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Sinn Fein outlines concerns regarding Pride of the Park Armoy, to the Parades Commission.

Published: 29 July, 2008

Sinn Fein Councillors in Moyle have met with the Parades Commission to highlight serious concerns in relation to parading in the Moyle area. The meeting took place recently following recent parades in Armoy and Ballycastle.

The 'Pride of the Park' annual band parade in Armoy drew strong criticism following reports of Paramilitary displays in the form of flags and bannerets. Standards were carried throughout the parade depicting the names of deceased Loyalist Paramilitary members of the UFF and the UVF.

Joe Bratty, a UFF member who was involved in the murder of 5 Catholics at Sean Grahams Bookmakers in Belfast in 1992 had his name prominently displayed at the head of Sandy Row Flute Band. Also displayed in the Pride of the Park Parade Armoy, were the names of UDA member William Campbell and UVF man Robert Freeman by Dunaghy Flute Band and Freeman Memorial respectively.

Robert Freeman was one of four UVF men killed priming a bomb bound for a Catholic owned restaurant near Coleraine on the 2nd of October 1975. 12 people in total died that day at the hands of the UVF including 6 Catholic, and 2 Protestant civilians.

William Campbell of the UDA also died at his own hands while handling a pipe bomb in a derelict house in Winston Way in the Heights area of Coleraine on the 3rd January 2002. Nationalists claimed at the time that since September 2000, over 100 catholic homes had been attacked in the area up until Campbell's death.

Sinn Fein Councillor in Moyle, Pdraig Mc Shane, outlined some of the concerns of residents in the village of Armoy.

'While Armoy Residents can be rightly proud of building strong community relations over the last number of years, there are those in the village who have another, more sinister agenda. The local flute band seems to be engaged in a campaign of intimidation with these Paramilitary displays in the village. I along with my party colleagues have highlighted the concerns of residents to the Parades

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Commission. I will be expecting the Commission to address these concerns on behalf of all the residents of Armoy when making future decisions concerning this parade."

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Councillor Mc Shane added, "In the recent past DUP MLA Mervyn Storey has been quite vocal in his support for the organisers of this parade. I would now call on the MLA to use his undoubted influence to curtail any repetitions of the disgusting scenes witnessed in Armoy over the last few years. If he feels he carries no clout with the organisers then he must distance himself from this parade and align himself with those who want to enhance community relations in the village of Armoy."

ENDS

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