diverse perspectives is vital to facilitate respectful discussion around this key moment in our shared history. Whether through the Forum, or through wider engagement, every effort will be made by the UK Government to ensure these perspectives are included and respected.

At today's meeting, the advisory group discussed a range of proposals to facilitate national recognition and international awareness of the anniversary, that will reflect on the past and importantly, build for Northern Ireland's future. The centenary can be an opportunity to showcase what is best about Northern Ireland around the world; this programme of centenary events will reinforce the UK Government's commitment to a prosperous Northern Ireland and levelling up through economic development and investment opportunities. It will also celebrate Northern Ireland's people, business, culture, arts, and young talent, looking forward to a positive future.

The Centenary Historical Advisory Panel has also started work, bringing together a range of expertise and perspectives. It is independently chaired by Lord Bew, Emeritus Professor at Queen's University, Belfast.

This Panel will provide advice to the Forum, and to the Government, on the historical facts of the centenary, and its work will be guided by the Principles for Remembering. As part of its role, the Panel will seek to develop and curate accessible content which encourages a deeper public awareness of the history of the centenary.

**Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Robin Walker MP said:**

"The Centenary Forum provides a fantastic opportunity for a broad spectrum of

people, including those from across the political parties, business, tourism and the voluntary and community sectors, to come together to shape the delivery of an ambitious programme of events to mark this significant national anniversary.

“I want to see the whole of our society represented on the Centenary Forum, so that together we can progress this unique and exciting opportunity to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland.

“I thank the Historical Advisory Panel, chaired by Professor Lord Bew, for their contribution in bringing strong and independent academic rigour to our approach to marking this important anniversary.”

### **Professor Lord Bew said:**

“It is important that the centenary is marked in such a way that recognises the historical facts of the period. This Panel, which will be academically rigorous and independent in its research, includes a range of perspectives and research interests; I am also eager to collaborate more widely with historians and researchers across these islands. I look forward to working with them to develop key themes and collectively enrich public understanding of the events of 1920-22, and their implications.”

### **Composition of the Centenary Forum:**

- Doug Beattie MC MLA
- Eileen Chan-Hu, CRAIC NI
- Stephen Farry MP
- Rev. Mervyn Gibson, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland
- Ivy Goddard, Inter-Ethnic Forum
- Peter Harbinson, Invest NI
- Howard Hastings
- Jacqueline Irwin, Community Relations Council
- David Jackson, SOLACE NI
- Ian Marshall
- John McGrillen, Tourism NI
- Paul Mullan, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Luke Patterson, NI Youth Parliament
- Canon David Porter
- Gavin Robinson MP
- Cormac Savage, NI Youth Parliament
- Jonathan Stewart, British Council
- Liza Wilkinson, TIDES Training
- Richard Williams, Northern Ireland Screen

### **Composition of the Centenary Historical Advisory Panel**

- Professor Lord Bew MRJA, Emeritus Professor, Queen’s University Belfast
- Dr Brian Barton, FRHistS, Independent Historian
- Dr Marie Coleman, FRHistS, SFHEA, Reader in Modern Irish History, Queen’s University Belfast
- Dr Niamh Gallagher, Lecturer in Modern British and Irish History,

University of Cambridge and Fellow of St. Catharine's College

- Dr Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, University of Sheffield
- Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Reader in History and Politics, Queen's University Belfast
- Professor Henry Patterson, Emeritus Professor of Politics, University of Ulster
- Professor Graham Walker, Professor of Political History, Queen's University Belfast