

11th October

Conference Celebrates Work with Victims

This Friday (12th October) Paul Goggins MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland, will give the keynote speech at a conference celebrating the achievements of a six year long programme working with victims and survivors of the Northern Ireland 'Troubles'.

The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace is holding the conference to celebrate the achievements of its 'Legacy Project' which will come to a close in November. The Conference is both a reflection on the past activities and looking forward to future plans to continue the work.

The Foundation will launch its 'The Legacy: Learning from the Past, Making a Better Future' report which shares the learning from the project which has worked with over 80 victims/survivors of the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' and more than 180 organisations both in the U.K and Europe.

Speaking about the conference, Paul Goggins said: "This is an important day for the Legacy Project and a time to celebrate the invaluable work that has been done with those whose lives have been affected by the Northern Ireland Troubles.

"The work undertaken by the Project team has made a significant impact on the lives of victims and survivors and I believe that as the Project comes to a close we should give our thanks and congratulations to those who have shown that beyond the tragedy, good and great things can be achieved.

"The changes that Northern Ireland has seen in the last few years and the historic events of this May have shown how hope can emerge from even the most bitterly divided past. It is evident that the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace has been a beacon for healing and reconciliation."

A leaflet produced by victims and survivors entitled "Steps Towards Empowerment & Positive Survival – If only someone had told me" will also be launched at the conference. The leaflet aims to help victims of politically motivated violence develop the strength to tackle the issues they are dealing with and to signpost victims to where support should be available.

Speaking about the leaflet, STEPS Chair Evelyn Bitcon, said: "Our Group has come together from many different experiences of conflict. We felt one of our common experiences was 'if only somebody had told us what to expect' and hence the idea for the STEPS leaflet was born. We hope this leaflet will help other survivors in a positive way and also help professionals to see things from our perspective."

Speaking of the project, Legacy Project Manager, Jo Dover, said: "There has been a great deal of learning from the past six years of work that may be of benefit to other organisations and therefore help improve services for future victims and survivors. They showed courage, openness and willingness to engage in activities that would have challenged most people, let alone those whose lives had been touched by violence and trauma. Many participants got involved as volunteers and the Foundation would like to show its appreciation for their time and commitment. "

- Ends -

Photographers and journalists welcome. Further information from Clare White on 01925 581 231, See www.foundation4peace.org

- The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace was set up by Colin and Wendy Parry following the death of their 12-year-old son Tim and 3-year-old Johnathan Ball after the IRA bombed Warrington in 1993. Wilf and Marie, Johnathan's parents fully support the organisation.
- The Peace Centre (Warrington) is a unique LIVING legacy and memorial to Tim and Johnathan. It was built with local, national and international support, and was opened on March 20, 2000 - the 7th anniversary of the bombing. It is a £3m state of the art, fully equipped learning centre where people develop a passion for peace through participating in learning programmes.
- The Foundation works with young people, victims of political violence and former military and paramilitary combatants, including former adversaries.

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