

Kildare County Council Decade of Centenaries Plan 2020

Background

Kildare County Council had designed an ambitious plan of events and activities to take place throughout 2020, through the Decade of Commemorations Committee, in late 2019 and 2020. Among the public events planned were:

- a seminar and exhibition in Naas to mark the contribution of Irish nurses over the past one hundred years, including short talks by published historians.
- the 4th Irish Military Seminar featuring a wide-ranging programme of talks with prolific historians, including talks on the 1912-23 period. Events were to take place in Newbridge and Celbridge, including an evening of talks by local historians.
- Organising an exhibition in conjunction with the Curragh Military Museum.
- A symposium in the Autumn on Bloody Sunday 1920, with the focus on Kildare links e.g. referee Mick Sammon and player Frank Burke.
- Public talks in conjunction with the Federation of Local History Groups and Kildare Readers Festival were also planned for the final quarter of 2020. Talks to community groups, schools, local history groups were to take place throughout 2020, organized through the Library Service.

Similar to many other programmes, the Covid-19 national emergency has unfortunately resulted in an alternative approach to the Decade of Centenaries programme for Kildare being required. Public events with large audiences – such as those above – are no longer feasible with social distancing and capacity restrictions in place. Kildare County Council is therefore focusing on activities that will promote a deeper understanding of the historical events of the period, including the local stories and experiences in County Kildare.

Revised Kildare County Council Decade of Centenaries Plan For 2020 (as of late July 2020)

- Publication of digital exhibition in flipbook format describing the life and activities of Conradh na Gaeilge activist, republican, Kildare County Council Vice-Chair and IRA battalion commander Éamonn Ó Modhráin. This flipbook includes unique personal material from the family archives.
- Digitisation of the minute books of Kildare County Council for the 1899-1924 period. The digitized volumes will be made freely available through the website of Kildare Library Service, as a way of marking the centenary of Kildare County Council declaring allegiance to Dáil Éireann after the 1920 local elections.
- Creation of an exhaustive timeline booklet, with key dates and events, to highlight key events that took place in County Kildare and Ireland during the 1919-23 period. It is planned to distribute this publication to schools and community groups, thus promoting engagements with the revolutionary period amongst younger people and the wider public.
- Create and curate an online video documentary focusing on the events of Bloody Sunday in November 1920. There will be an emphasis on the Kildare aspects of this day, particularly on the

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referee and Kildare footballer Mick Sammon from Clane and Dublin dual player Frank Burke who was originally from Carbury. Historians and family members will feature in the documentary.

- Co-operate with Marc McMenemy, researcher with *The History Show* on RTÉ Radio 1, to create as short documentary piece and panel discussion on Kildare connections to Bloody Sunday November 1920. This is in progress already.
- Kildare County Council will continue to engage with local history groups, schools and community groups with our Decade of Centenaries Programme. Training opportunities for these groups will also be explored, particularly in the area of online content and organising activities in the Covid-19 period.
- Produce additional online content with published authors, historians and historical experts in the form of webinars and podcasts.
- Create and curate an online documentary on the Curragh internment camps, including original archival material in digital format and interview with historian.
- Publish a new book with a comprehensive listing of all of those from County Kildare who died in World War 1.
- Create and publish online additional online digital content featuring original archival material from the Local Studies & Archives collections of Kildare Library Service.
- Partnering with Irish Academic Press to commission a book of essays on 'County Kildare and the Irish Revolution' as part of a series (to be published in second half of 2021).
- Continue to support and publish local research on www.kildare.ie/ehistory and also in the local media. Among the topics are: General Strike and cancellation of Punchestown in April 1920, the June 1920 Local Elections, the burning of Athy and Maynooth courthouses, attacks on R.I.C. stations in County Kildare, the Kill ambush in August 1920 and subsequent reprisals; along with other significant community events that took place during the struggle for independence.
- Explore the possibility of employing a historian in residence to assist with the implementation of the Decade of Centenaries plan and associated activities for County Kildare.
- Continue to engage with local and national cultural institutions, including Athy Heritage Museum, the Curragh Military Museum, the Military Archives, the National Archives and the National Library.
- Facilitated the '120 Years of Local Government' exhibition created by the local authority archivists group that toured libraries in County Kildare in early 2020. This exhibition complemented a booklet on this anniversary, published by Kildare County Council in 2019.

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Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta**
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