

Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association

The [Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association](#) annual conference took place on 6-7 May at the Rural College, Derrynoid. The college is set in woodland below the Sperrin Mountains near Draperstown – you could not imagine a more peaceful idyll for a weekend retreat. There were 28 adults, including Pat & Keith Lander from AIF, and around 10 children.

We worshipped together at Catholic Mass led by Fr Tom on the Saturday evening and a Church of Ireland Eucharist led by William Odling-Smee on the Sunday morning. Following Mass there was a fun games session for adults and children alike, and Keith & Ken's Smarty Pants won the contest! However, the business part of the conference was more serious as we heard that, despite the valuable contribution NIMMA have been making to community housing, integrated education and other societal, contra-sectarian projects, the Community Relations Council funding stopped in March. This is despite the excellent work their new administrator, Rebekah, and her assistant, Meryl, have been doing, and having secured £4500 for advertising posters on the buses, and a series of thirteen 90 second TV ads. NIMMA are currently using their reserves to maintain the office and staff. It will be impossible to continue their community work unless more funds can be secured by September. We had a very interesting session with Prof. Derick Wilson from the consultancy who examined NIMMA's core funding programme presented his paper on the Saturday morning; he was clearly perplexed as to why the government had stopped their funding. At the AGM Ken Dunn was elected Chairman to take up the cudgel from William Odling-Smee.

Keith Lander, AIF UK

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At the recent AGM both William, as Chairman, and Nuala, as Treasurer completed their terms of office. Both have guided NIMMA through traumatic times with staff changes and then the removal of our CRC core funding. I would want, on your behalf, to thank them both for the many hours of voluntary service given to furthering the cause of mixed marriage both in Northern Ireland and further afield. They have been replaced by myself as Chair and Mary as Treasurer. We both have a hard act to follow.

The good news is that the Dublin Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund has decided to give us a one year grant of €20,000 to help cover our running costs. To celebrate this Maura and I attended a reception in Iveagh House, Dublin where we had an opportunity to meet the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his senior civil servants, along with representatives of about 60 other groups who also received awards. These funds have eased our immediate needs, but we still have a relatively short time to acquire more long-term funding. Anyone with knowledge of a body that would fund NIMMA should get in touch with the office and their suggestion will be followed up.

The irony that Dublin has funded us when CRC refused to do so has not been lost on all those I have spoken to!

An appeal for help to find financial assistance is going out from NIMMA to all those we think could influence our future funding. If you have any ideas of who should receive such a letter please notify the office who will make the necessary arrangements.

Ken Dunn, NIMMA

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