

FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES

Minutes of

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13 NOVEMBER 2021

By ZOOM

The AGM was held as a virtual meeting under the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Present: Josephine Herbison (Chair), Robert Guthrie Vice-Chair; Bridie Bradley (Treasurer), Patrick Devlin (Acting Secretary), John Dooher, Joseph McCoy, Aine Ni Duibhne, Elizabeth Ferguson (Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers), Jonathan Gray, Professor Brian Walker, Angelique Day, Dr William Roulston, Roddy Hegarty, Larry Breen (FLHS)

Introduction

Before the meeting started Jonathan Gray, who had agreed to provide technical support for the Zoom meeting, explained the layout of the screens, what each control represented and how to use them to access information, ask questions and register a vote.

At this point the Chairman formally launched the AGM and asked the Acting Secretary, Pat Devlin, to report on the problems with holding AGM 2020 and the replacement process used.

Report on AGM 2020 replacement process

The Acting Secretary said that the Pandemic had stopped all location-based activities in its tracks, so it was not possible to hold the normal Annual general Meeting.

The Executive Committee knew that, in the absence of an AGM, there would be questions of legitimacy for them to carry on into another year without getting the views of the members, so it was agreed to put the essence of a physical meeting to the members to ask for approval.

A questionnaire was circulated, enclosing the normal papers including the Minutes of AGM 2019, Trustees' Report and Statement of Accounts for the 2019-20 Financial year, Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports, the reappointment of the Auditor, and approval for the existing Officers and Executive Committee to continue in office until the next AGM.

Twenty-three Societies responded and agreed with all the recommendation.

The Chair then asked to Acting Secretary to present the Trustees Report and Financial Statement for 2020-2021

Trustees' Report and Financial Statement 2020-2021

Trustees' Report: Secretary's statement

The Acting Secretary said that the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement is one of two matters required by Companies House to be laid before the AGM, the other being the election of the Officers and Executive Committee. He would present the Trustees' Report and the Treasurer, Bridie Bradley, would present the Financial Statement after which both Reports would be put to the AGM for adoption.

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Originally the Federation held its AGM in June but that changed to November when it lost government support and had to depend on volunteers to manage the Company. Because of the long period between June and November we now provide an 'in-year' update on activities and finance, a sort of mid-year state of play. These are for information only and do not need delegates' approval.

The Report reflects the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic that affected the whole of the 2021-2022 period and since. All member Societies suspended their activities; all meetings and events were cancelled. The Executive Committee also ceased regular activities, including planned Seminars and joint events with the Southern Federation. By the end of the year a handful of Societies were experimenting with virtual meetings and lectures.

The Executive Committee resumed limited activities in October 2020 with virtual meetings using Zoom, holding five monthly meetings between October and March.

The Annual General Meeting was not possible, so the Executive Committee agreed to ask the members to approve the re-election of the existing Officers and Executive Committee, to approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Report and the Trustee's Report and Statement of Accounts for the 2021-2022 Financial Year.

The recommendations were approved by 23 of the Societies who also authorised the Executive Committee to re-appoint the existing Financial Examiner for the 2021 – 2022 Financial year.

Although little planning was possible, we continued to cooperate with government and voluntary where feasible e.g. virtual meetings with the Southern Federation on joint on-line seminars and joint visits when the restrictions eased. We launched a new website with improved features. The Executive Committee's primary objective was, and remains, to preserve the essential services needed for us all to return to as near normal historical activities as soon as possible.

The Chair called on Bridie Bradley, Treasurer, to present the Financial Statement

Trustees' Report and Financial Statement

Financial Statement: Treasurers' Report

The Treasurer, Bridie Bradley, said that The Federation is a limited company and registered charity. Therefore, it must prepare its Trustee and Financial Reports in accordance with the Companies Acts and Charities (Northern Ireland) Acts.

This statement relates to the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Total Income received was £7,302, mostly from membership subscriptions and Public Liability Insurance charges. £467 was received from the sale of publications. £50 for a planned Seminar was received and later refunded when it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 epidemic.

Membership subscriptions of £3,633 were £588 less than in the previous year.

PL Insurance charges show an apparent increase over the previous year. The difference on this occasion is explained by the fact that substantial proportion of societies tend to pay the charges before 1 April but owing to the position after Covid travel restrictions were imposed, these were not lodged in the Bank until after 1 April 2020.

Expenditure amounted to £8,119.

PL Insurance premium remained at £1,646 – same as the previous year.

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Travel costs didn't apply as the Executive Committee could not travel in the year.

The increase in the costs of Publications from £1,349 to £1,785 was due mainly the postage of Due North to Societies.

As most societies were unable to function during the lockdown, the Executive Committee decided to reduce the membership fees by 50% from 1 October 2020 and the PL Insurance charge from 1 April 2020. The refund of £2,091 relate to membership subscription paid by Standing Order (and which we asked members not to change as this was a temporary measure) and PL Insurance payments already lodged before the Committee's decision.

The IT costs includes the final instalment for the new website launched in March.

The Auditor's Fee has remained the same for a number of years.

The deficit at year end was £817.

At the end of the year, total cash at Bank was £21,781

The Treasurer proposed that the Trustees' Report and Statement of Account be agreed by the AGM.

This was seconded by Joe McCoy and agreed by the meeting.

The Chair asked the Acting Secretary to provide an update on the period from 1 April 2021 to this 31 October 2021.

Secretary's Update from April to November 2021

The Acting Secretary said that the report has already been circulated so he did not plan to repeat it word for word. The Report was attached as Appendix 1.

As this is an interim report in the current reporting year, there would be no vote on acceptance.

The Executive Committee, in company with most of the societies, continues to be restricted in our activities, although we have made some progress in returning to normal, if that was ever going to be possible.

- We have had seven Zoom meetings since April.
- We have added two new members
- The current number of outstanding fees from societies is currently 18, and 9 Individual members.
- One Society, Lough Erne Heritage Trust, decided not to renew membership.
- The reduced fee would continue to apply until the new membership year started in October 2022
- The 100% rebate in the PL Insurance charge would be reviewed in the spring of 2022.
- The joint Seminar with the southern Federation was successfully delivered on 23 September with over 50 participants from both jurisdictions.

The Chair thanked the Pat for his presentation and called on the Treasurer to present the financial update.

Treasurers' Update for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021

The Treasurer gave a brief overview of the financial position of the Federation for the seven-month period from 1 April to 31 October 2021.

In the period total Income was £2,498, £2,333 of which was membership subscriptions paid in October.

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Expenditure totalled £3,360. This included Insurance premium of £1,646, membership subscriptions and Insurance refunds of £837, Bank charges, email fees £144; computer, website, Zoom set-up and postage £733. The insurance premium was paid in full by the Federation the charges to the societies were waived.

The closing Bank balance on 31 October was £24,135 (credit)

This week she had written cheques to the value of £733 relating the refund of to 50% of membership subscriptions paid by Standing Order.

The current bank balance is £23, 362

The Chair thanked Bridie for her presentation.

Chairperson's Address

The Chair, Josie Herbison, began by thanking people who have given much to the Federation over this last while, during lockdown. To Treasurer Bridie, a big thank you for looking after our money matters and keeping the Federation's financial matters in order; our Auditor, Roisin Shanks, for her part in overseeing a check on our financial books, to Pat, for carrying out the role of Acting Secretary, at this difficult time when there was no elected Secretary. She wished him well for the future. Thanks also to thanks to Katie for acting as Minute Secretary. She thanked Joe McCoy, for acting as Zoom Manager, a job thrust upon him; each person on the Committee, thanks for their part in keeping the Federation functioning during these very difficult times. Now, to you Robert, I wish you well, as you take on the role of Chairperson of the Federation.

Well done, and thanks to everyone.

The role of Chairperson of the Federation for Ulster Local Studies has certainly been somewhat different to what it formerly was. Gone were the days of rushing to the Station, to catch a bus or train, and then hurrying along, keeping an eye on the time, to make sure you reached the meeting venue on time. A catch-up chat with fellow members took place before settling down to the business on the agenda. We only managed three of these meetings, December 2019 and January/February 2020, before Covid struck and we were in lockdown. No one had ever experienced anything like this before and it took a few months to work out just what we should be doing. ZOOM, ah! yes!, this felt good. No masks, no cold waits for the train or bus and no rushing to make sure we were on time. EASY – just switch on the computer, grab a cup of coffee, press a few buttons and there was everyone in front of you, ready to talk. BUT NO – at first it wasn't quite the same. Gone was the camaraderie and interaction, even though you were sitting in a warm room and not having to face a long cold journey. Gradually however we managed it, got used to it and here we are today having our AGM, by Zoom

Some of our events suffered – Our Annual Spring Seminar at the Home Place in Bellaghy was cancelled, as were our meetings with our associates in The Federation of Local History Societies. There was no formal AGM in 2020.

Local Societies also suffered as no meetings could be held. BUT, History itself did not go away. It was out there waiting to be uncovered and that's just what some people did during lockdown, including myself, they went digging for those hidden stories from the past.

You all know the saying "from little acorns, mighty oak trees grow". The oak trees can be seen by everyone, near and far. History is like the oak trees, the great historical events and people, such as

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WW1, WW2, Winston Churchill and Florence Nightingale are known about by everyone just like the mighty oak trees, on the other hand there are the little plants – the snowdrop, the violet, which are only seen and known about, by those close to them. History is also like these tiny plants – local happenings, local people only known about, by their local community.

Doctor Norman Graham was a gentleman I knew as I grew up in Antrim. He came to fill up his beautiful big shiny Rover car, at the petrol pumps opposite our house. It wasn't until many years later that I learned of the part He had played in history during WW1. While serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps, he carried out the Autopsy on Baron Manfred Von Richthofen, the Red Baron, when he had been shot down in 1918. Doctor Norman was awarded the Military Cross and was Mentioned in Despatches by Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig. The War heroics of Dr Norman lay buried for many years and not many of his family even knew of them.

As a child, I grew up knowing that an area at the top of Antrim Town, near our house was known as "The Gun". But why! I often wondered about this and then I learned that a large Gun used to be situated there. Where had it come from? Where was it now? Many years later, on a visit to PRONI, I found out the answers to these questions, when I came upon a newspaper report about this Gun. It was one of two German Howitzer Trophy Guns, which came to Antrim after WW1.

These Guns, and I quote "after they had been cleaned of all there Germanic rottenness and were made to look respectable" unquote, they were unveiled at a huge ceremony in Antrim on March 23rd, 1924. They remained in place until WW2, when they were taken to be melted down for War use. Thus that area of the town became commonly known as "The Gun", but not many people really understood why, after the Gun had disappeared.

These are only two examples of many stories, from my area, which lay hidden until they were eventually unearthed. Every area in our Country is the same – hidden stories eventually uncovered. They are on our doorstep, just waiting to burst onto the scene and become part of our history.

"Hidden Gems Forgotten People", formerly played a big part in uncovering such stories. Because of Covid and other reasons it has rather fallen away. I hope you can see how important it is for us to revive it, dig up our local history and make it known to a wider audience. I leave you with this: The vision of the Federation for Ulster Local Studies, which states: "Our vision is of a community in Ulster that is able to lay claim to and have a pride in its History and Heritage."

Election of the Officers and Executive Committee.

The Chair reported that the nomination for the Officers and Executive Committee were as follows

Chairman

Chairman: Mr Robert Guthrie

Vice-Chairman: Mr Joseph McCoy

Secretary: No nominations

Treasurer: Ms Bridie Bradley

Executive Committee

Mr John Dooher

Ms Aine Ni Duibhne

Mrs Helen Meehan

Mrs Josephine Herbison (Immediate Past Chairman)

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The Chair declared that since the nominations did exceed the number of positions available, all were duly elected for the incoming year.

Appointment of the Honorary Officers

The Chair said that before calling for the appointment of the President and Vice-Presidents she wanted to say that she was sorry the Dr Brian Turner was unable, for technical reasons, to join the AGM on Zoom. She said that she wanted to use the opportunity to thank and pay tribute to our outgoing President. Dr Turner had been the Director of the Down County Museum and Curator of Local History at the Ulster Museum and had written on a wide range of historical topics. He had been a long-term member of the Federation. He served on the Executive Committee for many years and was Secretary for several years. On behalf of the Executive Committee and the wider Federation she thanked Dr Turner for his service and wished him well for the future.

The Chair asked Johnny Dooher to propose the appointment of Professor Brian Walker as President.

Appointment of Professor Brian Walker as President

Johnny Dooher also thanked Dr Turner for his service and wished him well.

He said that we were here to appoint Brian Walker to the Office of President.

Brian Walker had been involved in the study of history in the Province for a lifetime. He was Trinity graduate and began to develop an interest in political developments. He first met him in the early 1970s when his book on elections in the Province after the great Reform Act of 1832 was published. It was a fascinating account of the people and electorates involved and a great resource to research 19th century developments. Prof Walker was a leading light in the History and Politics department at Queens and Director of the Irish Studies department for a number of years. As well as a lecturer and guide he was also a publisher of a large number of books. In particular, the publication of the Ordnance Survey Memoirs was a major achievement, starting in the 1990s. Angelique Day was also involved in that project.

Johnny said that he had come to Queens for a year in 1992/93 and it was a marvellous opportunity to meet people working on a major project.

He said that Prof. Walker had been a supporter of the Federation and of local studies. He had been Vice-President for some years, and he was delighted to propose him for the office of President.

The proposal was seconded by Joseph McCoy and accepted by the AGM.

Appointment of William Roulston as Vice-President

Johnny Dooher said that William had been a well-known figure in the local history scene for many years. Johnny remembered back in the 1980s as a student and a graduate. He was then involved in local history and studies in County Tyrone and was seen as a rising figure in these fields. He was lucky in his choice of tutors, Bill Crawford, Bill McAfee and Brian Trainor, all helping him get started. William has now been in the local scene for over 30 years and has developed from his work at local level to much wider role with his involvement with the Ulster Historical Foundation and Family History as well as his links between the Foundation and north America. He had a major programme of work behind him; In the past year and a half he had published three substantial books – he's glutton for work! He was seen as a major figure in the current history scene in Ulster.

Johnny had no hesitation in proposing William Roulston for the office of Vice-President.

Appointment of Roddy Hegarty as Vice-President

Pat Devlin said that it was a great pleasure to introduce Roddy Hegarty as a new Vice-President.

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Roddy had been a well-known and well-respected figure in local historical and heritage circles for many years, and was directly employed by the Federation, as Development Officer in the days that the Federation was partly funded by Government.

His career in the field started in the Ulster Historical Foundation in 1993 when he ran *Familia*, the public face of the Foundation, that helped people with genealogical research. He promoted, and helped sell, local publications.

From 1998 to 2006 he was the Federation's Development Officer, working with PRONI and other groups, including with groups in Ulster, the south of Ireland and in the Hebrides, and with local cross-community groups.

In 2006 he started work in the Cardinal O Fiaich Library and Archive. For four years he was the Education and Interpretive Officer, engaged in Outreach work and cooperating with major publications such as the 400 anniversary of the Flight of the Earls and the History of the GAA in Ulster.

He has been the Library and Archive's Director since 2010.

Roddy had been a member of the Federation's Executive Committee and acted as Chairman in the 2012-2013 years.

Roddy and the Library has consistently been supportive of the Federation, hosting many of its Seminars and Workshops, and the Hidden Gems and Forgotten People Exhibition in 2017.

He had been a ready source of wise helpful advice to the Executive Committee, and it was grateful to him for that.

Pat thanked Roddy, for his contribution down the years and hoped he would enjoy the new role.

Pat recommend the appointment to the AGM.

The appointment of William Roulston and Roddy Hegarty was put to the AGM by the Chair and agreed

The Chair congratulated William and Roddy on their appointment, thanked them for their willingness to serve, and wished them well in their new office.

Appointment of Auditor

The Treasurer said that Roisin Shanks had been the Federation's Auditor for many years. She had always done a fantastic job. She is prepared to carry on for the next term. Bridie said that she had no hesitation in proposing her reappointment. This was put to the meeting by the Chair and approved.

Incoming Chairman

At the request of the Chair, Joe McCann contacted Robert Guthrie, the incoming Chairman, who had been unable to join the AGM and Josie congratulated him on his election. Over the phone Robert apologised for his inability to attend and thanked everyone for his election. He hoped it would not be too long before normal business could be resumed.

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Address by the new President, Prof. Brian Walker

Prof Walker said that he was delighted to be here and honoured to having been appointed President. He began by saying a few words about his predecessor, Dr Brian Turner. Brian was well known to us, partly because of his original post in the Ulster Museum and then as Director of the Down County Museum. We also greatly appreciated his published work such as his Volume on the Photographs of RJ Welch. He also thanked him for his service as President of the Federation. He also thanked Johnny Dooher, Josie Herbison, Bridie Bradley, Pat Devlin and the other members of the Executive Committee in keeping things going through difficult times.

Prof. Walker said he had a high opinion of the Federation and of the many local history societies in all parts of nine counties of Ulster. The growth and work of the societies over the past fifty years had been remarkable. Some go back before this time, but many had been more recently formed. Besides their work in the history of their local area these societies had often provided important centres for cross community involvement, brought together through a common interest in their locality. Through this involvement came much research and publications, changing the way we look at our history. Over the past two years the activities of the Federation and societies have been very limited due to Covid restrictions although ZOOM has helped to some extent. Hopefully before long matters will return to normal.

Prof. Walker said he had been asked to speak briefly about commemorations and it was a topic in which he was very interested, not only because they feature events from our own history but because they reveal much about ourselves; what we choose to mark or to commemorate will often reflect our contemporary interest. How we do this can be important. How we celebrate events, significant to us; that is our own communities, how we deal with events important to others and how we enjoy shared historical times will have an important effect on community relations. Recent decades have seen a more measured approach to commemorative events than were seen earlier e.g. 1966. He would concentrate on the last ten years, but it was worth noting that in the 1990s one could see the beginnings of a new inclusive and tolerant approach to some of these events. The tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne and the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion were marked by impressive and dispassionate events, lectures and Exhibitions. There was a new inclusive approach to all of these e.g. to those who served and died in the two World Wars.

Our Decade of Centenaries of Events began with the events of 1912, will continue to the events of 1923 and may extend these to 1925 and the demise of the Boundaries Commission. The double events in 1916 of the Easter Rising and the first Battle of the Somme were two events in the respective communities. They were commemorated with pride but at the same time there were efforts to avoid provocation. A special feature of these years was a shared sense of history regarding the First World War. In many parts of Ireland events were held and publications were issued to commemorate all those who died in the war. In 1918 we recorded the terrible effects of the Spanish Flu in every community. He had only recently realised that his grandfather had died in October 1918 aged only 49 at the height of the second wave of the flu in Ulster. He now wondered whether the Flu had contributed to his death, although there was no family evidence available.

That year, 1918, marked the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women, although there were remaining limits to this. Those events had seen not only Government involvement through the contributions of Museums and Universities as well as voluntary bodies such as local history societies. There has been considerable interest in these commemorations.

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Prof. Walker said that he had been in Enniskillen on the Centenary of Armistice Day in 2018. One hundred years earlier, in 1918, Enniskillen was the first place in Britain or Ireland to ring the church bell to celebrate the Armistice. This was due to one alert telephonist in the Army Barracks in Enniskillen who, early in the morning of 11 November picked up a message from Marshal Foch to the troops at the Front announcing the end of the War later that day. The ringing of church bells followed in Enniskillen before London and before Dublin.

At the Armistice Wreath Laying ceremony was the NI First Minister Arlene Foster and the Irish Government Minister Heather Humphries. In the Parade there were not only the British Army and the British Legion but also a large contingent of Irish Army Veterans in their United Nations berets. This would not have happened fifty years ago.

However, from that time onward, many events and topics were more controversial. These included the War of Independence, Partition, the formation of Northern Ireland, the Anglo-Irish War, the establishment of the Irish Free State and the Irish Civil War. Governments in both jurisdictions have now established Advisory Bodies of historians to provide sensible arrangements on how these events might be shared.

Commenting on happenings in the last few years, Prof Walker saw continuing interest in the Centenary Events. The outbreak of COVID-19 had put a dampener on public events. Nonetheless, lectures by ZOOM organised by societies and other bodies had all allowed attention to the developments of 100 years ago. National Museums in Belfast and Dublin put on wonderful Exhibitions, Local Councils promoted lectures, and the Community Relations Council supported projects to explore different narratives and to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland in an inclusive way.

Some local history societies have been able to hold lectures by ZOOM and in person. Hopefully restrictions on such meetings would be lifted in the near future and a return to more regular events be permitted. However, the effects of our past can still cause problems. This was the case with the recent Inter Church Service of Reflection and Hope in Armagh, marking the Centenary of the partition of Ireland and the establishment of Northern Ireland. Prof. Walker had been present at the service as a commentator to the BBC to supply the historical context for the occasion. The event raised considerable controversy when President Higgins declined the Invitation to attend. He said he was concerned about the Invitation itself and complained that the event had been politicised. The Church Leaders had described the event *"an opportunity for honest reflections on the events 100 years ago, with an acknowledgement of failures and hurts but also with a clear affirmation and shared commitment to a future marked by peace, reconciliation and commitment to the common good."*

It is not clear what the President's objections were, exactly. Nevertheless, misunderstandings and poor communication were part of the problem. After the President's refusal the event became politicised and controversial. In the end, the event was a remarkably uplifting, dignified and inclusive occasion. The incident served to highlight that sometimes there can be difficulties in marking divisive issues. It has highlighted the need for better communications as well as determination on all sides not to reignite old tensions.

There will be other events. They will be interesting because, on the one hand, it's fascinating to explore aspects of our history and, at the same time, it can reflect our current interests. There have been difficulties but there will be many opportunities, when these have been overcome, for people

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to acknowledge that there are different narratives and different views and that they should be open to hear those differences.

Prof Walker concluded that he looked forward to the remaining years of the Decade of Centenaries in a positive light.

Open Forum

The Chair asked Johnny Doohar to manage this new feature of the Agenda.

Johnny Doohar said that the new feature was an opportunity to comment on any issue or to make suggestions on how to overcome current problems or to develop services in the future. The panel of Hon. Officers would discuss possible approaches, but he invited those present to contribute if they wished.

Roddy Hegarty thanked to Committee for placing him in such elite company. The pandemic had presented us with technical and social challenges, which the Federation could either shy away from or embrace them in a positive way. Covid's biggest impact on the local history community was on its self-confidence. It reduced people's confidence in doing things in the way they had done for decades. There was need for some form of strategic health check for local societies in particular. He suggested that as we come out of the pandemic academic local history would probably demonstrate how much it thrived since it started. It would show that it had taken advantage of the technological and research opportunities available. He suggested that there would be a raft of new publications over the next year or more. On the other hand local history would struggle in the short term at least, because of the lack of self-confidence and communication as well as the fears that still exist among the many of the members in engaging in open technology (ZOOM). There is a challenge here for the Federation in what it could do to help move things and to assist in that whole process or re-engagement.

There were opportunities here. He had been in discussion with official in statutory bodies who were keen to work with local societies on the use of their venues, including Libraries, perhaps in the next year. There was an opportunity for the Federation to work with these organisations as to what could be done to restore confidence including the social dimension of local studies or for the engagement of local historians with their own research and to produce those 'little acorns' that the Chair had talked about.

It was important to challenge the fatalism that might emerge from the pandemic and have a positive look forward and consider whether the Federation could do what it had been doing in the mid-1970s in building that confidence and encouragement and clear pathways for those local studies groups and the individuals within them to take on the months and years ahead.

Betty Ferguson (Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers) said that for them the period of lockdown had been very productive; they had launched their own website, and their first publication, using ZOOM to keep in touch. However she was disappointed that they had received so little feedback. She suggested that the EC should visit local societies to give them support.

Jonathan Gray commented that the Irish Studies Library in Armagh had been caught up in a wider policy change in the Library's structure. He had concerns that the same level of accessibility would be maintained.

Roddy Hegarty said that the library had been subject to reviews over the past few years, mainly because it's location and building was unsuitable. The collection had formerly been sited at Library

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Board HQ on the Markethill Road. Following consultation over eighteen months ago it was argued very strongly by those who had used it extensively over the years that it was important for the collection to be held together rather than be broken up and distributed to different parts of the Board. That argument was won, and the collection has been relocated to a new venue on the Markethill Road. It is not yet fully open to the public. The existing Librarian, Catherine Gartland will continue in that role. Earlier in the year a friend of local studies, Joe Canning, for many years the local studies Librarian in Armagh, had passed away. He had played a huge role in building that collection and it was important that it be preserved.

Launch of *Due North*

Johnny Doohar asked Dr Roulston to launch the new edition of *Due North*. Tomorrow he would begin posting out copies to the membership.

Dr Roulston began by thanking the Federation for doing him the honour of appointing him to the Office of Vice-President.

One thing he could say, in introducing *Due North'* was that what people in the last 18-20 months had been reading. Book sales had been excellent, and many had been buying books, reading and exploring things. The new issue of *Due North* is another excellent contribution to the local history scene. To begin he wanted to pay tribute to Johnny Doohar, in the work of pulling it all together and editing it (never an easy job). In the new edition the array of articles was fascinating, a really packed line up of quality. Some make great use of the primary source data in PRONI and other archives. Some articles examine the careers of interesting individuals, have dug out nuggets from our past.

Dr Roulston briefly ran through the articles, with brief descriptions of each one. In conclusion he recommended the latest edition of *Due North* to the membership.

Conclusion of the AGM

The Chair thanked Prof Walker for his inspiring address, also to Dr Roulston and Roddy Hegarty for their contributions. In particular she thanked Jonathan Gray for his technical contribution in making the ZOOM meeting such a success. She then declared the AGM closed.

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ANNEX 1

SECRETARY'S REPORT TO THE AGM

Introduction

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic severely restricted the activities of the Member Societies during 2020 and 2022 and in many cases the complete cessation of business. Some societies conducted some limited activities such as lectures using ZOOM, the remote meeting and conference software. A few held local tours etc.

This report sets out the activities of the Executive Committee since 1 November 2021. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, all meetings were via ZOOM. From December 2020 to the end of September 2021 there were ten such meetings

Governance

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

Committee member	Possible	Actual
Sean Barden	10	5
Bridie Bradley	10	10
Patrick Devlin	10	10
John Dooher	10	10
Robert Guthrie	9	5
Josephine Herbison	10	10
• Liz Hoy	10	0
• Helen Meehan	10	0
Joseph McCoy	10	8
Aine Ni Dhuibhne	10	10
Katie Orme	10	10

- Unable to use ZOOM but have been supplied with the meetings and other papers and can comment as appropriate.

Membership

Because of vacancies due to the pandemic the membership had been asked to nominate names for co-option to the Committee. Three persons were nominated and accepted. These were

Sean Barden – Armagh and District History Group

Helen Meehan – County Donegal Historical Society and

Aine Ni Dhuibhne – County Donegal Historical Society

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SECRETARY'S REPORT TO AGM 2021

Membership

Society Membership stands at 94, Individual Membership, 23.

Three new members have been accepted into membership –

1. Kilmore O'Neilland Building Preservation Trust
2. ABC Family History Association

By the end of September despite several reminders, twelve Societies had not renewed membership for the current year. Their reasons are unknown, but all have been invited to re-join for the 2021-2022 year.

In view of the continuing impact of the pandemic on Members' activities, and 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 continue the reduction of membership fees by 50% for the 2021-2022 year. Members (Society and individual) who pay by Standing Order need not alter their existing bank mandate; the Federation will refund the difference in November 2021.

The Committee also decided to rebate the PL Insurance charge by 100% for the 2021-2022 year; ending on 31 March 2022. This means that member societies will pay nothing until at least 1 April 2022. A substantial number of Societies (who had paid the full charge in 2020-2021 before the charge was reduced by 50%) are thereby owed half of that. In the event societies were refunded to a total amount of £1530.60

New Website

The website continued to be updated but by a limited amount as there were no new activities and few additional features to add or update. The new on-line shop attracted a small number of journal orders, and several membership applications were processed.

AGM 2021

For the 2021 AGM the Executive Committee agreed to hold a virtual AGM using Zoom. While some members may be familiar with the software many may not be. However, the system is easy to use, and the Committee would encourage individual members and Society Officers to download and install it.

The use of Zoom required some modification of the AGM timetable and processes. For example, it is not possible to hold the Officers and Executive Committee elections at the AGM . The processes have been modified so that the votes will be cast in advance and sent directly to the Scrutineers who will report the results during the AGM. Officer vacancies will be filled after the AGM from within the Committee and on the Executive Committee by co-option from the membership.

A Newsletter setting out the arrangements and documentation was issued in September.

Other Activities

Four Newsletters were issued between January and September 2021.

FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES

A Joint meeting with the Federation of Local History Societies 29 April 2021 discussed the options for resuming joint operations. The following proposals were agreed

a. Moving the HGFP website

One of the impacts of Brexit was to render inoperable the Hidden-Gems and Forgotten People domain name (www.hidden-gems.eu) and the site disappeared from the internet on 1 January 2021. To recover the site, it was necessary to transfer the registration to an EC country and, with the transfer to FLHS completed in May 2021, the site returned to the internet.

The meeting also agreed to the transfer of the hosting and management of the site to FLHS as soon as possible. Until the new site was available FULS would administer, and update, the existing site. One of the issues was the need to update the application to a modern platform such as WordPress, so the site computer code was copied to FLHS for their action.

b. Joint Seminar

It was agreed to arrange a joint webinar on 23 October 2021 on the theme of **A Changing Ireland 1918-1921**. The Seminar was delivered as planned.

c. Exchange Visit 2022

It was agreed to organise the joint event early in 2022 in the Kildare / Wicklow area.

d. Visit to Great Britain

The visit to Southeast England, originally arranged for early 2001, would be revived for early 2022.

Patrick Devlin
Acting Secretary

23 October 2021

FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES

ANNEX 2

SECRETARY'S UPDATE 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 OCTOBER 2021

Introduction

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic severely restricted the activities of the Member Societies during 2020 and 2021 and in many cases the complete cessation of business. Some societies conducted some limited activities such as lectures using ZOOM, the remote meeting and conference software. A few held local tours etc.

This report sets out the activities of the Executive Committee since 1 April 2021. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, all meetings were via ZOOM. From April 2021 to the present there were seven meetings.

Executive Committee Membership

Because of vacancies due to the pandemic the membership had been asked to nominate names for co-option to the Committee. Three persons were nominated and accepted. These are

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Sean Barden | – Armagh and District History Group |
| Helen Meehan | – County Donegal Historical Society and |
| Aine Ni Dhuibhne | – County Donegal Historical Society |

Membership

Society Membership stands at 94, Individual Membership, 23.

Three new members have been accepted into membership –

1. Kilmore O'Neilland Building Preservation Trust
2. ABC Family History Association

By the end of September despite several reminders, twelve Societies had not renewed membership for the current year. Their reasons are unknown, but all have been invited to re-join for the 2021-2022 year.

In view of the continuing impact of the pandemic on Members' activities, and 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 continue the reduction of membership fees by 50% for the 2021-2022 year. Members (Society and individual) who pay by Standing Order need not alter their existing bank mandate; the Federation will refund the difference in November 2021.

The Committee also decided to rebate the PL Insurance charge by 100% for the 2021-2022 year; ending on 31 March 2022. This means that member societies will pay nothing until at least 1 April 2022. A substantial number of Societies (who had paid the full charge in 2020-2021 before the charge was reduced by 50%) are thereby owed half of that. In the event societies were refunded to a total amount of £1530.60

FEDERATION FOR ULSTER LOCAL STUDIES

New Website

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For the 2021 AGM the Executive Committee agreed to hold a virtual AGM using Zoom. While some members may be familiar with the software many may not be. However, the system is easy to use, and the Committee would encourage individual members and Society Officers to download and install it.

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A Newsletter setting out the arrangements and documentation was issued in September.

Other Activities

Two Newsletters were issued between April and November 2021.

A Joint meeting with the Federation of Local History Societies 29 April 2021 discussed the options for resuming joint operations. The following proposals were agreed

a. Moving the HGFP website

One of the impacts of Brexit was to render inoperable the Hidden-Gems and Forgotten People domain name (www.hidden-gems.eu) and the site disappeared from the internet on 1 January 2021. To recover the site it was necessary to transfer the registration to an EC country and, with the transfer to FLHS completed in May 2021, the site returned to the internet.

The meeting also agreed to the transfer of the hosting and management of the site to FLHS as soon as possible. Until the new site was available FULS would administer, and update, the existing site. One of the issues was the need to update the application to a modern platform such as WordPress, so the site computer code was copied to FLHS for their action.

b. Joint Seminar

It was agreed to arrange a joint webinar on 23 October 2021 on the theme of **A Changing Ireland 1918-1921**. The Seminar was delivered as planned, with over 50 members from both jurisdictions attending.

c. Exchange Visit 2022

It was agreed to organise the joint event early in 2022 in the Kildare / Wicklow area.

d. Visit to Great Britain

The visit to Southeast England, originally arranged for early 2001, would be revived for early 2022.

Patrick Devlin

Acting Secretary

5 November 2021