

# Conway Mill Preservation Trust Limited.



## Trustees' Annual Report

From 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 - To 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

[Charity Nic. 101569](#)

[Date registered. 27/08/2015](#)

### [Background](#)

The Conway Mill Preservation Trust Limited was established in 30-11-1999 with the aim of preserving, protecting, and restoring the mill complex for the benefit of the inhabitants of Belfast and of West Belfast in particular. Its main functions are: Overseeing the restoration of Conway Mill; Ensuring that the building's heritage is preserved for future generations; Developing projects and mediums through which visitors, from near and far, can interpret the buildings and the social history of the linen industry and Belfast.; Organising events and training related to local heritage preservation; Maintaining the buildings and site and documenting all works.

After an extensive refurbishment, (completed in 2011), the Mill is now one of Belfast's best preserved and most important historical buildings. It provides a unique multi-functional space, at the same time preserving the local industrial heritage and history of the area. The mill comprises: Two main blocks linked by a glass roof with an inner court yard; car parks to the front and rear of the complex. Facilities within the Mill Complex include: - Disability access; 62 business units, theatre and arts spaces, High speed Wi-Fi connection; Service lifts; Toilet facilities; free onsite parking as well as available street parking.

The Conway Mill is one of the last remaining Mill sites in Belfast, and the only one in West Belfast, which is community-owned. In economically devastated West Belfast the Trust recognises the need for local communities to maintain ownership and control of assets and resources which can be used to provide opportunities for people to become active players in the local economy and to improve their quality of life.

### [CMPT Charitable objectives are:](#)

To preserve for the benefit of the inhabitants of Belfast and in particular of West Belfast whatever of the historical, architectural and constructional heritage may exist in and around the Conway Mill Complex in the form of buildings of particular beauty or historical, architectural or constructional interest.

### A statement of the main purposes as defined by the charity commission is:

The advancement of environmental protection or improvement.

### Who do we help?

- Tenants
- Voluntary and community sector
- Interface communities
- Students
- Ethnic minorities
- Specific areas of deprivation
- Local residents

### How do we do this?

The refurbishment of the two main blocks within the Mill complex has provided great benefits to the area. The board of Trustees continues to work to:

- Tackle dereliction
- Facilitate business development
- Promote educational opportunities
- Develop economic opportunities
- Promote Tourism locally
- Improved health and wellbeing for the people of the area

### HOW DO THESE ACTIVITIES PROVIDE A BENEFIT?

#### Facilitation of business development

We have 62 business units within the Mill complex. Tenants represent the following industries: - Architecture & Design; Arts & Crafts; Community, Engineering; Hospitality; Insurance; Music, Media and Production; ICT; Tourism and Leisure; Legal.

Affordable rental units provide essential space for business development and growth. The direct impact is lower employment rates locally. Our tenants are representative of a broad Belfast base. Attracting tenants from across the city raises the profile of the West Belfast neighbourhood and promotes inclusion, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

During the period 1st December 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 the Conway Mill Preservation Trust provided the following services:

#### Promotion of educational opportunities

Students of architecture, engineering, history and international studies visit the Mill to explore its industrial and social history, its unique Georgian architecture as seen in the Old Block and the 'new' block representative of Edwardian design. Also, of interest is the transfer of ownership to the local community and the recent history of the Mill.

Local schools, theatre companies, local artists, musicians, heritage bodies, museums, community organisations and production companies have benefitted from access to unique spaces within the complex for the purpose of exhibition, performance, workshops, film and documentary and outreach.

#### Tackle dereliction:

Development of The Attic in the Old Block of the main Mill complex; The Drying Room, the Theatre, engine rooms and boiler house.

The large Attic is ideal for the development of incubation hubs for new business start-ups, we continue to explore a way forward to make this happen and are waiting on confirmation to put in new stairs.

The Drying Room is still in need of development to make it a multi-functional creative space.

The Theatre has been brought into line with Health and safety regulations with new double doors fitted and a really good makeover which has had great reviews.

The Mill Museum is almost ready to open to tourists and the public with some consultation with the NIMC to which we are now members.

Some local schools have now used the Mills history and museum as part of their class curriculum.

#### Audits completed include:

- Ansvar Insurance
- Annual servicing of Lifts
- Fire Risk assessment
- Health and Safety audit.
- Gas boilers serviced
- Ecolab environmental assessment
- Lightening audit.
- Fire and emergency lights

#### Develop economic opportunities

The Attic of the old Mill / engine room and boiler house connected to the Mill complex has been identified for development for much needed start-up businesses. The Board of Directors are exploring the costs of renovation with a view to acquiring funding to aid this much needed development. We are very hopeful we can bring these important parts of the mill complex into use in the future.

The Drying Room is a unique, dramatic space which is a hidden gem within the Mill. The board are exploring a future funding package to bring this beautiful part of the old mill complex into use. This area is ideal for musical performance, theatre, exhibition of art, installations, presentations and film. We also envisage marketing this space as a unique wedding venue for small intimate weddings. This space really has it all and will be a great asset to the Mill.

The Mill Theatre is included in our marketing as a space within the Mill for weddings and other celebrations. As part of our plan to tie in with Fáilte Feirste Thiar and Belfast Welcome Centre we would hope to promote a package for cruise ship passengers which would encompass a brief history of the Mill, traditional Irish music, song and or dance, food and refreshments. The Theatre will attract a range of creative artists, community groups, businesses and corporations who will be able to avail of the range of packages to fit their needs.

#### [Promote Tourism locally](#)

We are developing the Mill museum / exhibition shop, the Board with help from the NIMC and others have been exploring the best way forward with this project. We are keen to make this a reality soon. Our Artists in residence will have an opportunity to exhibit and sell their works in the Museum shop and with the NIMC helping us to make the best of the resources we have at hand and tell story and experience we have of the history of linen production for the local, national and international tourist/ visitors.

Staff and Board members engage with Fáilte Feirste Thiar and community tourism workshops which are city wide and provide great networking opportunities. Creation of new services within the Mill to meet with local and international tourism is a work in progress and we are keen to pursue this via FFT, Belfast Welcome Centre and Belfast City Council to link-in to planned Linen tourism trails.

#### [Improved health and wellbeing](#)

During this reporting period the Trust has facilitated the following groups through the use of Units and other spaces for the delivery of arts, community information services, counselling and Intervention services, Education and training.

The following is a list of organisations who benefited: -

John Bosco ABC

Food bank

Aisling Awards

Féile an Phobail

Workforce Awards

Conway Education Centre

AMPS Studio

Tar Anall

SIPs

Conway Education Centre

MENI;

[Private benefit:](#)

This is no private benefit.

DECLARATION

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

**Full Name(s)**

**Mr Andrew Martin Donnelly**

**Position**

**Director**

**DATE 30/11/2023**