



BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY
COMHLACHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH NA BREATAINE
AGUS NA hÉIREANN

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT
2006

No. 123

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CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Membership of the Body</i>	3
<i>Political developments</i>	3
<i>The work of the Body</i>	7
<i>Thirty-second Plenary</i>	7
<i>Thirty-third Plenary</i>	9
<i>Steering Committee</i>	12
<i>Committees</i>	12
<i>Staffing</i>	13
<i>Prospects for 2007</i>	13
APPENDIX 1: <i>Membership of the Body</i>	14
APPENDIX 2: <i>Reports and other documents approved by the Body</i>	19
APPENDIX 3: <i>Work of Committees</i>	21
<i>Committee A</i>	
<i>Committee B</i>	
<i>Committee C</i>	
<i>Committee D</i>	
APPENDIX 4: <i>Staff of the Body</i>	25

BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY
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ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY

Introduction

1. This is the eleventh Annual Report of the Body since it was decided at the 11th Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Body during 2006.

Membership of the Body

2. There were a number of changes to membership of the Body in the course of the year, and these can be followed in Appenix 1 to this report. The saddest was the death of Mrs Margaret Ewing, MSP, a serving Member of the Body, to whom tributes were paid at the spring plenary session. Mr Steve Rodan, SHK, replaced Mr Tony Brown as the member from the Tynwald following Mr Tony Brown's appointment as Chief Minister. The Body congratulates Mr Brown.

Political Developments

General

3. 2006 was an intensive period for the peace process, which culminated in the St Andrew's Agreement in October.
4. The year began with the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair meeting in Farmleigh, Dublin on 26 January to consider the way ahead in relation to Northern Ireland. A joint statement, issued after the meeting, emphasised that while Northern Ireland had experienced a period of unprecedented peace, prosperity and growth, it could not afford either complacency or prolonged stalemate. The Taoiseach and Prime Minister stated that 2006 would be a decisive year for the process and announced that talks would begin on 6 February with the aim of setting out the arrangements and timetable for restoring the devolved institutions as soon as possible. They called on all the parties to take the necessary steps to allow trust and confidence to be rebuilt and said that it was time for the parties to engage in a collective discussion.

5. On 24 January, Dr Ian Paisley met with Prime Minister Blair in Downing Street to present DUP proposals for a return to devolution, which stopped short of a power-sharing executive involving Sinn Féin. These proposals were published in a sixteen page document “Facing Reality” on 31 January.
6. The talks which took place in February with the Northern Ireland political parties typically involved a series of consecutive meetings between each of the parties and the two Governments. Through these talks the two Governments sought to put in place an inclusive process involving all the parties. The meetings focussed on addressing issues arising out of the operation of the devolved institutions, including possible legislative change across the three strands. In parallel, some of the parties (including DUP, Ulster Unionist Party-DUP- and Social Democratic and Labour Party- SDLP) submitted proposals to the Governments for institutional arrangements which could, in their view, constitute a transition to full devolution or otherwise operate on a contingency basis.
7. The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair met in Armagh on 6 April and issued a Joint Statement which outlined plans to recall the Northern Ireland Assembly on 15th May with a view to working towards a fully functioning Executive and Assembly in 2006.
8. On 10 April, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Peter Hain, announced that he was appointing the former Alliance Party deputy leader, Ms Eileen Bell, as Presiding Officer (Speaker) of the Assembly.
9. Emergency legislation (the Northern Ireland Bill 2006) to facilitate the recall of the NI Assembly on 15 May was discussed in the House of Commons on 27 and 28 April and became law on 8 May.
10. When the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair announced in Armagh on 6 April that the Assembly would be recalled, it was not clear whether or not all the parties would agree to participate. At its first meeting on 15 May, however, all 108 MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly), elected in November 2003, formally took their seats, which in itself was a significant achievement.
11. On 15 May, the MLAs were also required to sign the roll and indicate their community designation (nationalist, unionist or other.) Most media coverage of the first meeting focussed on the agreement that Mr David Ervine, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), would join with UUP members to form the UUP Assembly Group, bringing the Group’s total complement of MLAs to 25. This would be sufficient to grant them a third Ministerial seat in the event of the formation of an Executive.
12. Further meetings of the Assembly took place on 16, 22 and 23 May. On 16 May MLAs heard a presentation at Stormont on the economy from a group of Northern Ireland business people. This was followed by a debate on economic issues in the Assembly Chamber. Sinn Féin attended and spoke at the presentation in the morning but did not participate in the afternoon debate.

13. On 22 May initial efforts to elect a First and Deputy First Minister were unsuccessful when DUP leader Dr Ian Paisley rejected Sinn Féin's nomination to be First Minister. On 23 May, Secretary of State Hain announced plans for the establishment of a Committee of the Assembly on necessary business relating to preparation for Government. The task of the committee was to scope the work which, in the view of the parties needed to be done in preparation for government in advance of further intensive talks between the parties and the two Governments envisaged before the summer break. The Secretary of State asked the Assembly's speaker, Ms Eileen Bell, to convene the first meeting of the committee on 6 June.
14. At a meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) in Hillsborough on 25 July 2006 Mr. Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Mr. Dermot Ahern, the Minister for Foreign Affairs urged the political parties to use the period up to 24 November to engage constructively, and in good faith, on those issues which need to be agreed before the devolved institutions could be restored. The Conference also noted that work was going on to prepare the new partnership arrangements which will need to be put in place to bring forward full implementation of the Agreement in the event that the parties are unable to share power.

The Preparation for Government Committee

15. Overall there was a good engagement in the Preparation for Government Committee over the summer period particularly in the economic sub-group. The sub-group presented its first report on 12 September which reflected the large degree of consensus that existed between the parties on the economic challenges and how to address them. It recommended that any economic package accompanying a restoration of devolution should focus on community regeneration, infrastructure development, education and skills as well as tax incentives.
16. Over the late summer period Sinn Fein gave positive signals that it would move forward with endorsement of policing and 'full-bodied' participation under certain conditions. Sinn Fein said it would call a special Ard Fheis if agreement was found on working political institutions at Stormont, including agreement on a new Policing and Justice Department, the powers to be transferred and the timeframe.

The 2006 marching season

17. The 2006 Marching season was the most trouble-free in many years, with no significant incidents. Huge efforts were made by the nationalist side to steward and manage protests, including through close coordination with the PSNI.

Autumn 2006

18. The autumn period brought renewed efforts by both Governments. Minister Ahern met with Secretary of State Hain in Dundalk on 12 September. The Taoiseach met Prime Minister Blair at Chequers on 15 September to discuss how to encourage the parties to engage constructively in the weeks that followed.

The St Andrew's Agreement

19. The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair hosted intensive talks with the political parties at St. Andrews in Scotland from 11-13 October, with the aim of resolving outstanding issues and reaching agreement on full restoration of the political institutions. Following publication of the Agreement, the Governments asked the parties to consult their membership as appropriate and to confirm their acceptance of the proposals by 10 November to allow for nomination of the First and Deputy First Minister on 24 November, and for restoration of the Executive.
20. The first meeting of the new Programme for Government Committee scheduled for the 17 October was postponed due to a disagreement over the Ministerial pledge of office. Sinn Féin carried out consultations on the St Andrew's deal and held more than 60 meetings with local groups to discuss the St Andrew's Agreement. The Sinn Féin Ard Comhairle met on 19 October and again on 6 November. Speaking after the meeting on 6 November, Gerry Adams said the "*meeting has mandated the party leadership to follow the course set out at St. Andrews*". The Governments welcomed Sinn Féin's response to the St. Andrews Agreement. The DUP consulted its constituency base including community leaders and produced a consultation document.
21. The British Government introduced legislation at Westminster to reflect the agreement at St Andrews on certain operational matters relating to the institutions.

The economic package

22. Significantly all Northern Ireland parties were represented at senior level at talks in London with Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown on an economic package for Northern Ireland on 1 November. An economic package worth up to £53 billion (€79.3 billion) over 10 years was pledged by the British Government following the meeting. It has been estimated that the package involves approximately £3 billion 'new' money. The British Government has stated the funding to be conditional on adherence to the timetable set out in the St Andrew's Agreement. On the issue of an Irish contribution to the economic package, the St Andrew's Agreement stated that the two Governments would consider joint investment initiatives. The parties also lobbied the British Chancellor for a reduction in rate of Northern Ireland's corporation tax, from the current UK rate of 30% to the South's rate of 12.5%. There was no specific reference in the economic package to reducing the level of corporation tax, although it was indicated that discussion might continue on a range of issues.

The Assembly

23. In line with the timetable agreed at St Andrew's, Mr Gerry Adams confirmed at a sitting of the Assembly on 24 November that his party would nominate Mr Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister. Dr Ian Paisley made a speech indicating his willingness to accept a nomination as First Minister but saying that the circumstances had not been reached in which there could be a nomination or a designation. Dr Paisley released a statement later the same day to make his

position clear after a group of DUP Assembly Members issued a statement insisting the party had not participated in a process of designating a Shadow First Minister and Deputy First Minister. His subsequent statement outside the chamber provided the additional clarity required to proceed with the implementation of the St Andrew's Agreement.

24. Significantly, all the Northern Ireland parties have participated at senior level in meetings of the Programme for Government Committee, which held its first meeting on 20 November 2006. In addition to meeting in plenary session, the parties also participated in weekly meetings of the Programme for Government Committee.
25. At the end of 2006 Sinn Fein's endorsement of policing and a timeframe for the devolution of policing and justice powers remained central issues to be resolved but its party leader gave a commitment to call a special Ard Fheis on policing policy within the timeframe agreed at the St Andrews negotiations.
26. The Taoiseach met PM Blair on 4 December in advance of PM Blair's meeting with the DUP on 5 December. Minister Ahern and the Secretary of State for NI Peter Hain met at the BIIGC on 12 December. The year ended on a note of hope.

The work of the Body

Thirty-Second Plenary

27. The Thirty-Second plenary session was held at the Brehon Hotel, Killarney on 24th and 25th April.
28. At the beginning of the meeting tributes were paid to Ms Mo Mowlam and Lord Merlyn- Rees, both former Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, and to Mrs Margaret Ewing, MSP, a Member of the Body, all of whom had died since the previous plenary.
29. The main debate took place on the Monday morning on the motion: "That this Body acknowledges that significant progress has been made over the past year, including decommissioning of IRA weapons; notes that the two Governments are convinced that the IRA no longer poses a terrorist threat; recognises that ongoing concerns about criminality need to be addressed and urges all communities to support policing structures; calls on loyalist and dissident republican paramilitary groups to cease all paramilitary and criminal activity and decommission their arms; underlines the need to avoid a prolonged political vacuum; welcomes, in this context, the 6th April initiative by the two Governments to set out an agreed strategy for the restoration of the Assembly and devolved Government; recognises that the prospects for a peaceful and prosperous future for Northern Ireland are best served by devolved, power-sharing government as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement; looks forward to the recall of the Assembly on 15th May; urges the parties to take full advantage of this opportunity to engage in dialogue with a view to an early agreement on the election of a First Minister and Deputy First Minister, formation of an Executive and restoration of the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement; encourages and fully supports the ongoing work to develop

North/South co-operation in the best interests of both parts of the island and east-west relations for the benefit of all the peoples on these islands”.

30. The debate was opened by Mr Seymour Crawford, TD, who welcomed the initiative by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach to set out a strategy for the restoration of devolved government in the Province. Over twenty speakers took part in the debate which was held less than a month before the Northern Ireland Assembly was reconvened for the first time since it was suspended in October 2002. All expressed the hope that the work of the Assembly would be successful in leading to devolved government. Sinn Fein leaders were urged to accept the role of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which would be a significant step towards the restoration of devolved Government.
31. The first item of business in the afternoon session was an address to the Body by senior representatives of the Democratic Unionist Party. This was one of the most important developments in the work of the Body since its formation. Representatives of the Northern Ireland loyalist parties had always refused to have anything to do with the Body, so it was with great delight and expectation that members of the Body gathered to hear what Peter Robinson MP, MLA, Iris Robinson MP, MLA, Nigel Dodds MP, MLA and Jeffrey Donaldson MP, MLA had to say. Peter Robinson outlined the political position of the DUP. He made it clear that the DUP regard themselves as the “future of Northern Ireland, like it or not”. He stressed that the party wanted a peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland living in harmony with its neighbour to the south. The party would fully cooperate with other parties on the basis of mutual respect. He referred to the Anglo-Irish Agreement as one which had created a wasteland in the Province for many years and said it still created problems for Unionists. After Mr Robinson’s address, all the members of the DUP delegation participated in answering questions from members of the Body.
32. There is no question but that the Body greatly welcomes the breakthrough achieved in the attendance by the DUP at the Thirty-Second Plenary conference.
33. During the second part of the afternoon session, the conference was addressed by Mr Dermot Ahern TD, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Irish Republic. He was able to speak with first-hand knowledge about the strategy agreed between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach just a few days earlier, on 6th April, for the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland by the end of 2006. He explained that the Assembly would be reconvened on 15th May and would be asked to elect a First Minister, a Deputy First Minister and an Executive within six weeks. If that were not possible the deadline would be extended to 24th November. He went on to say that at the meeting on 6th April the Taoiseach, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and he had met a delegation of business leaders in Northern Ireland who urged a radical approach to the economic situation in the Province. If there were no Executive in place by 24th November, the two Governments would bring forward the work of the North/South Council.
34. Mr Ahearn then answered a wide variety of questions from members of the Body. Thereafter he was also able to have a short meeting with the DUP delegation.

35. At the Tuesday morning session, the Body held a series of debates on Committee reports. The first was a debate held on the Report by Committee A on the implications of the introduction of British identity cards for the Common Travel Area. Committee A concluded that the identity card proposals raised issues of concern to Irish people. Jim O'Keefe, TD, Chairman of the Committee, drew attention to a number of problems which could arise and urged both Governments to engage in a dialogue on the subject. Other speakers voiced their concerns, particularly Iain Smith, MSP.
36. This was followed by a debate on Committee B's report on European Funding for Socially Deprived Areas of Northern Ireland. Rosemary McKenna MP introduced the debate, explaining that it was in the nature of an interim report. Concern was expressed by a number of speakers, notably Baroness Blood, Mike German, AM and Helen Eadie, MSP, that projects established with the European Union money were not continuing to receive funding. There was, they said, little point in establishing certain social programmes and then abandoning them.
37. The Body then debated the Report on Challenges and Opportunities facing the Small Farm Sector made by Committee C. Seamus Kirk, TD introduced the short debate, speaking of the pressures on the sector and the lack of funds for capital investment. Paul Flynn, MP, spoke of the alarming statistic that only 3% of farms in Ireland are considered viable and that by 2015 the number will be half that. By comparison, he drew attention to the huge amount of money which was paid to large companies and mentioned the Royal Family as significant beneficiaries of the Common Agricultural Policy. John Ellis, TD and Seymour Crawford, TD also spoke.

Thirty-Third Plenary

38. The Thirty-Third Plenary session was held in Belfast on 23rd and 24th October. After the disappointment of a year earlier when the expressed wishes of the Body to meet in Belfast went unfulfilled, the Body was delighted that it was finally able to meet in the one part of the United Kingdom where it had not previously met and where so much of its purpose is centred. The meetings took place in the Waterfront Hall, while the Hilton Hotel, only 100 yards away, provided the accommodation for most of those attending.
39. A significant feature of the visit was that the City Corporation hosted a pre-dinner reception at Belfast City Hall before the Body's formal dinner at the same location. A particular pleasure was the number of local political representatives who accepted the Body's invitation to attend the dinner but, sadly, these did not include any Unionist political representatives. The Body would wish to thank most warmly all those associated with its visit to Belfast and hopes that it marks another step in the normalisation of politics in the Province.
40. The plenary took place only ten days after the reaching of the St Andrew's Agreement which provided the background to the main political debate of the meeting.

41. The first item of business on Monday morning was a discussion on the economic situation in Northern Ireland. The Body was delighted that a number of distinguished participants in business and industry in Northern Ireland agreed to act as panellists and facilitators of the discussion. Sir George Quigley, with a range of experience in both the public and private sectors, chaired the panel, the others being Mr Peter Bunting, the assistant general secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and Mr Adam Ewart, a young businessman who runs his own online music business. After their presentations the panellists answered questions from Members of the Body.
42. Sir George Quigley described the economic situation in Northern Ireland in some detail. He acknowledged that political stability had allowed much improvement but the wealth gap with the rest of the United Kingdom persisted because productivity is much lower. He said that the Northern Ireland economy was restructuring itself through an employment boom in low productivity jobs. He referred to the imbalance between public sector and private sector jobs and pointed out that the difference between public expenditure and the tax yield in the Province was £6 billion, a position that the Secretary of State had described as unsustainable. Sir George also drew comparisons with the economy of the Republic which he believed could be a model for the North. He ended by saying that Northern Ireland has enormous potential, with several world-class Centres of Research Excellence. Peter Bunting spoke of the levels of poverty and disadvantage in the Province. He could not share the optimism of others, pointing out that there are over 500,000 economically inactive people in Northern Ireland. He referred to a high proportion of illiteracy and that 36% of the unemployed have no qualifications. University numbers in the Province were capped which meant that many students go to universities elsewhere in Great Britain and then do not return. He also spoke of the ways in which the economy might be kick-started but he saw no advantage in a lower rate of corporation tax. He preferred the more targeted approach of tax grants.
43. Later in the morning, Mr Michael Mates, MP, moved “That the Body welcomes the St Andrews Agreement of 13 October last and commends the two Governments and the political parties on their efforts to restore devolution for the people of Northern Ireland; welcomes the position as set out in the Agreement, that support for policing and the rule of law should be extended to every part of the community, and that such support includes endorsing the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the criminal justice system, encouraging the community to co-operate with the police in tackling crime; and actively supporting all the policing and criminal justice institutions, including the Policing Board; notes that the political parties have been asked to consider the agreement carefully before 10 November; reiterates the importance of this opportunity to establish a devolved power-sharing Government for the benefit of the whole community; encourages the parties to work towards accepting the Government’s proposals by the proposed date to allow the Assembly to nominate the First and Deputy First Minister on 24 November to allow for restoration of the institutions on 27 March 2007; welcomes the commitment by the Government in the agreement to work with the parties to establish a favourable economic climate for Northern Ireland, which is essential for long-term economic stability; welcomes the inclusion in the agreement of support for a future east-west inter-parliamentary framework as well as provision

for a North/South parliamentary forum; and looks forward to welcoming Members of the devolved Assembly to its deliberations at a forthcoming plenary session.”

44. Mr Mates drew attention to the two most important points of the St Andrew’s Agreement--on the one hand, a commitment to policing and the rule of law, on the other, an acceptance of real and meaningful devolved power-sharing. He referred in particular to the non-participation by Unionists in the work of the Body, saying that the Body had worked in a spirit of inclusiveness since its formation. It was sad that a section of political opinion was not heard at the plenary meetings. Thirteen other members of the Body spoke in the debate which was wound up by Jim O’Keefe, TD. Most welcomed the St Andrew’s Agreement and expressed the hope that the Northern Ireland parties would now work towards the formation of an Executive which would lead to devolved Government and economic regeneration. But Lord Glentoran warned the Body that both Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams had said afterwards that nobody except the two Governments had agreed to anything at St Andrews. Speakers also followed up many of the points made during the earlier panel discussion about the economy of Northern Ireland.
45. During the Monday afternoon session, the Body debated the role of civil society, again with the assistance of three distinguished experts, Ms Patricia McKeown of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Mr Duncan Morrow of the Community Relations Council and Mr Michael Wardlow from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. Ms McKeown spoke of the need for greater equality in society. She said it was outrageous that the difference between what men and women earn is as high as 37%. She drew attention to the disadvantaged, particularly migrant workers and the significant number of people who work below the minimum wage. The current framework for addressing inequalities entitled “A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland” was, in the eyes of the trade union movement, not based on equality and would only deepen disadvantage in society.
46. Mr Duncan Morrow spoke of the damage caused in society by the decades of violence. Although the violence had largely stopped, deep antagonisms still existed. Violence had caused great poverty which in turn bred violence. This could be addressed by political leadership so long as devolved leadership did not result in one community benefiting at the expense of another. Michael Wardlow drew attention to schooling and urged the creation of more integrated schools. He told the Body that integrated schools were no longer “an experiment”, they did have an impact on pupils who attended them and had the potential to create common ground in Northern Ireland. There should be sharing of differences rather than separation on account of differences.
47. A short discussion followed the talks by those who had spoken with real and practical experience of the problems facing civil society.
48. The discussion was followed by an address by Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Mr Hain was guardedly optimistic about the future. He said that there had been a number of very significant developments in the past year; the Independent Monitoring Commission had reported that the IRA had disbanded its engineering capacity, the 2006 marching season had been entirely

peaceful and there had been the historic meeting between Dr Ian Paisley, MP, MLA, and Archbishop Sean Brady, the Catholic Primate of Ireland. Peter Hain said that all these improvements in relationships between communities had meant that the recent meeting in St Andrews had been held in an atmosphere of trust. There was never a better climate in which to do a deal. He went on to explain the twin pillars of the St Andrew's Agreement, namely the acceptance of the rule of law and policing and also a commitment to power sharing. He outlined the things which had to be done to implement the Agreement and accepted that there was much to do before the deadline of 26th March 2007. Mr Hain finished his address with reference to the economy of Northern Ireland, which he said faced enormous challenges and was currently unsustainable. He also pointed out the wasteful nature of the education system because of segregation and separation.

49. At the end of his address, Mr Hain answered a wide range of questions, the majority of which were on devolved government. He also answered about the "disappeared", competitiveness and free travel for older Irish emigrants.
50. The Body was delighted that Mr Hain was able to stay till the evening and attend the dinner at Belfast City Hall.
51. The proceedings on Tuesday morning were attended by only a handful of British MPs because the Labour and Conservative parties had insisted on the return to Westminster of their members for important votes. This situation has led to informal discussions about alternative meeting arrangements for plenaries but no firm proposals have been put forward. But it is a matter which the Steering Committee will bear in mind during 2007.
52. The agenda provided for the presentation of Committee reports by the Chairmen. Only one report was debated, that from Committee D on Life Chances which addressed the problems faced by young people in Northern Ireland. Baroness Blood spoke of the high levels of suicides among the young, Deputy Alan Breckon spoke of the importance of using educational facilities for youth clubs, Mr Elfyn Llwyd, MP, spoke of the drug problem and Senator Terry Leyden said that the report illustrated the vital importance of restoring devolved government to the Province so that the problems referred to could be addressed locally. Despite the low attendance, there was considerable interest in the subject and all those who spoke wanted urgent action on the report's recommendations.
53. The Body amended its rules about the submission of motions otherwise than by the Steering Committee to reduce the notice period from four weeks to two and the required number of signatories from thirty to fifteen, to include Members from three jurisdictions.

The Steering Committee

54. The Members of the Steering Committee during 2006 were Rt Hon Paul Murphy, MP and Mr Pat Carey, TD, Co-Chairmen, and Mr Seamus Kirk, TD, Mr Michael Mates, MP, Lord Dubs, and Mr Seymour Crawford, TD, Vice-Chairmen. Mr Murray Tosh, MSP, represented the Scottish Parliament and Dr Dai Lloyd, AM represented the Welsh Assembly. The Crown Dependencies were represented first

by Hon Tony Brown MHK of the Isle of Man and then by Deputy Alan Breckon of Jersey. Following a decision of the Steering Committee at its meeting in July 2006 to invite Committee Chairs who are not Vice-Chairs to be Members of the Committee, it was joined by Mr Jim O’Keeffe, TD for Committee A and Mr Robert Walter, Committee B.

55. During the year the Committee met twice in London in addition to its meetings before each plenary session.
56. The committee was delighted that its efforts to persuade the Democratic Unionist Party to attend a plenary session, mentioned in last year’s report, were successful. But they are disappointed that the Ulster Unionist Party is still opposed to the Body because it originated in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. The Committee will consider whether a change of name might persuade the UUP to participate in the Body.

Committees

57. The work of the Committees during the year is outlined in Appendix 3.

Staffing

58. Ms Dearbhla Doyle was succeeded as political adviser to the Irish side by Ms Maire Flanagan. Mr Michael Hennessy was replaced as Shadow Clerk to Committee C by Ms Tracey Garratty. The Body wished the departing staff well in their new responsibilities and thanked them for the work they had done.

Prospects for 2007

59. The future development of the Body will depend to a great extent on the implementation of the St Andrew’s Agreement. The St Andrew’s Agreement contains provision for an East-West parliamentary tier, a role which the Body is well-placed to fill. The Secretary of State said in his address to the Belfast plenary ‘I pay tribute to BIIPB...for all the work you have done since 1990. I hope that you will continue to flourish in future and continue to play an ever-more important role, bringing even more politicians from Northern Ireland under your wings. I think that the prospects for that are better than they have ever been’.
60. The Northern Ireland Assembly has been a member of the Body since 2001, although this membership was suspended following the suspension of the Assembly in 2002. The Body looks forward to a restored Assembly taking up the places on the Body to which it has been entitled under the rules since 2001, and to the stimulus which such participation will give to its deliberations.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Members of the Body

Ireland - January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Pat Carey TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Mr John Carty TD
Dr Jerry Cowley TD
Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD
Dr Jimmy Devins TD
Mr John Ellis TD
Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Senator Joe McHugh
Senator Martin Mansergh
Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O’Brien
Ms Liz O’Donnell TD
Senator Mary O’Rourke

ASSOCIATES

Mr Barry Andrews TD
Mr Niall Blaney TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr Paudge Connolly TD
Mr John Curran TD
Senator John Dardis
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Michael Kitt
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Sean O’Fearghail TD
Mr Ned O’Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Mr Trevor Sargent TD
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Mary White

Mr Seamus Pattison
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock TD
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Ireland - December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Pat Carey TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Mr John Carty TD
Dr Jerry Cowley TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Dr Jimmy Devins TD
Mr John Ellis TD

ASSOCIATES

Mr Barry Andrews TD
Mr Niall Blaney TD

Senator Joe McHugh
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr Paudge Connolly TD
Mr John Curran TD
Senator John Dardis
Senator Geraldine Feeney

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Senator Martin Mansergh
Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Ms Liz O'Donnell TD
Senator Mary O'Rourke
Mr Seamus Pattison
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock TD
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

ASSOCIATES

Senator Michael Kitt
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Sean O'Fearghail TD
Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Mr Trevor Sargent TD
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Mary White

United Kingdom – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP

Mr Tony Baldry MP
Baroness Blood MBE
Rt Hon Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH PC
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Baroness Goudie
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Ms Meg Hillier MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Mr Lembit Öpik MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Robert Walter MP

Mr Joe Benton MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Mr Quentin Davies MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoughue
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

United Kingdom – December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Baroness Blood MBE
Rt Hon Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH PC
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Baroness Goudie
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Ms Meg Hillier MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Mr Lembit Öpik MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Mr Quentin Davies MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoughue
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

The Scottish Parliament – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
Ms Helen Eadie MSP
Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ms Helen Eadie MSP
Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP

National Assembly for Wales – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Dr John Marek AM
Mr Mike German OBE AM
Mr John Griffiths AM
Mr David Melding AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Dr Brian Gibbons FRCGP AM
Mr Glyn Davies AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Dai Lloyd, AM
Mr Glyn Davies, AM
Mr Mike German, AM
Mr John Griffiths, AM
Dr John Marek, AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alun Cairns, AM
Mr Jeff Cuthbert, AM
Ms Jocelyn Davies
Ms Jenny Randerson

Mr Glyn Davies had replaced Mr David Melding AM and Mr Jeff Cuthbert, AM and Mr Alan Cairns, AM, had replaced Mr Brian Gibbons, AM and Mr Glyn Davies AM as Associate Members.

Northern Ireland Assembly – membership suspended October 2002

States of Jersey – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Maurice Dubras

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

States of Jersey- December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Guernsey – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

States of Guernsey – December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

Tynwald – January 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Tony Brown, SHK

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Eddie Lowie, MLC

Tynwald – December 2006

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK (Mr Speaker)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Eddie Lowey MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other documents approved by the Body

Thirty-Second Plenary, Killarney, 24 and 25 April 2006

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions :

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That the Body acknowledges that significant progress has been made over the past year including decommissioning of IRA weapons; notes that the two Governments are convinced that the IRA no longer poses a terrorist threat; recognises that ongoing concerns about criminality need to be addressed and urges all communities to support policing structures; calls on loyalist and dissident republican paramilitary groups to cease all paramilitary and criminal activity and decommission their arms, underlines the need to avoid a prolonged political vacuum; welcomes, in this context, the 6 April initiative by the two Governments to set out an agreed strategy for the restoration of the Assembly and devolved Government; recognises that the prospects for a peaceful and prosperous future for Northern Ireland are best served by devolved, power-sharing government as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement; looks forward to the recall

of the Assembly on 15 May; urges the parties to take full advantage of this opportunity to engage in dialogue with a view to an early agreement on the election of a First and Deputy First Minister, formation of an Executive and restoration of the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement; and encourages and fully supports the ongoing work to develop North/South co-operation in the best interests of both parts of the island and East/West relations for the benefit of all the people on these islands.

**INTERIM REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (SOVEREIGN MATTERS) : “
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF BRITISH IDENTITY
CARDS FOR THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA”**

That the Body takes note of the Interim Report of Committee A on “The Implications of the Introduction of British Identity Cards for the for the Common Travel Area” [Doc. No. 119] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments for their observations.

**EUROPEAN FUNDING IN SOCIALLY DEPRIVED AREAS OF
NORTHERN IRELAND**

That the Body takes note of the progress report of Committee B on “European Funding in socially deprived areas in Northern Ireland” [Doc. No. 116] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments and to the devolved administrations for their observations.

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT

That the Body takes note of the Tenth Annual Report of the Body [Doc No 104].

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE SMALL FIRMS
SECTOR**

That the Body takes note of the report of Committee C on “Challenges and Opportunities facing the Small Farm Sector” and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee which should be forwarded to both Governments and devolved administrations for their observations [Doc. No. 117] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments and to the devolved administrations for their observations.

Thirty-Third plenary, Belfast 23 and 24 October 2006

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND POLITICAL PROGRESS

That the Body welcomes the St. Andrews Agreement of 13 October last and commends the two Governments and the political parties on their efforts to restore the political institutions and restore devolution for the people of Northern Ireland; that support for policing and the rule of law should be extended to every part of the community; and that such support includes endorsing the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the criminal justice system, encouraging the community to cooperate with the police in tackling crime; and actively supporting all the policing and criminal justice institutions, including the Policing Board;

notes that the political parties have been asked to consider the Agreement carefully before 10 November; reiterates the importance of this opportunity to establish a devolved powersharing Government for the benefit of the whole community; encourages the parties to work towards accepting the Governments' proposals by the proposed date to allow the Assembly to nominate the First and Deputy First Minister on 24 November to allow for restoration of the institutions on 26 March 2007; welcomes the commitment by the Governments in the Agreement to work with the parties to establish a favourable economic climate for Northern Ireland which is essential for long-term economic stability; welcomes the inclusion in the Agreement of support for a future East-West inter-parliamentary framework as well as provision for a North-South parliamentary forum and looks forward to welcoming Members of the devolved Assembly to its deliberations at a forthcoming plenary session.

LIFE CHANCES

That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee D on Life Chances for Young People from the Economically Deprived Areas of Belfast [Doc 121] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their comments.

SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS

That Rule 16 (Inclusion of Motions in the Programme of Business) be amended to reduce the notice period for motions submitted by Members from four weeks to two and to the number of signatories required from thirty to fifteen, to include signatories from three participating institutions, as set out in Document 120 as amended.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Committee A: Sovereign Matters

Committee A met formally on three occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions and once on a working visit.

In January, the Committee met Andy Burnham, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, in London to discuss the implications for the Common Travel Area of the Identity Cards Bill.

The Committee also met representatives of the DUP to discuss progress on negotiations on the restoration of the Assembly and the Executive.

The Committee's primary interest during 2006 was the completion of their inquiry into Identity Cards. The report was debated and formally adopted at the Killarney plenary in April.

The Committee decided to conduct a new inquiry into barriers to trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and agreed to meet with InterTrade Ireland and the Joint Council of IBEC/CBI in early 2007.

The Committee also decided to look into the implications of the St Andrews Agreement on the future of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body.

The Committee also kept under review progress on matters connected with its report on the mutual recognition of penalty points. The Rapporteurs to the Committee (Lord Dubs and Senator Hayes) requested an update from their respective administrations.

Further meetings are expected to take place in the New Year.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2006

Tuesday 24th January 2006, London: Jim O’Keefe TD (Chairman), Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Rt. Hon Michael Mates MP, Liz O’Donnell TD, Senator Brendan Ryan, and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 24th April 2006, Killarney: Mr Jim O’Keefe TD (Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Mr John Carty TD, Mr Dominic Grieve MP (associate member of Committee A), Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O’Donnell TD, Senator Brendan Ryan and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Tuesday 24th October 2006, Belfast: Mr Jim O’Keefe TD (Chair), Rt. Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow-Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Mr John Carty TD, Mr Dominic Grieve MP (associate member of Committee A), Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O’Donnell TD, Senator Brendan Ryan and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Committee B: European Affairs

Work of the Committee in 2006

The full Committee held two formal meetings in 2006, both held during the Body’s Plenaries; in addition, the Committee held several informal meetings in January during a two-day visit to Belfast as part of its inquiry into *Economic Deprivation in Northern Ireland*.

As reported in 2005, the Committee, at request of the Steering Committee, agreed to undertake the above inquiry and concentrate on European funding programmes - in particular, why it seemed to be the case that people and organisations in unionist areas were less likely to apply for EU funds than those in nationalist areas.

During the visit to Belfast, the Committee met with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) (the Managing Authority for the PEACE Programme and the Managing

Authority and Paying Authority for the Northern Ireland/Ireland INTERREG IIIA Programme), the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland and representatives from the Ligonell Improvement Association, the East Belfast Partnership and the Oasis Centre, groups from both the nationalist and the unionist communities who, under the auspices of PEACE, were carrying out projects of benefit to those communities.

The Committee intends to conclude the inquiry, and its other ongoing inquiry, *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy*, during 2007.

Attendance at formal meetings of Committee B in 2006

Sunday 23 April, Killarney: Mr Robert Walter MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Michael German AM; Miss Julie Kirkbride MP; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francis O'Brien.

Monday 23 October, Belfast: Mr Robert Walter MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Jim Dobbin MP; Mr Damien English TD; Mr John Griffiths AM; Baroness Harris of Richmond; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francis O'Brien; Mr Murray Tosh MSP; Senator Diarmuid Wilson.

Visit to Belfast

The following Members took part in the visit to Belfast on 22-23 January: Mr Damien English TD; Mr Michael German AM; Mr John Griffiths AM; Baroness Harris of Richmond; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Francis O'Brien; Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD.

Committee C: Economic

Committee C met formally three times during the year, twice during plenary sessions, and once on a working visit.

The Committee completed its work on its report on the small farm sector, and undertook two informal visits, to farms on both sides of the Irish border on 3 March 2006 and a farm in Scotland on 20 April 2006. The report was taken note of at the Plenary Session held in Killarney.

In 2006 the Committee agreed to commence an inquiry entitled "Renewable Energy except Nuclear". The Committee visited Fife Energy Park and the Westfield Development area in Scotland in November 2006, and met with representatives from the Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise Fife, Ocean Power Delivery and Fife Energy Ltd. The Committee plans to continue its inquiries in 2007.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2006

25 April, Killarney, Ireland: Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Henry Bellingham MP, Seymour Crawford TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD.

23 October, Belfast, Northern Ireland: Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), John Austin MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Helen Eadie MSP, Lord Gordon of Strathblane (substitute), Cecilia Keaveney TD, John Robertson MP, John Marek AM.

27 November, Fife, Scotland: Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Seymour Crawford TD, Helen Eadie MSP, John Ellis TD, Lord Gordon of Strathblane (substitute).

Committee D: Environment and Social

Committee D met formally as a full Committee on six occasions during the year; twice during plenary sessions, once in Committee working on a report and three times on working visits.

The Committee's interest during 2006 was primarily on completing their inquiry into the life chances for young people from the economically deprived areas of Belfast. The Committee visited Belfast twice in early 2006 and took evidence from community groups and charities as well as local politicians and the government. The report was debated and formally adopted at the Belfast plenary in October. In the autumn of 2006 the Committee began an inquiry into the Irish Community in Britain. This followed on from a debate at the Edinburgh plenary in November 2005 with evidence provided by the Federation of Irish Communities. The Committee visited Irish Community groups in London in November and met with officials from government departments who work on minority ethnic issues. The inquiry will continue in 2007 with a visit to Leeds and Manchester.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2006

Thursday-Friday 12-13 January 2006, Belfast, Northern Ireland: Lord Dubs (Chairman), Johnny Brady TD, Speaker Tony Brown SHK, Jeff Ennis MP, Jim Glennon TD, Senator Terry Leyden, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Arthur Morgan TD, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Thursday- Friday 9-10 March 2006, Belfast, Northern Ireland: Lord Dubs (Chair), Johnny Brady TD, Speaker Tony Brown SHK, Jeff Ennis MP, Senator Terry Leyden, Arthur Morgan TD, Eddie McGrady MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Tuesday 24 April 2006, Killarney, Ireland: Lord Dubs (Chair), Johnny Brady TD, Senator Paul Coughlan, Jeff Ennis MP, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Eddie McGrady MP, Mr Joe Sherlock TD, Iain Smith MSP and Chris Ruane MP.

Wednesday 19 July 2006, London, England: Lord Dubs (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Speaker Tony Brown SHK, Jeff Ennis MP and Joe Sherlock TD.

Monday 23 October 2006, Belfast, Northern Ireland: Lord Dubs (Chair), John Austin MP, Johnny Brady TD, Senator Paul Bradford, Senator Paul Coughlan, Jeff Ennis MP, Lord Glentoran, Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Eddie McGrady MP, Arthur Morgan TD, Iain Smith MSP and Chris Ruane MP.

Monday-Tuesday 20-21 November 2006, London, England: Lord Dubs (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), John Austin MP, Tony Baldry MP, Senator Paul Coughlan, Jeff Ennis MP, Senator Terry Leyden, Arthur Morgan TD, and Chris Ruane MP. Senator Paschal Mooney was co-opted onto the Committee for the Irish Communities inquiry and attended the meeting in London.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Body in 2006

Irish Clerk: Mr Eoin Faherty

British Clerk: Ms Alda Barry

Counsellors/Advisers:
Ms Dearbhla Doyle, Ms Maire Flanagan

British Consultant:
Sir Michael Davies

Clerks , Committee A:
Ms Dearbhla Doyle, Ms Maire Flanagan

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:
Mr Huw Yardley,
Miss Nerys Welfoot

Shadow Clerks, Committee B:
Ms Elaine Hollowed

Clerk, Committee B:
Mr Mike Clark

Clerks, Committee C:
Ms Maire Flanagan

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:
Mr Mike Hennessy

Shadow Clerks, Committee D:
Ms Elaine Hollowed

Clerk, Committee D:
Miss Audrey Nelson

Irish Administrator:
Mrs Veronica Carr,

British Administrator:
Mrs Amanda Healy

Irish Assistants:
Mr David Mulligan, Mr Garrett Barry

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns