

FROM: ROSALIE FLANAGAN
7 OCTOBER 1998

SEN. DIR. (B)
copy
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N.I.O. BELFAST

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MR McCUSKER

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PORTADOWN INITIATIVE : MEETINGS ON 18 SEPTEMBER 1998

Enclosed are minutes of the separate meetings which officials held with the Garvaghy Road Residents and the Orange Order on 18 September. The former minute is in draft form, to be agreed with the residents at our next meeting. The latter is an internal minute.

Rosalie Flanagan

- the reference to agreement to discuss sup. for future meetings

ROSALIE FLANAGAN
☎ 28420

People.
DPW note this to me
in the knowledge of EPSG
4/8/10

In the letter
I thought we were quite
explicit with both G.R.R.C. &
OO that a mtg. on a
less indirect basis not
include discussion of
arrangements for future
meetings.

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- PS/Mr Murphy (DFP, B&L)
- PS/Mr Pilling
- PS/Mr Semple
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Leach
- Mr Jeffrey

HW
F. 6

DRAFT (TO BE AGREED WITH RESIDENTS)

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

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MEETING WITH GARVAGHY ROAD RESIDENTS COMMITTEE 18 SEPTEMBER 1998

1. The purpose of this note is to set out an agreed record of the main points of the discussion which took place between representatives of the Garvaghy Road Residents Committee led by Mr MacCionnaith and a delegation comprising Mr Watkins, Mr McCusker, Mr Leach and myself. Peter Quinn and Reverend Roy Magee also attended. The meeting took place in the Drumcree Community Centre at 4.00pm on Friday 18 September 1998.
2. Mr Watkins said that, because it was his first time to attend one of these meetings, and in view of recent press reports, he had prepared a note which set out our understanding of the common ground which had been reached by all sides to date and suggested two possible options for moving forward.
3. Mr MacCionnaith said that it was important to recognise that in the local community attitudes had hardened over the past 11 weeks because of the trouble in the town, and that the residents felt that the policing issue was crucial. They were still not having an adequate response from the RUC and thought that the NIO could play a more proactive role in influencing RUC policy on policing in Portadown. Mr Leach said that he could, and had, passed on the residents' concerns, but that decisions in the ground were a matter for the local police. Mr MacCionnaith said that he had had a meeting with ACC Tom Craig but had found him noncommittal. The residents felt that the RUC was still not taking a sufficiently hard line with the loyalist groups. They thought that any diminution in the violence during the past two weeks was due more to the revulsion felt among ordinary Protestant people about the events of 5 September, particularly the fact that a policeman is still fighting for his life, than to any change in RUC policing policy. It was suggested that regular meetings could be held between the residents

and the local police, to establish a direct channel through which the RUC could be made aware of the genuine concerns of the residents.

4. It was acknowledged by all that no element of a settlement could be agreed in isolation from other elements, and that it was necessary for trust to be built up between all sides.
5. Mr MacCionnaith emphasised that the community would want to see progress towards addressing their concerns before they would be able to consider any options in relation to marches, and said that at Armagh they had made it clear that any discussions on parades must be with the Orange Order.
6. Mr MacCionnaith confirmed that the residents were still in agreement with the Statement which had been agreed by all sides in early September, and could sign up to it but doubted if the Orange Order could also do so on the basis of what had happened recently. It was agreed that the Order would be advised of the residents continuing commitment to the statement but that they had reservations about the Order's position on it.
7. It was also agreed that on the basis of what had been agreed at Armagh the Orange Order could be told at the meeting which officials were to have with the Orange Order later that evening, that the residents were prepared to go with "a move into a less indirect form of dialogue in order to broker an Agreement, for example by meeting in the same room but with all comments addressed through an independent chairman." Mr MacCionnaith said that the residents were prepared to get the debate started now, perhaps by inviting the Orange Order to the Community Centre to explain their views.
8. In relation to the economic situation and the Portadown Forum proposals, Mr MacCionnaith explained that the residents were concerned that the structure and operation of the Forum would lead to all decisions being biased against them. It was recognised that the details of the role of the Forum and how resource allocation decisions would be made needed to be discussed in greater detail and it was agreed

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that Mr McCusker would take these matters forward with a larger group of residents as soon as possible.

9. Finally, the residents asked officials about their personal security concerns which had been raised some time ago. Mr Leach explained that this was a matter in the first instance for the RUC and that he would raise the matter again with them.

**ROSALIE FLANAGN
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT**



NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MEETING WITH ORANGE ORDER REPRESENTATIVES 18 SEPTEMBER 1998

1. This note records the main points discussed at meeting between representatives of the Orange Order led by Mr Denis Watson, and a delegation comprising Mr Watkins, Mr McCusker, Mr Leach and myself. The meeting took place in Carleton Street Orange Hall at 5.45pm on Friday 18 September 1998.
2. Mr Watkins explained that at the earlier meeting with the Garvaghy Road Residents Committee, the Committee had indicated that they were prepared to move to indirect talks with the Order through an independent Chairman, and had suggested that in anticipation of the talks, they would be happy to welcome representatives of the Order to their Community Centre to give them the opportunity to explain their views. He further said that the residents had indicated their willingness to commit to the Statement which had been agreed by all sides earlier in the month, provided the Order could show its commitment to the Statement by using its best offices to bring to an end the current spate of troubles in the town.
3. Mr Watson and Mr Burrows said that the Order's influence had already led to improvements in the situation, but that sinister elements who could not be approached directly were involved. They emphasised that within the Order frustrations were setting in, and that the longer the situation went unresolved, the more difficult it was to control the rising tensions.
4. It was agreed that the Order representatives at the meeting would seek to get the District to agree to show their commitment to the Statement by publicly reiterating their opposition to the violence, and specifically asking that the parade in Portadown on 26 September should be entirely peaceful.

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5. The Order representatives explained that when the People's Park event had been cancelled, it was felt that some alternative opportunity needed to be given to members to express their concern about the Drumcree situation, and a parade had been planned for 26 September. The parade would not pass through any controversial areas. The RUC were to be asked to police it in as low key a way as possible and the local traders were to be asked to remain open. For their part the Order would seek to ensure that the parade was not seen as triumphalist. The Order asked officials to influence the residents and others to play their part in keeping the heat out of the situation by ensuring that any statements made were positive and helpful, that outsiders such as Gerard Rice did not appear in the town (as they had on 5 September) and that protests were not held.

6. It was agreed that the Orange Order's commitment to the Statement could be further underlined by the Order taking part in some outreach project where there could be interaction with the residents although an event at the Community Centre would not be appropriate at this stage. It was decided to take this forward by making contact over the weekend with the Council, through the Mayor initially, and then perhaps setting up a small steering group to organise the event.

7. There was some discussion about the timing of indirect talks, and how these might mesh with the proposed outreach event, or even with an announcement about it. The Order representatives recognised that when it came to a Parades Commission determination next year, any efforts which Portadown had made towards resolution, including taking part in talks, would be to their benefit. However they expressed their serious reservations about the reactions of some of the Portadown members to these proposals. It was agreed that the representatives would take soundings over the weekend and that this group would meet again on Monday 21 September at 6.30pm, depending on progress.

**ROSALIE FLANAGAN
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT**

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Portadown District LOL No1

Over the past ten years many concessions on our parades have been given by Portadown District either voluntarily or by policing decisions. It has been give, give, give by the Unionist community and take, take, take by the nationalist. Enough is enough. Our stand at Drumcree this year over the denial of our civil liberties has been demanded both by our people and by natural justice. Here we have stood, we could do no other.

If consensus is to be found on parades then we need to begin at the beginning, the very beginning before any concessions on our traditional parades has been made. We cannot begin the process of finding an agreement unless there is a level playing field. Consideration must be given to the concessions already achieved by nationalists in Portadown and all without any kind of reciprocation.

Portadown District feel that the routes they have had already to concede should be taken into account in the overall picture, namely:

1. The Junior Orange parade from Corcrain to Portadown via Obins Street and the Tunnel led by the traditional band, Portadown Defenders. This to take place in May.
2. The return of the Junior Orange Lodge from Portadown to Corcrain Via the Tunnel and Obins Street led by Portadown Defenders.
3. That on 12 July, the eight country lodges, as has been their tradition, since 1807, walk into town via Obins Street and the Tunnel accompanied by four bands, eight lambeg drums and their lodge banners.
4. The return from Portadown centre via the same route on 12 July evening accompanied by the full District lodges, bands, drums and banners.
5. The Royal Black Preceptory walk of the country preceptories, accompanied by the all the preceptories within the District, their

banners and twenty bands from Corcrain via Obins Street, the Tunnel and Woodhouse Street into Portadown town centre.

6. The return walk by the same route on the 12 July evening via the Tunnel and Obins Street.
7. The Drumcree church service on the first Sunday in July, which is open to all members of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and led by any of the Portadown bands. Parade to church via the Woodhouse Street, the Tunnel, Obins Street, Dungannon Road.
8. The return of the same parade along the Garvaghy Road, Parkmount and Castle Street to the town centre.

On this basis we believe we can move forward and reach a fair and just agreement that takes account of the past to build a better future.

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