

Meeting of the National Archives Advisory Council

23 November 2021

Present: Mr. John Hedigan, (Chair); Dr. Hiram Morgan; Dr. Ciara Breathnach; Mr. Kieran Hoare; Ms. Catriona Mulcahy; Mr. Michael Nolan; Dr. Natalie Harrower(until 11am), Mr. John Grenham, Comdt. Stephen Mac Eoin Dr. Elizabeth Mullins (until 11am).

Apologies: Professor Deirdre Raftery

In attendance: Ms. Orlaith McBride (NAI Director)

1. Minutes of Meeting on 15 September 2021 (for approval)

The minutes were approved for web publication.

The NAAC specifically referenced the meeting with the Minister and the ongoing issues affecting the National Archives such as the Act requiring review acknowledging that this was not specific to Ireland and was also an issue for PRONI.

2. Presentation from Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services presented on this aspect of the National Archives work outlining the areas of work falling under this division including managing the building, general services, disaster recovery, staffing, procurement, capital projects and IT.

3. Update from the Director

The Director updated the Council on the following:

- Public Services Review
- Archives Repository Project (ARP)

- Census 1926 and the process to commence work
- 20-Year Rule and release in December 2021 of records from 1991-1998 from DFA, Taoiseach's, Attorney General's Office and Justice
- Budget 2022 and staffing
- Update on Commemorations Programme including the Talks series, the Treaty Exhibition at Dublin Castle as well as the artist-in-residence programme.

Members discussed the Public Services Review in the context of international comparators, current and future bookings and appointments system, reading room rules and regulations for users.

The recommendations of the review will be share with the NAAC upon completion.

4. Update on NAAC Event

In the absence of Professor Deirdre Raftery, the other members updated on a recent meeting to discuss a public event in April 2022 that would bring attention to the National Archives and the role of the NAAC in advocating on its behalf as well as the responsibility of the State to the records of the State.

The group proposed that the Chair would deliver a 'keynote' address which would be live streamed. It was suggested that this might take place in the former reading room of the Public Record Office in the Four Courts, now the Court of Appeal.

The group agreed to support the Chair in drafting the address with other members and stakeholders also contributing on areas such as preservation, public access, governance, curation, role of record keeper/archivist.

It was agreed that the group would meet again in early 2022 with the Chair also in attendance.

5. AOB

The NAAC acknowledged the recent retirement of Tom Quinlan and thanked him for his significant contribution to the National Archives over many decades and wished him well in the future.

The NAAC also noted the departure of Brian Bermingham on a mobility scheme to the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Council thanked him for his work as secretary to the NAAC and wished him well in his new role.

There was no other business.