

# Paul Gosling



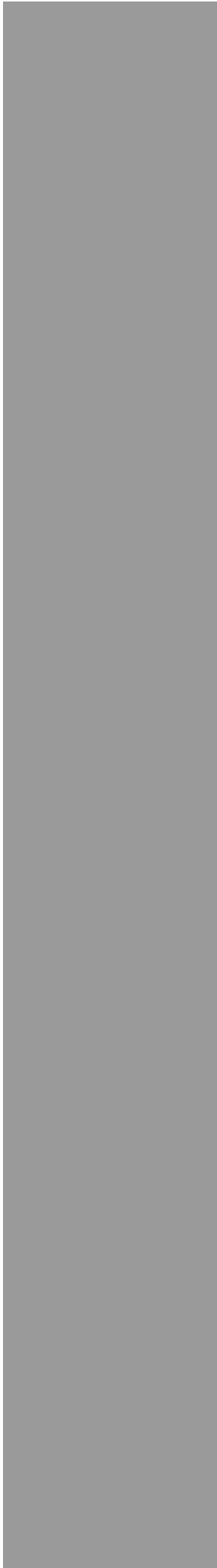
Navigate to...

## **A NEW UNION: A NEW SOCIETY – IRELAND 2050**

POSTED ON **JUNE 28, 2018** · POSTED IN **SELF-PUBLISHED**

---

**A NEW UNION: A NEW SOCIETY**  
IRELAND 2050



## **CONTENTS**

1. AIMS OF REPORT  
3
2. FOREWORD 5
3. UNITY OR THE UNION 7
4. MOVING FORWARD 12
5. HOW IRELAND NEEDS TO CHANGE – VIEWPOINTS 19
6. ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF AN ALL-ISLAND ECONOMY 33
7. THE SOUTHERN PROTESTANT EXPERIENCE  
43
8. UNIONIST CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS 45
9. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM 50
10. COUNTDOWN TO UNITY – DES MURPHY OPINION  
58

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

61

## 12. APPENDICES

64

### 1. *AIMS OF REPORT*

The aim of this discussion document is to renew the civic debate on the future of Northern Ireland and of the whole of Ireland. It is motivated in part by the letter from 105 unionists in the Belfast Telegraph.

**Our primary aim is to outline a form of economy and political settlement which aims to satisfy, at least partially, the aspirations of unionists across this island and provide a way forward in which unionists as well as nationalists/republicans can engage with, support and commit to.**

It has been said that Irish nationalism has failed to gain traction with Protestants and dissenters in the north east corner of the island (the fourth green field) because it sought to impose political authority through coercion without first securing social cohesion.

We are making suggestions for debate as to how this social cohesion can be achieved.

We are motivated by the question: what kind of island do we want our children and grandchildren to inherit in the Ireland of 2050?

People need to reach out and understand other people's point of view; in the absence of dialogue we get misunderstanding, fear and conflict.

We further aim to promulgate the most accommodating ideas we have come across for a long term political solution that will not only command consent of the majority in both parts of our island, but also loyalty to the new union.

It is not just a question of union with GB versus a united Ireland, but a question of shaping also a new Union between the nations who share these islands: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, which respects and builds on civil and economic rights. Martin Luther King's essays were not just about civil rights, but also economic rights – this is what our young students should be

debating, not just flags, parades and languages.

We aim to promote a debate about how we expand our Irish identity to embrace both the two traditional faiths (and those of newer arrivals) and contested land identities. That debate should also consider how Irish civic republicans can articulate a civic nationalism that is free from ethnic sectarian nationalism. There must be space to challenge old assumptions and expectations and so make traditional responses (and perhaps identities) seem anachronistic.

Our hope is this will help to reignite the process of reconciliation which has lacked momentum in recent years since being dropped from the Executive's programme in 2007. Yet this is essential not only if we are to build a new union, but also if we are to have harmony within the houses we live in.

*Authors Pat Mc Art, Paul Gosling; legal contributor Des Murphy SC*

*Research co-ordinator Colm McKenna*

## 2. FOREWORD

*"It is acknowledged all these – and many, many more – made a massive contribution to our shared history; what is rarely mentioned is all were Protestant."*

The contribution of the Protestant community to the island of Ireland has been immense. The first civil rights movement in Ireland was initiated at the First Presbyterian Church, which overlooks the Bogside in Derry/Londonderry as indicated by the plaque on its walls honouring those who suffered.

Without Edward Bunting, much of our music and folklore would have been lost. Wilde, Yeats, Beckett, O'Casey brought our literature to the world. Charles Stewart Parnell, Wolfe Tone, Thomas Davis, John Mitchel were all towering political figures. The Irish language revival owes much to Douglas Hyde.

It has to be acknowledged all the above – and many, many more – made a massive contribution to our shared history. What is rarely mentioned is all were Protestant.

Now we stand at the brink of what are likely to be two the most momentous events in this country since partition almost a century ago – Brexit and the emergence of a Catholic/nationalist majority in Northern Ireland. The implications for the two communities on the island are immense.

It is our firm belief that rather than procrastinate we should begin

discussing our future now. We hope that islanders of all identities might come together to develop a constitution and/or Bill of Rights for the whole island. A new union would be a victory for all the traditions on these islands; it would not be surrender if all of who live here were to engage in designing a peaceful future to hand down as our gift to our children and grandchildren.

Times are much changed. There is much to discuss, and many more changes to be made. While it is recognised that the Catholic church held undue sway in the Republic for many years, that pictured has changed – and was never entirely accurate. Two of the first Irish presidents were Protestants. It also needs to be pointed out that the Protestant gentry in the south did not lose their lands. To this day many of the biggest and most successful farmers in the Republic are Protestant and proud of it, and do not hide their religious beliefs. And, paradoxically, polo, a game with a very British military background, continues to be played in the Phoenix Park in Dublin, but not in Londonderry.

Should the 12<sup>th</sup> of July become an all-Island bank holiday? Could the ‘Londonderry Air/Danny Boy’ become the new national anthem for a New Ireland? How could the Union Jack and the Tricolour be accommodated in a new flag? These are issues for discussion and decision.

While Orange Order parades have been a point of tension in Northern Ireland, they continue in Donegal and other border areas. This inspires the question to what extent unionism can continue outside the borders of the UK and whether the culture of loyalism could be compatible Irish unity.

An Ulster man, Harry Ferguson, probably did more to help farmers than any single individual in history. Arguably the greatest footballer this world has seen, George Best, was born in Belfast. Rory Best, our rugby captain, is as much a hero in the south as he is in the north.

Presbyterians from Ulster played a central role in the settling and creation of the United States. Andrew Jackson, the seventh President and founder of the Democratic Party, was Ulster Scots, whose parents came from County Antrim. Seventeen US presidents have Ulster Scots Presbyterian heritage.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth took it upon herself as monarch to speak in Gaelic when visiting Dublin. Prince Charles sees himself as “defender of faiths”, not a single faith, and has expressed his desire to wander among the hills of Kerry with the same freedom as he enjoys elsewhere. In a new, settled, union he could.

### *3. UNITY OR THE UNION: A DEBATE THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED*

**Brexit and the changing demographics in Northern Ireland have brought centre stage the so called ‘union or unity’**

**debate.** The rapidity with which the issue has come from the back burner to mainstream has caught many by surprise. And whilst it is certain to be a cause of anxiety to unionists it’s a debate, according to leading unionist political pundit, Alex Kane, that cannot be ignored.

Writing in the Belfast News Letter (April 23<sup>rd</sup>) Kane didn’t pull any punches: “My advice to fellow unionists: do not ignore this debate, do not kid yourself this issue is going away. Do not kid yourself that somehow it’ll be ‘alright on the night.’”

Kane has good reason for exhorting unionism to get engaged. They are in a minority in Belfast city council. Four out of the six counties now have nationalist majorities. They are in a minority in the Assembly, and in the last two elections unionists/pro-union candidates were also in the minority.

Referring to the changing demographics, Kane didn’t provide much cheer for the unionist community there either: “The latest figures from Dr. Paul Nolan – a specialist in the field – suggest that Catholics will represent a majority by 2021. I don’t buy the view that all Catholics oppose the union or would, in a border poll, vote against but I do buy into the view that unionists should take nothing for granted anymore.”

The whole issue of ‘unity or the union’ is, of course, nothing new.

Sir Edward Carson, the founder of the northern state – who described himself as ‘a proud Irish man’ – was very much in favour of a united Ireland, albeit under the aegis of the Parliament at Westminster. His belief was that his country was better off in union with Britain than without. Partition in 1921 was not his first choice option.

Fast forward half a century from partition to 1971 and broadcaster and author Don Anderson tells the story of the night when that colossus of modern day Ulster unionism, Rev Ian Paisley, discussed the possibility of Irish unity during a meeting in the Europa Hotel with a group of southern journalists.

The former BBC journalist wrote: “Far into the night Paisley eventually gave Liam Hourican of RTE an interview, in which he asked that, if the Republic ditched the 1937 constitution (meaning the sovereignty claim over Northern Ireland) and changed certain other laws, whether he would consider the prospect of being part of a united Ireland. He (Paisley) replied, to the astonishment of the journalists, that such a situation, would present an ‘entirely different set of circumstances’.”

In fact, Paisley went even further in an interview with the Irish Press newspaper later that same year, when he said if the people

of the south wanted the Protestants of the north to join them they should scrap the 1937 constitution in its entirety, so as to ensure the Catholic church could no longer have undue influence on Irish politics, adding: “If this were done, then the Protestant people would take a different view...”.

The decision of the British people to vote ‘leave’ in the Brexit referendum has, undoubtedly, been a major catalyst in accelerating the debate. Many nationalists were reasonably content with a UK that was part of the EU where, they believed, their identity was protected. That comfort blanket of protected identity won’t exist, many feel, in a UK outside the EU. The Dublin government and various nationalist parties in the north have been quick to give voice to this concern.

But it’s not just nationalists who have an issue with Brexit. Good Friday Agreement negotiator, Jonathan Powell, has said some unionists would prefer to live in a united Ireland rather than leave the EU. In an article in the Belfast Telegraph on April 9<sup>th</sup> this year he stated: “You do hear stories of middle-class unionists in the golf and rugby clubs saying, ‘if we’re going to leave the EU, we might as well stay in as a united Ireland’. Friends of mine tell me they’re hearing this. You’d have never heard that before.”

Mr Powell, former prime minister Tony Blair’s chief of staff, pointed to the fact that the percentage of people in the north who voted ‘remain’ in the Brexit vote was more than the Catholic population, which indicated to him there were some unionists prioritising EU membership.

How all this will pan out is far from conclusive. There hasn’t been a ‘national’ conversation on the issue yet, and it’s unlikely there will be one until Brexit is sorted. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t need for one. The issues at play here are many and varied. For many nationalists in Northern Ireland unity is not an open and shut case. Far from it.

David McWilliams, who has done extensive research on the north, has no doubt that major change is inevitable. Writing in the Irish Times last year he pointed out: “Demographics are leading to a changed north.... Some northern Catholics may want to remain in the union, which ironically could be more attractive if the Catholic population were in the majority, because they’d have the power without having to pay for it. Also many people in the Republic might balk at the unification bill. But the demographic patterns pose the most significant and immediate challenge to unionism, because, within a generation, democratic politics in the north will come down to whether unionism can persuade nationalism to keep Northern Ireland intact.”

*Does it still pay to be a unionist?*



When Northern Ireland was established in 1922, after the partition of the island of Ireland, unionists could point with great confidence to the three rock solid pillars on which their political edifice was built – politics, religion and economics.

In terms of politics they had a solid two thirds majority in every election, in regard to religion the six counties was overwhelmingly Protestant and in terms of economics, in and around Belfast was a powerhouse producing almost 80% of the industrial output of the entire island of Ireland.

The logic of the unionist position in any debate on the issue of whether partition was a good or a bad thing was blindingly obvious – it paid to be a unionist. Big time!

Fast forward to 2017 and McWilliams, writing in the Belfast Telegraph, pointed out that the north has an effective budget deficit of 22% of GDP (15% in 2002) while the RoI's is 1%.

It gets worse. In late December 2017, in an article in the Irish Times, McWilliams delivered a devastating critique of just how poorly the north is doing in real terms: "The Republic's economy is four times larger, generated by a workforce that is only two and a half times bigger. The south's industrial output is today 10 times that of the north. Exports from the Republic are 17 times greater than those from Northern Ireland, and average income per head in the Republic, at €39,873, dwarfs €23,700 across the border."

Those are just some of the startling statistics that reveal a massive reversal of fortunes between the two economies. Another is that while incomes in the north have grown five times in 60 years incomes in the south they have grown by twenty times.

And the bad news doesn't end there. There has been a massive demographic shift in that four of the six counties now have Catholic/nationalist majorities. And those changes are gathering pace in that census figures from 2011 reveal the Catholic birth rate is way higher, while the Protestant death rate is almost double that of the other community. Put simply, there are more Catholics being born, more Protestants dying. It's a double whammy.

With Brexit fast approaching and economic upheaval likely – the riddle of how trade will function with one part of the island inside the EU and the other outside has yet to be solved. It would seem

the time has now arrived when the question can be legitimately asked: Does it still pay to be a unionist?

And a corollary question naturally follows: Would unity now make more economic sense for all citizens on the island?

It would seem the evidence is in the affirmative. In a massively detailed study of the impact of Irish unification published in 2015, a team led by Canadian academic, Professor Kurt Huebner of Vancouver University, came to the conclusion that a combined Irish economy, as opposed to two separate economies, would, in a short number of years, be greater than €35bn a year. It seems somewhat odd that this study, the only one of its kind ever undertaken, has been all but overlooked.

It is also self-evident that in terms of economies of scale, having two separate tax regimes, two legal systems, and two competing economic development agencies, doesn't make sense. Neither does it seem particularly efficient on an island with just over 6.6m people to have two states and three governments – London, Dublin and Belfast – having input into the governance of the people.

Economically, the argument seems well defeated. The Republic has moved massively ahead of the north in terms of foreign direct investment. Since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, US corporations have invested £312bn in ROI, equivalent to 56 years of UK government subvention in Northern Ireland.

London School of Economics professor Dr Christian Kissane, writing in the Irish Times last May, pointed out that the future for the north is likely to change dramatically post-Brexit. English politicians and taxpayers, he suggested, will likely demand cuts in the subvention upon which the Northern Ireland economy has become dependent and balk at picking up the tab previously paid by the EU by way of subsidies and grants.

As far back as 2002 two leading Irish business journalists, Sean MacCarthaigh and Eamon Quinn, writing in the Sunday Business Post, put forward a detailed analysis of some elements of the restructuring needed of the Northern Ireland economy. In their conclusion they observed: "While they appear formidable none of the obstacles to an all-Ireland economy are insurmountable."

Most formidable amongst those obstacles is the economic failure of Northern Ireland which needs to be addressed; any state that, according to the British government figures, still requires a £10bn annual subvention 100 years after its creation cannot be considered a success or sustainable. However, the whole question of the subvention is disputed. In their document, 'Towards a United Ireland', published last year, Sinn Fein decried this figure – they suggest it could be as low as £3bn – and alleged the £10bn figure was purely 'a ploy' by the British government to dampen down debate on a united Ireland – but whatever the truth of the matter, it will have to be addressed. It is worth acknowledging that the turmoil of Brexit followed a referendum campaign in which anger was expressed about the cost of EU membership, which is a net contribution of £8.4bn.[1] If this much confusion and distress can be caused to cut expenditure of £8.4bn, what would taxpayers in England (in particular) say if they could save a supposed £10bn by accepting Northern Ireland leaving the UK? It seems to be unsustainable over the medium and longer term for this level of subvention to continue.

Finally, it has to be acknowledged that Brexit has changed the dynamics of the debate on the future of this island. As News Letter columnist Alex Kane observed earlier this year (on January 5th), some unionists had taken offence at comments by Leo Varadkar in regard to a united Ireland, believing he should have 'kept his nose out of our affairs'. Kane wryly retorted he had no problem with Varadkar's position, pointing out: "...thanks to the Brexit results, 'our' affairs have become their affairs."

*Any proposals to address the concerns fears and aspirations of the people of this island need to be:*

1. *Aspirational on an individual basis.*
2. *Future orientated*
3. *Realistic*
4. **MOVING FORWARD**

**Whether in the foreseeable future Northern Ireland decides to become part of a united Ireland, or whether it continues as part of the UK, there must be a similar path to progress. A Northern Ireland that is a devolved part of the UK must achieve proper, generous reconciliation between different identities. This is equally true – arguably even more so – should Northern Ireland become part of a reunified Ireland.**

The Good Friday Agreement was intended as the basis for

creating a shared society, in which communities became integrated and reconciled. They would move on from the past. There was an expectation that there would be a peace dividend, which would create jobs and higher incomes. The failure of that ambition is illustrated by the gap between the employment rate (the percentage of working age adults in employment) in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, which has actually increased since the Good Friday Agreement. In some respects, Northern Ireland has fallen further behind Great Britain economically in the past 20 years, when the expectation was that the gap would close.

Peter Sheridan of Co-operation Ireland made the interesting proposal that a Department for Reconciliation should have been established by the Executive. Certainly the focus on reconciliation by the Executive was inadequate and arguably abandoned, with a willingness instead to accept what might be regarded as 'separate development'.

In 2010, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published "*From a 'shared future' to 'cohesion, sharing and integration'*". This pointed out the damage caused by replacing the objective of reconciliation with the lesser one of cohesion. Mutual accommodation had become the aim, rather than tackling the roots and continuation of sectarianism. As one of our interviewees, lawyer Philip Gilliland, observed, voluntary segregation is not good enough. As a society, we need to heal. And that healing must encompass the whole of the island.

There is an interesting parallel here. Former deputy first minister Mark Durkan told us that one of the most regrettable reverses in the devolution process in Northern Ireland was the ending of the Civic Forum. It had been seen – particularly by the Women's Coalition – that the strengthening of civic society was an important step towards binding Northern Ireland together, while also creating a broader and more effective system of political accountability, which went beyond party politics.

In the Republic, the role of the Citizens' Assembly was hugely influential in putting forward an amendment to the constitution regarding abortion. A broader civic engagement has proved to be a progressive move in the Republic, and it is to be hugely regretted that Northern Ireland has moved away from this.

Stephen Farry made an important observation in his interview with us, pointing out that it was the slow progress towards full

implementation of the Good Friday Agreement that led to increased electoral support for the more hard line political parties. History cannot be reversed, but the current enforced period of reflection is a good moment to consider whether some elements of the Good Friday Agreement that have been abandoned should be re-evaluated, such as the Civic Forum (or a possible replacement citizens' assembly).

It is to be hugely welcomed that the DUP is itself going through a period of reflection. We have included a summary of points made by former DUP finance minister Mervyn Storey, who expressed a willingness for greater compromise in future government. He was not the only senior DUP member that we spoke with and it is clear that the DUP is very aware that it must be more inclusive in government if the Executive is to resume and work in the future. One of the points made by Mervyn Storey – and from others outside the DUP – was that he was unsure who really made decisions in Sinn Fein and this undermined trust within the Executive.

Part of the purpose of this report was to ask key influencers from different backgrounds what their core values were. The hope is that if we can focus on values, rather the community identities, it might be possible to make progress. It was heartening to have engagement from almost the entire political spectrum.

A number of values were expressed repeatedly. These values were 'reconciliation', 'respect', 'honesty', 'truth', 'rule of law', 'inclusion', 'equality' and 'justice'. Significantly, almost everyone said it was essential that government must be 'future focused' and concentrate on delivering agreed outcomes. It might be hoped that establishing a government around those values might assist with progress and stability.

There were some points of disagreement. Some said that 'trust' was essential, whereas Máirtín Ó Muilleoir suggested that it was possible to have government without mutual trust, providing there was agreement. However, this is presumably the reason why Stephen Farry referred to the Executive as having become a "transactional clearing house", with the key decisions taken outside of the room and just being rubber stamped in the Executive. It is important to stress, though, that Claire Sugden reported that this was not her experience when she was on the Executive in a later period. While Stephen Farry felt the minority parties were not treated with respect on the Executive, Claire Sugden felt that as the sole MLA from outside the two main

parties, that she was well treated and regarded.

A view was also expressed that there were times when the two main parties got on better in private than they did in public. This, it would seem, may have been counter-productive. Both the main parties have had difficulty in bringing their party supporters with them at difficult times. Our society can only make progress if there is genuine reconciliation. For that to happen, there has to be the “brave leadership” that Claire Sugden called for. It requires for the parties to be clear that they are against sectarianism and support social integration, including in schools and housing. We seem to be a long way from achieving that. It also requires the main parties to be unapologetic to their supporters about their commitment to work in partnership and to heal divisions.

Isolation within separate communities is not assisting reconciliation: it is also financially unsustainable. How long will the UK government – and taxpayers (particularly in England) – be willing to finance such a large subvention to Northern Ireland? Much of that subvention is the cost of the social division and service duplication that continues to mark Northern Ireland.

Ironically, while the choice between UK or UI represents the division between the DUP (and TUV and UUP) with Sinn Fein (and the SDLP), the symptoms of that division must be addressed irrespective of whether the north becomes part of an all-island Ireland, or continues to be Northern Ireland. For unionists, the costs of division must be addressed if the UK is to continue to be willing to pick up the bill. For republicans, they must demonstrate their capacity to be effective (and more effective than in the past) in government if they are to be in government in the south and to influence the debate around the reunification of Ireland.

One point made by several interviewees is that Sinn Fein cannot be the successful advocates of a united Ireland. History prevents them winning over many of the people that need to be won over. As Peter Robinson hinted in a recent Queen’s University lecture, the future requires a more reasoned debate over the future of Ireland than was achieved over Brexit. A compromise that keeps everyone happy with relation to the future of Northern Ireland is impossible. But to achieve the ‘settled’ outcome that will lead to an effective all-island state must require a significant number of Protestants, former unionists, to believe it is the best solution. Those people need to be won over by evidence.

## **A New Ireland?**

There was widespread agreement amongst those we interviewed that it would be unacceptable to expect Northern Ireland to join the Republic of Ireland as it stands. While its new social liberalism is widely welcomed across the north, its heavily criticised health system is unpopular in Northern Ireland. The housing crisis in the south is another negative. And while regional policy in the Republic is arguably better than that in the north, it is not effective enough.

“I think it is particularly valuable that the report points out that future arrangements in any new all island Irish State should draw from best practice in either jurisdiction, such as health in the North and economics and education in the Republic,” commented Ray Bassett. “The NHS is needed in a united Ireland,” said Claire Sugden. “We must have an NHS, free at the point of delivery,” echoed Stephen Farry.

Andy Pollak suggested: “The idea of an all-island health service is worth considering seriously. I believe this would be a practical and mutually beneficial ‘pilot’ project to see how wider all-island governance could work in the longer term.”

As one leading political commentator (privately) put it: “If you just called a referendum it would be lost because no one knows at present what they’re voting for: a unitary state, a federal state, a confederal state, the continuation of Stormont subordinate to the Dáil? What would the currency be? What would happen to health care? Would I have to pay €100 to go to A & E? What would the question(s) be in the referendum?”

## **The role of the Irish government**

It is essential that there is a good relationship between the Irish state and the people and institutions of Northern Ireland. That applies irrespective of the constitutional situation of Northern Ireland. Brexit has created unhelpful, negative stresses to those relationships. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar is making efforts to improve relationships with civic society in the north. But as Jane Morrice observed: “We need to improve the outreach from the south to unionists and Protestants in the north. This needs to be taken seriously – very seriously. Tokenism is not enough.” The

election of Ian Marshall to the Senate is excellent and indicative of much more that needs to be done.

It would be helpful if many more people – the unionist population – looked to the Taoiseach as an advocate for their interests. As Máirtín Ó Muilleoir expressed it, “We need more ‘Irish unionists’ – unionists who see themselves as Irish.” In truth, many unionists – as Claire Sugden elegantly explained – are comfortable as being both unionist and Irish, including by supporting the Irish rugby and cricket teams.

But for this progress to happen, change is needed in the south, to embrace not merely all the people of the north, but also to acknowledge the history of people of the north and the positive role of Protestants. “The rest of Ireland does not understand about the role of Presbyterianism, for example its role in creating the United States,” explained Philip Gilliland, who is an historian as well as a lawyer. “This needs to be an all-Ireland conversation. Catholic Ireland needs to be proud of the Ulster Scots’ contribution and welcome them into the family. That would be an historic meeting of minds. How do we get more people in Ireland educated about the Presbyterian role? Paisley was correct: two tribes have to get on. This is a ten year conversation. Protestant Ulster needs to go to Dublin to talk.”

This progress must go beyond government. It should be noted, though, the warm praise from Bishop Ken Good for the generosity from the Department of Foreign Affairs in supporting the Church of Ireland. Jane Morrice made the profound observation that other Irish institutions must begin to see themselves as relevant to the whole of Ireland, including the north, if the people of Northern Ireland are to see the Republic as relevant to them. “The institutions in the Republic need to reflect more of the northern culture, for example, RTE,” she argued, persuasively. “RTE does not have much presence in the north and its broadcasts are not easily accessible in Northern Ireland. This restricts the level of knowledge and understanding in the north of the Republic’s state and government.”

This report has argued that Northern Ireland is better-off as part of a reunified Ireland. But this is not a short-term project. While one recent opinion poll commissioned by the BBC showed significant support for a united Ireland, this is not a consistent result of all polls. And there remains much uncertainty around what people would be voting for. There needs to be an informed, open, debate on the merits of UK or UI. That debate should begin now.



However, an immediate border poll might be to the benefit of those unionists who are strongly opposed to reunification and would like an early referendum that they are more likely to win and which might put the issue into a closed cupboard for several years.

It is instructive that most opinion leaders spoken with said that they did not have a clear picture what a united Ireland would look like. Mark Durkan had both a vision and a route map towards achieving it. His plan includes clarity that Northern Ireland would become part of the existing Republic of Ireland, as a new constitution created too much uncertainty around whether votes within the Republic would find that much change unacceptable. He also believes that there must be bold measures to protect British identities. These include the right to continue to hold a British nationality and identity after reunification. Presumably that right could be passed down the generations.

Part of the useful ongoing debate would focus on whether the Republic should become federated, with the continuation of Stormont – and whether Stormont should be for the existing six counties, or the nine counties of Ulster. If the latter, should there also be assemblies for the other provinces? Would Stormont, and other possible assemblies, have the existing or lesser powers?

There are also issues around community identities that this section of the report has attempted to steer away from. These include flags, emblems, parades, relationships with the British Crown, the role of the President, languages. If these could be discussed as part of an early theoretical debate, rather than later on as part of a real decision-making process, the level of contention and tension might be reduced.

Perhaps the first priority, though, if the Republic is genuinely committed to eventual reunification is the reform of its health service. The cost of reform would be substantial in moving to a free at point of delivery model, but discussions around this change could begin soon. Failure to do so would be regarded by many in the north as an impediment to reunification.

As the main parties ally themselves closely with Christian values, it might be appropriate to quote Bishop Ken Good's comments. "Generosity needs to be shown. As Christians, we need to be proactive with forgiveness. This has been overlooked. Christianity has forgiveness at its heart."

Perhaps the most telling remark made by an interviewee was by DUP MLA Mervyn Storey. Talking in general about Northern Irish society, he said: “There will be change.” He added: “I am against a single Irish jurisdiction – but I would have to accept it if there was a vote and that was the outcome. Unionists must not think that day could not come. There has to be an honest discussion around the benefits or disadvantages of being in the UK or a united Ireland. The reports, along with others, can inform a discussion. There is a lesson from what is happening in the Republic for everyone, including in unionism.”

## 5. HOW IRELAND NEEDS TO CHANGE –

### VIEWPOINTS ON A NEW IRELAND

**We have engaged in detailed conversations with senior political figures and community leaders, regarding both the two reports on the future of the island of Ireland and on what can be learnt from the experience of devolution in Northern Ireland.** Many of the conversations have considered the lack of reconciliation following the Good Friday Agreement.

These are a selection of the comments.

#### **Peter Sheridan, chief executive, Co-operation Ireland**

“The core values for transition out of violence are: peace keeping; peace making, peace building (which is where we are now) and peace sharing (which we have not yet reached).

“We have got through the peace making phase. We reached an agreement on how we are governed. But we have not agreed about how we learn to live together. We remain in a cold war situation. We had 18 peace walls before the Good Friday Agreement, we have 88 now. The institutions of the Good Friday Agreement were only ever supposed to be stepping stones to the next stage. Sectarianism is still there. Politicians are not genuinely committed to the Good Friday Agreement.

“People should ask the political parties what they are going to do. Ask unionists what they will do for nationalist and republicans. Ask republicans what will do to protect PUL communities. Good rights are what you will do to protect others. We have never got to

the stage where we can walk in other people's shoes. But the good news is that everything is shift-able.

“We have to deal with the past. We need to debate the past and deal with it. Universities are a good place for debates. We will never do justice on the scale of the injustice. There should have been a Department for Reconciliation within the Executive. We should have had a future facing government. We don't do enough to tell unionists that we will protect unionist identity. We need to convince a generation of young people.”

### **Philip Gilliland, lawyer and Anglican**

“My values are those of the Taoiseach: socially liberal; fiscally, moderately conservative. I believe people should live according to the values they espouse, without hypocrisy and with tolerance. I believe in inclusion, including all indigenous and non-indigenous communities. In Northern Ireland, that explicitly means educating children together – otherwise people will never escape their ‘mono-ness’.

“Sinn Fein does not articulate what it means by ‘equality’. It can mean nothing more than our tribe must have the same as the other tribe. Equality can mean meritocracy, equality of opportunity – which is what we must strive towards. What does justice mean?

We need truth and honesty about the past. Administratively, justice in respect of Troubles-related crimes is not possible. The forgotten people are the victims. What we need is truth. We need that from government and from republicans and from loyalists.

“We are in a system of voluntary segregation. Better government would help to deal with this and could lead to a process of desegregation. But who can govern us to lead us into desegregation? The only solution that we have not tried is for the Republic to do this.

“The UK government is not interested in direct rule and has no appetite for this. We need to explore another approach that could work and that is a united Ireland. Brexit has changed everything. It has helped Protestants to talk about a united Ireland in ways they never have before. Protestant business leaders are now talking about Brexit changing things. The east around Belfast is much more of a British economy, but the west is much less.

“As a Protestant it makes me wonder what it was about a united Ireland that we are supposed to be afraid of. For unionists a hundred years ago my guess is that their views were informed by three things:

- 1 Why leave the world’s largest trading bloc,
- 2 Home rule would be Rome rule,
- 3 Bigotry.

“The theocracy is now in Northern Ireland, not the Republic of Ireland, which is a socially liberal country. Numbers one and two no longer apply, which only leaves number three and I don’t want to be a bigot.

“The rest of Ireland does not understand about the culture and heritage of Ulster Scots Presbyterianism, for example its role in the creation of the United States. This needs to be an all-Ireland conversation. Catholic Ireland needs to be proud of the Ulster Scots’ contribution and welcome them back into the family. That would be an historic meeting of minds. How do we get more people in Ireland educated about the Presbyterian role? Paisley was correct on one thing: the two tribes have to find a way to get on. This is a ten year conversation. Protestant Ulster needs to go to Dublin to talk.

“I want a unitary Ireland, not a federal Ireland. A federal Ireland would do very little for the North West/Derry, which desperately needs to see the removal of the border. I would be against the continuation of Stormont for this reason, and also because the inherent tribal stalemate means it cannot function in anything other than a populist fashion. It would be different if it was a nine counties Stormont.

“How does it happen? If it’s initiated by Catholic politicians, it can’t happen. It has to come from Protestant NI and from Dublin.”

**Mervyn Storey MLA, former DUP finance minister**

“I want a peaceful, settled, prosperous Northern Ireland. We are not living in the 1960s. There will be change. We need to be future focused. While I’d like past crimes to be dealt with through the courts, there is little chance sadly in many cases of getting justice for most past crimes. We’ve had a conflict management process, rather than a reconciliation process. There is the challenge.

“There was too much focus on the relationship between Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness. We (in the DUP) don’t know who is in charge of Sinn Fein. Too many unionists do not understand the dynamics and difficulties within republicanism. Too many unionist voters do not understand the differences between dissidents and Sinn Fein.

The society I would like is: respect for the rule of law; fairness, for example in employment. There should be responsibility and accountability in government. I want devolution to work. A caring society that supports people in crisis. To move beyond the platitudes of respect. I am anti-abortion and pro-traditional marriage, but I must recognise that others in my community have different views from me in this. Government in future should be outcomes focused.

“I am against a single Irish jurisdiction – but I would have to accept it if there was a vote and that was the outcome. Unionists must not think that day could not come. There has to be an honest discussion around the benefits or disadvantages of being in the UK or a united Ireland. The reports, along with others, can inform a discussion. There is a lesson from what is happening in the Republic for everyone, including in unionism.”

**Claire Sugden MLA, independent unionist and former justice minister**

“The values I want in society are respect, the appreciation that everyone is different and for that difference to be embraced. Difference can be contentious. I want empathy and compromise. You can’t get agreement if you don’t have empathy. It needs to be understood that we are the products of our experiences and of our families. I understand why people did things, even if I don’t agree with what they did. I do have a specific designation as a unionist and I think that is right. We need to de-sensitise the concepts of unionism and nationalism.

“Justice is about upholding the rule of law. Often what people mean by justice is fairness. Truth is also difficult, because it means different things for different people. Social justice is another important concept. The different narratives should be told.

“My unionism is practical. I believe the best place for Northern

Ireland for now is part of the UK. I am not convinced that even after Brexit that the best place for Northern Ireland will be outside the UK. If there were circumstances in which on a practical basis we would be better off in a united Ireland then I would consider that. Unionism is also part of my culture. Northern Ireland is my home and I wouldn't leave. I'm happy to say that I'm Irish, Northern Irish and British. The Good Friday Agreement allows us to say that we are both Irish and British. The Good Friday Agreement is not the end game for those pursuing nationalism. In 1998, Unionism thought that it was the compromise of both ideologies; nationalism saw it as a stepping stone. I am interested in the ideas of a 'new Ireland'; I'm not sure how those proposing it will find a purpose for unionism after unification.

"There was never contention on the [NI] Executive. The relationship was good between me, the DUP and Sinn Fein. Martin McGuinness nominated me as justice minister – he didn't need to do that, he could have just gone along with the nomination. I ensured that statements on justice involved the Executive as a whole, not just myself. The Executive was great. But now the party leaderships need to rein in their parties.

"Paramilitary violence now is more about community control and criminality, rather than politics. After the Good Friday Agreement we didn't effectively address problems, we just threw money at them. We need to be braver in dealing with the problems. Sinn Fein has secured the next generation of voters sorted because of their social policies; the DUP needs to rethink their values in the context of a changing world and changing demographics in order to secure their vote and unionism's vote.

"The NHS is needed in a united Ireland. Sinn Fein needs to go on a journey. What I like about the Republic is that it is structured around issues, like the Department for Children. It is very focused on outcomes. And I like the voluntary coalition structure in the south. The Republic is being brave, for example on abortion and same sex marriage. It is helping Ireland move forward. I crave leadership in Northern Ireland."

**Ray Bassett, former Irish Ambassador to Canada.**

"The report is very timely as the circumstances which led to the division of Ireland have radically changed, particularly in regard to economics and demographics. There has been a curious lack of debate on how the two parts of Ireland should react to the

changed circumstances.

“I think it is particularly valuable that the report points out that future arrangements in any new all island Irish State should draw from best practice in either jurisdiction, such as health in the North and economics and education in the Republic. I hope this report stimulates further serious study and discussion on a subject which was unfortunately taboo in the Republic for far too long.”

**Iain Barr, manager of Waterside Theatre, Derry/Londonderry, community activist, son of senior loyalist Glen Barr**

“I believe everyone should be treated equally and I am dismayed by what I see in Northern Ireland today. For example the abortion debate in the south has thrown up some strange bedfellows here, like the DUP and the Catholic church. I find it amazing that a country such as the Republic of Ireland, which until very recently was basically governed by the Catholic church, is now more liberal than Northern Ireland. We are now being shown as the “backward” part of this island. These groups are opposed to equality, the DUP says it wants Northern Ireland to be the same as the rest of the UK but not when it comes to issues like same sex marriage or abortion.

“My father in the 70s wrote a document for a devolved system of government that got rid of green and orange politics and for sharing power. That remains the blueprint, the correct approach. A lot of politicians should mind their language. Politicians here are not leading. We can’t move forward until we stop looking back.”

**Bishop Ken Good, Church of Ireland, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe**

“Ecclesiastically, the Church of Ireland is an all-Ireland entity: we pray for the Queen on one side of the border, for the President on the other. Some parishioners strongly identify with the UK, others with the Republic of Ireland. In church terms, the border is not paramount: as Christians, our prior loyalty must be to the Kingdom of God.

“The Department of Foreign Affairs funds some Church of Ireland activities in the north. There is a financial generosity in their approach. Some Republic of Ireland government ministers are very generous to the Church of Ireland. In the Republic, our Church is given more weight than our numbers may warrant. People [in ROI] are willing to listen to the Church of Ireland. Leo Varadkar and other ministers met with Protestant Church leaders recently and the Church of Ireland does feel valued. It is not necessarily a bad thing that the state has become more secular.

“My values include a concern that people of different religious and other traditions feel they have a place, that there is room for them, that they are valued, not exploited. Justice. Fairness. Inclusion. Respect.

“The treatment of victims is one of the biggest issues. Brave moves are needed on both sides. Generosity needs to be shown. As Christians, we need to be more proactive with forgiveness. This has been overlooked. Christianity has forgiveness at its heart.”

**Geraldine Conaghan, lawyer, Donegal**

“I see merit in our recognising ourselves as part of the British Isles, but we [could] have a new confederation of the Island of Ireland and Scotland within the EU under a new constitution (scrap the 1937 version), and let England and Wales BREXIT. The discussion has to be put out in the mainstream of ordinary citizens who care about the economy more and our future, but could NI with its top heavy civil service and politicians survive without UK funds? This is where Europe needs to step up and prop up the new Union within their larger Union.”

**Professor Jim Dornan**

“Over the past months I have been very impressed how many people traditionally of a unionist background have come round to believe that a New Union of Ireland is the way forward. All who aren't historically and emotionally committed to a New Union truly need to see what's actually on offer before voting.”

**Brian Feeney, writer and political commentator**



“This paper on Irish unity emphasises engaging Unionists and offering them participation at all levels which must be the only way to proceed. However, the main immediate task is to engage the Irish government and its officials, many of whom are hostile to proposals for unity partly because they are incumbents and naturally resist change, partly because of laziness, partly because of fear of change, because of cost, but mostly for fear of the unknown.

“Finally, nothing can happen until Brexit is resolved. That means 2021 at the earliest. Governments can only manage one item as huge as Brexit at a time without contemplating major constitutional change as well. There will also be an Irish and a British general election, the first in 2019 or earlier, the second in 2022 at the latest. However, that means now is the right time to start planning for the future instead of being surprised by events.”

#### **Billy Patterson, southern Protestant and musician**

“It is not possible that two groups of representatives who dislike one another intensely can be expected to go into business together even though it makes economic sense and both sides will benefit from the merger. They must become friends or at least respect one another before that can happen.

“I like the idea of letting the people on both sides know, if they don't already, of the number of Protestants from the Republic who were patriots, writers, musicians, poets, politicians, sportspeople, etc. and make them aware of little facts which might baffle the people of the Orange persuasion – the Pope sent King Billy a letter of congratulations after the Battle of the Boyne and a Mass of Deliverance was celebrated in Rome for his victory. History is often manipulated to suit the audience, so maybe it's time to tell the full story even though a lot of it is unpalatable.

“Ban religion from politics. Recognise each other's big marching days and support each other as they actually did in the 'old' days – pre 1916. AOH and Orange marches should not be permitted in areas where offence may be caused. Nationalists need to stop flying our tricolour in NI. A new flag is needed for all the people, which pleases the two main protagonists. Perhaps a green and orange flag with a harp on the green and a red hand on

the orange. A new All-Ireland national anthem is recommended. New words even to the existing tune would be good. As it is, the words are archaic and hopefully there are alternatives to canon's roar and rifle's peal in the Ireland of tomorrow. I would see no future in recognising any language except the one spoken by everyone in the country – English. They must stop squabbling about trivia and get down to governing. References to past history should be avoided as they inhibit progress.”

**Andy Pollak, founding director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies**

“I like (former Attorney General) John Rogers' suggestion that the Irish Constitution should be amended to recognise ‘the plural origins of our people’. People in the South are going to have to get used to the idea that in the event of unity constitution, flag and anthem (in order to incorporate ‘Britishness’ into Irish symbols) will all have to change. It won't be easy to persuade them.

“I also like (Senior Counsel) Des Murphy's idea of an independent international mediator (or maybe an international Opsahl-style commission) that could draw up proposals for the future governance of Ireland (within the framework of the Good Friday Agreement) – to be put to people north and south in a referendum. I would regard this as much more sensible than a crude Border Poll, which, in the event of a 50%+1 vote for unity, would lead to renewed mayhem.

“The idea of an all-island health service is also worth considering seriously. I believe this would be a practical and mutually beneficial ‘pilot’ project to see how wider all-island governance could work in the longer term.

“On the wider issue I think it needs to be spelled just what an extraordinarily liberal society the Republic has become in a short time. It is now one of the most liberal countries in Europe: liberal abortion and same sex marriage overwhelmingly passed by referenda; gay, half-Indian Taoiseach; over 17% of the population foreign-born and not a whiff of a right-wing reaction.”

**Jane Morrice, former Women's Coalition MLA and deputy speaker of NI Assembly, former head of the European Commission's Office in Belfast, former NI deputy equality commissioner, initiator of petition for NI to remain part of the**

## EU.

“The values I want in society are honesty, integrity, equality, human rights, inclusion, mutual respect, understanding, tolerance, justice. Those values are European-wide and not linked to being north or south of the border.

“Reconciliation across the island is essential. I was present at the recent all-island forum on Brexit in Dundalk, which Barnier attended, but unionists were poorly represented. Outreach from the south to unionists and Protestants in the north should perhaps be more creative. This needs to be taken seriously – very seriously. Tokenism is not enough. Ian Marshall joining the Senate is good, but we have been here before with northern unionists sitting in the Senate.

“The institutions in the Republic need to reflect more of the northern culture, for example, RTE. RTE does not have much presence in the north and its broadcasts are not easily accessible in Northern Ireland. This restricts the level of knowledge and understanding in the north of the Republic’s state and government.”

### **James Wilson, historian and former British army soldier**

“Since the Good Friday Agreement, the more regional identities such as Northern Irish have become more established – similar devolved regional identities have emerged in Wales and Scotland (the English are always English, even when they mean British). By 2010 the Life and Times survey was rating Northern Irish as high as a third of population. My kids and me have both passports and Norn Irish is how we describe ourselves. My current research reveals a diversity of identity – even amongst passionate loyalists to the Crown.

*“The Citizen’s Assembly/Constitutional Convention convened by Tom Arnold, has proved to be a very tool useful in unpacking sensitive subjects and framing debates such as the Eight Amendment. Given the growing calls in the North for a border poll, would it not be prudent to task such a Citizen’s Assembly to conduct a full open and lucid debate on the National Question, the reunification of Ireland, or indeed any other constitutional options – the best of British / the best of Irish – that can provide an agreed settlement?”*

### **Mark Daly, Irish senator**

“There is a need for action now, policy neglect seldom goes unpunished. The future is a united Ireland as provided for under the Good Friday Agreement, with protection for the culture and identity of unionists and within the European Union. The Good Friday Agreement is, in effect, the path way to the peaceful and prosperous unity of Ireland and her people.”

### **Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, former Sinn Féin finance minister**

“We need to adopt the values appropriate for a wounded society. The priorities should be: build the peace, foster reconciliation. There are lots of divided societies in Europe. But while there are divisions, those are different. No one has a clear answer on how to achieve this. Justice. You can't have reconciliation without justice. Which also means civil rights. You have to look forward, not live in the past. The Stormont House Agreement found a way to deal with justice, while moving forward. There's a balance.

“The aspirations for a united Ireland should be: prosperity; a shared future, which includes prosperity for all; no dysfunction, no peace walls, people should be safe to walk where they want; the normalising of peace; a modern European society. We should be international leaders. Ireland should be global in outlook.

“How to move ahead? We need more ‘Irish unionists’ – unionists who see themselves as Irish. No one has set out the form a united Ireland would take. I don't believe it would be like East Germany joining West Germany, it would be more complex.

“The future depends on the people who are proud of being Irish while being unionists, not those who despise the Irish language and are difficult to deal with. Irish unionism is a good tradition.

“My learnings as mayor of Belfast were that if you meet unionists half way, they will meet you; unionists are ahead of their political leadership; there is a real desire for change I found people more welcoming than might be expected.

“It is possible to do deals without trust. There has to be a trade-off. Reaching out to unionism is an urgent task. We are not doing

enough to build that bridge. There are big challenges for Sinn Féin.

“No one has really imagined the future, for example how the Dáil would work, for example unionists in government. I would find it easier to imagine unionists in a continuing Stormont Assembly. The Good Friday Agreement was only a staging post. I have never thought about the role of the DUP and UUP in the Dáil. The collapse of the Executive is damaging for everyone, especially for the North West, for example regarding Magee. There is a real consequence, for example loss of funding for groups and services. Our vote may go up because of the collapse, but it is damaging to politics.”

**Stephen Farry MLA, deputy leader of the Alliance Party,  
former employment minister**

“I have a liberal perspective, which is a flexible term. I believe in rights, equality, fairness, a rights-based approach, empowerment, democracy, the rule of law. There is some disengagement from the rights agenda, for example equal marriage, LGBT rights, reproductive health care.

“Northern Ireland is still marked by sectarian division. This leads to different people having different life chances and can determine where they can live.

“The Good Friday Agreement was about creating new relationships across the islands, but it was imperfect. It was a means towards a reconciled and peaceful society. There were unresolved issues at the time – decommissioning was too slow, legacy, the rule of law – and these caused difficulties. That led to greater support for parties that took a hard line. There was no shared vision. Support for progress was always limited and qualified. In particular this was because the parties had different constitutional objectives.

“The Executive became a transactional clearing house. Lots of policy was determined outside the Executive. Proposals for health service reform were not discussed inside the Executive. Meetings were often unpleasant. There was little conversation about how do we deal with the big issues. The ‘zero sum game’ led to cronyism and lack of accountability, which in part contributed to the collapse.

“There was a conscious effort to keep constitutional issues out of

the Executive, such as legacy, flags. These issues were discussed in other places. There was never a conversation at the Executive about segregation. It was about doing business as quickly as possible and get out. Meetings might be delayed by 2, 3 or 4 hours and then the meeting last just ten minutes. One meeting that was scheduled for 2.30 actually began at 7.30. The Budget for 2016/17 for £11bn was tabled 30 minutes before the meeting and agreed on the nod.

“Sinn Fein were not very good at government. Lots of things had to be run through the wider party. This was difficult for them as a party of change. There was a lack of generosity by DUP to Sinn Fein and to other parties, especially after 2012. The draft agreement in February seems to show that Sinn Fein does want to be in government. But it does seem as if this is support for continuation of the Executive as a transactional clearing house. The DUP now looks more closely to London.

On the question of reunification, I am open minded. I don't have a fixed mind regarding UK or united Ireland. We must have reconciliation, a liberal society. The Alliance contains some members who are unionists and others who are nationalist.

“Against: subvention is a powerful economic argument. We must have an NHS, free at the point of delivery. Pro: Brexit, especially a hard Brexit; a united Ireland provides a route back into the EU; social policy, RoI is rapidly changing and more attractive than NI. I am reconsidering my position. Any discussion risks polarising society. So we don't want to jump in. The present priority is delivery via a NI Executive. The tipping point would be a hard Brexit and bad economic outcomes would be influential. Northern Ireland is not yet ready for this discussion. Nothing is guaranteed on the future of the subvention, or whether there will be change to the Barnett Formula.

“I have not really thought about what the future would be in a united Ireland. There needs to be respect for British and Irish identities. Not simply assimilation. There needs to be change on both sides.

“If it happened, a lot of people in NI would be very unhappy. It might involve a constitutional settlement with unionist representatives and protection of the unionist population and their rights. There might be an consociational structure in UI, as in Belgium, where things are done in accordance with a

convention. Northern Ireland does it constitutionally.”

**Mark Durkan, former SDLP MP, leader and finance minister**

“The Good Friday Agreement provides for two choices on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland – United Kingdom or a united Ireland. Unionist and nationalist aspirations are equally legitimate, therefore the threshold for majority consent in a referendum for either option must be equal. True parity of esteem cannot require a larger majority for one consent-based option rather than the other.

“Neither Unionists nor Nationalists would be working for just a 50% plus one outcome. Each would hope for bigger margins! But in the event of a narrow margin either way, the result has to be respected.

“The SDLP set out in papers (in 2003 and 2005) that the Good Friday Agreement must be seen to endure beyond any referendum result. In the event of a vote to change the north’s constitutional status, the principles, promises and precepts of the Agreement should still hold as mandated in 1998. The Agreement provides for ‘review’ arrangements. Such review mechanisms would be the channels for adjustments to be made in institutional structures to be compatible with change in constitutional status and to remain compatible with the Agreement.

“We set this out to allay any apprehension that having a referendum or its possible outcome would forfeit the unique standing of the Agreement. We also did it to show that it was not just Unionists who were challenged by the Agreement to recondition their assumptions. This was a way of showing that Nationalists had to look at a united Ireland under the light of the Agreement. This means allowing for a continuing Strand One and embedding Strand Three’s East-West structures for the future (using reviews to enhance these).

“There could not be a purely internal settlement in the north or inside the UK. But we can also accept that, even in a united Ireland, there would not be a purely internal settlement on this island. To take account of Unionists’ identity and ongoing affinity we have to think about more than just British passports for those who want them. As we have sought a direct northern voice in a reformed Seanad, then the “do unto others...” rule should apply in a united Ireland. This would not mean all institutions staying static

in a united Ireland as a new dynamic would be created by the scale of northern representation in an all-Ireland parliament as compared with Westminster. That would include a substantive unionist presence.

“Recalibrating the devolution envelope and regearing for all-island administration and legislation can be achieved by agreement using the modalities of the Agreement, building confidence and furthering reconciliation on the island and between these islands.

“This sort of understanding avoids the false precondition of having to secure Unionist agreement to a united Ireland before a referendum. It also avoids the false promise of having a referendum which, if passed, only invites negotiations which could be frustrated. The Brexit negotiation debacle is a warning that those who value the unity by consent precept of the Agreement need to have a sat-nav for how a positive result is advanced consistent with the Agreement.”

#### 6. *ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF AN ALL-ISLAND ECONOMY 2018*

*Financial journalist Paul Gosling’s 43 page report “The Economic Effects of an All-Island Economy 2018 “ (published in April 2018) considered the potential economic impact of Irish reunification, with particular consideration given to the likely effects of Brexit. The potential impact of Brexit could be devastating to the Northern Ireland economy and serious consideration needs to be given to what political strategies could mitigate the damage. North-south economic integration would generate substantial benefits for all of the island. This report concludes that there is a significant positive potential economic benefit from Irish reunification, particularly for the citizens of Northern Ireland. It is recommended that preparations begin now in accordance with Article 3 of the Irish constitution, as amended following the Good Friday Agreement. Progress towards achieving an all island economy should be reviewed annually by the Oireachtas. This report included a ten point plan for how Irish reunification might be achieved.*

*“The Republic of Ireland sits atop the European growth charts, while Northern Ireland is closer to the bottom.” EY’s Economic Eye, Winter 2017*

#### Ten Point Plan

1. The UK government agrees to continue its subvention to



Northern Ireland (currently operating through the Barnett formula) but on an annually tapering basis, with the UK subvention removed entirely within a negotiated period beyond reunification. UK support might be needed until 2050, supporting pension liabilities for civil servants, etc, under an arrangement similar to that with EU withdrawal. Over the long term this would produce a significant fiscal gain for the UK, which is likely to be welcomed by taxpayers in GB. For Northern Ireland, the subsidy would be replaced by higher tax revenues as Northern Ireland benefits from the economic impact of reunification and the Republic's economic policies. Sovereignty might also transfer on a gradual basis. Stormont might continue to operate as a devolved assembly, but of Ireland rather than of the UK. There could also be a graduated move towards a truly all-island economy, with both sterling and the euro accepted by businesses during the transition process. Substantial efforts must be made to accommodate the fears and concerns of those who have a British or Ulster Scots identity throughout the island of Ireland in order that a successful unified economy is achieved.

2. Increased spending on capital projects is required to bring infrastructure up to modern European standards. The infrastructure deficit that was carried forward from the period of direct rule needs to be addressed, which means that the UK government has an obligation to help meet the cost of correcting the infrastructure deficit. A UK government investment of £10bn would assist significantly with this, towards the cost of roads, health reform, education facilities and water and sewage systems. A bridge or tunnel connection with Scotland could provide reassurance to unionists that economic, social and political connections with Great Britain could actually be strengthened through new arrangements.
3. A reduction in the number of public sector workers in Northern Ireland to the same level as the Republic would assist in making Northern Ireland financially self-sufficient. This would take place on a gradual basis to reduce the impact on individuals and on the wider economy. Ideally the impact would be spread over several years, achieved as much as possible by natural wastage. All redundancy, pension and restructuring costs would be paid for by UK. This restructuring would assist in boosting Northern Ireland productivity.
4. The European Union would be asked to assist in the reunification of Ireland, which would address the problems caused by the Irish border post-Brexit. A new 32 county

administration should be empowered to borrow cheaply to invest in the economy and all-island infrastructure. The European Investment Bank would play a key role in this.

5. A political agreement on a new all island basis, inside the EU, would attract increased EU funding through Interreg, including financial assistance in restructuring Northern Ireland's infrastructure to improve its competitive position and integrated all-island economy.
6. IDA Ireland would promote all of the island on the world stage. This would produce benefits for all. Given its track record in attracting FDI worldwide it should prove to be a major player in turning the Northern Ireland economy into a world class competitor with the added benefit for the Republic that the two agencies would no longer be in competition but would be working together to produce economic growth.
7. Improved direct links between education and industry in Northern Ireland as per the Republic would lead to a more competitive market-oriented economy, over time producing improvements in living and working environments. While Northern Ireland needs to learn from the Republic with regards to elements of its education and skills system, the Republic needs to learn from Northern Ireland in terms of the cost and efficiency of its health system. Neither system is adequate at present. The Bengoa reforms need to be implemented in Northern Ireland as at present it has too many general hospitals, without sufficient specialist expertise.
8. A harmonised corporation tax would make all the island more attractive to foreign direct investment and lead to domestic companies throughout the island being more competitive, thus leading to economic growth for all.
9. As part of the post-Brexit response from the European Union, a special case should be presented to the European Union for assistance with the cost and social pressures involved with Irish reunification. This might be structured in ways that learn from the Marshall Plan and the experience of German reunification.

10. A single and integrated Ireland would create economies of scale and a more competitive economy. A single Ireland would be a world leader in the fields of research and development (eg Trinity College, UCD and Queen's, all in the same country), higher education, pharmaceuticals and new technologies.

Mike Nesbitt, quoted in the Brisbane Times[2]

#### Summary of economic report

1. Since partition, the economic strength of the north and the south have gone into reverse. In 1920, 80% of Irish industrial output was in and around Belfast, with Belfast the largest city in the island of Ireland. The economy of the Republic is now four times larger than that of Northern Ireland, with industrial output ten times larger than that of Northern Ireland.
2. Average full time income per head in the Republic in 2016 was £40,403, compared to £25,999 in Northern Ireland. In other words, a worker in the Republic is typically paid half as much again as someone working in Northern Ireland.
3. The cost of living in the Republic is much higher than in Northern Ireland, mitigating the benefits of higher pay. Housing availability and costs, in particular, would have to be addressed by a new state formed through reunification. Regional policy would also need to be re-assessed by the new state.
4. Since the Good Friday Agreement, increased investment has flowed to the Republic, rather than to Northern Ireland. Some £312bn of US investment has gone into the Republic since the GFA.
5. GVA – gross value added – per capita in the Republic in 2014 was €38,100, compared to €22,000 in Northern Ireland, just 57% of that in the south.
6. The Republic is much more globally and export focused than is Northern Ireland. As of 2015, exports accounted for 39.5% of Irish economic output, twice the level of Northern Ireland.
7. The Republic is Northern Ireland's main export market, accounting for 31% of international exports – a market likely to contract significantly following Brexit.
8. Northern Ireland sells more goods and services to GB than to ROI. However, much of that trade is dependent upon all-island supply chains that could be disrupted by Brexit. More NI businesses trade with the Republic than with GB. An effective strategy for either retaining or replacing the trading relationships with GB would be needed as part of

reunification. Reunification is likely to greatly increase trade between the north and the south.

9. The Republic has a fundamentally stronger economy than has NI and the economic performance gap between the Republic and Northern Ireland is widening. According to the latest Economic Eye study from accountancy firm EY, economic growth last year in the Republic was 4.9% and in Northern Ireland it was 1.4%.
10. The Republic is expected to increase its employment level, while Northern Ireland is predicted to lose jobs. EY predicts that the Republic will generate an additional 91,000 jobs by 2020 compared to 2016, whereas Northern Ireland will lose 3,500 jobs.
11. The Central Bank of Ireland's latest economic bulletin predicts strong continued growth in the Republic, with pay expected to grow 3.3% in 2018 and 3.3% in 2019, with the Irish economy growing 4.8% in 2018 and 4.2% in 2019, despite the moderating influence of Brexit. Unemployment is predicted to fall, with an additional 99,000 persons forecast to be in work by the end of 2019.
12. Northern Ireland suffered significantly as the UK moved its focus from manufacturing to being a service economy. Devolution arrangements since partition have been insufficient for Northern Ireland to create its own economic policies that are truly independent of London's and have been insufficient for the north to generate the level of jobs growth required. That policy weakness was exacerbated by the Troubles, which discouraged foreign direct investment. Devolution has failed to deliver for Northern Ireland in terms of the economy: the gap between Northern Ireland's and the UK's employment rate has actually increased since the Good Friday Agreement.
13. Northern Ireland compensated for the loss of manufacturing and private sector investment by relying on the public sector for employment, with a big growth in public sector employment between the mid 1960s to the late 1980s.
14. The Republic generated substantial economic growth through its use of a low corporation tax base, a strongly skilled labour market and business friendly policy, attracting large levels of foreign direct investment. Northern Ireland was unable to compete, generating investment instead in low cost support services, while profit centres went to the lower tax jurisdiction of the Republic.
15. The Republic has benefited from a very effective IDA Ireland, which has been more successful than Invest NI in attracting foreign direct investment, with the assistance of a more helpful business operating environment in the Republic.
16. The Republic has been clever in its targeting of growth sectors, particularly those that prosper in a globalised

economy. RoI has an open economy, from which it is easy to trade internationally. Dublin's International Financial Services Centre has been a major success.

17. The Republic continues to benefit from membership of the European Union, with investors from countries outside the EU using Ireland as a bridgehead into the EU. Ireland is currently benefiting from some Brexit relocations from London. Germany is the second highest source of inward investment into RoI, after the US.
18. There is a greater focus on skills and qualifications in the Republic than in Northern Ireland. While 45% of young people in the Republic complete their education with a degree or higher, this is true of only about 31% in Northern Ireland. More than a third of Northern Ireland school leavers who go on to university do so in Great Britain, most of whom do not return to work in Northern Ireland. While 26% of Northern Ireland's adult working age population are graduates, the figure is over 35% in Dublin and Cork. Both the Republic and Northern Ireland suffer from a problem of too many adults lacking basic skills.
19. Ireland's health system is widely criticised as inefficient and costly. If Irish reunification takes place, any merged health care system should be based on a reformed NHS. A united island would have to take the best from each jurisdiction, not simply add Northern Ireland onto the Republic.
20. There are around 403,000 public servants in the Republic of Ireland, 8.4% of the population. There are around 205,700 public servants in Northern Ireland, 11.4% of the population. This is also much higher than the UK average, where the figure is 8%. More than 50,000 jobs would go if the public sector in the north were proportionate in size to the Republic and GB. This could save more than £1.7bn a year in pay costs and national insurance contributions. But any such process should be achieved as far as possible by natural wastage to limit redundancies and the negative impact on individuals and the 'multiplier' impacts on the wider economy.
21. The possible retention of Stormont as a devolved assembly might limit to a small extent the level of job cuts.
22. Experience in Great Britain suggests that the economy can generate more private sector jobs than are lost in the public sector, but that many of the new jobs are less well paid and insecure.
23. Northern Ireland is less economically productive than is the Republic. PwC calculates that the Republic is 60% more productive than the north and that the UK is 15% more productive than Northern Ireland. A review by Ulster University concluded that Great Britain is 25% more productive than Northern Ireland. The productivity gap between GB and Northern Ireland is widening.

24. Factors causing weak Northern Ireland productivity include lack of private and public sector investment, an inadequate skills base, lack of R&D and innovation, a weak culture of entrepreneurship and an insufficiently competitive economy. The small size of Northern Ireland may influence these factors, for example by reducing the level of internal market competition.
25. Poor infrastructure is a key factor in the productivity weakness. Symptoms include long commuting times, delays in taking goods to market and slow broadband speeds in rural areas.
26. The CBI and Ibec have called for substantial infrastructure investment to support the all-island economy. Northern Ireland's weak infrastructure is, in part, the result of inadequate investment during direct rule years: it can therefore be argued that the UK government should contribute to addressing this deficit.
27. Northern Ireland's Investment Strategy plans for a capital spend on infrastructure projects of £8.2bn for the five year period 2015/16 to 2020/21, including road projects (including Belfast to Derry, Derry to Dublin, Belfast's York Street interchange, Belfast to Larne and Greenisland); healthcare, schools; water and waste water; and housing. This investment is insufficient to address Northern Ireland's existing infrastructure deficit.
28. Brexit will severely damage Northern Ireland's economy, whatever type of trading relationships replace membership of the European Union.
29. Leaked analysis conducted by officials in the Treasury concludes that Northern Ireland will be one of the UK regions most negatively affected by Brexit. According to reports, it concluded that without a deal with the EU, Northern Ireland's economy will be 12% smaller than it would otherwise be; with a hard Brexit deal, the negative impact will be 8%; and with a soft Brexit deal it will be 2.5%. This economic damage would be either eliminated or mitigated by Irish reunification and the retained membership of the European Union.
30. A European Parliament report predicts a likely 3% reduction in Northern Ireland's GDP through withdrawal.
31. The economic cost to Northern Ireland of Brexit is likely to be severe. A 2.5% underperformance by the economy would equate to a loss of around £930m a year in potential economic activity compared to a non-Brexit scenario; a 3% underperformance in the economy would be an annual £1.1bn loss of potential activity; an 8% hit would cost the economy £3bn; and a 12% hit would make the economy £4.5bn smaller than it would otherwise be. That is equivalent to £2,500 per person.
32. If the jobs impact was pro rata to the loss in potential

economic activity, then we would have 67,000 fewer jobs in Northern Ireland under the 8% assumption and more than 100,000 fewer jobs under the 12% scenario.

33. Northern Ireland's agri-food sector is particularly at risk from Brexit. There are more than 29,000 farmers in Northern Ireland, with 87% of Northern Ireland's total farming incomes coming from the EU's Single Farm Payment. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments are crucial for Northern Ireland's farmers, who receive 9% of the UK's total allocation of EU pillar payments.
34. Brexit provides a further threat to the agri-food sector in depriving it of access to an EU-wide labour market, on which many producers are dependent.
35. There has been a significant increase in cross-border commercial operations in recent years, as agricultural and food producing organisations achieve economies of scale through cross-border mergers. Dairy production, in part as a result of this, can cross the border repeatedly during the production process. It is as yet unclear how these activities, and these business structures, will be affected by Brexit and a UK/EU border.
36. The most comprehensive analysis of the potential economic benefits of Irish reunification was led by Karl Huebner. It concluded that using its assumptions (which predate the Brexit vote), unification could benefit people across the island of Ireland by €1,497 per year in the year of implementation, rising to €2,810 per person per year within seven years of implementation. Most of the financial benefits would be felt in the north.
37. There are different ways to calculate the level of subsidy Northern Ireland receives from the UK government. In 2013-14, total government revenues in Northern Ireland amounted to £14.9bn, with expenditure of £24.1bn. Some £4bn of this was on 'non-identifiable' items – Northern Ireland's share of general UK government expenditure. Many of the non-identifiable items – such as international relations – would not continue as costs to Northern Ireland after reunification. If these costs are ignored the deficit of revenue against expenditure for Northern Ireland is reportedly £5.2bn. A range of figures have been suggested for the size of the subvention to NI. It would be useful for there to be more work undertaken to provide a less contested figure. But it seems unlikely that any UK subvention in the range of £3bn to £11bn (the range of estimates) can continue indefinitely and despite recent years of austerity in GB – even if Northern Ireland continues as part of the UK.
38. A major restructuring of Northern Ireland in terms of its fiscal position within the UK seems likely, or is arguably inevitable. The removal of Northern Ireland as a cost to the UK would be

welcomed by large numbers of taxpayers in GB, particularly in England. It seems very likely that whatever happens politically that there must be substantial reform in the coming years to the Northern Ireland economy and structure of public service delivery. While London generates an annual fiscal surplus of £3,070 per person, Northern Ireland is the cause of the largest fiscal deficit, at £14,020 per person.

39. If the UK government agreed to gradually taper its subsidy of Northern Ireland, it is reasonable to believe that the adoption of the Republic's economic policies could increase tax revenues substantially, reducing the continued level of subvention for the north. The objective would be for the north to become economically self-sufficient, not dependent on fiscal transfers from either the south or GB.
40. A Ten Point Plan for how to achieve Irish reunification is included in the report.



## Conclusion of the Economic Effects of an All Island Economy 2018

If Irish reunification is to be achieved, it has to be achieved by consensus. That means that the unionist population needs to be accommodated and confident that reunification is in their collective best interests.

At the heart of this would be the recognition that a genuine all-island economy would produce significant economic benefits for Northern Ireland, with more jobs and higher incomes generated.

Social and political concerns would need to be addressed and satisfied. Unionists would need to be convinced that their chosen identity would be respected and their relationships with Britain would be protected.

There also needs to be significant preparation, not least to achieve the economic stability during the transition and to maximise the subsequent economic benefits.

These preparations should begin now in accordance with Article 3 of the Irish constitution, as amended following the Good Friday Agreement.[3] Progress towards achieving an all-island economy should be reviewed annually by the Oireachtas. Given the pressing need for the reform of the health systems in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, a separate study should be commissioned by the Oireachtas on how an all-island health system could be organised on the basis of an NHS-type arrangement.

*Many of the replies to the report highlighted that for unionists it was not merely their economic welfare they were concerned with, but also their constitutional position and protection of their cultural identity. As a result of this we have undertaken research into unionist fears concerns and aspirations and the result of our research is contained in the following chapter.*

The full report is available online at  
<http://www.paulgosling.net/2018/04/2915/>

## 7. THE SOUTHERN PROTESTANT EXPERIENCE

*“Irish Catholicism is itself becoming more Protestant”*

Marlene Jefferson was a well-respected and well liked unionist deputy mayor of Derry/Londonderry in 1993. She was invited to give her views to the Opshal commission which had been established to look at ways to move things forward in Northern Ireland. Nothing was off the table, including looking at possible unity. Councillor Jefferson said she would have personal concerns about this, not least the fact that as a member of the Church of Ireland, she had seen the dramatic decline in membership in her church in the Republic.

Heather K. Crawford, author of ‘Southern Irish Protestants and Irishness’, addressed this point in 2010 when she wrote: “The downward trend lasted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was arrested, Protestants were 3.8% and Catholics 87% of the population, i.e. Church of Ireland went up from 115,611 in 2002 to 125,585 in 2006. Other denominations also increased.”

In 2013 Justine McCarthy, writing in the Sunday Times, confirmed that the Republic’s 2011 census recorded a 6.4% increase in the Church of Ireland population between 2006 and 2011.

How much things have changed can be gauged by comments by well known journalist, Andy Pollak, the former Irish Times religious affairs correspondent, who spent a long time working in Belfast. He stated: “I believe in 2015 the Republic of Ireland is a good place for Protestants. In the words of former Labour Party leader, Ruairi Quinn, Ireland is now a post-Catholic pluralist republic.”

Pollak went on to say that Garret FitzGerald’s view that Irish society had changed more rapidly than any other society in Western Europe in recent times held true – nearly 10% of the population is now foreign born.

“The Church of Ireland and other Protestant churches are growing again helped both by emigrants and by Catholics often disillusioned by a lack of spiritual and moral leadership (most scandalously by child abusing priests) in the majority church.”

Pollak added: “Irish Catholicism is itself becoming more Protestant with far more emphasis on liberty of the individual conscience and participation by grass roots members than in the previously authoritarian institutional church.”

Today many members of the Protestant churches are centre stage in Irish life. Bono of U2 bestrides the music world like no other. Ireland’s most loved sportswoman is Katie Taylor. Judge Susan Denham is a former president of the High Court. Ivan Yates is one of the country’s favourite broadcasters, while Graham Norton is beloved just about everywhere. Until recently there were two Protestant cabinet ministers, Heather Humphreys and Jan

O'Sullivan, while one of the most colourful politicians in the Oireachtas is David Norris, who has been joined in the Irish senate by former Ulster Farmer's Union president Ian Marshall.

Catherine McGuinness, retired Supreme Court Judge, argued at the Merriman Summer School that Irish Protestants can be, and were, as Irish as anyone else.

Perhaps we should conclude with Pollak's quote in full: "None of this is any kind of attempt to persuade northern Protestants and unionists to give up their Britishness. However, they should realise the Republic isn't such an alien place these days – in many ways it is more open-minded, tolerant and liberal society than the north: and secondly, it wouldn't do them any harm to admit they too have a little bit of Irishness in their make-up and it might be interesting to visit the south to explore that."

## 8. *UNIONIST CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS*

Anyone who has come across the 2018 Sunday Times 'Rich List' could not but be impressed by the massive growth in wealth in the Republic. Indeed, the south can now boast of having one of the world's highest billionaire rates amongst its 4.7 million population. There is a billionaire for every 313,000 people, almost twice the proportion seen in the United States, Kuwait, or Sweden.

Meanwhile, the north is punching below its weight. While having 27% of the population of the island, it accounts for just over 13% of the wealth of the richest 300 people on the island of Ireland.

But economics is only part of what is a deeply embedded and deeply complicated set of problems and issues confronting those who wish to promote the case for a New Ireland. The roots of our diversity go deep.

Yet it would seem that recently there has been a significant shift in the terms of reference for any future debate. For years the public discourse in Northern Ireland was largely about convincing nationalists that the union with Britain was in their best interests; now, because of changing demographics and Brexit, there is a groundswell of voices suggesting that the bigger question is how to convince unionism Irish unity is the future.

A microcosm of this new reality was detailed by the former vice chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Denis Bradley, who, in the wake of the recent failed Stormont talks, told of meeting two businessmen, one nationalist, the other unionist, who were depressed by the failure to reach agreement.

Bradley, in an article for the Irish Times, described the nationalist as 'annoyed and frustrated', and particularly angry that unionism seemed content economically to withdraw into itself and into the

eastern counties of the north leaving a 'wasteland' on the western side along a line that runs from Coleraine to the southern tip of Fermanagh.

The unionist was more interesting.

Bradley stated: "Born into a unionist background and a business that straddled the Border, his thesis was that Irish unionism was on its last legs. Because of changing demographics he argued that all that was needed was to convince a small number of unionists that Irish unity was the future."<sup>[4]</sup>

The fact that so little effort has been made in the past to engage with unionism and address their concerns and fears is the most obvious bollard on the road to any meeting of minds. Indeed, much of the portrayal of loyalism, not just amongst nationalists, has been negative, of the stereo typed tattooed, beer drinking, hard men standing around bonfires on July 11<sup>th</sup>. This stereotyping is unflattering, offensive and misleading.

So what motivates unionism? What does need to be addressed?

Casual conversations with unionists suggests many feel unwanted, under threat, in a possible united Ireland. Many express resentment that traditional music, poetry, even Irish dancing have been almost exclusively appropriated by the nationalist community, despite the rich and varied contribution of Protestants to those aspects of our mutual cultural heritage.

A prime example of this is quoted in the book, 'Northern Protestants – An Unsettled People', by journalist Susan McKay. She quotes the liberal unionist John Robb as stating that Protestants were feeling "increasingly demoralised and threatened" and that "they (the Protestants) were in a terrible state".

This book was published almost 20 years ago, when unionism was very much in the ascendancy – so it would be reasonable to assume they feel much more 'unsettled' in 2018.

The former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Rev John Dunlop, made it clear more than two decades ago that at the time of the IRA ceasefire the unionist community was "not ready, prepared or happy" with the beginning of peace. He suggested it was more prepared to endure the continuation of the Troubles than engage with republicans. This is no longer an option.

As already explained, unionist political pundit Alex Kane pointed out, very forcefully, that the situation has shifted dramatically and a failure to address the rapidly changing realities is not in unionism's interests. But Kane, writing in the same article, accepts there are many others who feel they shouldn't, that it is somehow 'disloyal' to even be discussing the possibility of Irish unity.

This is a theme James Wilson, an academic engaged in research

amongst the loyalist/unionist community, also acknowledges. He suggested there are two impediments to Protestants discussing a future outside the union: firstly, there is the 'blood debt' to those who died fighting the IRA, and, secondly, there is the 'No Surrender' mantra handed down through the generations. The blood debt aspect runs deep, a feeling that it would be a betrayal of those who died – a 'did they die for nothing?' sentiment – while concessions or change from the status quo would, he points out, be conceived as 'surrender' and the act of a 'lundy.' It's a charge few unionist leaders are willing to risk.

The Ulster Scots identity must be properly addressed, including cultural and legacy issues. Anyone who visits the battlefields of WW1 on mainland Europe is likely to recognise the massive sacrifice made by the men of the 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division. Hardly a community in the north was unaffected by the huge loss of personnel: 5,500 alone dying on the very first day of the Somme offensive. That's a legacy of sacrifice that should not, and must not, be forgotten.

In recent times, many young Protestants leave to pursue third level education in Scotland and few come back. This is not a new phenomenon. There is a massive affinity between Ulster and Scotland going back through the mists of time. Long before the Plantation of Ulster there was a constant to and fro between Ulster and the west of Scotland, not least that of St Columba who established the monastery on the island of Iona after founding the city of Derry-Londonderry.

For centuries the traffic was mainly inward, but by the time of Irish famine in 1847 it was reversed. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literally thousands of people from Ulster, particularly from west Donegal, made their way to Scotland to work as 'tattie hokers' – that is, potato pickers. There were other ties of kinship too in that the Scots spoke Gaelic and English, liked to sing and dance in styles not too dissimilar to that found in Ireland, not to mention the partiality of both to a drop of whiskey.

One of the few politicians in the Republic to take a pro-active position on possible unity is Fianna Fail senator, Mark Daly. He is leading an effort by an Oireachtas committee to tease out what a reunited Ireland might look like post-Brexit. The key task the committee has set itself is to both understand and address comprehensively the fears unionists hold of a united Ireland.

Daly has already met with various groups of unionists who are willing to engage on the issues, and while most, he says, do not aspire to a united Ireland, or anything like that, there are those he describes as 'pragmatic elements' who value at least preparing for it, should that be the will of the people, north and south.

James Wilson has already met Daly's committee, and in his submission he pointed out that much of the fear of northern

Protestants around unity is ‘real and powerful’: fear of dispossession, fear of retribution, and fear of assimilation into an alien Gaelic culture that eliminates their ethno-cultural diversity as British/Ulster Scots.

The retribution element is primarily felt amongst serving and former members of the security forces. At this remove, fear of dispossession of lands obtained during the Plantation of Ulster more than 400 years ago seems more than a little quixotic: nevertheless, Wilson says that fear exists. (Others, though, dispute this contention.)

In recent months, Patrick Kielty’s question to DUP leader Arlene Foster asking what she would do in the event of unity – she said she would probably leave – stirred debate. David Trimble warned it could produce loyalist violence. Peter Robinson, the former DUP leader, argued a 50% plus one result would be unacceptable – and urged a conversation to take place to avoid the risk of a Brexit-type situation, where people voted for an outcome, without fully understanding what that would be.

Back in February, Mark Daly pointed to a 2010 survey which found that 82% of unionists would accept unity in a democratic vote. The remaining 18% he described as ‘fight or flight’, with some probably opting to leave and the remainder opting to oppose by physical force.

The Fianna Fail representative said the case had to be made to loyalists and unionists that there would be opportunities for them in a new Ireland, and that they were being left behind by the current leaders. “It’s about giving jobs and opportunities, education and hope and making sure that there’s a society where they have a future,” he said.

This approach is in marked contrast to his party’s position in 1981 when the then Taoiseach, Garret FitzGerald, suggested a ‘constitutional crusade’ to enable changes to be put in place well in advance of any reunification. The leader of Fianna Fail, Charles Haughey, rejected this position, stating there should be no changes until “unionists were sitting around the table”. As has been pointed out, this was the equivalent of a salesman trying to sell a car without showing the buyer what type of vehicle she/he would be buying.

It is important to recognise the grassroots stirring amongst ‘civic unionism’ which has made it clear that nationalists are not the only ones interested in rights and equality. In a letter to the ‘Irish Times’ in late February, signed by 105 unionists – including former UUP leader Mike Nesbitt, Doug Beattie MLA, academic Peter Shirlow and former rugby international, Trevor Ringland – it was stated: “We wish to unite, not divide, and in encouraging transparency we call upon civic nationalism and others to engage with us in frank and fulsome debates about the many values and beliefs that are

commonly shared and are vital to transforming the issues that we face.”

There is acceptance, seemingly at ground level (something not yet grasped by the politicians), that the tectonic plates locally are shifting. However, it is vital that nationalist leaders and opinion formers do not make the equivalent mistake that unionists did in not listening to, or addressing, the concerns of a deeply disenchanted nationalist minority held against their will in the years following the foundation of the northern state.

To make any progress it is essential that there is root and branch consultation to bring unionism on board with clear policies and constitutional and legal proposals on the table.

As James Wilson recently stated: “Until we feel an accepted part of the nation, we cannot be expected to engage with any confidence in the so-called ‘National Question’.”

## 9. *CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM*

Rostrevor born T.K. Whitaker was the top civil servant in the Republic when the northern Troubles broke out in late 1968. Because of his Ulster background, he had an understanding of the north in a way that few others in the corridors of power in Dublin had at that time. In a confidential report to the then Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, he advised a policy of ‘patience, understanding and forbearance’ when it came to dealing with unionism. Whitaker told Lynch: “The most forceful argument in favour of the patient good neighbour policy aimed at ultimate ‘agreement in Ireland between Irishmen’ is that no other policy has any prospect of success.”

Half a century later a stark headline in the ‘Irish Independent’ in July 2016 screamed out: “The EU needs to prepare for a united Ireland”. The comment came from Enda Kenny, probably the least republican Taoiseach since the foundation of the state. His

comment was totally unexpected, in that it took his own supporters as much by surprise as it did unionists in the north. It was a major change in political direction.

Brexit was the catalyst for Kenny's declaration in that he told the McGill Summer School in Glenties, Co. Donegal, that the decision of the British people would have seismic implications for both parts of the island – economic, political, social. It was something, he said, that could not be ignored or wished away.

Since then, the political road has become increasingly rocky. The new realities have necessitated considerable change in the Irish government's stance and outlook, and it has spooked unionism in that previously warm relationships between Dublin and the main unionist party, the DUP, are now badly strained.

So how can we begin a process of creating the conditions that would assuage unionism's fears about unity on the island of Ireland? How far are we willing to reach out to the 900,000 people who would regard themselves as both unionist and British? And, perhaps most importantly of all, the question has to be asked, are modern day republicans up to the task of making major concessions in the pursuit of real unity?

If they are having trouble getting their head around this the template for such gestures is already in place. Back in 1921 Eamon de Valera, the man who many regard as the key figure in the founding of the Irish Free State, said: "We are ready to give such local autonomy to Ulster...as would be practicable, if it would make for the contentment and satisfaction of the residents there.." He was willing to give Ulster a parliament as long as it was bounded within the Irish state.

In 2018 one gesture that would almost certainly send out positive signals would be for Ireland to rejoin the Commonwealth.

Strengthening where possible and practicable, the 'East-West' relationship would give considerable comfort to people who see Scotland (more than England) as the motherland.

The evolution of the constitution through discussion and consent would be another massive step in creating the right mood music. It could consider including incorporating possible different aspects: –

1. A Bill of Rights respecting the British identity on this island including the valued place the unionist community has for the



- Royal family;
2. Respect for the marching traditions of both cultures, particularly in regard to Orange parades, but subject to an overriding consent by hosting communities;
  3. The right for those born in Ireland to opt for either Irish or British nationality and identity, with equality for all those holding British passports;
  4. Guaranteed security of tenure of land for all – no redistribution of land;
  5. Discussion around possible regional or federal government arrangements, including for the six or nine counties;
  6. Military forces for each administrative area north and south to be drawn from each respective area;
  7. Parity of esteem for all languages by way of legislation – English, Irish, Ulster Scots.
  8. Equal recognition of Catholic, Protestant and other religions and their place in Irish society and guaranteed respect for their identities and independence;
  9. Recognition in the constitution of the special relationship Ireland has with the UK, historically and culturally;
  10. New flags, the anthem and other regional and national symbols should be agreed through discussion, with the objective of achieving consensus.

#### *LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS TO PROTECT UNIONIST CULTURE AND IDENTITY*

Discussions have a much better chance of success in a calm environment – like now!

There are just over 883,000 people who classify themselves as Protestant in the 2011 Census; 48% of the population of Northern Ireland. While some would vote Alliance and the Green Party and various other disparate minor parties, the vast majority of the Protestant population would describe themselves as unionist. They see themselves as British. So the road ahead in terms of promoting a new and different political settlement could well be extremely difficult, but the problem is no one seems to want to find a map that could provide a proper route.

Fianna Fail senator Mark Daly has stated that “policy neglect rarely goes unpublished” and it’s a matter of record that the Dublin government has no policy to put to unionists in regard to unity. It’s a clear case of failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

#### **For example:**

\* Would unionists be expected to sign up to a unitary state, a federal state, a confederal state, a continuation of Stormont under

the aegis of the Dail?

\* What would the currency be?

\* What would happen to health care? Would it cost £80/£100 to visit the doctor/A&E?

\* If there was a border poll, what would the questions be?

Without knowing the outcome of even these basic questions it goes without saying that unionists are highly unlikely to even seriously consider discussing unity, much less voting for it.

Unionists also need massive assurances that their identity, their culture, their traditions, etc will be respected and given legal and constitutional protections.

Recent history, right across the globe, has provided incontrovertible evidence that sensitive discussions have a better chance of success in a calm environment. Any discussion on the future make up of this island should take place as soon as possible, not when Brexit is an immediate reality and emotions are high.

In his book, 'Countdown to Unity' (which could be regarded as the seminal work on the topic of possible unity), Judge Richard Humphreys suggests some form of negotiation or discussions should take place with unionism prior to any referendum. While admitting that unionists are unlikely to agree to such a negotiation, it would, however, permit the referendum, he explained, to embody not just the question of Irish unity, but also the approval of any other measures agreed in the negotiation to accommodate unionism.

In a forward to the book, a leading Irish senior counsel, Rory Brady, spelled out why this course of action was so important: "It is a fact there is a community on this island with a British identity. It has been present for hundreds of years. In the event of a referendum in favour of unification it is axiomatic that this sense of identity and its expression – as a matter of human rights – be legally protected and secured."

Humphreys was unequivocal that any negotiations on a new constitution should start with a blank sheet, or as he put it, 'no sacred cows'.

Former Irish Attorney General, John Rodgers, in an article in 1998, suggested that the current Irish constitution should be amended to recognise what he describes as 'the plural origins' of our people and the absence of an acknowledged history and common allegiance. The preamble, he argued, should include the phrase that 'the republic is established for all members of the community on a basis of equality and respect.'

The changes anticipated were expected to be wide and varied. For example, The New Ireland Forum, established by Garret

FitzGerald in 1983, recommended that references to God be toned down and that references to Christian God be removed. In line with this and the Citizens Rights Charter suggestion, which appeared to be advocated by civic unionists, the religious formula for oaths of office would be removed and judges would make a secular declaration rather than religious.

It's an old maxim that gesture politics is not a bad thing if the gesture can be capable of being shown to having achieved something. Gestures that give comfort to one side while costing the other little could achieve much.

For example, unionists are not accustomed to a written constitution and have not until recent times lived in a culture where parliament can be judicially reviewed and is thus subservient to the judiciary. This consideration could be taken into account when proposals for the constitution to be replaced by a 'Bill of Rights' are made. British law is mostly based on 'the Magna Carta', written in 1215, which, basically, was the first ever 'Bill of Rights' for a democratic society in that it upholds the principle that everyone, even the King, is held equal before the law. Put simply, unionists do not like the idea that the pronouncements of a sovereign, duly elected parliament can be over-ruled by unelected judges.

Some of the more uncomfortable features of the Irish constitution for unionists, as outlined to the New Ireland Forum by Professor Brice Dickson, a law lecturer at Queen's University, should be debated by Queen's, UCD and Trinity, etc, with suggestions being made by each for consideration. For example, rights conferred under Articles 40 to 44 are not those to which unionists would themselves accord priority within society in that unionists' suspicion of the office of the president is a consequence of their loyalty to the crown. In developing an all-island constitution or Bill of Rights these sensitivities need to be considered in language and tone and content.

Des Murphy SC, when asked to advise on the implementation of the 12 constitutional changes published in an early draft of this report, recommended that an international mediator should produce a set of proposals for consideration, as was done prior to the peace process. This would only be for consideration within the framework of the Good Friday Agreement.

As James Wilson has pointed out, there are real fears amongst many unionists, particularly amongst serving and former members of the security services, that there will be retribution once the British presence is gone. That this will not happen has to be spelled out with cast iron guarantees. The most inclusive form of unity must be proposed, and new constitutional arrangements in the scenario of a unified island must allow for no prosecutions for politicians, or forces of the crown, etc, for actions in the past.

There is a need to comprehend and include the Irish identity,

which includes a British identity. Former Ulster Unionist politician, Christopher McGimpsey, didn't underestimate the difficulties involved when he described the formation of such a definition as "being as simple as nailing jelly to a wall", but it needs to be done.

In the interim there are many things that can be easily achieved.

As has been stressed throughout this document, there is a clear need to ensure British identity can be celebrated and respected within a unified Ireland, but honeyed words are not enough. Hence the need for clear, unambiguous legal measures – perhaps identified by a cross party Dail committee – which will recognise the legitimacy of the British identity and the British dimension in Irish life.

This shouldn't be a heavy lift. It is a matter of fact that a lot of our institutions and laws are largely drawn from, or influenced by, Britain. This should be reflected in the wording of our constitution, as well as recognising the primacy of European rights legislation.

#### *TRANSPARENCY*

There is a need to ensure British identity can be celebrated and achieved within any new union within Ireland. The British influence is evident throughout the island from Dun Laoghaire harbour, to the Royal Dublin Show, to Cork's English Market, to Irish towns like the English designed Westport. There is a need for official recognition, and to transparently acknowledge, that our institutions and laws as well as parts of our cultural heritage are drawn from, or influenced by, our joint history with Britain.

#### *TRUTH*

John Rodgers SC has said that the preamble to the constitution should be amended to recognise the plural origins of our people and the absence of an acknowledged history and common allegiance.

There is little doubt that few, if any, efforts have been made to address the elements of our constitution that Bruce Dickson told the New Ireland Forum were uncomfortable for unionists as acknowledged in Justice Humphrey's 'Countdown to Unity'.

#### *RIGHTS*

\* British citizens within a united island would need to be able to vote subject to residency requirements as is the UK situation for Irish citizens.

\* There should be legal and constitutional protection against discrimination for people who do not speak Irish.

\* There is a clear need to remove any requirement for compulsory Irish from students, lawyers, etc.

\* An agreed union should sign-up to recognise the International Court of Justice as the UK has done. This could act as a

safeguard for unionists to ensure rights are interpreted, implemented and protected.

\* In the event of a six county administration being restored under a unified island, an ombudsman or similar office holder should be appointed to ensure that ministers carry out their functions in compliance with the oath they take to obtain office under the Good Friday Agreement.

#### *EQUALITY*

\* Ireland should rejoin the Commonwealth now that it can accept republics.

\* Symbols such as shamrocks, green insignia, the harp and the Irish language should be retained and added to with, for example, the lambeg drum or crown as appropriate.

\* Scots Irish should be recognised as an official language.

\* Elements of the Union Jack to be incorporated in a new flag or flags, or the Union Jack be flown on designated days on main government buildings alongside the tricolour or new national flag on, e.g. the Queen's birthday or 12th July.

#### *CIVIL LIBERTIES*

\* Make the 12th July a bank holiday in the Republic as recommended by the ICTU.

\* Ensure that judges in the new republic are trained in the laws of Scotland as they are now in English law, to recognise the value unionists have in their Scots–Ulster links.

\* Irish citizens are precluded from being members of the Privy Council or holding a knighthood. This disbarment should be ended.

\* Restriction on religious ministers standing for election needs to be reviewed.

The visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Republic in 2011 was, as many commentators on both sides of the water suggested, a 'game changer'. It changed the dynamics of the relationships between our two islands. In 2018 we are not in the same Ireland as we were in 1916 or 1922. Given that, it would not be ridiculous to ponder what Michael Collins or Edward Carson would be prepared to discuss or consider if they were alive today. Our current leaders might well take note.

10. *COUNTDOWN TO UNITY 2008 OR GROUNDHOG DAY 2018?*

*By Desmond Murphy, Senior Counsel*

In 2008 Richard Humphries authored a book entitled 'Countdown to Unity' in which he outlined in detail a possible path towards the unification of Ireland. Since then there has been only two other significant works on the topic: Mark Daly's 'Brexit and the Future of Ireland' and Paul Gosling's 'The Economic Impact of an All Island Economy'.

However, since the vote of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union in June 2016 and the possibility of border controls, the debate on the future of Northern Ireland has sharpened to a level where many northern nationalists with an almost millenarian fervour have espoused the belief that Irish unity is inevitable and if it cannot be obtained by persuasion, will be achieved by the demography of a catholic majority in Northern Ireland in the near future.

Two points need immediately to be made:

1. Nothing is inevitable in history: a single example will suffice: most educated Europeans on 27 June 1914 would have taken for granted the continuation of peace and prosperity of previous 100 years and could never have imagined destructive European wars within six weeks.
2. The second point is the danger of precedents. While German unification was largely successful and quick for specific reasons, the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s into multiple sectarian civil wars should make one ponder, especially as it was praised in the 1970s and 1980s as an alternative to capitalism and communism.

The period 2016 – 18 has been discouraging in Northern Ireland. The Executive collapsed in 2017 and all attempts to restore it have failed. However, even worse has been the complete collapse of trust between the DUP and Sinn Fein, and the virtual elimination of smaller parties. There has been an explosion in twitter abuse: false news and deliberate attempts to rewrite the past.

It is inevitable that this position will infect Catholic and Protestant outlooks eventually, more importantly this abuse and bad faith given an inkling to what a referendum on the future of Northern Ireland would consist of. It would create a sectarian mobilization not ever seen in Irish history and would probably climax in one side or the other not accepting the result. It would eliminate any dissenting voices especially in the Protestant community and could easily trigger the disintegration of society. It would mean an inclusive constitutional conference impossible.

II

Humphries' optimism of 2008 that issues such as the Irish language or flags and anthems could be resolved now seems

misplaced. The bitter dispute over an Irish language act in Northern Ireland in the past few years, and the flags protests of 2012, suggest that compromise is now impossible; this hope of confidence building measures by nationalist Ireland now seems remote and impractical. Equally given the present strident languages, it would appear impossible for any unionist to negotiate on any form of Irish unity prior to a referendum.

However, in all texts considered, hard questions are avoided: a few can be alluded to here:

- What will be form of the state: if it is an independent republic then unionism will have lost and indeed cannot exist.
- If that is so, what is the point of recognizing British identity. The essence of unionism in Northern Ireland is loyalty to the crown and monarchy and to historical sacrifices on their behalf. If those links are snapped, fuzzy promises about holding British passports will be meaningless.
- Where would power lie in the new state, and more importantly what would be the distribution of such power. Unionists / Protestants could not exercise effective resistance in a new state unless there were artificial protections at the centre of power.
- Humphries reliance on the Good Friday Agreement as a means of driving constitutional change (p152) or the hope that a forum of joint authority over 30 years (p205) would ease the transition now seems sadly misplaced. Neither government has shown any interest in using the Good Friday Agreement to provide constitutional change as stalemate in Northern Ireland has prevented even modest workings of devolved institutions, never mind ambitious plans for a joint authority.

III

So, we have reached 'Groundhog Day' where the parties in Northern Ireland are content to abuse one another and allow society to fray at the edges. Topics that might be discussed at a constitutional convention will remain a wish list.

It requires imagination to break the current short and long-term stalemate. One suggestion would be to have a small independent commission receive suggestions for a different Ireland and to put the final proposals to the people in referendum north and south.

It would be made clear that if these were rejected, the status quo would continue, the position being that, if accepted, it would be possible to have detailed discussions on implementation without the pressure from either community that betrayal was imminent. It will be a slow process, but at least it would offer a fresh start and avoid reigniting the sectarian conflict in an even broader morass than before.

## 11. *RECOMMENDATIONS*

1. Call for the British Irish Council to organise debates to discuss the totality of relationships between these islands.
2. HRH The Prince of Wales Charles, as an opinion leader, should be approached to organise debates to see how the monarchy could be recognised for its historical and cultural importance in any new all island union.
3. Economic debates should be organised by academic institutions on how a political settlement might attract EU funding, further US investment and transform an all island economy which will improve the standard of living for all on the island.
4. Law societies in Queen's, Trinity, Magee, UCD, UCC, Maynooth, etc, should debate how best to begin to construct a new all-island constitution or, in the Presbyterian tradition, an all-island bill of citizens rights. Alternately, what legal changes could be introduced immediately to protect the British, Ulster Scots and unionist cultural traditions and identity.
5. Students unions across the island should be encouraged to conduct debates on building a new union which will promote a truly inclusive society incorporating all religions, races, and the importance of equality of economic opportunity for all citizens.
6. We recommend the renewal of the process of reconciliation dropped by the Executive in 2007 as an essential part of the process of building a new union, as part of the process we need to consider how the pro-treaty and anti-treaty communities were forced to forget their bloody civil war and stop demonizing each other, we need to decommission our national blood sacrifice mind set and move forward together.



7. An all-island commission should be established to oversee the introduction of a ring-fenced tax to finance a new health service. That all-island health service should achieve internationally recognised standards of excellence, on a level with that achieved, for example, in France.
8. An academic should be appointed to examine options for new flags and symbols, including anthems. Texas has six flags flown in recognition of the six nations which lay a claim to its territory and their respective blood debt. Surely in a unified island we could live with three.
9. The Good Friday Agreement needs to be recognised as the constitution of Northern Ireland, which can only be replaced through a referendum.

#### *OPTIONS TO CONSIDER THAT PROTECT CULTURE AND IDENTITY*

1. British citizens within a united island would vote subject to residency requirements as per the UK situation for Irish citizens.
2. Joining the Commonwealth (as a Republic).
3. Recognise the 12<sup>th</sup> July as a bank holiday in the Republic, as recommended by ICTU.
4. Ensure that judges in the new Republic are trained in the laws of Scotland as they are now in English law.
5. Symbols such as shamrocks, green, the harp and the Irish language should be retained and added to with the lambeg drum or Crown.
6. Flags might include elements of the Union Jack and tricolour.
7. A new national anthem, decided through a form of national consensus.
8. Scots Irish should be recognised.
9. Legal and constitutional protection for people who do not speak Irish.
10. Remove need for compulsory Irish from students, lawyers, etc.
11. Irish citizens might be permitted to be members of the Privy Council or hold a knighthood.
12. The House of Lords (or the UK Senate, after possible reform) to continue to include members who live in Northern Ireland, after reunification.
13. Review Catholic church's role in the provision of state funded public services.
14. Recognition of the International Court of Justice as a

protection of unionists' rights.

15. Appointment of an ombudsman if a federated structure is adopted, to ensure Stormont or other assembly (ies) undertake functions as per law and the Good Friday Agreement.

#### *POSSIBLE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM*

1. A Bill of Rights respecting the British identity on this island including the valued place the unionist community has for the Royal family;
2. Respect for the marching traditions of both cultures, particularly in regard to Orange parades, but subject to an overriding consent by hosting communities;
3. The right for those born in Ireland to opt for either Irish or British nationality and identity, with equality for all those holding British passports;
4. Guaranteed security of tenure of land for all – no redistribution of land;
5. Discussion around possible regional or federal government arrangements, including for the six or nine counties;
6. Military forces for each administrative area north and south to be drawn from each respective area;
7. Parity of esteem for all languages by way of legislation – English, Irish, Ulster Scots.
8. Equal recognition of Catholic, Protestant and other religions and their place in Irish society and guaranteed respect for their identities and independence;
9. Recognition in the constitution of the special relationship Ireland has with the UK, historically and culturally;
10. New flags, the anthem and other regional and national symbols should be agreed through discussion, with the objective of achieving consensus.

#### **APPENDIX ONE**

*A total of 105 people signed the letter, mostly from a unionist background.*

## APPENDIX TWO

### *Letter from Brian Walker and others*

We are civic unionists, more numerous in times of calm, fewer in times of crisis, but more influential than is often realised. We represent the strand of unionism that believes in sustaining civilised life rather than fighting sectarian battles. We embrace human rights and equality and we stand for compromise and reconciliation.

Our identity is Northern Irish, Irish and British in any order of priority. We call all parts of these islands home. Our Britishness is not a false consciousness and we deride the idea of Irishness as foreign. Our passport like our nationality is a matter of choice. The Belfast Agreement is our ideal settlement, not our temporary accommodation. From experience we know this is entirely compatible with moderate nationalism and are convinced it is the right position for unionism to adopt for our own and the common good. But we need help to develop our case from many quarters including Dublin and London.

We believe that dialogue between unionists and nationalists eager to engage can represent positions better than dialogue between committed neutrals, whose conclusions might underestimate the problems. Together at our own initiative and suggested by others, we would develop an agenda both of immediate and long term issues. Our outcomes we hope, will be all the more robust.

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36420140>

[2] <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/europe/more-peaceful-but-facing-uncertainty-northern-ireland-20-years-on-20180409-p4z8i1.html>

[3] <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html#part1>

[4] Irish Times, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

---

## LEAVE A REPLY

## COMMENT

NAME

EMAIL

Paul Gosling ▶ Self-published ▶ A NEW UNION: A NEW SOCIETY – IRELAND  
2050

## Paul Gosling

Paul Gosling is a journalist, broadcaster, author, researcher, media consultant, copywriter and public speaker.

### KEY LINKS

---

Home

My Articles

My Services

Contact

### MY RECENT ARTICLES

---

Five steps for CFOs to reduce staff turnover

Brexit is pushing Northern Ireland back into division

Coining IT: Ireland's burgeoning Initial Coin Offerings

MY LATEST TWEET

Liam Fox comments 60% chance of 'no deal' Brexit. I think he is right if what he means is there is a 60% chance tha... [twitter.com/i/web/status/10261...](https://twitter.com/i/web/status/10261...)

August 5, 2018 7:22 pm

© Copyright 2018 Paul Gosling. [Cookie Policy](#).

WordPress Web Design by [primary image](#)

