

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Meeting of Interdepartmental Committee on the Development of the Battle of the Boyne site, Iveagh House 28 March, 2000

Present: Rory Montgomery (DFA Chair)
Peadar Carpenter (DFA)
Paul McGarry (D/Taoiseach)
June Thompson (OPW)
Eugene Keane (D/AHGI)
Harry Lynch (NE Tourism)

Minutes

1. The minutes of the Committee meeting of 25 November were agreed and those of the Sub-Committee meeting of 28 January were noted.

Interim Measures

2. Keane advised that the interim signs setting out information on aspects of the site would, hopefully, be ready in approximately 10 weeks. He is still in discussion with local landowners on the siting of some of these. The signs would be bi-lingual and he was working with the Military History Society on the text for these. Carpenter requested that DFA be copied with the draft text for these signs and the proposed battle-site guide when they were finalised.

3. Keane indicated that there would be a requirement for some minor road improvements, which would cost approximately £40K. He was in discussion with Louth and Meath County Councils, who were positive. Work could commence in a matter of weeks.

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4. With regard to the existing viewing point, Keane advised that the local group (West Ferrard) were in negotiations with the owner of the land on which it was situated. It was agreed that, when these negotiations were completed, Louth County Council would be offered the cost of purchasing the site. The Council could then transfer the site to the West Ferrard group on a management licence basis. This would ensure that the site remained in public ownership and, at the same time, would give the group a continuing role in the project.

Property Acquisition

5. Thompson reported that the purchase of Oldbridge House was being finalised. Keane requested that, when OPW had completed the purchase, they would undertake some "weather-proofing". Thompson agreed to raised this within OPW.

Consultants

6. Keane advised that the consultants on the long-term development of the site (Brady, Shipman and Martin) had now been appointed and had been invited to make a presentation to the meeting on the envisaged conduct of the study. BSM outlined their methodology to the meeting, and emphasised the importance of an extensive consultation process, including with local concerns. Montgomery remarked that it would be important to advertise this in the Northern newspapers; it was agreed that DFA would offer advice on possible Northern contacts generally. DFA and Dúchas would liaise on this aspect.

7. BSM advised that they would be giving further presentations to the Committee before the finalisation of their report. To facilitate their consultation process, Keane will provide a list of relevant and interested parties.

Press/FOI requests

8. It was agreed that, for the moment, all press queries regarding this project would in the first instance be directed to DFA for reply or for the coordination of replies. It

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was also decided that, given the level of press interest a note setting out the history of the project would be useful for both FOI officers and for applicants. Carpenter undertook to draft this and to circulate it to Dúchas, OPW and D/Taoiseach for observations.

Visit by Apprentice Boys of Derry

9. Carpenter advised that the Apprentice Boys of Derry have arranged for a party of over 50 of their members to visit the site on Saturday 8 April. They will be holding a discussion that evening in the Boyne Valley Hotel on the topic "what visiting the Boyne means to me".

Peadar Carpenter
31 March 2000

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