



Maeve O'Rourke

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## Fw: Magdalene women - consultation in Mansion House?

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**From:** Maeve O'Rourke  
**Sent:** 31 January 2018 18:35  
**To:** [caoimhghin.o'caolain@oireachtas.ie](mailto:caoimhghin.o'caolain@oireachtas.ie)  
**Subject:** Magdalene women - consultation in Mansion House?

Dear Caoimhghin,

Many thanks for your work chairing the Justice Committee's hearing with the Ombudsman and Department officials today.

I'm sorry that this email is so late - I have been in meetings all afternoon.

I am really grateful for your offer to raise the question of a meeting of all Magdalene survivors with the Lord Mayor this evening.

The ICCL, Justice for Magdalenes Research, the NWCi, Amnesty International and Sage Support and Advocacy Service have all proposed that the Department of Justice should fund and provide the logistical support for all of the Magdalene women to meet each other and to consult on the question of memorialisation at the same time. We would love to see this happen in the Mansion House. At present, I believe that Dublin City Councillors (led by the Sinn Fein councillors) are organising to put together a meeting and consultation of the women - but they are at the early stages and it would be wonderful to have the Lord Mayor's support and the use of the Mansion House for the purpose.

Here are some brief background points:

- One of Judge Quirke's recommendations (not implemented by the Department of

Justice to date) was that the Magdalene women should be supported to meet each other. There are no funded support groups specifically for Magdalene women in operation in Ireland and the fact that their names were changed in the institutions has made it very difficult for them to group together of their own accord.

- Meanwhile, several former Magdalene buildings and sites have been the subject of planning permission applications and plans for commercial sale. Because they have not met or been consulted, the women have not been able to participate in the planning application processes and their experiences in the institutions and wishes regarding memorialisation have been ignored.
- Both Cork City Council and the elected Councillors of Dublin City Council have recognised the need for consultation with Magdalene survivors prior to the development of former Magdalene sites. In March 2017, Dublin City Councillors agreed a motion requesting 'that Dublin City Council commits to convening and consulting with a committee of Magdalene survivors, with a view to establishing a memorial at the site of the council owned Sean McDermott Street convent, as recommended by the Quirke Commission and promised by the Government as part of the Magdalene restorative justice scheme.' In its decision of 13 December 2017 regarding the Sunday's Well site, Cork City Council states that planning permission depends (inter alia) on receipt of proposals for the 'interpretation and memorialisation of the site...in consultation with relevant representative groups associated with the history of the Good Shepherd Convent'.
- In April 2017, JFMR wrote to Minister Frances Fitzgerald and the Taoiseach to ask that the government fund and support a meeting of the women (the Department of Justice holds the contact details of the women who have applied the scheme). The letters did not meet with a positive response.
- I believe that the Lord Mayor's support could help us all to achieve an historic meeting of the Magdalene women and to allow for consultation with them on the issue of memorialisation at the same time. A couple of years ago Justice for Magdalenes received the Lord Mayor's award and brought a number of the women together for the event. They loved it and I think that we now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make this happen for all of the women. It would be a form of redress that money cannot buy, and it is something that the women are in fact already entitled to under the Magdalene scheme (which forced them to sign away all of their rights against the state in order to receive their lump sums).

Many thanks and please don't hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] in relation to the above.

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