

Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim Cabinet Minutes Friday 9th May 2008

A meeting of the Cabinet was held on Friday 9th May 2008 at the Provincial Masonic Hall, Belfast.

Present

R.W. Brother D.R. Millen, R.W. Brother J.N. Millar, R.W. Brother W.J. Dyer, R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer, R.W. Brother J.O. Dunlop, V.W. Brother J Dickson, V.W. Brother A. Askin.

Also in attendance V.W. Brother Ivan Gillespie

The meeting was chaired by R.W. Brother D.R. Millen Provincial Deputy Grand Master.

Before the meeting started V.W. Brother Gillespie conveyed a message from the Provincial Grand Master R.W. Brother J.S. Dunlop sending good wishes for the meeting and saying he was enjoying good weather of high temperatures and wall to wall sunshine.

An apology was recorded for the Provincial Grand Master who was on holiday and an apology was received from V.W. Brother S. Murphy

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th April 2008 were agreed to.

Matters Arising

Lodge 505 R.W. Brother J.O. Dunlop reported that the problem was not yet resolved and was on going. Any other matters would be dealt with in the business of the meeting.

Reports

R.W Brother Millen reported that the new charity initiative would probably be launched in March 2009.

R.W Brother Millar said that some amendments had been made to the by-laws and more changes were required. He suggested a meeting with R.W. Brother J.L. Brother Frazer, V.W. Brother A. Askin and V.W Brother I Gillespie to discuss the changes before putting a proposal to Provincial Grand Lodge. New Provincial Grand Inspectors would be invested at the Provincial Grand Lodge Communication in November.

R.W Brother Dyer had nothing to report.

R.W Brother J.O. Dunlop reported that the Masonic Day would take place on 18th October 2008 in Antrim. A request was made for seals from Lodges who had returned their Warrant to be given to the Museum. The Education Committee had two new members, V.W. Brother James Cadoo and W. Brother Nigel Mitchell. The forthcoming Gazette was short of material.

R.W Brother J.L. Frazer said that his report would be with the sale of the Provincial Masonic Hall.

V.W. Brother Registrar said that all letters had now been exchanged re mediation and read the letter received from Sheridan and Hood. V.W. Brother Secretary had received a letter from the mediator R.W. Brother N. Humes and this would be read at the Provincial Grand Lodge of Board of General Purposes and Provincial Grand Lodge in September.

Letter from Brother W. Stevenson Lodge 501

V.W. Brother Secretary said he had left several messages for W. Brother Mark, secretary of Lodge 501 but W. Brother Mark had not yet responded.

Foreign Representatives There was some doubt as to the investiture of W. Brother D. Morgan Representative for the Grand Lodge of Finland at Grand Lodge and R.W Brother J.L. Frazer offered

to investigate. It was felt that all other names for Foreign Grand Lodge representatives were with Grand Lodge at present, as was the name of V.W. Brother J. Dickson for Grand Lodge Standard Bearer.

Venue and date of next Cabinet It was agreed that this should be held in the Provincial Masonic Hall on Friday 13th June 2008.

Assistant Librarian R.W. Brother Frazer gave an update on the position of the Assistant Librarian and said the matter was ongoing. It was also noted that there was and had been for some time a lack of procedures for accepting items for the Library and Museum.

Ceremonial Sword V.W. Brother Askin has been in touch with the supplier and the procurement of the Ceremonial Sword is progressing.

Key holders The Provincial Grand Secretary informed the Cabinet that the list of key holders required updating and noted the names for the updated list. 1) R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer, 2) R.W. Brother D.R. Millen, 3) W. Bro B. Whitten's son.

Provincial Grand Lodge Website A short discussion took place on the content and construction of the Provincial Grand Lodge Website. R.W. Brother J.O. Dunlop suggested he meet with the Provincial Grand Secretary. V.W. Brother Askin suggested using a professional to assist us.

Maintenance Provincial Masonic Hall The Provincial Grand Secretary asked regarding various repairs which would arise within the Provincial Masonic Hall and noted that at present there was a suspect leak in the roof. It was noted that the Administration Committee hadn't met for some time and the contractor for general maintenance was unsatisfactory. R.W. Brother Frazer offered to have the current problem resolved.

Committee of Inspection Venue It was reported that the recent vote showed a majority (by 1 vote) for Arthur Square over Whiteabbey and that many Lodges had not voted. It was also noted that Provincial Grand Lodge pays Committee of Inspection accounts.

September Meeting of Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer indicated that Grand Lodge Board could meet in Arthur Square if necessary.

European Heritage Open Day This normally takes place in September in the Provincial Masonic Hall. This matter could be resolved at a later date.

Luke Mural This will be dealt with in 'Sale of the Hall'

District Grand Royal Arch Chapter The provincial Grand Secretary had been advised that District Grand Royal Chapter would be relocating to Arthur Square from 30th June 2008. It was agreed that the letter should be acknowledged and wish them well.

Removal of Lodge and Chapter Items from Provincial Masonic Hall It was reported that some units were visiting the Hall to remove items from Lodge rooms. In view of remarks by Mr McRandall of Environment and Heritage Society it was decided that a moratorium be placed on the removal of any items from the Provincial Masonic Hall until the sale of the Hall is resolved. The Provincial Grand Secretary should write to all units advising them of this decision.

Any Other Business

Open Day in Arthur Square Lodge 669 on 24th June 2008 was proceeding.

Whiteabbey Masonic Centre Management Committee have written to Grand Lodge reference Chair lift. The procedure of the management committee in this matter was causing concern.

Grand Master's Festival The Provincial Grand Secretary advised that he had 7 requests from Lodges regarding permission to request donations from outside their Lodges.

The Provincial Deputy Grand Master asked for the feelings of the Cabinet Members regarding the Gala Dinner. Most felt that taking the whole evening into consideration that it would be a very expensive evening for Brethren

Permission was granted to St John's 811 to hold a Car Boot Sale.

Permission was granted to Maze 356 to contact Lisburn Lodges reference an auction for the Grand Masters Festival on 24th October 2008 in Belsize Road Masonic Hall.

Provincial Grand Lodge of North Connaught Communication on 11th June 2008. The Provincial Deputy Grand Master indicated he would attend.

Sale of Provincial Masonic Hall/Luke Mural A very long discussion took place with regard to the current position in view of developments during the past few days. R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer reported on many meetings he had held with various people during the past week.

Regarding the Luke Mural (or painting) Mr McRandall of the Environment and Heritage Society was of the opinion that the 'Luke Mural' was part of the Listing of the building, as was most of the furniture within the building. This was contrary to legal advice which R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer had been given. R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer also stated that a recent value by Wilson's Auction had valued the 'Luke Mural' at £1M.

The major development is the new proposal from the 'Consortium of Masonic businessmen' of which the Provincial Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes will have to be advised. A copy of all the correspondence relating to this proposal has been given to each member of the Cabinet present (and a copy is attached to these minutes).

Various views were expressed as to the substance of the 'consortium' proposals and the prominence of W. Brother Hood and R.W Brother J. Watson over recent days. The views and concerns of the Cabinet Members may be summarised as follows

- Who are the Consortium
- How did W. Brothers Hood and Wilson get information that the Property Advisory Committee (PAC) couldn't get.
- W. Brother Wilson may have a letter from Mr McRandall regarding the Luke Mural
- Timing of the proposal from W. Brothers Hood and Wilson.
- R.W. Brother J. Watson's involvement.
- Original offer for the Hall did not include the Luke Mural.
- Should W. Brothers Hood and Wilson be co-opted onto the PAC?
- Is there a lack of support for the PAC by the PAC members?
- W. Brother A. Steele has been in constant touch with the developers.
- Will the parties who made the offer on the Hall lose interest and withdraw if there is no decision.
- A lot of correspondence exists (hard copy and e-mail) which pre dates the first letter received by Provincial Grand Lodge.
- Will the Senior Officers be embarrassed by the recent proposals?
- The Brethren will be looking for leadership

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R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer read a prepared statement which he proposed to read at the Board of General Purposes on 12th May 2008 and informed the Cabinet that W. Brothers Steele, McCann and Hood were invited to the board meeting. W. Brother R. Wilson had been invited but apologised as he would be out of the country.

R.W. Brother N. Millar proposed and V.W. Brother A. Askin seconded that the Provincial Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes should put the sale to a vote and get a decision. This was agreed.

Stained Glass Window R.W. Brother J.O. Dunlop had a request from Richview Lodge 711 for Provincial Grand Lodge to write on their behalf to the Environment and Heritage Society seeking permission to remove the stained glass window and relocate it in Whiteabbey Masonic Centre. R.W. Brother J.L. Frazer offered to progress this matter.

There being no further business the Provincial Deputy Grand Master declared the meeting closed.


.....13th June 2008