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## The Four Just Men

SDLP chief John Hume might seem a little out of step but Ulster politicians secured a dramatic talks breakthrough last night.

Now Mr Hume, left, Ian Paisley of the DUP, Ulster Unionist Martin Smyth and the Alliance's John Alderdice are to hold historic round-table negotiations on a new way forward for the Province on Monday, June 17.

They agreed the date with a jubilant Peter Brooke after the four party leaders — including Mr Hume, who broke his self-imposed exile to return to Stormont — got together round the same

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table at Parliament Buildings.

The 11-day breathing space will be used by the two governments to find a suitable person to chair strand two negotiations involving Dublin.

Almost 30 names — including 23 from the two unionist parties — are in the melting pot. Hopes were high last night that someone would be found to fill the hot seat.

Yesterday's meeting of party leaders was their first face-to-face encounter since the troubled Brooke talks began six weeks ago

and then got bogged down in cross-party squabbling and procedural disputes.

The deadlock ended suddenly yesterday after Dublin, responding to hotline overtures from the Secretary of State, signalled its willingness to restore agreed venues to standing orders for the North-South strand of talks.

Unionists had protested on Tuesday that Dublin had omitted the venues, including Stormont, from a document which the parties had already agreed with Mr Brooke.

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