

Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum Annual Report 2023

Charity no. 100448 (www.charitycommissionni.org.uk)

The Trustees of the Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period 1 January – 31 December 2023.

Achievements 2023: A Memorable Year!

From the Royal Visit to Enniskillen Castle in May to hosting the U.S. Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs in September, much excitement was seen, and visitors from far and wide were welcomed. The year was book-ended by the launches of two new publications. The Museum Friends organised a launch of Cardwell McClure's invaluable and extensively researched family history of his uncle, the artist, William Scott. The end of the year witnessed the exhibition and much-anticipated launch of Mavis Thomson's beautifully produced publication, "Coloured Thoughts".

The work of Fermanagh County Museum was supported throughout by the Friends of Fermanagh County Museum.

Thanks to our Friends

2023 saw 83, 679 people visiting Enniskillen Castle;
8 new exhibitions were opened;
6 talks were held;
6 trails were offered;
12 additional events organised;
9 public events hosted;
246 objects, documents & photographs were accessioned into our collections;
104 school visits were arranged;
75 general tours given.

More details about 2023 can be found in the 2023 Friends Annual Newsletter on our website:

<https://www.enniskillencastle.co.uk/get-involved/become-a-friend/friends-annual-newsletters/>

Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum Annual Trip

2023's Annual Friends Trip saw a visit to Lough Derg via the Lough Erne Pilgrim Way. From the medieval era onwards, pilgrims from across Europe have travelled through Co Fermanagh on their way to St Patrick's Purgatory, Co Donegal. The Friends trip retraced their journey, following the route around Lough Erne to Lough Derg. Prior, Monsignor La Flynn, was our guide for the day around the historic pilgrimage site.

The visit ended with the viewing of an exhibition by artists, Dara Hand and Alison Britton at the nearby Cowshed Studios and Gallery. Other events organised as part of the Lough Erne Pilgrim Way programme included Helen Lanigan Wood's talk, "Pilgrim Journeys: Lough Erne to Lough Derg: Fermanagh to Compostela and Rome" and a tour of Galloon Ancient Graveyard by Megan Henvey as part of European Heritage Open Days.

Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum

Administrative Details

Trustees & Committee:

Acting Chair: Esdille Lappin

Vice Chair: Séamas Mac Annaidh

Treasurer: Sam Robinson

Secretary: It was agreed to leave this role in abeyance for the current period unless someone stepped forward. In the meantime, the Museum Manager will nominate a member of staff to take minutes of the meetings.

Election of Members: Marion Maxwell; Norma Heap; Toni Johnson; Selwyn Johnston; Bernadette Layden; Mark Scott; Mary O'Donnell (7 in total, rather than 6 to compensate for fewer Officers elected). Plus Museum Manager, Sarah McHugh
All ratified.

It is with great sadness to record that **Bernadette Layden** passed away on 26 May 2023. Bernadette had been of huge support to the Friends and to Fermanagh County Museum. She was a highly respected historian, author and storyteller. In recent years, Bernadette took the role of Secretary on the Friends Committee. She is greatly missed by all who knew her.

THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF FERMANAGH COUNTY MUSEUM CONSTITUTION

1) Name

The Association shall be called The Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum and the official address shall be c/o Fermanagh County Museum, Castle Barracks, Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, BT74 7HL.

2) Object:

i. The object of the Association shall be to further the interests of Fermanagh County Museum, through the activities of the Friends, and to that end:

a) In consultation with the Curator to assist with the development of the museum and its collection of educational exhibits and other records;

b) To participate in the activities of the museum and to encourage the wider knowledge, use, and enjoyment of its collections and facilities.

ii. The Association shall pursue the above object to the extent only that it is charitable and by charitable means only and shall be non-profit making.

3) Membership

i. Membership shall be open to two categories, individuals and corporate bodies who support the object of the Association and pay to the funds of the Association such sum as shall from time to time be fixed by the committee as the subscription for the particular category of membership applicable.

ii. Membership shall lapse if any subscription is unpaid six months after it is due.

iii. Honorary Membership

Persons who have rendered outstanding service to the museum or the Association may be

elected by the Association to honorary life membership.

4) Committee

i. At the annual general meeting in each year the Association shall elect from its membership its officers and committee. The officers, namely a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer, shall each hold office for one year but shall be eligible for re-election. Similarly, the committee members will serve for one year and be eligible for re-election.

The Committee shall consist of the officers, together with six other elected members of committee, and the Curator of the museum and one other member of the museum's staff nominated by the Curator who shall be, ex-officio, members of the committee. If a member of the museum staff be already elected to the committee, the curator will be empowered to make further nomination from the membership. Five members of the committee for time being, one of whom must be the Curator or the Curator's nominee, shall constitute a quorum.

ii. Each candidate for election to the committee must be proposed and seconded by members present at the meeting, and if any candidate is unable to be present at the meeting then that person's nomination must be accompanied by their consent to serve.

iii. If the nominations for the committee exceed the number of vacancies a secret ballot shall take place.

iv. The committee shall have power to fill any vacancies arising amongst the officers and committee members and shall have power to co-opt not more than five additional voting members during any one year.

5) Meetings

i. An annual general meeting of the Association shall be held in each calendar year. The business of the meeting shall include reception of the committee's report and the audited accounts of the Association, and the election of the officers and members of the committee for the ensuing year.

ii. Eight days' notice of any general meeting of the Association shall be given in writing to each member.

6) Financial Provisions

i. The treasurer shall keep a full record of the income and expenditure of the Association. In accordance with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland requirements, the accounts of the Association shall undergo an external Independent Examination annually and those accounts shall be presented to the members at the annual general meeting.

ii. In the event of the winding up of the Association, its funds and assets shall pass to such body having charitable objects as may be selected by a majority of the members present and voting at a meeting of the Association convened for that purpose.

7) Amendment

This constitution may be altered by resolution passed by a two thirds majority of members present and voting at a general meeting. The committee must give each member eight days written notice of any motion for such alteration, provided that no amendment is made which would cause the Association to cease to be a charity at law.

Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum

Public Benefit

The direct benefit which flows from purpose 2.i.a of the Constitution includes increasing public access to and enjoyment of collections relating to the heritage of Fermanagh. The Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum has funded purchases for Fermanagh County Museum's collection as well as provided match-funding, enabling the Museum to secure additional grant-aid from bodies such as the Art Fund, the Northern Ireland Museums Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

An additional benefit which flows from purpose 2.i.a includes the transfer of privately owned artefacts into the public domain through the Association's encouragement of members to donate significant artefacts relevant to the Museum's Collections Development Policy. Fermanagh County Museum is a fully Accredited Museum as part of the UK standards for museums and galleries administered by the Northern Ireland Museums Council on behalf of the Arts Council, England.

These benefits are evidenced through the Association's funding assistance, since its inception in 1984, in helping to acquire over 50 key artefacts for the Museum for public display. The works include major acquisitions by artists of local and national significance including William Scott (1913-1989) and TP Flanagan (1929-2011) as well as rare examples of Belleek Pottery. In addition, in 2019, over 130 donations and bequests of artefacts were received and accepted by Fermanagh County Museum. This purpose does not lead to harm.

The direct benefit which flows from purpose 2.i.b of the Constitution includes increasing public understanding of and connection with Fermanagh's rich heritage involving diverse audiences and communities. The Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum acts as an advocate and ambassador for the Museum Service. It encourages the contribution of knowledge and community expertise enhancing information relating to the history of the County and the Museum's collections. It supports improvement of the Museum's public facilities and services. These benefits are evidenced through increased public engagement. In 2023, over 83,000 people from the local community as well as tourists benefited from the Museum's programme of collection displays, exhibitions, tours, schools workshops and events. Regular visitor feedback and independent evaluation of services through surveys and reports highlights increased audience participation and increased levels of satisfaction. This purpose does not lead to harm.

The Association's beneficiaries are people of all ages, communities, abilities and faiths, with an interest in safe-guarding, discovering and enjoying the heritage of Fermanagh. This includes both the local community and tourists. A private benefit to trustees may arise from our programme of ongoing training in good governance, finance etc. Through this training trustees gain skills and experience which are transferable to other settings. These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

Annual report presented and approved, AGM 23 March 2024, and signed on behalf of the Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum:

Esdille Lappin
Chair
Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum