

**British-Irish
Parliamentary
Assembly**



**Tionól Parlaiminteach
na Breataine agus
na hÉireann**

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTIVITIES IN 2023

April 2024

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Membership of the Assembly	Page 3
The work of the Assembly in 2023	Page 3
<i>63rd Plenary Conference (Belfast—Good Friday Agreement)</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>64th Plenary Conference (St Helier, Jersey)</i>	<i>Page 7</i>
<i>65th Plenary Conference (Straffan, Co. Kildare)</i>	<i>Page 10</i>
The Steering Committee	Page 11
Prospects for 2024	Page 12
APPENDIX 1: <i>Membership of the Assembly</i>	Page 15
APPENDIX 2: <i>Assembly Resolutions agreed to and Reports adopted</i>	Page 19
APPENDIX 3: <i>Work of Committees</i>	Page 20
APPENDIX 4: <i>Staffing of the Assembly</i>	Page 25

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2023

Introduction

1. This is the twenty-eighth annual report of the Assembly since it was decided at the Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Assembly during the calendar year 2023.

Membership of the Assembly

2. A list of Members and Associate Members at the start and close of 2023 is set out at Appendix 1.

The work of the Assembly in 2023

3. In 2015 it was agreed by the Steering Committee that the Annual Report should no longer contain a précis of the speeches made and questions asked on the grounds that the verbatim record is now available on the website (www.britishirish.org). This, the 28th Report, therefore merely reports details of speakers and any specific or unusual arrangements.

63rd Plenary Conference (Belfast—Good Friday Agreement)

4. The 63rd Plenary Conference of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly was held in March 2023 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which had been concluded on Friday 10 April 1998. The Steering Committee decided that an extraordinary plenary to mark the anniversary should be held in Belfast, as the location which best represented the progress since the conclusion of the Agreement and the challenges which remained.
5. The Steering Committee meeting prior to the plenary was held in the Lantern Room of the Belfast City campus of Ulster University, by kind permission of the incoming University Provost, Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan. The meeting included a discussion with Professor Gormley-Heenan, a Professor of Politics, and her colleagues Professor Duncan Morrow, Professor of Politics and Director of Community Engagement, Professor Siobhan O’Neill of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and Dr Ciara Fitzpatrick of the Ulster University School of Law, on the current potential for co-operation and conflict between jurisdictions and areas where BIPA scrutiny and engagement might assist co-operation.
6. The pre-plenary dinner was held at Belfast Castle. Distinguished guests included Lady Trimble, Professor Seán Farren, Chair of the John and Pat Hume Foundation, Sir John Holmes GCVO KBE CMG, former Principal Private Secretary to UK Prime Ministers

John Major and Tony Blair, Professor Gormley-Heenan and Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Professor of Mental Health Sciences at Ulster University and Northern Ireland Mental Health Champion. Mr Dick Spring, former Tánaiste and a founder member of the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body, gave the address, during which he reflected on the early days of British-Irish interparliamentary cooperation in the Body and the building of trust between representatives which was the foundation of the Northern Ireland peace process in the 1990s.

7. The plenary sitting was held in the chamber of the Northern Ireland Assembly at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, by kind permission of Alex Maskey, Speaker of the Assembly. Mr Maskey opened proceedings by welcoming Assembly members from the Speaker's Chair in the Chamber and reflecting on the significance of progress made under the Agreement, the value of interparliamentary relations and the importance of developing the parliamentary culture at Stormont. The Assembly, he said, was essentially and should be the heartbeat of the politics of Northern Ireland; while lamenting the time lost when institutions were not functioning properly, he looked forward to the challenges of building for the future.
8. The Assembly then welcomed two speakers directly involved in the negotiation of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement: Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach between 1997 and 2005, and Sir John Holmes, Principal Private Secretary to John Major and then Tony Blair between 1995 and 1999.
9. Bertie Ahern praised the contribution of the Assembly, both in its original and current forms, as a forum in which good relationships and mutual understanding had been developed, and saluted current members of the Assembly for their shared determination to make society better. He set out the core principles on which the negotiations had been based and the structure of the discussions on achieving the peace and delivering the political process underpinning it. He was particularly concerned to note the change in context of East-West relations since Brexit, and welcomed the moves to reinvigorate the British-Irish Council: it was time to use the institutions set out in the Agreement to develop relationships and understanding further, particularly in the absence of the regular contacts between ministers and officials in the margins of European Union meetings. He stressed the importance of continuing the work of the Independent Reporting Commission and its recommendations on dealing with continued paramilitary activity. He welcomed the recent conclusion of the Windsor Framework as a fair means of dealing with the legitimate concerns which had been raised about the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, and hoped for swift restoration of the Agreement's political institutions.
10. Sir John Holmes described his role in the negotiations towards the Agreement under two Prime Ministers: he had been asked to stay on in his role by Tony Blair in May 1997 to provide continuity in the British Government's approach. Although the negotiations as described in historical perspective seemed to lead to a simple and inevitable conclusion, in practice they had been anything but, and the Agreement was in many ways 'a miracle': he set out the conjunction of transitory factors which

had aligned to deliver progress. He reflected on the successes of the agreement—seen in the transformation of the lives of most of the people of Northern Ireland, who had been able to get on with their lives without fear—and the work which still remained to be done to deliver on the Agreement’s promise. One lesson of the agreement, highly relevant in the current setting, was that peace and prosperity was best assured when both sovereign governments worked together harmoniously even if their interests did not precisely coincide. In a world where present conflicts were so often left to fester, he reminded the Assembly that success was possible, and always worth investing in, even when prospects of reconciliation looked bleak.

11. Extensive questions to both speakers followed, covering the human dimension of the negotiations, the merits or otherwise of later modifications to the Agreement, the potential consequences of a unitary state on the island of Ireland, the significance of existing Agreement North-South bodies, and the practicalities of cooperation across the island.
12. Vice-Chair Karin Smyth MP then chaired a panel discussion with four of the founding members of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, formed in 1996 to contribute to the political discussions about peace in Northern Ireland. She noted the contribution to that coalition of the late Baroness Blood, a former member of the Assembly.
13. Bronagh Hinds spoke of the skills and values which the Coalition’s members brought to the negotiations and the issues which they were determined to have addressed, such as integrated education, mixed housing, community development and redress for victims. Kate Fearon referred to the fresh approach which the Coalition was able to bring to a process where the policy positions of several of the other participants had calcified. Jane Morrice, a former Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, noted the strong cross-community composition of the Coalition and its value in underpinning the Coalition’s approach. Avila Kilmurray observed that the rapid formation of the Coalition and its sourcing of women to stand as candidates in the first Assembly elections gave the lie to suggestions from established parties that women were not interested in running for office. While she praised the achievements under the Agreement to date, she reminded BIPA of the issues still to be addressed, and the ‘everyday peace indicators’ which required regular monitoring to ensure that political peace was still delivering benefits for the people.
14. Discussion with the panel touched on the principle of consent underpinning the Agreement, the future operation of North-South cooperation bodies, the importance of constructive cooperation between the sovereign Governments, the role of the European Union in delivering and sustaining the Agreement, the need for better mutual understanding of cultures between North and South, the continued influence of sectarianism, the lessons of the Agreement for other conflict zones, the successes of policing reform, and the issues promised for delivery under the Agreement which were yet to be addressed, such as a bill of rights for Northern Ireland.

15. Lively discussion continued over lunch, which was hosted by Mr Speaker in the Assembly dining room. On resumption, the Assembly was addressed by Dr Jonny Byrne of Ulster University, who outlined the achievements in policing in Northern Ireland under the Agreement and indicated the areas where progress was still to be made. This presentation set the scene for a debate on progress in policing under the Agreement, during which Assembly members discussed the policing of minority communities in Northern Ireland, the positive influence which the changes in the North had had on policing in the Republic, how current policing was addressing the concerns of the younger generation, whether the incentives for joining the PSNI were adequate and appropriate, whether restricted funding was affecting the effectiveness of the Service, and how changes in sectarian approaches were presenting challenges for current policing. Dr Byrne responded to the questions raised in the debate with a summary presented from the perspective of his own work in criminology and in policing projects.

16. The plenary session concluded with a debate on a substantive motion moved by Brendan Howlin TD on behalf of the Steering Committee as follows:

That this Assembly acknowledges the contribution made by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement to peace and prosperity on these islands; marks the contribution made by the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly to these developments; acknowledges the continuing need to address the impact of the Troubles; and looks forward to the Assembly's contribution to the future work needed to ensure that the achievements of the Agreement continue to be built upon.

17. Nineteen Members made contributions. Several reflected not only on the addresses made to the Assembly during the plenary but also on the past and potential future contribution of BIPA to improving and sustaining political relationships across the Isles: one Member called for "something more meaningful, deep and effective" in BIPA's future approach. Members addressed the ways in which the work undertaken by BIPA, on matters covered by the Agreement and a host of other matters, could be picked up usefully by their own institutions and used to enrich discussions within legislatures and with executives. There was common agreement that while BIPA had benefited enormously from the opportunity of holding its plenary in the Assembly Chamber, that chamber would be far better used by a restored Northern Ireland Assembly undertaking the legislative and scrutiny work it had been established to do.

64th Plenary Conference (St Helier, Jersey)

18. The sixty-fourth plenary conference of the Assembly was held on the island of Jersey, the second time the Assembly has met in a Crown Dependency following the meeting on the Isle of Man in 2010. Originally proposed by former BIPA Member and erstwhile Chief Minister of Jersey, John Le Fondre, who was present throughout as an observer, the plenary was held in the Radisson Blu hotel on the St Helier waterfront. Dinner on the Sunday evening was hosted by the Bailiff of Jersey and President of the States Assembly, Sir Timothy Le Cocq KC, at L'Horizon Restaurant in St Brelade's Bay, while that on Monday was hosted by the Chief Minister, Deputy Kristina Moore, at the La Mare Wine Estate.
19. Issues with fog at Jersey Airport provided substantial challenges to several Members travelling to the island, and a number were unable to complete their journey. Those who succeeded in arriving at St Helier enjoyed two days of discussion focusing on how many of the common issues shared by all BIPA jurisdictions were being addressed by the Government and States Assembly.
20. The Bailiff gave an address of welcome to the Assembly at the opening of its proceedings, referring to the particular constitutional position of Jersey as a Crown Dependency, and the functioning of the States Assembly and its oversight of the Government of Jersey.
21. His address was followed by an address from the Minister of State at the Irish Department of Finance, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, a former member of the Assembly. She spoke of the value of BIPA as a place to make and build strong political relationships which had continued with her into government. She particularly referred to the work which both sovereign governments had contributed in the successful negotiation of the Windsor Framework and noted the energy and effort of the UK Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Steve Baker, at BIPA and elsewhere in forging stronger relationships. The progress in the relationships across the Isles had been shown in attendance of republican parties at the recent coronation of King Charles III. While the relationships between the two governments were strengthening and deepening, she referred to the significant concerns the Government of Ireland had over the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill under consideration in the House of Lords. Questions to the Minister ranged across the Legacy Bill, cooperation in financial services across jurisdictions, the Windsor Framework and reinvigoration of Good Friday Agreement institutions.
22. The Chief Minister of Jersey, Deputy Kristina Moore, then addressed the Assembly. She spoke of the strong ties between Jersey and the UK and Ireland, shaped by migration from both countries, and the contribution of the Government of Jersey to the work of the British-Irish Council as well as the mutual benefit to BIPA and the States Assembly of the inclusion of the Crown Dependencies in BIPA's membership. The administration that she led was voted into office in July 2022 following an election which saw widespread political change. The issues which her government

was tackling included affordable housing, a cost of living crisis and staff retention in the private and public sectors, common to many other BIPA jurisdictions. Affordable housing and the operation of the rental market were being actively addressed: tax thresholds had been increased and the minimum wage was being increased with the ambition to reach a living wage. The Government was also addressing as a priority challenges in workforce training, the care sector, the environment, sustainability and the public realm. The Chief Minister responded to a range of questions, including on relationships between Jersey and the government at Westminster.

23. The Assembly was then addressed by Deputy Kirsten Morel, Deputy Chief Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, who spoke openly about the demographic challenges facing Jersey and the relationship between economic growth, population growth and profile and continued prosperity on the island. Questions from the floor were wide-ranging, touching on relevant economic development issues across all BIPA jurisdictions and the political culture in Jersey which facilitated open dialogue about such issues.
24. During proceedings the Assembly was informed of the sad news of the death of Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, a former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and a member of the Assembly of long standing. The Co-Chairs resolved to write to Lady Brooke to express the Assembly's sincerest condolences.
25. Following lunch, the Assembly welcomed Steve Baker MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland in the UK Government, who set out a programme of significant engagement between the two sovereign governments in the renewal of relationships after Brexit. He reflected on the benefits of strong British-Irish relationships and the vital nature of the partnership between both governments. He welcomed the establishment of the Windsor Framework and recognized the challenges which it presented for many in the Unionist community as a means of maintaining an infrastructure-free land border. He thanked the Assembly for its support in pressing for early restoration of the Stormont institutions. Questions focused on the progress of the Legacy Bill through the UK Parliament and how the institutions the UK Government intended to be set up to deal with legacy would function; the value of cross-party working and the proper functioning of the Good Friday Agreement institutions; and the differential in economic performance between Northern Ireland and the Republic.
26. The Co-Chairs then provided a brief progress report on matters under consideration in the Steering Committee, drawing on the recent report of Committee A on consolidating the bilateral relationship which had been presented to the Assembly at its 64th plenary in Cavan. The Committee was seeking closer cooperation with the British-Irish Council and with the other international parliamentary assemblies in northern Europe (the Nordic Council, the Baltic Assembly and the Benelux Parliament); it was seeking information from both sovereign governments on the number of bilateral meetings which had been held; it was considering the

realignment of committee remits so as to better support the work of the Assembly; and it was considering introducing greater thematic planning in Assembly plenaries.

27. The day's proceedings concluded with a debate on a substantive motion moved by Senator Emer Currie on behalf of the Steering Committee as follows:

That this Assembly endorses the report of the Committee on Sovereign Matters on *Consolidating the bilateral relationship between Britain and Ireland*; emphasises the importance of the strongest possible relationship between the two Governments in Dublin and in London and the governments across the British Isles; welcomes the positive initial responses to the report from the UK Government and the Government of Ireland; commends the practical proposals made in the report to enhance the relationship; and directs the Steering Committee to develop the Committee's proposals for the Assembly to play a more active role in promoting the relationship.

A wide-ranging debate covered the importance of maintaining and promoting the bilateral relationship and the Good Friday Agreement institutions, in particular the intergovernmental ones. There was very strong endorsement of the conclusions and recommendations of the report and their importance in the future structure of the bilateral relationship. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

28. Assembly members then adjourned for a visit to the States Assembly in St Helier hosted by the Bailiff.
29. The proceedings on Tuesday 16 May opened with a progress report from John Lahart TD on Committee B's activities and a presentation on that Committee's interim report on European defence and security cooperation, which the Assembly noted, Sean Crowe TD then provided a progress report from Committee D before presenting the Committee's report on provision for indigenous minority languages in the BIPA jurisdictions, which the Assembly adopted and ordered to be communicated to the relevant administrations and parliamentary committees. Progress reports were the made by the Chairs of Committees A and C.
30. The Assembly was then addressed by the Jersey Minister for the Environment, Deputy Jonathan Renouf, who gave a presentation of the Government of Jersey's policies on environmental protection and tackling climate change. The Minister took extensive questions from Members on the challenges in his portfolio and the may ways in which they were replicated in other jurisdictions.
31. The plenary concluded with a wide-ranging debate on current political developments, during which twelve Assembly members spoke. There was a general welcome for the constructive tone of the plenary and a recognition of the shared challenges facing all jurisdictions, elaborated in the presentations from Jersey Ministers and from the informal discussions which the Assembly engenders.

65th Plenary Conference (Straffan, Co. Kildare)

32. The sixty-fifth plenary conference was hosted by the Oireachtas at The K Club, Straffan, Co. Kildare from 22 to 24 October 2023. In the unavoidable absence of the British Co-Chair, Karen Bradley MP, the Steering Committee invited Karin Smyth MP to co-chair the plenary.
33. Proceedings were opened on Monday 23 October with an address from Michael McGrath TD, Minister for Finance at the Irish Department of Finance. He gave a wide-ranging speech on the economic outlook for the Irish economy and the prospects for economic cooperation and cross-border trade, referring to the importance of joint initiatives such as the 1993 Downing Street Declaration as the basis for mutual trust and partnership between the sovereign governments. Questions from Assembly members followed.
34. The Assembly was then addressed by the Minister of State for Northern Ireland in the UK Government, Steve Baker MP, who built on his contribution to the Cavan and Jersey plenaries by setting out the recent bilateral contacts between the two governments, particularly in the activities to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. He discussed the intensifying of work on energy cooperation, on the Common Travel Area, on investment in Northern Ireland and on the joint bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028, and took several questions from Members: in the course of one answer he offered a view on the desirability of requiring supermajorities on referendums to decide constitutional issues, both in the context of the UK's departure from the EU and in the context of a possible border poll on the island of Ireland. Assembly members warmly welcomed the Minister's continued commitment to the Assembly, both in his formal engagement with the business of the Plenary and his willingness to engage informally in discussions with Assembly members.
35. Ossian Smyth TD, Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform with special responsibility for Public Procurement and eGovernment; and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for Communications and Circular Economy, then addressed the Assembly on his several responsibilities and the particular environmental and energy issues facing the Government of Ireland: he made the point that the continued lack of an executive in Northern Ireland was hampering attempts to collaborate on all-island approaches to shared challenges. A wide-ranging question and answer session ensued with issues raised by a large number of Assembly members.
36. Pamela Arthurs, Chief Executive of the East Border Region, then made a presentation to the Assembly on the Faster Project, an initiative aimed at facilitating a sustainable transition to electric vehicles in the regions of Ireland. The Assembly welcomed as an observer Councillor Terry Andrews, of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the elected chair of the East Border Region authority. Questions ranged over the practicalities involved in securing Government support for initiatives to support

electric vehicles, and the shared experiences from initiatives in other local authority areas in the Isles.

37. After lunch the British Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Paul Johnston, addressed the Assembly on the subject of current British-Irish diplomatic relations and responded to a number of detailed questions from Assembly members.
38. Noel Cunniffe, CEO, and Niall Goodwin, Head of Policy, Wind Energy Ireland, and Marian Troy, Head of Corporate Affairs, Ireland and Matt Pringle, Head of Public Affairs, Great Britain, SSE, then led a panel discussion on developing wind energy during which they examined the prospects for development of the sector across all BIPA jurisdictions. They took a series of detailed questions on the practicalities of developing grid infrastructure in Great Britain and in Ireland to the capacity required for the future supply of electricity from wind generation, including issues with planning systems in the various jurisdictions.
39. The sitting closed with a debate on recent political developments, during which Members exchanged views on the content of the day's addresses and presentations.
40. Proceedings on the Tuesday morning were opened by Senator Emer Currie, who presented Committee A's report on protecting the Common Travel Area in the post-Brexit era, which the Assembly adopted and ordered to be communicated to the relevant administrations and parliamentary committees. Progress reports were the made by the Chairs of Committees B, C and D.
41. Continuing the theme of the plenary, the Assembly then received presentations on the role of energy agencies from Lisa Vaughan, CEO, Tipperary Energy Agency, and on leveraging community power from Eugene Conlon, Manager, Energy Team and the Market House, Dunleer Sustainable Energy Community, Co. Louth. In questions, Assembly members welcomed the fresh and innovative thinking demonstrated by both organisations for ways to promote community engagement in sustainable energy.

The Steering Committee

42. The Steering Committee met five times during 2023: on the occasion of the three plenary sessions (on 5 March in Belfast, on 14 May in St Helier and on 22 October in Straffan), and in the Oireachtas on 24 April and in the Senedd on 18 September. At each meeting the Committee discussed the strategic development of the Assembly, including the fostering of a more meaningful relationship with the British-Irish Council; the promotion of Assembly activities in BIPA legislatures; the resources available to the Assembly for its work; monitoring of the bilateral relationship between the two sovereign governments; development of relationships with similar international parliamentary assemblies in northern Europe; a more thematic approach to organising plenary programmes, and the potential revision of the current remit of Assembly committees to better reflect the challenges for public policy across BIPA jurisdictions.

Committees

43. The work of the Committees during the year is set out in Appendix 3.

Staffing of the Assembly

44. Details of the staffing of the Assembly in 2023 can be found at Appendix 4.

Prospects for 2024

45. The Irish and British plenary sessions will be held in County Wicklow and Edinburgh respectively (in April and September). It seems likely that these will be the last sessions of the Assembly in its current composition, as general elections in both sovereign jurisdictions are expected by early 2025. Following the restoration of the Stormont institutions, the Assembly is likely to wish to examine the overall functioning of intergovernmental bodies established under and subsequent to the Good Friday Agreement. The theme of the Wicklow plenary will be the promotion of tourism across BIPA jurisdictions, while that of Edinburgh will be security cooperation. The Steering Committee will continue to implement its strategic programme for the development of the Assembly.

APPENDIX 1

Membership of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The UK Parliament—January 2023

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP (Co-Chair)	Kevin Brennan MP
Mark Menzies MP (Vice-Chair)	Paul Bristow MP
Karin Smyth MP (Vice-Chair)	Jackie Doyle-Price MP
Lord Bew	Colum Eastwood MP
Sir Peter Bottomley MP	Chris Elmore MP
Rt Hon Lord Bruce of Bennachie	Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Gregory Campbell MP	Stephen Hammond MP
Alistair Carmichael MP	Baroness Hooper
Rosie Cooper MP	Sarah A Jones MP
Lord Donoughue	Rt Hon Lord Kilclooney
Stephen Doughty MP	Tony Lloyd MP
Lord Dubs	Joy Morrissey MP
Lord Empey	Lord Northbrook
Mark Logan MP	Taiwo Owatemi MP
Conor McGinn MP	Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick
Nigel Mills MP	Gavin Robinson MP
Rt Hon Lord Murphy of Torfaen	Liz Saville Roberts MP
Bridget Phillipson MP	Alexander Stafford MP
Richard Thomson MP	Bob Stewart MP
Martin Vickers MP	Lord Wood of Anfield
Craig Williams	

The UK Parliament—December 2023

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP (Co-Chair)	Kevin Brennan MP
Mark Menzies MP (Vice-Chair)	Paul Bristow MP
Karin Smyth MP (Vice-Chair)	Jackie Doyle-Price MP
Lord Bew	Colum Eastwood MP
Sir Peter Bottomley MP	Chris Elmore MP
Rt Hon Lord Bruce of Bennachie	Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Gregory Campbell MP	Baroness Hooper
Alistair Carmichael MP	Rt Hon Lord Kilclooney
Lord Donoughue	Sir Tony Lloyd MP
Stephen Doughty MP	Joy Morrissey MP
Lord Dubs	Lord Northbrook
Lord Empey	Taiwo Owatemi MP
Lord Godson	Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick
Damian Green MP	Gavin Robinson MP
Stephen Hammond MP	Liz Saville Roberts MP
Sarah A. Jones MP	Alexander Stafford MP
Mark Logan MP	Bob Stewart MP
Rebecca Long-Bailey MP	Lord Wood of Anfield
Conor McGinn MP	
Jerome Mayhew MP	
Nigel Mills MP	
Rt Hon Lord Murphy of Torfaen	
Richard Thomson MP	
Martin Vickers MP	

Lord Wrottesley

Houses of the Oireachtas — January 2023

Brendan Smith TD (Co-Chair)	Michael Collins TD
Alan Farrell TD (Vice-Chair)	Senator Robbie Gallagher
Senator Niall O'Donngaile (Vice-Chair)	
Senator Frances Black	
Senator Victor Boyhan	
Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD	
Sorca Clarke TD	
Senator Lorraine Clifford Lee	
Senator Martin Conway	
Patrick Costello TD	
Seán Crowe TD	
Senator Emer Currie	
Peter Fitzpatrick TD	
Gary Gannon TD	
Brendan Howlin TD	
John Lahart TD	
Mattie McGrath TD	
James O'Connor TD	
Éamon Ó Cuív TD	
Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD	
John Paul Phelan TD	
Neale Richmond TD	
Senator Diarmuid Wilson	

Houses of the Oireachtas — December 2023

Brendan Smith TD (Co-Chair)	Michael Collins TD
Alan Farrell TD (Vice-Chair)	Cormac Devlin TD
Senator Niall O'Donngaile (Vice-Chair)	Mairéad Farrell TD
Senator Frances Black	Senator Robbie Gallagher
Senator Victor Boyhan	Claire Kerrane TD
Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD	Ruairí Ó Murchú TD
Sorca Clarke TD	Darren O'Rourke TD
Senator Lorraine Clifford Lee	Senator Fintan Warfield
Senator Martin Conway	
Patrick Costello TD	
Seán Crowe TD	
Senator Emer Currie	
Peter Fitzpatrick TD	
Gary Gannon TD	
Brendan Howlin TD	
John Lahart TD	
Mattie McGrath TD	
James O'Connor TD	
Éamon Ó Cuív TD	

Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD
John Paul Phelan TD
Neale Richmond TD
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

The Scottish Parliament – January 2023

Annabelle Ewing MSP
Ross Greer MSP
Emma Harper MSP
Pauline McNeill MSP
Tess White MSP

James Dornan MSP
Jamie Halcro Johnson MSP
Paul O’Kane MSP
Elena Whitham MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2023

Annabelle Ewing MSP
Ross Greer MSP
Emma Harper MSP
Pauline McNeill MSP
Tess White MSP

Jackie Dunbar MSP
Jamie Halcro Johnson MSP
Paul O’Kane MSP
Collette Stevenson MSP

Senedd Cymru – January 2023

David Rees MS
Heledd Fychan MS
Darren Millar MS
Sarah Murphy MS

(no associates appointed)

Senedd Cymru – December 2023

David Rees MS
Heledd Fychan MS
Darren Millar MS
Sarah Murphy MS

(no associates appointed)

Northern Ireland Assembly – January 2023

Steve Aiken OBE MLA
Maurice Bradley MLA
Colin McGrath MLA
Kate Nicholl MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

Cathal Boylan MLA
Alan Chambers MLA
Mark H. Durkan MLA
William Humphrey MLA
Éoin Tennyson MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly – December 2023

Steve Aiken OBE MLA
Maurice Bradley MLA

Cathal Boylan MLA
Alan Chambers MLA

Colin McGrath MLA
Kate Nicholl MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

Mark H. Durkan MLA
William Humphrey MLA
Eóin Tennyson MLA

States of Jersey – January 2023

Connétable David Johnson

Deputy Rob Ward

States of Jersey – December 2023

Connétable David Johnson

Deputy Rob Ward

States of Guernsey – January 2023

Deputy Al Brouard

Deputy Chris Blin

States of Guernsey – December 2023

Deputy Al Brouard

Deputy Chris Blin

Tynwald – January 2023

Hon Juan Watterson SHK

John Wannenburg MHK

Tynwald – December 2016

Hon Juan Watterson SHK

John Wannenburg MHK

APPENDIX 2

Resolutions agreed to and Reports adopted by the Assembly

Sixty-third Plenary, Belfast, 5 and 6 March 2023

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

POLICING UNDER THE BELFAST/GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

That the Assembly has considered the progress made in policing under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

THE BELFAST/GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

That this Assembly acknowledges the contribution made by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement to peace and prosperity on these islands; marks the contribution made by the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly to these developments; acknowledges the continuing need to address the impact of the Troubles; and looks forward to the Assembly's contribution to the future work needed to ensure that the achievements of the Agreement continue to be built upon.

Sixty-fourth Plenary, St Helier, Jersey, 14 to 16 May 2023

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

CONSOLIDATING THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UK AND IRELAND

That this Assembly endorses the report of the Committee on Sovereign Matters on Consolidating the bilateral relationship between Britain and Ireland; emphasises the importance of the strongest possible relationship between the two Governments in Dublin and in London and the governments across the British Isles; welcomes the positive initial responses to the report from the UK Government and the Government of Ireland; commends the practical proposals made in the report to enhance the relationship; and directs the Steering Committee to develop the Committee's proposals for the Assembly to play a more active role in promoting the relationship.

UK-EU DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION: INTERIM REPORT

That the Assembly takes note of the report from Committee B (European Affairs) on UK-EU Defence and Security Cooperation: Interim Report.

PROVISION FOR INDIGENOUS MINORITY LANGUAGES IN THE BIPA JURISDICTIONS

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environmental and Social Affairs) on provision for indigenous minority languages in the BIPA jurisdictions, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved and Crown Dependency administrations for their observations and to the relevant committees of each BIPA legislature for their information.

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That this Assembly has considered recent political developments.

Sixty-fifth Plenary, Straffan, Co. Kildare, 22 to 24 October 2023

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That this Assembly has considered recent political developments.

PROTECTING THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA IN THE POST-BREXIT ERA

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee A (Sovereign Matters) on protecting the Common Travel Area in the post-Brexit era, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments for their observations and to the relevant committees of the UK Parliament and the Houses of the Oireachtas for their information.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Annual Report of Committee A (Sovereign Matters)

1. BIPA Committee A met five times during 2023: twice at the Plenaries in Jersey and Kildare, twice during evidence gathering visits to London in January and Derry-Londonderry in June and a further time virtually via MS Teams in November.
2. At its meeting at the Plenary Session held in Jersey on 15 May 2023, Committee A discussed responses to its report on the bilateral relationship received from both sovereign governments, and agreed to seek further information from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Members discussed the evidence received during the Committee's inquiry into the common travel area and the information required to complete the inquiry.
3. At its meeting at the Plenary Session held in Kildare on 22 October 2023, the Committee agreed its report on the 'Protecting the Common Travel Area in the post-Brexit'. As part of its examination of this topic the Committee agreed to seek meetings with the UK's Secretary of State for the Home Office and Ireland's Minister for Justice in early 2024 to discuss the recommendations made in its report.

Attendance at meetings/Fact Finding Mission of Committee A in 2023

London Visit, 23 -24 January 2023:

Senator Emer Currie (*Chair*), Nigel Mills MP (*Vice-Chair*), Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Lord Bew, Senator Niall Ó Donnghaile, Lord Kilclooney, Sorca Clarke TD

Jersey Plenary, 15 May 2023:

Senator Emer Currie (*Chair*), Nigel Mills MP (*Vice-Chair*), Senator Diarmuid Wilson, Eamon O'Cuiv TD

Derry-Londonderry Visit, 19 -20 June 2023:

Senator Emer Currie (*Chair*), Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Lord Bew, Senator Niall Ó Donnghaile, Lord Empey

Kildare Plenary, 22 October 2023

Nigel Mills MP (*Vice-Chair*), Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Lord Bew, John Paul Phelan TD, Senator Diarmuid Wilson, Lord Kilclooney

Virtual meeting, 21 November 2023:

Senator Emer Currie (*Chair*), Nigel Mills MP (*Vice-Chair*), Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Lord Bew, Johnny Guirke TD (*Note: Lord Empey tried to attend the meeting but was unable to connect due to a technical fault.*)

Annual Report of Committee B (European Affairs)

4. The Committee met five times during 2023. Twice at the Plenaries in Jersey (May 2023) and Kildare (October 2023), a further twice on evidence gathering sessions/visits in Brussels (March 2023) and Dublin (July 2023) as well as virtually to agree its interim report on UK-EU Defence and Security Cooperation Post-Brexit (May 2023). There were some membership changes in the first half of 2023.
5. On the Brussels visit in March 2023, the Committee visited the UK Mission to the EU, the European Union and NATO as part of its above inquiry. At the Plenary Session held in Jersey in May 2023, Vice-Chair John Lahart TD stood in as chair of the Committee's meeting given the significant travel disruption affecting members. Here, formal consideration of the interim report took place, following the informal virtual consideration earlier in the month, as well as agreement on future evidence sessions and dates. The report, which was presented to the Jersey plenary, contains several recommendations around three themes – predominantly on the response to conflict in Ukraine but it also touched upon cyber security and intelligence and policing issues. There will be more on the latter two themes in the final report, due in the second half of 2024.
6. At the session in Dublin in July 2023, the Committee took further evidence from relevant stakeholders, including the Irish Garda Commissioner, academics, industry working in critical infrastructure, a think tank, and the Irish Government. At the Kildare plenary, the Committee's meeting was brief, but members agreed to pursue evidence sessions with the UK National Crime Agency and Cyber Security Centre, if possible, although the latter had already declined the Committee's invitation. Members also agreed, following Steering Committee approval, to pursue a visit to Helsinki and Tallinn in early 2024 to meet with the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats and NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, along with any other relevant stakeholders who are available. The Kildare plenary was the last meeting with Irish Clerk Claudia Zelli who was standing down due to promotion within the Oireachtas. The Committee thanked Claudia for her work and welcomed new Irish Clerk, Niamh Murray.

Attendance at Committee B meetings

Attendance has been strong and consistent at all meetings, visits, and online sessions. While not every member has been able to attend every meeting, there has been engagement in 2023 from Darren Millar MS, John Lahart TD, Paul Kehoe TD, Frank Feighan TD, Peter Fitzpatrick TD, Senator Vincent P Martin, Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD, Lord Bruce, Lord Murphy, Mark Menzies MP, Karin Smyth MP, Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Steve Aiken MLA, Colin McGrath MLA and Hon Juan Watterson SHK.

Annual Report of Committee C (Economic Affairs)

1. The Committee met eight times in 2023: once at each plenary in Belfast, Jersey and Kildare; on three evidence gathering visits to Glasgow and Dumfriesshire, Manchester and Immingham, and County Wicklow; and twice virtually, including an evidence gathering meeting with energy market analysts. The Committee membership changed during the year.
2. Over the course of these meetings the Committee gathered evidence in connection with its inquiry into *Energy strategy and consumer energy policy*, which it began in Autumn 2022. The inquiry is examining the ways in which the BIPA governments have supported consumers with rising energy prices, and their longer-term strategies for ensuring energy supply remains secure, sustainable and affordable. In addition to stakeholder meetings the Committee visited community energy projects in Dumfriesshire, decarbonisation projects in the Humber and the pumped hydro power station at Turlough Hill in County Wicklow. In December the Committee agreed that it would aim to present a report to the Spring 2024 Plenary.
3. During these meetings the Committee welcomed new members Rose Conway Walsh TD and Jerome Mayhew MP. Mairéad Farrell TD left the Committee in April, and the Committee took the opportunity during its meeting in Glasgow to thank her for her contributions. The Committee also noted the Brendan Howlin TD's announcement that he would not contest the next Irish election, and thanked him for his hard work as Chair of the Committee.

Attendance at meetings/visit of Committee C in 2023

Virtual meeting, 23 January: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Senator Martin Conway, Mairéad Farrell TD, Stephen Hammond MP, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Pauline McNeill MSP, Sarah Murphy MS, Kate Nicholl MLA, Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

Belfast Plenary, 6-8 March: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Senator Lorraine Clifford-Lee, Senator Martin Conway, Stephen Doughty MP (Vice-Chair), Mairéad Farrell TD, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Mattie McGrath TD, Pauline McNeil MSP

Visit to Glasgow and Dumfriesshire, 20-21 April: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Senator Martin Conway, Mairéad Farrell TD, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Pauline McNeill MSP, Martin Vickers MP

Jersey Plenary, 14-16 May: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Mairéad Farrell TD, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson

Visit to Manchester and Immingham, 29-30 June: Senator Lorraine Clifford Lee, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Kate Nicholl MLA, Martin Vickers MP

Kildare Plenary, 22-24 October: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Senator Martin Conway, Rose Conway Walsh TD, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Sarah Murphy MS, Martin Vickers MP

Visit to Turlough Hill, Co. Wicklow 9-10 November: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Rose Conway-Walsh TD, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Mattie McGrath TD, Martin Vickers MP

Virtual meeting, 12 December: Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Senator Martin Conway, Emma Harper MSP, Brendan Howlin TD (Chair), Connétable David Johnson, Mattie McGrath TD, Pauline McNeill MSP, Kate Nicholl MLA, Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick, Martin Vickers MP

Annual Report of Committee D (Environmental and Social Issues)

7. The Committee met six times during 2023. The Committee met in the course of Plenary meetings in Jersey and Co. Kildare, and held evidence sessions to coincide with the Co. Kildare plenary. The Committee also held evidence sessions in Dublin (29-30 January) and Belfast (7 March). Further, the Committee held online meetings on 23 April and 19 June.
8. At the Committee's meetings in Dublin and Belfast, it heard evidence relating to its inquiry into provision for indigenous and minority languages in the BIPA jurisdictions. It also took the opportunity to undertake site visits to Conradh na Gaeilge in Dublin, and Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, the East Belfast Mission, and the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.
9. The Committee further considered its indigenous and minority language report at its online meeting on 23 April and its meeting at the Plenary Session in Jersey. In Jersey, the Committee also took a site visit to Jersey Museum. The Committee agreed its report into indigenous and minority languages at the Plenary Session. The Committee also thanked outgoing UK Clerk Tristan Stubbs for his work in support of the Committee, and welcomed the newly appointed UK Clerk Jillian Luke. The Committee further welcomed its newly appointed members, Sarah Jones MP and Lord Wrottesley.
10. The Committee considered its future work plans at its online meeting on 19 June. The Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry into rural housing. The Committee subsequently heard evidence on rural housing coinciding with the Plenary Session in Co. Kildare. Further, the Committee agreed to hear further evidence from other BIPA jurisdictions in 2024, beginning with Scotland.

Attendance at meetings/fact finding missions of Committee D in 2023

Dublin, 29-30 January: Seán Crowe TD (Vice Chair), Senator Victor Boyhan, Cathal Boylan MLA, Alan Farrell TD, Heledd Fychan MS, Richard Thomson MP.

Belfast, 7 March: Cathal Boylan MLA, Heledd Fychan MS, James O'Connor TD (temporarily in the Chair in absence of Chair and Vice Chair), Richard Thomson MP (temporarily in the Chair in absence of Chair and Vice Chair), Tess White MSP.

Online meeting, 23 April: Lord Dubs (Chair), Seán Crowe TD (Vice Chair), Maurice Bradley MLA, Alan Farrell TD, Richard Thomson MP, Lord Wrottesley.

Jersey, 14 May: Lord Dubs (Chair, via videoconference), Seán Crowe TD (Vice Chair), Senator Victor Boyhan, Sarah Jones MP, Richard Thomson MP, Tess White MSP, Lord Wrottesley.

Online meeting 19 June: Lord Dubs (Chair), Seán Crowe TD (Vice Chair), Senator Frances Black, Cathal Boylan MLA, Heledd Fychan MS.

Kildare, 22-24 October: Lord Dubs (Chair), Seán Crowe TD (Vice Chair), Senator Victor Boyhan, Cathal Boylan MLA, Alan Farrell TD, Heledd Fychan MS, Sarah Jones MP, Richard Thomson MP, Lord Wrottesley. Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD attended evidence sessions in an observer capacity.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2023

Ireland:

Clerk:

Ms Regina Boyle

Policy Adviser:

Ms Emma McCarron

Clerk, Committee A:

Mr Chris Morash
and Ms Rebecca Coyle

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Ms Claudia Zelli
and Ms Niamh Murray

Clerk, Committee C:

Ms Stephanie Bollard

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Mr Darren Kelly

Irish Secretariat:

Mrs Veronica Carr

United Kingdom:

Clerk:

Mr Martyn Atkins

Political and Strategic Consultant:

Mr Paul Evans CBE

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr Nick Taylor
and Ms Susanna Smith

Clerk, Committee B:

Mr Simon Horswell

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Mr George James

Clerk, Committee D:

Mr Tristan Stubbs
and Ms Jillian Luke

UK Secretariat:

Mrs Amanda Healy

Media Consultants:

Ms Áine McMahon, Press Liaison Officer, Houses of the Oireachtas

Mr Tim West, Committee Press Consultant, House of Commons