

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS
COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON FRIDAY 12TH AUGUST 2022 11AM
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

3795/22 **Present:** Chair Mr M McDonald, , Mr J McCallister, Ms N Tandon, Ms C Harris, Mr M McDonnell

3796/22 **In Attendance:** Dr J Irwin (CEO), Ms H George (PA to CEO and Board).

3797/22 **Observers:** Ms F Cassidy (Legal Advisor)

3798/22 **Apologise:** Ms M Braniff Mr R Campbell, Ms A Simpson, Ms S McClelland,

3799/22 **Correspondence**

The Chair informed members that CRC had received correspondence from the Information Commissioners Office, notifying that a case officer had been appointed to the Freedom of Information review. This FOI review relates to the Bonfire Report, a piece of research commissioned by CRC.

The correspondence from the Information Commissioners Office includes a number of questions and exercises CRC should complete and return to the case officer, in order for a determination to be made on whether the decision to withhold the whole report was reasonable and meets the criteria set out in the various relevant laws.

The Chair informed members that he, along with the CEO, met with CRC's legal advisors to discuss the possible response to the ICO's correspondence.

3800/22 **Qualified Persons Opinion**

Ms F Carson reminded the Board of the decision they made in August 2021, as the 'qualified persons. The Board decided that the report should not be released to the Freedom of Information seeker for the following reasons:

- The Report had never been published
- It was not intended as a policy document, but rather a private discussion
- The Report from the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition had not yet been released.

The Board were asked to consider if these reasons were still reasonable, and whether they would uphold the decision to withhold the Report, or whether the circumstances had changed and a redacted version of the Report should be released to the FOI seeker.

3801/22 Discussion and Decision

The Board discussed the options available to CRC. Attendees agreed that the circumstances had changed since:

- The Report by The Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture, and Traditions has now been published
- No correspondence was received from the councils regarding the release of the Bonfire Report in the intervening period since this was last considered.

The Board agreed that a redacted version of the report could be shared with the FOI seeker, through the Information Commissioners Office.

Ms F Cassidy presented the Bonfire Report to the Committee, and took them through where it was appropriate for redactions to be made, and where information within the report is publically available. The Board agreed with Ms F Cassidy's proposed redactions in the main report and the approach to be taken to the appendix.

3802/22 Next Steps

ACTION: Ms F Cassidy to implement the agreed redactions to the Bonfire Report and appendix. This will be completed by Wednesday 17th August, and shared with the CEO and Chair. Chair to approve final version to go to ICO.

ACTION: Full Board to be notified of the decision at today's meeting.

ACTION: Board's decision to be shared with the Information Commissioners Office Case Officer by 1st September 2022.

Mr M McDonnell left the meeting

3803/22 Any Other Business

i) Board Minutes –Pathfinder Grants

The Chair presented members with the minutes of CRC's previous Board meeting. At the last meeting the Board agreed the funding of a number of groups under the Pathfinder Grant. While the meeting was no longer quorate, the Chair noted that the minutes were not contentious and had been previously circulated to Board members for comment. He therefore authorised that the Pathfinder Grants can begin being processed and added to CRC's grant management system, and the final minutes and the Chair's action will be presented at the Board meeting in September 2022.

ii) Correspondence – Peace Heroines Project

The CEO presented members with correspondence regarding a project titled 'Peace Heroines Project' which is conducted in collaboration with Herstory,

National Museums NI, and Hilltown Community Association. The education project aims to showcase the work of women during the peace process. The exhibition will tour Northern Ireland before heading to the UN Headquarters in New York.

The project coordinators have asked if CRC would agree to sit on their Committee, and produce a letter in support of the project.

The Board and Chair agreed that CRC should support this project by joining the Committee and writing a letter of support. While the meeting was not quorate, the Chair agreed that CRC can proceed as this was a straightforward request. The correspondence will be shared at the next Board meeting.

ACTION: The Chair approved CRC's involvement with the Committee. The correspondence will be shared with Board members at 23rd September meeting.

ACTION: The CEO to confirm CRC's interest in taking part in the 'Peace Heroines Project' Committee, and draft a letter of support.

3804/22

Date of Next Meeting

23rd September 10:30am