

**FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES  
SECRETARY'S REPORT - AGM 2020**

**Introduction**

This report sets out the activities of the Executive Committee since the 2019 AGM. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were only three meetings of the Executive Committee, December 2019, January, and February 2020. There was a virtual meeting, via Zoom, on 8 October to discuss matters relating to the AGM and related matters. For the duration of the Covid-19 emergency this is likely to be the process for progressing Federation business.

The Committee has not met since February and has no plans to do so until alternative arrangements can be made. Consequently, this report is necessarily short.

**Governance**

The attendance record of the members of the Executive Committee for these meetings is recorded in the following table.

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Actual</b>
James Armour	3	3
Bridie Bradley	3	3
Patrick Devlin	3	3
John Dooher	3	3
Robert Guthrie	3	2
Josephine Herbison	3	3
Liz Hoy	3	3
Joseph McCoy	3	3
Katie Orme	3	3

**Honorary Membership**

After 12 years' service on the Executive Committee, John Hulme stood down at the last AGM. In thanking John for his service, and noting his sterling work in developing and maintaining the Speakers and Tour Operators' Register, and also for his dedication to the Hidden Gems and Forgotten People Project, the Committee agreed to grant John the status of Honorary Membership of the Federation. His legacy will continue to be a feature of the Federation's service. Thank you, John.

**Membership**

Society Membership stands at 96, Individual Membership, 17.

Three new members have been accepted into membership –

1. Termonmaguirc Historical Society – December 2019
2. Loup and District Historical Society – January 2020
3. Aghadowey Rural Kinship – August 2020

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In view of the impact of the pandemic on Members' activities, and perhaps also their financial resources, as well as the fact that the Federation is at present able to provide only limited services, the Executive Committee decided to reduce all membership fees by 50% for the incoming year. Members (Society and individual) need not alter their existing mandate, the Federation will refund the difference.

Also, PL Insurance for the current year and the following one, a reduction of 50% was agreed. Members who have already paid will either –

- be excused payment for 2021-22 if the 50% reduction is confirmed, or
- Pay only 50% of the full rate if it decided to reinstate the current arrangements.

### **New Website**

The new website was launched in February. The site has a new livery and colour scheme and a new logo that emphasises the Federation's nine-county Ulster historical reach. It is a composite logo incorporating the symbol, the Federation's name, and the strapline. The site produces much of the same information as the old one but is packaged in a modern format that adds considerable value for Federation members and others who are interested in local historical studies. As well as retaining most of the existing functionality, the new site provides a range of e-commerce functions, including the ability to renew subscriptions and PL Insurance, recruit new members, and purchase Federation publications.

New features include *Our Federation in Photographs* recording many of the Federation's events over the years, including many of those events, both at home and abroad, undertaken in partnership with our sister Federation in the Republic of Ireland, the Federation of Local History Societies.

The new Federation Videos, linking to YouTube, provides a wide range of talks and lectures, delivered over the years by local historians, launch events and other interesting and useful material. As well as the videos and photographs, illustrated reports of the events, including those of the Annual General Meetings, are available.

The Federation has been in existence for over forty years and the most of the sixty journals produced in that time are out of print. However, they have been digitised and are available as CDs for purchase on the site.

A small number of the over 600 individual articles in both of the journals have been selected for display on the home page, as have a few of the interviews with Federation stalwarts and other interesting individuals published from time to time. These will change periodically.

A new Members Forum is available for members to comment on issues of interest to them, seek advice or help on matters of concern; publicise events in your own or other areas, or suggestions for new services or events.

### **Other Activities**

Three Newsletter were issued between January and August 2020, with at least one more was expected before the end of October 2020.

A Seminar in the Seamus Heaney Homeplace on 4 April, notice of which had been issued, was cancelled. The Executive Committee intends to reinstate the Seminar when restrictions are lifted, but not before Summer 2021.

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A Joint meeting with the Federation of Local History Societies in December 2019 agreed on a Trip to England in April and a Joint Event in the Republic later in the year. In the event the Trip was cancelled and action on the Joint Event was deferred sine die.

**Patrick Devlin**  
Acting Secretary

8 October 2020