

THE FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES LTD.

Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Federation for Ulster Local Studies Limited held on Saturday 27 November 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Flame Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus.

A list of those in attendance is in Appendix 1.

APOLOGIES

Mr. Canning of Antrim Historical Society.
Vice Chairman of FULS Roddy Hegarty.
Glenelly Historical Society
Cookstown Historical Society
Dr. Neil Mc Glennon, Markethill and Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha.
Maurna Crozier, Loughbrickland Historical Society,
Malcolm Duffey, Aughnacloy and Truagh Society
Larry Breen, Federation of Local Historical Societies

WELCOME

Chair Bridgeen Rutherford welcomed everyone on behalf of the Federation Committee and praised their efforts to attend despite the inclement weather. She introduced Carrickfergus Councillor Séan Neeson MLA and invited him to give us a talk on some local Marine Historical topics etc.

Sean began by giving his opinion that knowledge of local history should be an integral part of every community and remarked it was apt the Federation was holding its AGM in Carrickfergus. He told how pleased he was about “Nomadic” being purchased by the Government. Presently the fate of the soon to be de-commissioned WW1 veteran HMS Caroline presently lying in Belfast is presently unknown.

He hopes the cargo schooner “Result” built in Carrickfergus by the Paul Rogers shipyard and deployed as a Q ship during WW1 will be moved from the Transport Museum where she is deteriorating to a dry dock in Belfast. He told us there was even more to Carrickfergus than KW3. In October an interesting well-attended seminar was held in the Town Hall about the Franciscan Friary that existed on the site of the Town Hall and remarked that the White Friars were established on the site of the old Courtaulds complex. He praised our “Due North” publication.

MINUTES OF THE 2009 AGM:

These were adopted without dissent by the meeting having being proposed by Liam Devlin and seconded by Pat Devlin.

SECRETARY’S REPORT PRESENTED BY JOHNNY DOOHER:

The review of Federation activity for the past year presents a healthy picture of a vibrant organisation and growing engagement with the grass roots of local Societies and activities in the local study scene. There have been two very successful seminar events, two joint events with the Federation of Local History Societies in the Republic and regular communications with our members through newsletters and on the Federation website. Once again Due North has appeared on schedule and administration appears to be functioning smoothly.

FULS Membership

Membership of the Federation for 2009-2010 stood at 98 with new members Ballintoy Historical Society and the Historic Churches Charitable Trust joining the Federation. There were three members whose

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involvement lapsed: Brownlow Archaeological Group, Dromore Historical Society and the old Newry Society and it would appear that local administrative problems were at fault. Membership becomes due in September each year and so far 76 Societies have renewed their association with the Federation, with 22 still being pursued. No doubt many of these defaults are due to Officer changes or mislaid documentation but it is unfair the Federation treasurer Pat Devlin has to spend so much time trying to chase these groups. At the last meeting other committee members undertook to contact the missing Societies and hopefully they can be brought back within the fold in the near future. There was an effort made over the past two years to get Societies to renew by standing order but so far only a small number have adopted this procedure; hopefully this number can be increased in the coming year when most members will use this method to the benefit of themselves and of the Federation officers. Individual membership stood at 13 for 2009/10 and this appears to be the same for the current year.

Administration: Sub committees

Last year there had been a review of Federation administration and three sub-committees were set up to help in the planning of activities.

The Education committee under the leadership of Roddy Hegarty looked at widening the involvement of local studies in the school curriculum and have arranged contacts with the teacher training colleges to help in the process. The other area where they were involved was in the Library Service Review and the closure of some local history resource centres and the new policy of centralisation that saw others stripped of their previous collections and it is hoped the new attitude of co-operation will ensure greater input from users in the years ahead.

The events/Programmes sub committee was headed by Bridgeen Rutherford and they were responsible for the development of the seminar programme. Two successful events were held- the Plantation Seminar at the Rural College, Draperstown in April and the Town Lands and the Place Names Seminar at the O'Fiaich Library, Armagh in October. Both proved highly successful events, with large audiences at each being highly pleased with the scholarship and expertise of the speakers and the relevance to local Societies. The only mild criticism might be that the crowded programme left less time for questions from the audience and attempts will be made to ensure adequate discussion time at such future events. Initial planning has got underway for a Belfast seminar in April 2011 on the theme of Labour and working Class Politics 1900-1925 and this will be linked in with the Federation of Local History Societies in the Republic and it is hoped to run a further seminar on the Town Lands theme possibly in Omagh.

The Publications committee was headed by Johnny Dooher and its remit was to look at developing contact with Societies and the wider public. Due North is now well established though some time was spent whether the title was sufficiently appealing to attract a wider readership. Once again it proved difficult to get contributions and member societies are encouraged to be more proactive in coaxing local writers to use Due North as a platform for promoting their work. The other role of the Publications committee was to develop the lecturers list for the use of societies in drawing up their programme and the credit for this must go to John Hulme who spent considerable time and energy in contacting groups verifying details of speakers for inclusion in the Federation list. This has proved highly popular and hopefully can be built upon in the months and years ahead. Less time was devoted this year to the Hidden Gems and Forgotten People project but it too is one of the ongoing successes of the Federation that has a relevance to every Society. The dedicated website linked to the FULS website is well worth a visit for any group interested in doing a project on local heritage.

Executive Committee:

The executive committee held eight meetings during the year and sub committee meetings preceded many of these. Attendance at these meetings was good and all played an active role in discussion and planning. One committee member, Ruth Olphert from the Newbuildings Society resigned from the committee at the first meeting while Finny O' Sullivan and Malcolm were co-opted. The position of Secretary remained unfilled and the thanks of all the committee are due to Pat Devlin for his continuing combining the roles of Secretary and Treasurer it certainly leads to a much more efficient administration but at the cost of a

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very heavy workload for Pat. It appears that the position will once remain again unfilled at this AGM and it will be left to the incoming committee to grapple with the situation. Liam Devlin has over the past number of years helped out by volunteering to act as minute secretary and this role has been much appreciated in helping to relieve part of the secretary/ treasurer's burdens.

Joint Federation Programme:

Contact with the southern Federation has continued with four joint meetings and the two shared visits. The visit to Brussels and Leuven in April will probably form part of the folklore of both Federations in the years to come and fondly remembered by most of the participants. Twenty-four members from each Federation were booked to go on the visit with one late withdrawal and the programme had envisaged a meeting in the European Parliament and site visits to WW1 memorials and to the cities of Bruges and Leper. Everything went smoothly until the morning of the return when it was discovered that flights home were not available. Some six days later the group made the overland journey to Calais on the first leg of on a long trek homeward and back to domestic comforts. Those additional days, however, had been packed full of exploration, developing friendships and the experience of working together. And to make matters even better the European Parliament helped defray much of the cost of the extended visit even if the payments were slow in arriving.

That was followed by the visit to Naas in early July when the local Society and the Federation of Local History Societies were hosts to the Ulster Federation in a packed day of site visits and informal discussions. This summer visit to one or other jurisdiction has now become part of the interaction between the Federations and participants find it most worthwhile event. It is the turn of Ulster to host the visit this coming year and while it was planned for Downpatrick there may be a change of venue-fuller details will follow in the early part of the New Year. Continued co-operation in the Hidden Gems project and the forthcoming seminar in Belfast will ensure the spirit of Leuven 2010 will survive and develop.

Publication Information:

Due North was once again available as planned in early October and the sales have been promising so far. A number of Societies are regular purchasers of the journal and help to ensure its viability. But there are some societies who do not seem to recognise Due North as part of their promotional activity and a means of highlighting the work of local groups. It is hoped to increase the number of articles carried and more support will be needed from all societies to access the required material and ensure better distribution. A similar picture can be said to emerge from the Newsletter, produced throughout the year by our Treasurer/ Secretary; some groups apparently distribute it widely at local meetings whilst others seem unaware of its existence. Communication is a vital part of local society and Federation interaction and too often it appears to be a one-way street. The FULS website is another underused facility; too few member societies use it to promote their activities to keep abreast of developments in the wider field of local studies.

Conclusion:

In conclusion therefore we can be reasonably satisfied with the progress being made in the Federation programme and believe that it serves a useful role in helping to promote local studies. It is once again suggested there needs to be improved communication and interaction between societies and the executive committee and that opportunities to help in the promotion of local history throughout Ulster are being missed. Societies are the core elements of the Federation and their activities need to be highlighted as widely as possible. The executive have in their strategic plan proposed a number of ways in which issues of communication and interaction can be better promoted and it is vital that these are acted on in the interests of a strengthened local studies programme within Ulster. There is scope for new blood in the executive committee and it is recommended that societies or individuals should make contact with the chairperson or secretary if they feel someone from their area should contribute to the workings of the Federation; co-options and roles in the sub committees can be a useful way into the development of a more vibrant local studies scene within Ulster.

The Executive Committee of the Federation for 2009-2010 was as follows:-

Chairperson- Bridgeen Rutherford (Newbuildings and District Historical and Archaeological Society)

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Vice Chairperson-Roddy Hegarty (North Belfast Historical Society)

Hon. Secretary-Vacant

Company Secretary Liam Devlin (Trinity College, Dublin-NI Association)

Hon. Treasurer- Pat Devlin (Lecale and Down Historical Society)

Past Chairman-Johnny Dooher (Strabane History Society)

Committee Members:

John Hulme (Carrickfergus and District Historical Society), Doreen Mc Bride (Banbridge Society), Dr. Maurina Crozier (Loughbrickland Historical Society), Dr. Neil Mc Gleenon (Markethill & Cumann Séanchais Ard Mhacha), Ruth Olphert (Newbuildings Society) resigned, co-opted- Malcolm Duffey (Aughnacloy and Truagh), co-opted- Finny O Sullivan (Lisburn Historical Society).

The Report was accepted by the meeting as proposed by Helen Rankin and seconded by John Hulme.

FINANCIAL REPORT PRESENTED BY TREASURER PAT DEVLIN

Introduction

2009-10 was an uneventful year in terms of the Federation's finances

Total income was £14,815; total expenditure, £11,225; surplus £3590- making our total Funds at the end of the year £10,135.

Included in the income is a figure of £3944 shown as "Excursions/ Events". This is the total of fees paid by participants in the events organised by the Federation. These were

1. The Workshop on Vernacular Buildings in Cushendall in April 2009,
2. The joint FULS/FLHS Trip to Stormont in September and
3. The Plantations Workshop in Draperstown in March 2010

These events are not intended to raise funds but are designed to break even. With some of the bills for the Plantation workshop being paid in the current financial year the final "surplus" for these activities was £138.00. If we subtract the cost of printing, stationery and postage for the three events the final surplus is negligible.

You will note in the balance sheet on page 11 reference to "Prepayments" and "Deferred Income". These are presented in this way due to changes in accounting conventions that relate the transactions to the year in which they occur. In this case the funds were for the Brussels Trip planned for April (in the current financial year). This is a presentational issue only.

The Federation as you know is now funded solely by the Membership's fees and since we made the transition to a wholly voluntary funded body the membership has remained loyal and has participated well in the events we have organised. Some unfortunately seem to have fallen by the wayside and since the last AGM three Societies have not renewed their membership. At least one of these closed down due to lack of membership participation, though I understand that efforts are being made to make a restart. We hope this temporary lapse and that we will see them in membership again.

As a voluntary organisation our outgoings are modest because we don't carry the costs of staff and accommodation. So our surplus can be devoted completely to the growth of our membership services.

I recommend the acceptance of the Financial Report and Accounts.

This was accepted without dissension having being proposed by Liam Devlin and seconded by Doreen McBride.

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CHAIRPERSONS REPORT PRESENTED BY BRIDGEEN RUTHERFORD

I am delighted to welcome you all to the FULS AGM 2010. Having now reached the end of my first year in the post I can look back at the progress and achievements that we have reached along the way.

I say we, as the Federation Execution Committee can never be run by one person alone, it needs a strong and supportive committee to oil its wheels. I would like to thank each and every member who was either elected or co-opted to the Federation Committee for giving of his or her time knowledge and experience. This has contributed to the success of the current Federation Committee. I would like to thank the Cardinal O’Fiaich Library and Archive for allowing us to avail of their facilities for meetings.

I would like to pay a personal tribute to Johnny Dooher for his guidance and encouragement over the past year. Note -I have not as yet decided whether this should be thanks! As far as I remember he, coerced me into taking on the role of vice-chair at a meeting in Donaghmore when the Federation was in danger of folding. His plea was that a “women” was needed on the committee and this woman is still there some years later! What he also failed to point out to me was that there was a distinct possibility that I would be in his shoes at some stage. By the time the realisation had eventuality sunk in I had caught the bug!

You will have heard from the Treasurer’s report 2009-2010 has been an eventful year for the Federation’s finances. Wee are now a wholly a voluntary funded body. I think you, the members for remaining loyal in renewing your membership fees and attending at our events. This undoubtedly gives the Federation committee great encouragement in the knowledge that you the members place your faith and support in our endeavours. We will continue planning and organising such events and hope to run more practical workshops in the coming year. However, we welcome your suggestions for training events/ seminars that would benefit your needs.

I wish to pay particular thanks to Pat Devlin for his never-ending support for which the Federation is indebted. He acts as Treasurer, Secretary (with the help of Liam Devlin as minute and Company Secretary) and IT guru. I wish I possessed some of his energy and enthusiasm! Pat, I thank you most sincerely on behalf of the Federation Executive Committee and Federation members.

As we are still without a nominated secretary Johnny has kindly compiled a comprehensive report of the year’s activities. The role of secretary is an essential component of any organisation. We again are reaching out for a volunteer to join us. Please contact me if anyone interested in this valuable role.

Johnny has detailed the activities carried out since the last AGM. These have been varied and have involved a lot of planning and organisation. We have been working closely with our colleagues in the Federation of Local History Studies in the south. Our prolonged visit to Belgium (do we ever want to her the words Ash Cloud again?) I think this will remain a highly memorable trip. Our thanks go to Johnny Dooher and Larry Breen (FLHS) for their organisation and subsequent reorganisation of our trip home and reimbursement from the European Parliament of some of our costs.

Strong friendships have been forged as a result of this venture and were renewed on the trip to Naas in July. We were treated to a highly interesting tour of Naas and memorable visit to Palmerstown House.

More events are in the planning with the FLHS, as Johnny has detailed and we look forward to meeting up again in the future.

Following presentation of the Action plan from the Strategic Plan at last year’s AGM sub-committees were set up to implement this. The sub committees have worked hard to achieve successful outcomes and I thank each one of them for their dedication and commitment. This has given us a platform to work from and move forward.

I wish to thank Roddy Hegarty (vice chairman) for his editorial skills and commitment to the publication of Due North. We welcome new articles and suggestions for items to be included in the publication.

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Please contact Roddy or Johnny as necessary. Copies of the recent edition are available from Pat Devlin. We will also keep you updated of Federation activities as these can be published in the Newsletter, put on our website and sent to all member societies.

The provision of a Speaker's Register has proved a successful piece of work. John Hulme undertook to put this together on a database. This was an enormous task and took hours to get completed. John, I thank you on behalf of the Federation Executive Committee and the member societies, as feedback has been very positive. We also welcome suggestions for additional categories that can be added.

On a more somber note I would like to remember Mary Hamilton of Tempo Historical Society who passed away recently. Mary was an active member of Tempo Historical Society kept in regular contact with the Federation Executive Committee. Our thoughts are with her family and friends at this time.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

Pat Devlin moved the following proposed amendment to the Articles of Association

‘add an additional Article, as follows-

Article 28a

Members may appoint proxies to exercise any or all of their rights to attend and to speak and vote at General Meetings. The names and addresses of proxies must be received at the Federation's registered address no later than 48 hours before the time for holding the General Meeting. Termination of the authority to act as proxy must be received at the Federation's registered address no later than 48 hours before the time for holding the General Meeting.'

He said that Section 324 of the Companies Act 2006 provides that “a member of a company is entitled to appoint another person as his proxy to exercise all or any of his rights to attend and to speak and vote at a meeting of the company.”

Article 28 of the Federation's Articles of Association provided that “any body corporate or organisation which is a member of the Federation may by resolution of its directors or other governing body authorise such person as it thinks fit to act as its representative at any meeting of the Federation and the person so authorised shall be entitled to exercise the same powers on behalf or organisation of the body corporate which he represents as that body corporate could exercise if it were an individual member of the Federation.”

This is a more restrictive provision in that it applies only to Society memberships, excluding individual members. There are also provisions in the Companies Act about time limits for the notification and cancellation of proxies that do not appear in the Federation's Articles.

The motion was seconded by Johnny Dooher and carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Federation Hon. Vice President Doreen Corcoran presided and declared all offices vacant:-

Office of Chairman: On the proposal of proposal of Doreen McBride and seconded by Helen Rankin, Bridgeen Rutherford was nominated as Chairperson.

Office of Vice Chairman: On the proposal of Bridgeen Rutherford and seconded by Liam Devlin, Roddy Hegarty was nominated as Vice Chairman.

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Office for Hon. Secretary: No nominations were received.

Office of Hon. Treasurer:- On the proposal of Alistair Bell and seconded by Maud Hamill, Pat Devlin was nominated as Hon Treasurer.

Members of the Executive Committee: The existing committee have all agreed to stand for re-election and their names are as follows:-

Johnny Dooher (past chairman) John Hulme Malcolm Duffy Doreen Mc Bride
Finny O' Sullivan Dr.Neil Mc Glennon Dr. Maurna Crozier Liam Devlin

As no other nominations were received for the various Offices and places on committee all these persons were re-elected having been proposed by Billy Hamilton and seconded by Alistair Bell.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF FULS AND THE FEDERATION OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

Chair Bridgeen reported the work of the Joint Committee

The Hidden Gems and Forgotten People project covering places not really known and Forgotten People who did not seek national importance is still ongoing.

The trip to Belgium in April with the principal objective of a tour of the European Parliament where we were greeted by five MEPs four from the Republic of Ireland and one from Northern Ireland was an outstanding success. The visit to the Parliament was particularly moving when in the debating chamber there was a moving ceremony commemorating the Polish politicians who died shortly before our visit in an air accident in Russia. We stayed at the Irish College where the fleeing Earls stayed in 1607 en route to Rome we visited the historic Leuven Town Hall, Tynecot a WW1 cemetery near Passchendaele and there were trips to Bruges, Ghent, Ieper, Antwerp etc. The return to Ireland was delayed by the eruption of the volcano in Iceland that caused a suspension of all European air flights but this only added to the enjoyment.

There was a visit by FULS Societies to Co. Kildare to meet our colleagues in the Federation of Local Historical Societies. We enjoyed a civic reception at Naas Town Hall hosted by the Mayor afterwards we had a tour of the Town visited a Church and Castle with the high point of the visit for many that was seeing over Palmerstown House.

There will be a joint trip to historical sites in Ulster but plans are at an early stage.

Also a seminar is being planned on the history of Labour and Working Class Politics 1900-1925 that will be held in Belfast.

UPDATES ON INDIVIDUAL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Ulster History Circle - Pat Devlin gave a summary of the work of the Circle in the past year in erecting 12 blue plaques to people of distinction. He discussed the criteria for selection, the involvement of local communities and sources of funding. He showed slides of some of the events and outlined the programme for 2011.

Abbey Society-Maud Hamill told us about her society's wedding dresses from the past project.

Donaghadee Historical Society: The Chair Billy Hamilton told us about his Society's activities since their foundation in 2001. Donaghadee has been a mail port from 1616 to 1849. They have 80 members, meet each month and their record attendance so far has been ninety-four at a meeting. They have published some literature and have their own website.

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Family history and Genealogy Society: Randal Gill told us something of the publication *North Irish Roots*.

The AGM closed at 1:30 p.m. with the Chair thanking the Flame Gasworks Museum for looking after us so well and she looked forward to the tour of the Museum after lunch. She also wishes everyone a safe journey home in view of the inclement weather and arctic conditions.

APPENDIX 1.

Attendance at the 2010 AGM

Abbey Historical Society	Maud Hamill, Alistair Bell
Antrim & District Historical Society	Kate Orme, Jane Edwards, Bill and Nancy Canning
Banbridge & District Historical Society	Doreen McBride, George Beattie
Bronte Society	Finny O'Sullivan (Proxy)
Carrickfergus & District Historical Society	Doreen Corcoran, John Hulme, Nigel and Denise Curtis
County Donegal Historical Society	Patrick Devlin (Proxy)
Donaghadee Historical Society	Billy Hamilton, Jane Wright
Carrickfergus Gasworks Preservation Society	Helen Rankin
Lecale Historical Society	Patrick Devlin
Lisburn Historical Society	Finny O'Sullivan
Newbuildings & Dist. Archeological &c Soc.	Bridgeen Rutherford
North of Ireland Family History Society	Randall Gill
Strabane History Society	John Dooher
The Trinity College Assn. of NI	William Devlin
Ulster Archaeological Society	Ken Pullin