

**DIALOGUE FOR DIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting**  
**26 April 2018 at 12.20 p.m.**  
**At 19c Mullacreevie Park, Armagh BT60 4BA**

**Present:** Terry Howard (Chair), Pat Davis.

**Apologies:** Pdraig O'Connor, Roma Carlisle.

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

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 2017 AGM were unanimously approved  
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis
  
2. **Appointment of Directors**  
Roma Carlisle and Pdraig O'Connor were unanimously re-appointed as Directors for the coming year.  
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis
  
3. **Appointment of Chair**  
Terry Howard was unanimously appointed Chair of the Directors  
Proposed: Pat Davis; seconded: Brian Lennon
  
4. **Appointment of Company Secretary**  
Brian Lennon was re-appointed as Company Secretary  
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis
  
5. **Appointment of Management Committee**  
The following were unanimously appointed as members of the Management Committee:
  - Brendan McPartlin
  - Michael Bingham
  - Kate Martin
  - Frank Brady
  - Brian LennonProposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Pat Davis
  
6. **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.Proposed Pat Davis, seconded Terry Howard.
  
7. **Appointment of Financial Overseer**  
Denis McCourt of DMC Consultants, 8 Ashley Heights, Portadown BT61 1QE was unanimously appointed Financial Overseer.  
Proposed: Pat Davis, seconded Terry Howard.
  
8. **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.

*Terry Howard*

26<sup>th</sup> April 2018

/contd....

## Appendix One

### Dialogue For Diversity Programme Report 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

#### Introduction

Dialogue For Diversity runs 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 and equal opportunity. We aim to reduce prejudice and build social capital through a structured project of formal care and the promotion of day to day kindnesses. We also aim to 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. Our aim is to integrate them in a community of right relations by carrying out the following strategies.

*English Classes: L2 Training* provides a suite of English classes at all levels; and information sessions on CV writing, job searching, mortgage taking, civil, legal and political rights. 600 hours of English class were provided. There were 280 registrations of whom 80 were certified as meeting attendance requirements; 7 information and training sessions were held. This contributed to the aim of reducing marginalization and social isolation and improving living standards and social cohesion.

*Information and advice service* held 2,000 one to one consultations with 800 people with a view to helping them find solutions to their issues with employment, income, housing, education and health care.

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

*Consulate Outreach:* We hosted members of the Portuguese Consulate from Manchester over four separate weeks while they interviewed 1,000 people and issued them with citizenship documents and registrations. 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 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council provided matching funds of £6000 in support of these projects. The National Lottery Fund is funding us with £42,000 for each of three years beginning January 2018.

## 2. Prison Work

### 2. **Prison Work**

#### a. *COMMUNITY SUPPORT*

Community Support is a voluntary group that was set up to offer support and encouragement to newly released prisoners.

#### *Comings and Goings*

This has been a difficult year in terms of mentors. Gerry Gribbon, a founder member of the group, found he had too much on his plate. Andy Steed also had to withdraw due to family reasons. We would like to thank both Gerry and Andy for the great work they did over the years. Another old hand, Osmond Mulligan, was off for several months, again due to family reasons, but thankfully is now back in action. We welcomed one new mentor, Joe Baxter, who joined us just before Christmas. All this meant that the number of mentors available was considerably reduced. Despite this, we were able to achieve a sizeable volume of work.

#### *Impact*

We made 391 visits in total. This is a considerable work load for 3 volunteers on a part-time basis. We saw 34 very regularly. 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.

Many of those we saw were medium to high risk of re-offending. Of the 34 we saw regularly, 4 are back inside. We will continue to keep in touch with these inside, and to encourage them that the road to a new life is always an up and down one. If the picture is positive this is first and foremost because of the efforts made by mentees themselves, especially given the difficulties faced by all newly-released prisoners. But the efforts of many agencies may well have helped 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 who had been battling with very difficult mental health issues, died during the year. We offer our deepest sympathy to his family. Another mentee was able to find work, and has now been selected for management training. One of our mentees continues to stay off drink: now for over 1.5 years, the longest time by far in his life. We have been contacted by several former mentees, who have now moved on, but who were grateful for the support they received. Offering this was a privilege for us.

Many struggle with addiction issues, and with underlying problems of depression and anxiety. 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.

We have helped a number of prisoners with housing issues by meeting with landlords. We have had some contact with solicitors and spoken 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 one of twists and turns in the cycle of change.

#### *Cooperation with other agencies*

We continue to have excellent relations with prison staff in Maghaberry who have been very helpful to us in making contact with prisoners. Probation, the Prison Service, Quaker Service, and Prison Fellowship continue to serve on our Advisory Group.

#### *Issues arising*

Housing remains a continuing issue. Also some prisoners still seem to have problems in getting ID cards on release, and in getting benefits. Some of this is related to the disgraceful delay in enabling people to access Universal Credit where it has been introduced. This is a matter of government and it needs to be addressed urgently.

#### *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.

#### *B. CHAPLAINCY*

Frank Brady and Brian Lennon continue to work as part time prison Chaplains in Maghaberry Prison. A six session Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises was given to two more groups. Approximately 60 have now completed this. 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. Feedback was very positive, so further series are planned.

#### *C. SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS IN TRANSITION*

Michael Bingham sees about 12 prisoners and former prisoners, most of whom he has been in touch with for several years. Many have been in and out of prison for most of their adult lives. Michael aims to give extra encouragement as people strive to integrate back into the community. Michael also accompanies men to

meetings about housing, or with the police, or in court. Sadly, two have lost their lives over the past year from substance abuse.

### **3. Dialogue Project**

The Dialogue Project encourages conversations about difficult political and social issues among divided groups in Northern Ireland. Divisions are deep, as evidenced by the collapse of Stormont. This makes dialogue all the more urgent. As in previous years our focus has been on work with marginalised working-class Loyalists. We ran two residential, as well as an 8 session course for a group from the Shankill who were completely new to dialogue, and a trip to Dublin.

Participants in the first residential were deeply and emotionally divided over identity issues, especially the Irish language. In this they were reflecting the divisions at Stormont. They remained divided at the end of the second residential, but precisely because of the work already done they were able to speak to each other in a much more constructive way. This illustrates the benefit of dialogue leading not to agreement but to understanding. Many of the same participants took part in the trip to Ballymun in Dublin where they met political representatives and community activists. Some of the Ballymun group had attended the second residential which helped.

The North-South element of the dialogue was very important for both sides, as each has little understanding or knowledge of the other. The trip to Dublin included a visit to the Dail where we met some Sinn Fein representatives. This was too short a meeting, but it was good both for the Northern Protestants and Sinn Fein to meet.

The Shankill participants were initially completely closed to meeting anyone from outside their own group, but at the end agreed to meet with Brian Lennon, and now seem open to taking part in future residential.

### **4. Local community empowerment**

We continued to support the SPRING youth project in Armagh which has about 90 active participants from local deprived estates in Armagh.

#### *Iona Community, Portadown*

*Pastoral work:* We celebrated 80 masses for the Parish and took part in penitential services, first communions, house, school and hospital visits as required. Weekly meetings of the Spirituality Group were held over 12 months, attended by six people on average. We held 40 individual sessions for spiritual direction. Ten people attended 8 sessions each of instruction in preparation for sacraments of initiation. Verification was given for 80 people who were applying for passports. Brendan MacPartlin serves as a member of the Council of Priests in Armagh Diocese.

*Ecumenical Activities:* Brendan Mac Partlin is Chair of Churches Together in Portadown. He also met the Lay Interchurch Forum of Portadown to organise cooperative events. All our work in the prison is in close collaboration with clergy from other Churches.

*Governance:* The Management Committee of Dialogue For Diversity meets approximately monthly. Brendan MacPartlin coordinates the Jesuit Apostolate in Northern Ireland group which meets three times a year, and is Chair of Grow in the North of Ireland, which supports mental health self-help groups in Portadown, Newry and Belfast. Michael

Bingham is Chair of Drumcree Trust and a Board Member of the Mayfair Business Centre.

## **5. Church Reform**

Brian Lennon continued to serve on the Justice Commission of the Armagh Diocese. During the year the Commission did a small survey of a number of estates in Armagh and Louth, asking people what issues they wanted discussed at the World Day of Family meeting in 2018. The biggest item from Armagh people was support for married clergy.

Michael Bingham continues with doctoral research, exploring the link between change and conversion/redemption. He argues that change can best be effected from a relationship of trust, without an agenda or judgment. He hopes that this research will endorse in the academic sphere the value of an apostolate to society's outcasts.

Brian Lennon's book with Tim Kinahan (C of I) *Does Christ Matter? An Anglican and a Jesuit in Dialogue*, was launched in November 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 is selling well.

A guided retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises was given to a group of seven in Armagh. Feed back was very positive.

## **6. Irish language**

Frank Brady is now chaplain to 5 Irish language Primary schools, 3 in Belfast, (since Alan McGuckian was appointed Bishop of Raphoe) Turf Lodge / Lóiste na Mona; Ballymurphy / Baile Uí Mhurchú; and Lower Falls/Br an bhFál, as well as one each in Portadown and 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.

/contd....

## Appendix Two

**Dialogue for Diversity  
Income and Expenditure Account  
For the Year Ended 31st March 2018  
Date: 23rd April 2018**

**Prepared by:**

**DMC Business Consultancy, 8 Ashley Heights, Co. Armagh Northern Ireland, BT62 1QE**

	£	£	
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Grants	42,226		
Donations	<u>6,332</u>		
<b>Total Income</b>		48,558	
<b><u>Less Expenditure</u></b>			
Community Dialogue	8,554		
Bank Charges	93		
Utilities	2,266		
Insurance	1,348		
Rent	8,805		
Salaries	34,513		
Training Costs	5,147		
Travel Costs	5,826		
Office Supplies	464		
Accountancy	200		
Telephone	586		
Sundry	<u>87</u>		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		67,889	
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>		-19,331	
<b><u>Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2018</u></b>			
	£	£	£
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>			4,469
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>			
Bank Account	4,836		
Debtors	<u>4,089</u>		
		8,925	
<b><u>Current Liabilities</u></b>			
Loan from Jesuit Community		<u>2,470</u>	
<b><u>Net Current Assets</u></b>			6,455

**Total Assets** 10,924

**Capital Employed**

**Represented by  
Capital Account**

Opening surplus at 1st April 2017 30,255

Less Net Expenditure 12 Months ended 31st March 2018 -

**Accumulated Funds at 31st March 2018** 30,255

**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 31st March 2018 and to assets and liabilities of the business at 31st March 2018.

Signature Terence P. Howard

Date 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018

DMC Business Consultancy