



Northern Ireland Assembly

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON A BILL OF RIGHTS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 8 October 2020
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present, Room 29:	Emma Sheerin MLA (Chairperson) Mike Nesbitt MLA (Deputy Chairperson) Kellie Armstrong MLA (deputising for Paula Bradshaw MLA) Michelle McIlveen MLA Christopher Stalford MLA
Present, via StarLeaf:	Mark Durkan MLA John O'Dowd MLA (deputising for Carál Ní Chuilín MLA)
In Attendance:	Caroline Perry (Assembly Clerk) Gareth Cross (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 2.05 p.m.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Briefing by RaISe on the 'Particular Circumstances' of Northern Ireland

Michael Potter, Research Officer from the Assembly's Research and Information Service, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2:06 p.m.

His briefing summarised two aspects of the ‘particular circumstances’ of Northern Ireland: as envisaged by the Belfast Agreement of 1998 and the particularity of Northern Ireland following the UK’s decision to leave the EU.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Michael for his attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

3. Briefing by Professor Tom Hadden on what the Bill of Rights was intended to achieve for Northern Ireland

Professor Tom Hadden, Honorary Professor at the University of Kent, Professor Emeritus at Queen’s University Belfast School of Law and Visiting Scholar at Ulster University’s Transitional Justice Institute, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2:22 p.m.

His briefing covered three points, drawing on his own experience. These were:

- what was intended by the provisions for a Bill of Rights;
- what international experience was to be relevant (rights needed in a divided society); and,
- how to deliver the proposed Bill of Rights?

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Professor Hadden for his evidence.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

4. Chairperson’s Business

Members noted committee room layouts which ensure that social distancing of two metres is maintained. They also indicate the maximum number of people allowed in each room.

John O’Dowd expressed concern that these plans were produced using a risk assessment based on measurement only. Though there is no specific guidance, he said this did not take account of ventilation or the time spent in the room.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 3:00pm.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 September 2020.

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1 October 2020.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from Dr Amanda Cahill-Ripley and the Clerk to the Committee on Procedures.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson referred Members to the draft Forward Work Programme.

Members noted the Forward Work Programme.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 15 October at 2.00p.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.02 p.m.

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights