

Dialogue For Diversity

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

15 May 2015 at 11.00 a.m.

At 211 Churchill Park, Portadown BT62 4EU

Present: Alan McGuckian (Chair), Terry Howard.

Apologies: Pat Davis, Kate Martin, Pdraig O'Connor

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

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 2013 AGM were unanimously approved
Proposed: Terry Howard; seconded: Alan McGuckian

2. **Appointment of Director**

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 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

4. **Treasurer's Report**

- Accounts for the financial year have been approved by DMC Consultants, 8 Ashley Heights, Portadown BT61 1QE. A summary of the account are laid out below as Appendix Three, and the full financial report as Appendix Four
- The accounts were unanimously accepted:

Proposed Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard

5. **Adoption of Three-Year Strategic Plan**

A three year strategic plan was submitted and approved

Proposed Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard

This is attached as Appendix Two.

6. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman in his comments thanked all who had taken part in the Projects for their hard word.

The Report is attached as Appendix One

6. **Appointment of Financial Overseer**

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

Proposed: Alan McGuckian, seconded Terry Howard.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.

Appendix One: Chairman's Report

Introduction

This has been a good year for the development of Dialogue For Diversity. We run five main projects: Migrants Support, Community Support for ex-prisoners, Dialogue between divided groups, Community Development, a 3rd Church Reform. Steady progress was made in all areas.

Community Support

We saw approximately the same number of prisoners inside and out, but we increased the number that we saw outside. This was an important change as supporting prisoners post-release is the main focus of our work.

We experienced the sad death of two of our mentees, one found on the street, and one after a serious illness during which he was released into the care of his family. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of both these men.

This year also saw the setting up of a new management committee, and we are very grateful to those who agreed to serve on it.

We continued and grew our close links with other statutory and voluntary agencies. NIACRO, the Prison Service, PBNI, the Quaker Service, Prison Fellowship are all represented on our Advisory Group. This met less often than in the past both because there is less need for it now that we are set up, and because some of its functions are being carried out by the management committee. Nonetheless, it remains an important group for us because of the on-going learning that we gain from these meetings, and also because it gives us an opportunity to feedback ideas to other groups. In particular we would like to record our thanks to Sile McClean from NIACRO who has recently retired. She was a tremendous support to us from the beginning.

Our Volunteer meetings, held approximately monthly, have been key to developing our planning and strategy. They have also been central to our learning which came through sharing about our encounters with our mentees. Regular supervision was vital for each of us. Also important were the meetings we held with statutory and voluntary groups represented on our Advisory Committee.

As well, we have continued our relationship with Community Chaplaincy in London: this represents similar groups in England, Scotland, Wales and ourselves in Northern Ireland.

Impact

The following table shows the numbers that we visited in the past year.

Total Visits	Individuals seen once	Individuals seen twice	Individuals seen three times	Individuals seen four times	Individuals seen five times	Individuals seen over 5 times	Total number of individuals seen
1106	74	41	23	12	4	34	209
Visits to people inside	Visits to people outside						
512	594						

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The 34 individuals that we saw over 5 times make up the group that have engaged with us for regular on-going support meetings. These meetings have become very important to us as mentors, and seem equally important to our mentees, judging by the faithfulness with which they turn up. Approximately 66% of these have been out of jail either for over a year, or for the longest period in their lives.

Mentees

Meetings with mentees can cover a wide variety of situations. Sometimes a mentee has walked away from his family because pressures have become too much; or they have gone back on drugs and had a bad episode; or they worry about making contact with their children; or we are contacted by a solicitor looking for a reference and sometimes we are able to give this; or we give evidence at court which on occasion seems to influence judges to choose bail or release on license to further time in prison; or we are able to arrange hostel accommodation; or we work with other agencies, such as the Methodist Church or De Paul housing – finding housing for sex offenders is particularly difficult and this year we helped one man get a place after a wait of three years, and we helped get housing for 8 others; or we meet a guy at the gate, drive him to a port to catch a boat to England, and arrange for him to link with a similar group to ourselves; sometimes we get calls that mentees are threatening suicide; some of our men are lifers who can go through a fairly long process of adjusting to life on the outside.

Much of our work goes under the heading of advocacy, with judges, benefits, housing, Probation, Mental Health services in prison, and other agencies.

The centre of our work is our relationship with individual mentees. Everything else depends on this.

Good relations

As part of our work we make a contribution to good relations. One way we do this is by our own diversity, and by being known for this inside the prison with staff and prisoners, and also by other agencies. It is very important to us to mainstream good relations: prisoners are just as entitled to and have just as much need to a diverse society, as do citizens living outside prisons.

We make it clear that we deal with all-comers irrespective of their background. Some of our mentees live life at the coal face of interface problems – with people whom they perceive as enemies and with the police. For many their first experience of diversity is inside the prison themselves, when for the first time in their lives they have to deal with people from a variety of backgrounds. The good news is that in some cases they make new friends. However, such contacts can often cease on release. Nonetheless, they can speak to their peers about their experiences.

We also helped liaise between about seven prisoners and their home situation in cases where paramilitaries had issued threats against them if they returned home.

Seven other prisoners were given support by a mentor different in background from themselves. And we also sought helped prisoners find placements for addiction issues in contexts quite different from their own background.

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Cooperation with other agencies

As mentioned already we have been greatly helped through our relationship with NIACRO, Quaker Service, and De Paul Housing. We have had constant support from the prison staff, especially in the Offender Management Units in Magilligan and Maghaberry and we appreciate this very much. Probation supported us with funding, and made several referrals to us. And Prison Fellowship continue to support us through our Advisory Panel. We have also taken part in the meetings of the ASFO, a group of NGOs working in the area who meet to share ideas.

Funding

Our funding this year came from PBNI, the Lottery Fund, Stephen's Green Trust, Lloyds TSB, the Community Relations Council, and two gifts from individuals of £500 each. Our grateful thanks to all.

Context

Like all other groups we are now forced to work in a context of cutbacks. Some of this is obviously counterproductive. Prisoners are being locked up for longer than ever periods because of staff shortages. That inevitably increases strain which in turn leads to more incidents. These sometimes lead to property damage and increased costs as a result of court cases. The tragedy is that all this is predictable because of cutbacks that have already taken place in England and Wales with the same outcomes. The decrease in funding in the sector has made serious inroads into the work of our partner groups.

Hopes for coming year

Our hope for the coming year is that we will continue the trend we established this year by increasing the number of prisoners that we saw post-release. We also hope that we will be able to recruit some new volunteers, and that some of these will themselves be ex-prisoners. While it may take some time to get this in place, we see it as being very important, because the capacity of someone who has been inside to talk to prisoners, all other things being equal, is going to be greater.

Migrant Support Service

The Migrant Support Service (MSS) has been working with local migrants from 2010. While largely staffed by voluntary workers, there is a paid part time migrant support worker. Grants from the John Moores Foundation, the Allen Lane Foundation, OFMDFM Minority Ethnic Development Fund and Leslie Buckley Associates made this year's work possible.

Information and Advice Service

This service aims to support the migrant to overcome his/her deficits of information, language and know how in order to avail of the equal opportunity statutory services. Daniel Gouviea, the Migrant Support Worker carried out over 2,000 face to face interviews in 2014-15. As each case requires multiple visits 500 cases were seen through to completion, affecting 2,000 people indirectly. These cases dealt with any problem presented but mostly with issues concerning housing, health services, social protection, employment and education. Daniel received the Mayors Award for this work from the Craigavon District Council.

Legal Service

Specialist in immigration law, Abed Natur, shares our offices and provides legal backup when necessary availing of free legal aid where possible. He dealt with about 100 cases this year and has identified patterns of discrimination which will be changed by campaigns of advocacy. The objective is to extinguish incidents of discrimination and crimes of hate and eliminate the underlying attitudes of prejudice and racism.

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Outreach Programme of the Portuguese Consulate

The Portuguese Consul visited on three tours of four days each and met 1,000 people in all to issue passports and citizen cards and register citizenship and births. Portuguese speaking people from all over Northern Ireland come for these visits. In facilitating this we support the right of migrants to maintain and pass on their own culture. The Consul has announced Daniel Gouveia as the Portuguese Honorary Consul in Northern Ireland. Ethnic groups have a right to express their own culture and it can be a contribution to the wider community. To this end we give our support to people who teach their own languages (Escolinha de Lingua Portuguesa), celebrate their own fiestas (Guinea Bissau Association), maintain their own radio station (Radio Nova Emigrante) and organise their own sports activities (Lusa F.C.). We also took part in the *Belonging Project* with the Belfast Migrant Centre.

Inter Faith Dialogue is desirable in this context. The majority of our ethnic minorities have a catholic background and as a result there is some demand for RIAC type work from Africans. We have a mixed denomination spirituality group among Northern Irish.

English Classes

We taught English to about 100 people. Of these about 60 will have persevered to a level that merits certification. This year there have been many newcomers to the country and an increase in the numbers of those able to take up work. Participation in the labour force is a main way of contributing to the host society, and facility with English is key to getting work. It is questionable just what, the type of jobs that are available in this area, do contribute to the country, when they are provided by employment agencies on a zero hour contact basis and minimum rate per hour. The alternative is less attractive.

In learning English people get to know one another and build some community. This is a basis, going forward, for increased participation, representation in all spheres and in gaining a sense of belonging. The ultimate goal is the integration of all groups into a community of right relations, based on justice and reconciliation, which celebrates its diversity.

Work Placement

The local training agency, Wade, placed two trainees in our offices as receptionists. One was Portuguese speaking and the other Romanian which has been a great help our clients.

A Cape Verdian migrant found it difficult to get a job and was in difficulties about housing. He came to live at Iona, found a job and is now ready to move into his own accommodation. Meanwhile his wife's cousin was consecrated as the first Cape Verdian cardinal.

Future Hope

Currently applications for funding are with OFMDFM and ABC District Council. The former is for the Minority Ethnic Development Fund of the Racial Equality Unit whose aims are very close to those of the Migrant Support Service. The latter is for the Good Relations Unit whose aims match those of DFD very closely. The long term sustainability of MSS requires the funding of two half salaries and rental for an office and a classroom.

Dialogue Project

During the year one residential was held to facilitate dialogue between Loyalists and Republicans. Much of it was taken up struggling with the past. But it was highly constructive. The listening among the divided groups was intense. Some Loyalist and ex-security force personnel found it difficult to listen to stories of collusion between the state and paramilitaries. But Republicans were struck by the degree to which they did listen. For their part Republicans learnt at first hand what it was like to be part of the security forces. A strong wish was expressed for more encounters, and that these would include more young people. These are planned for early 2015.

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Members of DFD regularly attended Clergy Fraternal in Portadown and Armagh. These meetings are notable for the relaxed, informal atmosphere in which they now take, which is quite different from the tensions of the past.

Local community empowerment

We continued to support Drumcree Trust in Portadown and SPRING youth group in Armagh. Both are surviving in a difficult funding context. The work of SPRING has increased noticeably since their premises were renovated with a Neighbourhood Renewal Grant.

Church Reform

We continue to support local church work in Portadown and Armagh. The justice commission in the Armagh Diocese is planning a conference on the exercise of authority by non-ordained women in the church in October.

Brian Lennon gave two series of talks in the parish on scriptural themes, the second on women in the scriptures. These were well attended.

We continue to talk part in clergy groups in both areas.

Conclusion

The basic aim of Dialogue For Diversity is to develop more respect and esteem for all groups in society, especially among marginalized people. Clearly there is no end to this task. Nonetheless, the initiatives taken by the group over the past year have contributed to this end.

Appendix Two: Dialogue For Diversity Three Year Strategic Plan Dialogue for Diversity

Background: History and Current Context

The Iona Jesuit Community was set up in 1981 to accompany the deprived people in Portadown and to help build positive relationships between divided groups. Community development, Drumcree Community Trust and Mayfair Business Centre emerged from this. These projects are now fully in the control of the local community. Dialogue for Diversity (DFD) was set up in 2009 by Irish and British Jesuits to build the peace and further right relations in the aftermath of The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 and government policy on ‘Cohesion, Sharing and Integration’.

In this context DFD is engaged in the following projects:

- Accompaniment of Ex-Offenders (Community Support)
- Migrant Support Service (MSS)
- Peace Dialogue
- Action Research and Reflection

Community Support: This is now well organised and structured on the basis of a good team of volunteers. It visits 100 prisoners in the course of year and supports 28 post-release. Of these, 66% have been out of jail either for a year, or for the longest period in their lives.

Migrant Support Service: MSS supports 300 new cases per annum with problem solving; 100 people per annum attend the School of English and Culture: 1000 per annum actions with Portuguese consular outreach.

Dialogue for Peace: Three residential peace dialogues between the separated communities are carried out each year.

Action Research: Reflection sharing and writing result in publications.

Dialogue for Diversity Plan, 2015 - 2018

reas of Concern	A	Objectives	Strategies	Structures	Actions	3 Year Goal
Cultivating a Culture of Peace		To foster: non-violence; mutual understanding; ability to live together	Dialogue between divided communities; Storytelling;	Dialogue for Peace; Churches Together; Interchurch Forum;	Residentials; Friendship; Regular meetings Empowering Loyalists Project.	Significant group of Loyalists committed to the development of a peaceful, diverse society. Development of a group of Nationalists and Loyalists who are politically aware and able to make

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					a positive contribution to the future of Northern Ireland.
Migration	To integrate newcomers	Advisory service; Language training; Intercultural events; Sustainable & migrant owned organisation;	Migrant Support Service; Garvaghy School of English, Work & Culture;	Daily clinic; English classes; Job club; Consular outreach;	Migrant Cohesion, Participation & Representation
Prisons	To visit those in prison; To give structured support to ex-offenders; To seek ex-prisoners as possible mentors.	Focus on Republicans & the unvisited; Accompany ex-offenders;	Community Support; Maghaberry Chaplaincy;	Accompaniment of ex-offenders; visitation of prisoners; building relations with prison personnel.	Reduction in recidivism; Positive lifestyles among ex-offenders; Sustainability of Community Support
Action research	Reflection; Discernment; Communication; Advocacy; Motivation.	Writing for publication	JAINI meetings	D Prof; Writing & Publication; Groups; Exx in daily life;	Evidence based programmes of action in support of deprived groups
International Networking	To develop an advocacy desk, with international links, on migrants, prisoners and peace	Shared research, conferencing and publication	Membership of Global Ignatian Networks on peace, migration and prisons	Offer placements; host participatory programs; contribute to conferences;	Contribute to global policy;

Appendix Three: Financial summary

Dialogue for Diversity

Income and Expenditure Account

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**Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31st March 2015**

Income		£	£
Donations		6786	
Grants		21,019	
Bank Interest		14	
Rental Income		510	
Lloyds Bank		5000	
St. Stephens Green Trust		7707	
Community Relations Council		3327	
Lottery Fund		2500	
Loan	Received	5000	
<u>Total Income</u>			51,863

<u>Less Expenditure</u>		
Bank Charges		77
Facilitation Costs		2,305
Insurance		579
Rent		7,701
Salaries		19,039
Heat and Light		2,584
Travel Costs		10,156
Subsistence		1,281
Office Supplies		84
Loan Repaid		3,000
Telephone		1,052
Sundry		<u>113</u>
<u>Total Expenditure</u>		<u>47,973</u>

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Net income over expenditure		<u>3,890</u>

<u>Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2015</u>			
		£	£
Fixed Assets		4,030	
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Bank Account	10,796		
<u>Current Liabilities</u>			
Bank	1,000		
Accruals	<u>582</u>		
Net Current Assets		<u>9,214</u>	
Net Total Assets		<u>13,245</u>	
<u>CAPITAL EMPLOYED</u>			
<u>Represented by Capital Account</u>			
Opening Surplus (Deficit) at 1 st April 2014	5,325		
Transfer to fixed assets	4,030		
Add (Less) Net Surplus(Deficit) for 2015	<u>3,890</u>		
Surplus (Deficit) at 31 st March 2015		<u>13,245</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 31st March 2015 and to the assets and liabilities of the business at 31st March 2015.

Signed: Dennis McCourt, Accountant, DCM Consultants,
8 ASHLEY HEIGHTS
PORTADOWN
CRAIGAVON
CO ARMAGH
BT621QE

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	Dialogue for Diversity					
	Period ended 31/03/15					
	Income and Exp.					
			nr 1a/c	nr 2a/c	nr 3a/c	
		Overall Total	Holding	Community Support	Dialogue	Migrants
		Totals	6554617	65598418	65598421	45317896
<u>Income</u>		£	£	£	£	£
Donations		6,785.84	554.04			6,231.80
Grants		21,018.76				21,018.76
Lloyds Trustee Sav Bank		5,000.00		5,000.00		
Bank Int. Received		14.41		5.99	0.42	8.00
Rental Income		510.00				510.00
Man Fee		188.62	188.62			
St. Stephens GreenTrust		7,707.13		7,707.13		
Community Rel. Council		3,326.96			3,326.96	
Lottery Fund		2,500.00		2,500.00		
Loan		5,000.00		3,000.00	2,000.00	
Total Income		52,051.72	742.66	18,213.12	5,327.38	27,768.56
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Loan Refund		3,000.00			3,000.00	
Bank Charges		78.29				78.29
Facilitation Costs		2,304.50			2,304.50	
Insurance		579.00	579.00			
Rent		7,701.24		1,588.44		6112.8
Salaries		19,039.77				19039.77
Website Costs		59.24	59.24			
Utilities		2,584.02				2584.02
Travel		10,156.43		10,078.23	78.20	

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Subsistence		1,280.63		1,280.63		
Office Supplies		83.79	13.00			70.79
Man Fee		188.62		188.62		
Parking Fees		55.10		55.10		
Telephone		1,051.54		446.49		605.05
Total Expenditure		48,162.17	651.24	13,637.51	5,382.70	28,490.72
Net Surplus(Deficit)		3,889.55	91.42	4,575.61	- 55.32	- 722.16
<u>Balance Sheet @31st March 2015</u>						
Fixed Assets		4,030.34	-	-	-	4,030.34
Current Assets						
Bank Balances		10,796.18	691.61	5,787.27	176.16	4,141.14
Current Liabilities		- 1,581.87	-	-	- 1,000.00	- 581.87
Net Current Assets		9,214.31	691.61	5,787.27	- 823.84	3,559.27
Net Assets		13,244.65	691.61	5,787.27	- 823.84	7,589.61
Represented by						
Surplus(deficit) c/fd 01/04/2014		5,324.76	600.19	1211.66	- 768.52	4,281.43
Transfer to fixed assets		4,030.34		-		4030.34
Net Surplus(Deficit) from trading		3,889.55	91.42	4,575.61	- 55.32	- 722.16
Surplus at 31st March 2015		13,244.65	691.61	5,787.27	- 823.84	7,589.61
<u>Bank Reconciliation</u>						
bank bal 31st March 15		14,454.08	691.61	7,445.17	2,176.16	4,141.14
less o/st cks@31st March 2015		3,657.90	-	1,657.90	2,000.00	-
book bal		10,796.18	691.61	5,787.27	176.16	4,141.14