

Dialogue For Diversity

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 18 May 2017 at 12.15 p.m. At 28 Brookvale Park, Belfast BT14 6BW

Present: Alan McGuckian (Chair), Terry Howard.

Apologies: Pat Davis, Pdraig O'Connor, Roma Carlisle.

In Attendance: Brian Lennon (Company Secretary), Brendan McPartlin, Frank Brady, Michael Bingham.

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 2016 AGM were unanimously approved
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Alan McGuckian

2. **Appointment of Directors**

Kate Martin and Pdraig O'Connor were unanimously re-appointed as Directors for the coming year.

Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Alan McGuckian

3. **Appointment of Company Secretary**

Brian Lennon was re-appointed as Company Secretary

Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Alan McGuckian

4. **Appointment of Management Committee**

The following were unanimously appointed as members of the Management Committee:

- Brendan McPartlin
- Michael Bingham
- Kate Martin
- Frank Brady
- Brian Lennon

Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Alan McGuckian

5. **Treasurer's Report**

- Accounts for the financial year have been approved by DMC Consultants, 8 Ashley Heights, Portadown BT61 1QE. A summary of the accounts are laid out below as Appendix Two.
- The accounts were unanimously accepted:
Proposed Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard.

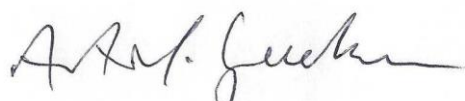
6. **Appointment of Financial Overseer**

Denis McCourt of DMC Consultants, 8 Ashley Heights, Portadown BT61 1QE was unanimously appointed Financial Overseer.

Proposed: Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard.

7. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman in his comments thanked all who had taken part in the Projects for their hard work. His report is attached as Appendix One. There being no other business the meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.



Appendix One:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: 1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 MARCH 2017

Introduction

Dialogue For Diversity run six main projects: Migrants Support, Community Support for ex-prisoners, Dialogue between divided groups, Community Development, Church Reform, and Support for the Irish Language. Steady progress was made in all areas.

Vision and mission

God, as three persons in relationship, made the world in their image and are developing it in their likeness. We want to join in this work and, at this time, contribute to building a community of right relations where everybody, especially the poor, find parity of esteem, equal opportunity. We aim to reduce prejudice and build social capital through a structured project of formal care, the promotion of day to day kindnesses and facilitate entry to the labour market as a key to integration.

1. Migrant Support Service

There is a high concentration of migrant families in the more deprived areas of Portadown. They come from Asia, Africa, Brazil, Portugal, Eastern Europe and Syria. We hold on average 2,600 meetings with them about employment (job applications, CVs, grievance resolution); education (information, seeking school places, liaison); housing (information on Housing Executive, mediation with landlords, housing benefit); documents (passports, identity cards); language (English classes, translation); welfare credits and benefits; and legal issues (immigration, race crime, family matters). Their situations range from the basic needs of new arrivals to those of the more settled people who need to integrate into the community. We hope to move more towards education in English and citizenship and reduce the one-to-one service.

Our aim is to integrate them into a community of right relations and to that end pursue the following strategies.

Our *School of English and Citizenship* provides a suite of English classes at all levels; a programme of smooth transition for mothers and children; courses on self-development; and sessions on CV writing, job searching, mortgage taking, civil, legal and political rights. 600 hours of English class were provided. There were 400 registrations of whom 140 were certified as meeting attendance requirements; 8 information and training sessions and cultural events were held. This contributed to the aim of increasing the ability of newcomers to take part as constructive members of community and develop a sense of belonging.

Our *information and advice service* provides one to one consultation with a view to helping people find solutions to their issues with employment, income, housing, education and health care. 1,750 face to face meetings were held to find solutions to gaining access to services and to securing fair outcomes.

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Our *immigration specialist*, a solicitor, works alongside to redress injustices and resolve immigration issues. He held 150 legal consultations which were followed up as appropriate and led to a reduction in racism and prejudice.

We organise *Consular outreach tours* by the Portuguese Consulate to provide passports, identity cards and other registrations. 1,200 people were registered and documented. Correct documentation enables job entry and access to entitlements. This activity strengthens the enforcement of citizenship rights, the recognition of identity, and respect for diversity.

Finance: The Executive Office's Minority Ethnic Development Fund grant aided this programme for 2016-17 but is not available for 2017-18. Applications to other funding sources are currently in progress.

2. Prison Work-Chaplaincy

Frank Brady and Brian Lennon continue to work as part time prison Chaplains in Maghaberry Prison, Frank - 2 days per week, and Brian one day a week. This includes seeing newly arrived people just committed to prison, , and also celebrating mass . They also see prisoners who are unwell and report on their situation, and keep in touch with prisoners they have seen frequently over the past few years.

Brian Lennon recently started a process focussing on Week 1 of the Spiritual Exercises to groups of about 10. The process brings the group through some scripture stories and raises questions about connections to their own lives. The process is in silence, without sharing. This seemed counter-intuitive at first, but seems to have worked well, in part because sharing would likely have developed into less personal discussion. Secondly, the lack of sharing gives participants a chance to struggle with the questions at a deeper, more personal level. So far 40 have attended . Participants were interviewed at the end of 4 series and feedback was very positive, so more series are planned.

3. Prison Work-Community Support

Community Support was set up:

- To assist a number of newly released prisoners to avoid re-offending
- To help mentees to improve their self-image and self-confidence through support and encouragement
- To encourage mentees to develop their talents and hopes to the full
- To help mentees to link with existing statutory and voluntary agencies
- To work with others engaged in prison work to develop post-release services

Crucial to our mission is linking newly-released prisoners to existing support services.

Impact

The following figures give an overview of our quantitative impact this year:

Total of	Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of
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visits made	visits inside	visits outside	individuals visited	individuals seen inside	individuals seen outside
482	227	255	140	118	22

Some individuals were seen many times as the following table shows:

Individuals seen over 5 times inside and outside	Individuals seen 5 times	Individuals seen 4 times	Individuals seen 3 times	Individuals seen twice	Individuals seen once
19	3	7	7	28	78

The above table shows that we made 482 visits in total. This is a considerable work load for 5 and often only 4 volunteers, working on a part-time basis. We saw 19 very regularly, and were therefore giving them on-going support. Those who received 5 visits may have been seen a number of times inside and have decided not to follow up post-release. Some of the support was by phone or text. The vast majority of those we saw regularly were released. Almost none, at the time of writing, have re-offended.

These figures are encouraging, as of the 25 we saw on 3 or more times outside, only 1 is back inside, and he was recommitted at the very beginning of the year under review. Of course the reason for this is first and foremost because of the very considerable efforts the mentees themselves made, but the support of CS and other agencies is likely to have been a help to some.

The figures give little idea of the stories behind the mentees. Some of this can be seen from the following:

Mentees

Sadly, one of our mentees died after a long illness. It was a privilege to be able to support him during this time. Some have found work: in computers, selling phone plans and magazines, dish washing, and building. Many struggle with addition issues, and with underlying problems of depression and anxiety. One has been off drink for over a year, which is the longest time in his life, but still needs a lot of encouragement to stay in touch with AA. Another suffers from ADHD and has frequent bouts of heavy drinking. Sometimes our support has involved simply listening to mentees as they and their families readjust to release: no one should underestimate the trickiness of re-engaging with a family after having been inside for a number of years, especially if there are teenagers involved. Family members may also have died while a mentee was inside, and some times he was refused permission to attend the funeral. This makes grieving harder and family members can blame him for not having been around. In this regard it is really important for prison authorities to factor in the long-term psychological cost of refusing compassionate leave when deciding whether to grant it or not.

We have helped a number of prisoners with housing issues by putting them in touch with the Methodist Church who run a loan scheme. We have also gone with prisoners on home leave to see if flats on offer are suitable. It helps that we have now good contacts with some landlords.

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We have had a fair amount of contact with solicitors and have spoken quite often for prisoners in court.

Above all, our task is to support and encourage prisoners. Nothing is more important than this. All of them face an uphill battle post-release, with many road blocks. That is why encouragement is so important. Further, those who re-offend also need to be encouraged: the road to being free of crime for many is not a single uphill journey, but rather one of many twists and turns in the cycle of change.

Cooperation with other agencies

We continue to have excellent relations with prison staff in both Maghaberry and Magilligan, and they have been very helpful to us in making contact with prisoners. Unfortunately we have recently had to cut back on our visits to Magilligan. We also work closely with Probation: one of our mentees described his Probation officer as the best he has ever had – and he has had many! He had good reason to think this. She went way beyond the call of duty in working on his behalf to ensure he got many entitlements which he might not otherwise have received. This was critically important when he faced terminal illness. Probation and the Prison Service both continue to serve on our Advisory Group. We are also very grateful to the Quaker Service, Prison Fellowship, and NIACRO who continue to support us. We have also begun to make contact with RESET. This is a PBNI initiative, managed by NIACRO. They mentor newly-released prisoners for 15 weeks and we are looking at options to support those who have finished this process and still need support.

Funding

The Stephen's Green Trust and Halifax have remained our main funders for the past year: we could not have survived without them, and for this we are very grateful. As with all groups, our financial position remains somewhat precarious, and we hope that we will be able to find other funders in the year ahead.

Comings and Goings

In the past year we have welcomed one new mentor: Andy Steed. Chris Marley and Rebecca McClements moved on and we thank them for their efforts and wish them well on their new journeys. We welcomed Sinead Bailie from Quaker Services on to our Management Committee. Ideally we would like to have another three mentors, so please encourage anyone you know who might think of volunteering.

4. Dialogue Project

The Dialogue Project encourages conversations about difficult political and social issues among divided groups in Northern Ireland. As in previous years our focus has been on work with marginalised working-class Loyalists, and we ran a course from September to April for them. The aim was to give them a critical understanding of major loyalist documents so that they will grow in confidence about their own identity and thereby be able to relate with less fear and resistance to groups different from themselves with whom they disagree.

There were sixteen participants, which was a small increase on last year. Most of these were new to dialogue. The remainder were experienced leaders, but were

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needed as participants to persuade the others to attend. One third were young Loyalists who are likely to become future community leaders. Some of the older participants were ex-combatants and had served long sentences in prison. Many were either close to, or had taken part in, flags protests. This means that the group we were drawing into the process are precisely the group that needs it. Their level of confidence and skills, including literacy, was in some cases low. But they were also beginning to engage in other groups: some in the PUP, some in local community groups.

It was important that one section was from a UDA background, the other from a UVF background. There have been many feuds between the two groups, so, apart from building understanding between Loyalists and outsiders, it is important also to do this among Loyalist themselves.

A new element this year was to focus on the 1912 Covenant as a learning tool. This is as important an element in Loyalist identity as the 1916 Proclamation is to Republicans. But, as with Republicans, many Loyalists know little about their actual history. We used an important document by Billy Mitchell, *Principles of Loyalism*. We produced summaries of different sections of the document, and these can be used with other groups.

We raised some significant questions for participants:

- a. If they are British subjects do they accept that only the British state can decide who should bear arms?
- b. The Covenant talks about 'For God and Ulster'. What is the relevance of this in a more secular world?
- c. Is it good for them to focus on electoral success if, as they argued, they will not succeed because the wider community, and Loyalists themselves, are much more likely to vote for the DUP?
- d. They complained frequently about media bias against them, so we raised questions about how they could deal with this. We also raised the dilemma that all Loyalists will be tarred with the same brush if some Loyalists are involved in crime.
- e. We discussed the feelings of Loyalists being marginalised in the peace process, and the likelihood that this will not change.

The position working-class Loyalists find themselves in is very similar to other working class groups across the Western world. And these were a significant factor both in the Brexit vote and the Trump election. As it happened, one of the participants towards the end of the course said that he had changed his mind about Brexit, and perhaps the course contributed a little to this.

Feed back at the end was positive and we are planning another course for next year. While this will still focus on the 1912 Covenant, we hope to widen it to look also at the 1916 Proclamation and the 1998 Agreement.

5. Local community empowerment

We continued to support the SPRING youth project in Armagh.

Iona, in Portadown, provides a community aspect to Dialogue for Diversity's recognition of the Trinitarian set of relations that reach out, especially to the

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poor of the world. Members of the community:

- i Supplied the parish for weekly mass, first communions, school visits and other occasions where required
- ii Prepared adult migrants for the sacraments of initiation
- iii Directed individuals in the Spiritual Exercises
- iv Chaired the board meetings of the mental health self-help group *GROW in the North of Ireland*
- v Peace activities: Met with *Regenerate* and *Epworth Methodist Church* in discussions about the Peace Wall in Portadown.
- vi Chaired the board meetings of the *Drumcree Trust*
- vii Michael Bingham continued his course of study at the Dept. of Theology & Religious Studies at Chester University in Practical Theology. He recently presented his second module – ‘Publishable Article’ – which argues for a convergence between the experience of desistance and conversion. He hopes later to research what helps offenders to desist, particularly in the quality of relationships formed with those offering them support.
- viii Since April 2016 Michael has supported released prisoners as an independent practitioner, with affiliation to the Community Chaplaincy Scheme operating in England and Wales. He currently attends to 12 people on a regular (weekly/fortnightly) basis, two of whom have recently been returned to custody. On a more occasional basis he has kept in touch with a further 16 (one of whom died in the New Year), ten of whom to date have been returned, or are awaiting release or appeal. A further three have ‘graduated’, though contact is often maintained on a friendly basis. During this time till the present 184 meetings with clients have been recorded, including accompanied visits to hospital or the PSNI, and 34 visits in the prison. 83 court attendances took place, at which 25 court references were presented. In addition eight references were addressed to the NIHE. There is always a core of four or five clients – whose composition constantly changes – who need intensive attention as they undergo crises of one sort or another, while contact with the remainder can be maintained at lower levels, so that overall the spread of meetings/visits carried out varies greatly.

6. Church Reform

Brian Lennon continued to serve on the Justice Commission of the Armagh Diocese. The Justice Commission takes part in the wider Diocesan Commission meetings which are currently preparing the World Day of Family in 2018. They are also discussing suggestions for a possible visit to Northern Ireland by Pope Francis in conjunction with his proposed visit to Dublin in August 2018.

Brian’s book with Tim Kinahan (C of I) *Does Christ Matter? An Anglican and a Jesuit in Dialogue*, will be published in the Autumn by The Irish Messenger Office. The Messenger Office also published a new edition of Brian’s book, *So You Can’t Forgive? Moving Towards Freedom*, which had been out of print.

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A guided retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises was given to a group of 11 by the Down and Connor prayer guides over a six-week period. Feed back was very positive.

Brendan MacPartlin serves on the Council of Priests for Armagh Diocese, and both he and Frank Brady attend monthly meetings of the Churches Together group in Portadown and engaged in joint ecumenical activities at Christmas, Easter and other occasions. The community also held weekly meetings of the *Theological Reflection Group*.

7. Irish language

Frank Brady continues his work as Editor and Director at *An Timire* and 'FS / Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta', the Irish Province Publishing House. *An Timire* is the younger sister publication of the *Irish Messenger* and FS its book publishing section. It is the oldest Irish Language magazine in print and is published 4 times a year. FS publishes 3 books a year. The aim of these publications is to link Irish Culture with the Irish Spirituality tradition in line with the renewal of Vatican 2. Both prioritise material on faith, justice, and ecology. Frank is Chaplain to 2 Irish medium primary Schools, on in Portadown and one in Dungannon.

Conclusion

The basic aim of Dialogue For Diversity is to develop more respect and esteem for all groups in society, especially among marginalized people. A large number of people helped to make progress with the above projects. To them our thanks is due.

Appendix Two:

Dialogue for Diversity

Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31 March 2017

	£	£
Income		
Donations	4,496	
Grants	60,448	
Bank Interest	<u>13</u>	
Total Income		64,957
<u>Less Expenditure</u>		
Accountancy	200	
Bank Charges	167	
Insurance	685	
Rent	7,217	
Salaries	28,934	
Utilities	2,185	
Travel Costs	4,628	
Conference Cost	4,197	
Office Supplies	582	
Telephone	719	
Sundry	<u>2,271</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>51,785</u>
NET INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		<u>13,172</u>

Dialogue for Diversity - Prisons/ Migrants

Period Ended 31.03.2017

Income and Expenditure

	Overall Totals	Nr 1 Acc Holding	Nr 2 Acc Community	Nr 3 Acc Dialogue	Migrants
	£	65564617	65598418	65598421	45317896
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations	6,134.01		200.00		5,934.01
Loan received	1,013.00	13.00	1,000.00		
Grants	62,601.45		10,702.99	13,038.67	38,859.79
Bank Int. Received	0.29				0.29
~St. Stephens Green Trust	1,312.13			1,312.13	
Total Income	71,060.88	13.00	11,902.99	14,350.80	44,794.09

Expenditure

Accountancy	200.00				200.00
Transfer to Nr 2 A/C	5,057.91			5,057.91	
Loan Refund	4,638.00		1,000.00	2,000.00	1,638.00
Community Dialogue	500.00			500.00	
Bank Charges	166.55		23.70		142.85
Maintenance	416.39				416.39
Facilitation Costs	750.00			750.00	
Publicity	105.60				105.60
Insurance	685.08	619.81			65.27
Rent	7,216.62		794.22		6,422.40
Salaries	29,420.45				29,420.45
utilities	2,184.99				2,184.99
Catering	593.08			593.08	
Travel	4,580.23		4,197.23	383.00	
Room Hire	891.44			891.44	
Residential	2,248.35			2,248.35	
Subsistence	465.14		465.14		
Office Supplies & Postage	582.07	95.80			486.27
Cleaning	42.38				42.38
Refund	36.00	23.00	13.00		
Training	440.00		60.00		380.00
Parking Fees	28.68		28.68		
Telephone	718.88		127.99		590.89

Total Expenditure	61,967.84	738.61	6,709.96	12,423.78	42,095.49
Net Surplus (Deficit)	9,093.04	- 725.61	5,193.03	1,927.02	2,698.60
Open Book at 01/04/16	6,807.83	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	757.07
net in/out	9,093.04	- 725.61	5,193.03	1,927.02	2,698.60
Closing book bal	15,900.87	192.19	8,617.28	3,635.73	3,455.67

Bank Reconciliations

bank balance 31st March 2017	16,659.05	192.19	8,617.28	4,393.91	3,455.67
less o/s cheques @ 31st March 2017	758.18	-	-	758.18	-
Book Balance	15,900.87	192.19	8,617.28	3,635.73	3,455.67

Dialogue for Diversity

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2017

	£	£
Fixed Assets		4,030
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Bank Account	15,901	
Debtors	<u>10,872</u>	
		26,773
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
Nil		-
<u>NET ASSETS</u>		<u>30,803</u>
<u>CAPITAL EMPLOYED</u>		
<u>Represented by Capital Account</u>		
Opening Surplus (Deficit) at 1 st April 2016	17,631	
Add Net Income 12 months ended 31 st March 2017	<u>13,172</u>	
Accumulated Funds at 31 st March 2017		<u>30,803</u>

Dialogue for Diversity

Clients Approval of Accounts

I approve these accounts and confirm that I have made available all relevant records and information relating to the income and expenditure of the business for the period ended 31 March 2017 and to the assets and liabilities of the business at 31 March 2017.

Signature..... Brian Lee , Company Secretary
Date..... 18/5/17.....

Dialogue for Diversity

Accountants Report

In accordance with instructions given to us, we have prepared the attached accounts from the accounting records, information and explanations supplied to us. In accordance with the terms of our engagement, we have not performed an audit and consequently we are not in a position to express an opinion on these accounts.

The accounts are in agreement with the accounting records and are consistent with the information and explanations supplied to us.

8 Ashley Heights
Portadown
Co. Armagh
BT62 1QE

..... 18/5/17
Date

..... [Signature]
DMC Business Consultancy