

# BELEAST TELEGRAPH

ADVERTISEMENT

**Belfast Telegraph - IPR Website of the Year**

Search Site

Advanced Search

- Loadzaccars.co.uk
- Loadzajobs.co.uk
- Propertynews.com
- Belfast Telegraph TV
- Family Notices
- Ads For Free

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Local & National](#)

## Local & National

### Ministers did hold victims' role talks

Thursday, January 17, 2008

By Chris Thornton

An internal Stormont memo has revealed Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness had high level talks about re-running the hunt for the Victims Commissioner two weeks before their office denied they were planning to do it.

The memo, released under the Freedom of Information Act, shows the First Ministers met the Commissioner for Public Appointments about their proposal on September 11 last year.

According to the minute of the meeting, Mr Paisley told Felicity Huston, the public jobs watchdog, that he and Mr McGuinness were looking at "the possibility of running a new, OCPA-regulated appointments process".

But on September 26, their office denied to this newspaper that the post would be re-advertised. On October 8, the ministers then announced that they were re-advertising the post.

The hunt for the permanent Victims Commissioner has now dragged on for almost a full year.

The £65,000-a-year job was first advertised in January last year when direct rule ministers were in overall charge of the process.

Interviews were conducted by officials, and Mr Paisley and Mr McGuinness were handed the shortlist of six candidates when they became First and Deputy First Ministers on May 8.

They then told MLAs they hoped to appoint a commissioner by mid-July.

That didn't happen, and material released to the Belfast Telegraph under FoI Act shows that they considered scrapping the whole process.

In mid-August they asked for a meeting with the Commissioner for Public Appointments. According to a memo this would be "related to the FMDFM views to stopping the new Victims Commissioner process".

The First Ministers met Mrs Huston on September 11 with their special advisors. The minutes of the meeting say Mr Paisley told her "they would be judged on the performance of the person appointed as Victims and Survivors Commissioner" and the appointment must reflect the "new dispensation".

He also said he and Mr McGuinness were "very keen that the person appointed has the credibility associated with being appointed under a process which is taken forward under the FM and dFM".

"For these reasons, he and the dFM would be willing to look at the option of re-running the appointment process".

Mrs Huston said they would need "a strong reason" to start the process.

Mr McGuinness said they hoped to encourage more candidates to apply to a process carried out under local ministers.

Mrs Huston said that would be a "legitimate basis for beginning a new process".

Two weeks later, this newspaper asked the First Ministers' Office if they were planning to re-advertise the post.

A spokesman denied it. "There is no intention to readvertise the position and the issue is still with the First and Deputy First Minister," he said.

On October 8, the ministers announced that they were seeking new applicants and they hoped to appoint

-  Email Article
-  Print Version
-  Search
-  +Most Emailed
-  +Most Read

- Belfast Telegraph**
- Home
- News
  - Local & National
  - World news
  - Politics
  - Environment
  - Education
  - Letters
  - Opinion
  - Technology
- Breaking News
- Northwest Edition
- Business
- Business Telegraph
- Sport
- Health
- Features
- Columnists
- Entertainment
- Homefinder
- Weather
- Archive
- Calendar 2008
- Telegraph Travel
- Shopping Directory
- Inside Belfast
  - Jobs
  - Training
  - Dating
  - Casino
  - Bingo
  - Reader Offers
  - Diners' Club
- Services
  - RSS
  - Media Kit

#### Don't Miss . . .

##### Brain breakthrough



Scientists discover way to reverse memory loss

##### Sleep disorders



Why you don't have to take insomnia lying down

##### Video: Homefinder



Helen Carson tries a slice of the good life in Ballymena

##### Audio: Liverpool



Rafa Benitez speaks ahead of the West Ham match

##### Belfast Telegraph Business Awards



Annual event celebrating the best of Ulster commerce

##### Video: Miss NI



Melissa Patton talks about her life as a beauty queen

##### Belfast Fashion Week



City prepares for some catwalk glamour

##### Video: Healy's hat-trick



David scores at Belfast Telegraph Sports Awards

##### Net success



Young web designers honoured at ceremony

ADVERTISEMENTS

Other Titles

- » [Sunday Life](#)
- » [Ireland's Saturday Night](#)
- » [Community Telegraph](#)

by the end of December.

No announcement has been made yet.

Last week the Belfast Telegraph revealed that material released under FoI showed the First Ministers went against the advice of civil servants in extending the process.

A spokeswoman for their office said they "took into account a range of views including those of officials, the Commissioner for Public Appointments and legal Counsel before deciding to proceed with the extension to the appointments process.

Alliance MLA Trevor Lunn yesterday hit out at the delays in the process, describing it as "a total disgrace". "It is an affront to victims who have already been left without a voice for the past 13 months," he said.

**More articles in Local & National**

- » [Police went through red light](#)
- » [Call for action after latest fatal crash at accident black spot](#)
- » [Province has some catching up to do on the walking front](#)
- » [Sand dunes under threat](#)
- » [UFU warning over energy](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

Best of 2007 . . .

Records



Music stars reveal their pick of this year's tunes

Gigs



The pick of this year's finest concerts and performances

Films



Our experts reveal their pick of the year's movies

Books



Authors reveal their pick of this year's finest writing

2007 In Pictures

[Jan & Feb](#)

[March](#)

[April](#)

[May](#)

[June](#)

[July](#)

[August](#)

[September](#)

[October](#)

[November](#)

[December](#)

Video

[A taste of tinseltown](#)



Mischa the belle of Belfast city for movie premiere

[What's the big Ikea?](#)



The iconic Swedish superstore opens

[BT Woman of the Year](#)



Applauding Ulster's most exceptional women

[Omagh blaze tragedy](#)



Special report on Northern Ireland's worst house fire

[Belfast Telegraph Property Awards](#)



Celebrating excellence at the inaugural awards gala

[Best view in town](#)



Special multimedia report on Belfast Wheel

[Big Man's big fry](#)



First Minister's vision is outlined over breakfast



### Ulster's boy wonder



Watch our interview with golf sensation Rory McIlroy

### In Pictures . . .

#### News

- [Ulster Fry event](#)
- [The Twelfth](#)
- [Bull Run](#)
- [Award-winners](#)
- [Flooded Ulster](#)
- [Sunny Northern Ireland](#)
- [Devolution Day](#)
- [Assembly Elections](#)
- [Maze tumbles](#)
- [Blair quits](#)
- [Last watchtower](#)
- [Carrick-a-rede](#)

#### Events

- [Derry Xmas](#)
- [Boss is back](#)
- [Xmas: what a turn on](#)
- [Property Awards](#)
- [50 Cent](#)
- [Enrique Iglesias](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Fantasy Fest](#)
- [Rolling Stones](#)
- [Oxegen 07](#)
- [Beach Party 07](#)
- [Balmoral Show](#)
- [Razorlight](#)
- [St Patrick's Day](#)
- [Mardis Gras](#)
- [Justin Timberlake](#)
- [Brit Awards 07](#)

#### Sport

- [Spain 1 Norn Iron 0](#)
- [Win over Denmark](#)
- [Windsor win](#)
- [Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
- [British Open](#)
- [Copa America Final](#)
- [N Ireland v Sweden](#)
- [Six Nations](#)
- [World in Sport](#)