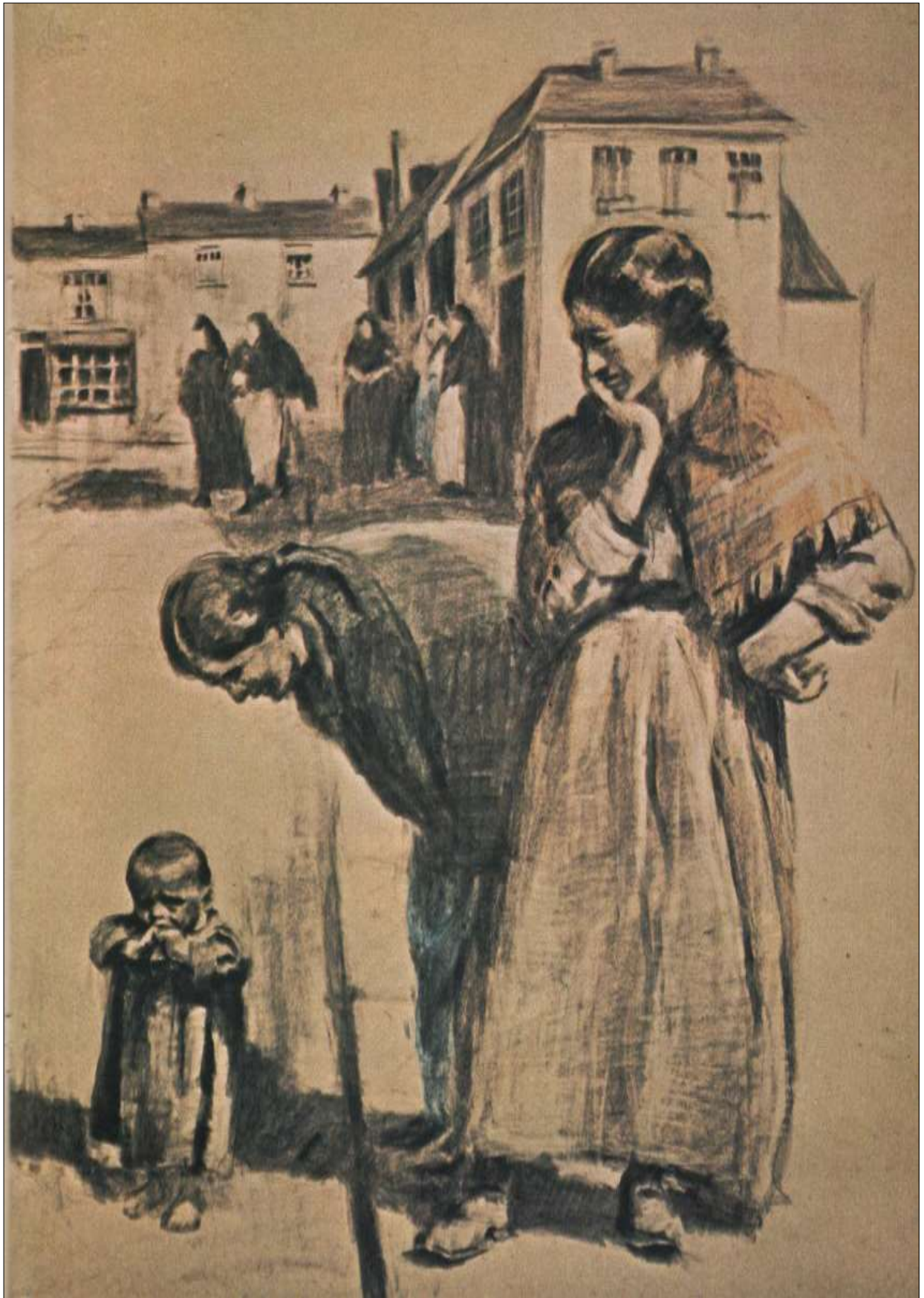




Brookfield Business Centre  
333 Crumlin Road  
Belfast  
BT14 7EA

# **FLAX TRUST REPORT 2022**



"Study of a Lost Child" by William Conor, Courtesy of the Ulster Museum

## **The Flax Trust**

### **Trustees**



Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.  
Chair



Mrs Maura Lundy



Mr John Patterson



Sr Mary Turley pbvm

### **Advisory Board**

Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.

Maura Lundy

John Patterson

Sr Mary Turley pbvm

Cletus McCloskey

John Carson C.B.E.

Briege Dobbin

Lady Empey M.B.E.

Jeffe Jeffers

Marian Kane

Paul McBride

Neil McCann

Eamon McElroy

James McGinn

Robert McNeill

Dr Peter Smyth

Ann Tanney

**NI Charity Commission Number:** NIC 103133

**HMRC Charity Number:** XN4870

From literally nothing the Flax Trust has:

- 1977 delivered the former Brookfield linen mill from a state of dereliction into a 232,000sq. ft. Business Centre in which it accommodated over 70 small business, acted as a business incubator for all of Belfast creating over 400 businesses;
- provided training and personal development for several hundred people each year through Brookfield Business School Ltd (Investors in people) and Community Aid 2000 Ltd (Investors in People);
- developed an International Arts Centre - Theatre, Art Gallery, Dance Studio and the Pittsburgh Bar & Steelers' Restaurant;
- initiated a Community Association and health programmes;
- initiated social programmes which have served thousands of Meals on Wheels in addition to Day Care Centre meals;
- built a Medical Centre housing Ardoyne Community Healthcare Centre, Ardoyne/Shankill Healthy Living Centre, Doctor's & Dental Surgeries, Elderly Day Care Centre;
- built a Shopping Centre including a supermarket, post office, pharmacy, fancy goods store, florist, community-based organisations, café, offices and workshops providing services;
- 1982 Flax Trust/America was set up – Americans for Reconciliation through Economic Development 501(C)3
- Flax Housing Association Ltd was set up in the 1980's to address the acute shortage of social housing and sheltered accommodation in the North Belfast area.
- assisted Bannside Development Centre in Portadown, a socio-economic regeneration initiative which also serves to bridge the religious divide and promote mutual understanding;
- initiated the Foyer Project which assists homeless and unemployed young people age 16-25, providing accommodation, independent living and developing skills to enhance employability;
- in the late 1980's in a joint venture with Bombardier Aerospace redeveloped the derelict Belfast Co-operative department store in York Street into an 180,000 sq. ft. 'neutral' city centre block. Interpoint has housed the Northern Ireland Forum for Reconciliation; the Patton Police Commission; the Northern Ireland Justice Review; was home to the Novatech initiative which developed new technology-based ventures through a unique process of technology transfer and licensing, housed a range of new technology-based businesses; Northern Ireland Office, Department of Culture Arts & leisure (DCAL). Interpoint site is now owned by Ulster University;
- in 1992/3 set up Ulster Community Conference an association of community based economic development organizations to support, foster and co-ordinate the community economic enterprise.
- In 1995 initiated the creation of Ulster Community Investment Trust Ltd. UCIT was established as a provider of affordable loans and free business support and mentoring for the social economy sector.
- 1995 opened Holy Rood House. Accommodation for the frail elderly.
- Initiated the School for Social Enterprises in Ireland, set up in 2003 in partnership with Ulster University in response to the need for high quality education, training and development for the growing social economy sector.

- The highly successful Best Practice visit in 2010 to Fordham University, New York by a group of SSEI Graduates and a reciprocal visit of a delegation from Fordham University in 2013 was organized through Flax Trust/America. SSEI continues to roll out a series of high-profile Master Classes and plays a major role in professionalising the social economic sector.
- Flax Trust Classics initiated in 2012 provides Bursary Awards to Queen’s University for young classical musicians, to Camerata Ireland’s Young Musicians of the Future, City of Belfast Youth Orchestra (CBYO) and City of Belfast School of Music with the objective of supporting their continued studies.
- Flax Trust Inter-School, Cross Community Choir Competition FISCA bursaries initiated in 2013 continues to involve over 300 pupils from 20 schools in North Belfast Primary and Post Primary. FISCA is bridging the divide through music.
- In 2015 created shared performance space at Holy Cross Church for the wider community as part of ongoing development and enrichment of diverse musical talent.
- 2015 The new 76 bed 5 Star Nursing Home for the elderly in North Belfast was officially opened serving both communities.
- 2016 - The Flax Trust continues to support The Education Task Group to develop a vision for Education in North Belfast. The vision is to build an ‘All Faith Education Village’.
- 2016 – The Flax Trust funded the Houben Centre for Cross Community, personal development, community leadership and inter community understanding.
- 2016 – The Flax Trust acquired the Shankill Mission Building to facilitate Argyle Business Centre re: development of a Hospitality Training facility for the Shankill area to improve local employment opportunities,
- 2017 – The Flax Trust set-up the ABC Trust, a Community Regeneration Project to facilitate the transfer of St Gemma’s School to the new Trust to develop a health and leisure facility.
- 2018 – A housing development programme of £20,000,000 was negotiated for the people of Ardoyne and Old Park, North Belfast.
- 2018 – Flax Trust Arts presented the musical Oliver during Community Week, staged in a unique “Big Top” setting, comprising people from North Belfast and Greater Belfast areas.
- 2019 – Flax Trust Arts presented Rodgers & Hammerstein’s OKLAHOMA in the MAC Theatre, Belfast, the week of August 7<sup>th</sup> as part of Community Week, the cast being from North Belfast and Greater Belfast Area.
- 2020 – Flax Trust continued work with ABC Trust on the new Health & Leisure Centre to replace St. Gemma’s School. This work also included support from Urban Villages.
- 2021 – The ABC Trust development is well underway. Completion date March 2024.
- 2022 – The conversion of the Old Mill, new shops and apartments have been completed

# EDUCATION

## Future Strategic Education Strategy



As the number of children attending Mercy College continues to increase and put a strain on the school to accommodate them, Flax Trust continues to support the Education Task Group to develop a vision for education in North Belfast. The vision to build an ‘All Faith Education Village’ becomes more urgent at the start of each new academic year.

Education Minister Michelle McIlveen (DUP) made a statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly announcing 28 schools were to advance in planning under the Major Capital Works Program in March 2022. Mercy Collage in North Belfast was one of those listed. The schools will benefit from an estimated capital investment of £794m. This actions the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage of the Education Strategy.



## School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI)

The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI) is a Flax Trust / Ulster University alliance (2005) devoted exclusively to leadership, management and business development for the social economy sector.

'The TRANSFORM' Social Enterprise Development Programme offers the award of an Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise, fully accredited by Ulster University.

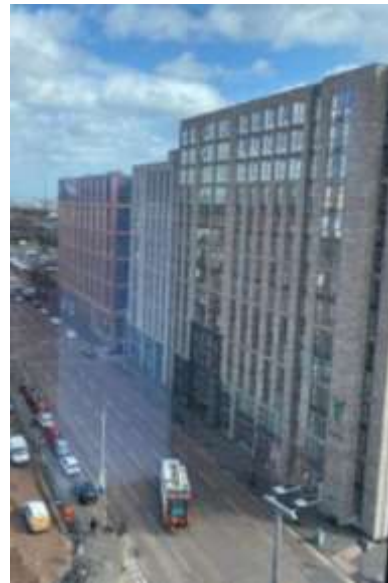
It is aimed at individuals in existing community organisations, social enterprises and charities who are trying to diversify their income streams and those who have an idea for starting or growing a social enterprise.

The academic content and delivery mechanism reflects the changing needs and emerging trends within the social economy sector, recognising the key drivers for social enterprise development. In addition the cohort participate in other learning opportunities with the Management & Leadership Networks series of seminars and conferences.

With the opening of the new Ulster University Campus in Belfast City Centre is a Flax Trust Dream come true on the original site of its Interpoint Building.



Form Students in class



New Ulster University, Belfast City Centre

### SSEI Social Enterprise Collaboration

During the year the SSEI with Flax Trust support partnered with Belfast City Council, Work West Enterprise Agency and the social enterprise GLL / Better Organisation to deliver the On-Purpose conference.



SSEI/ADSE graduate Chara Clarke  
Founder of Glow shares her insights  
At the On-Purpose event



Prof Ken O'Neill Chair of SSEI with key note speaker  
Michael Kelly

### SSEI Board of Directors

Prof Kenneth O' Neill Chair  
Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.

Robert Mc Neill  
Prof Jackie McCoy

John Patterson  
Sr Mary Turley pbvm

Charity No. NIC 1004

# THE FLAX TRUST ARTS

Flax Trust Classics Reconciliation Through Music

Production of *Fiddler on the Roof* 2022 MAC Theatre, Belfast - cast of 60



**Leads:** Tevye: Bass/Baritone, Jim McGuigan  
Golde: Soprano, Megan Mooney

Flax Trust Arts Christmas Concert with the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra  
Holy Cross Church, North Belfast, December 2022



Flax Trust Annual Music Bursary  
Award Winners 2022



Katie Lyons

Colm Mohan

The Flax Trust Conductor's CBYO Award



Tilly Martin, Oboe Winner of  
The Flax Trust Conductor's Award  
City of Belfast Youth Orchestra  
Conductor Paul McBride



## Support to Community Groups, Music & Sports Individuals & Organisations 2022

- Community organisations received small grants to support their Christmas recreational programmes and other initiatives within their wider communities
- Educational /Training Bursaries were awarded to support individuals advance their personal educational development.
- Brookfield Business Centre received grants to undertake its wide range of support activities to associated Charity, Community and Other Organisations, including Community Based concerts and the annual Flax Trust Inter Schools Choral Awards.
- Crumlin Star Football Club – grant to meet running costs of paying fees for football pitches and transport etc.
- Adullam Christian Ministries to support Community Education and Training Projects.
- Ardoyne Association - to facilitate its work in providing support and responding to need throughout the local community.
- Bannside - to facilitate its work in providing support and responding to need throughout the local community.



<b>Community</b>	
ABC Health & Leisure Trust	2296.50
Adullam Christian Ministries	1000.00
Ardoyne Association	38970.00
Cursillo	2500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>44766.50</b>

<b>Music &amp; Sport</b>	
Crumlin Star Football Club	1000.00
Aine Doherty	500.00
Hugo Reilly Stuart	500.00
Irish Dance Championships.	1500.00
	<b>3500.00</b>

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As part of the continuing Education Village strategy, Flax Trust supported a number of local Primary Schools and Nursery Groups, in order that specific value-added initiatives could be taken forward.

Primary Schools in North Belfast shared £42,300 of funding from Flax Trust in 2022, and Nursery Groups in North Belfast shared £16,050.00 of funding from Flax Trust in 2022.



#### NURSERY GROUPS

Holy Cross Nursery School	10,000.00
Lamb of God Creche	5,000.00
Wheatfield Nursery School	500.00
174 Trust	1,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,050.00</b>

#### PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Holy Cross Girls Primary School	35,000.00
Holy Cross Boys Primary School	7,300.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£42,300.00</b>

### 3<sup>rd</sup> LEVEL EDUCATION

Podiem	1,800.00
Ulster University	32,000.00
Callum Mc Gilloway	1,500.00
Georgia O'Neill	1,500.00
Catherine Osborne	500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£37,300.00</b>

## Community Regeneration – New Life for Brookfield Mill



The building works at the old mill site have been completed. Town houses and apartments. The building contains 55 apartments and an additional 22 town houses. All fully occupied.



The Galgani housing development on the St Gemma's site is now occupied by families that were in need of homes. This development consists of 53 new affordable housing units of which 29 are houses and 24 apartments and 5 retail units.



New apartments have been built in Ardoyne Avenue with shops underneath these can be purchased or rented. The shops also contain supermarket premises.

The next phase in the redevelopment programme is to build on the old Flax Centre Shopping Mall site. Work is expected to begin in December 2023 with the demolishing of the existing premises.

## COMMUNITY REGENERATION PROJECT, North Belfast



Flax Trust is working in collaboration with ABC Trust and Urban Villages to develop this community regeneration project, providing health, recreational, training facilities and an art centre.

Flax Trust gifted these premises to ABC Trust and has contributed essential running costs for the facility ensuring availability to the community until the building works are completed.



BCT NI currently occupies space on the site and is providing training to the young people of the local community.

The community-based fitness suite / gym on site is put to good use by the local community.



## Flax Trust/America

For over 40 years, the Flax Trust in Belfast has actively promoted its Trust Objects through the support of Flax Trust/America.

The Flax Trust/America charity, 501(c)3, has focused on promoting the educational purposes of Flax Trust, facilitating provision of bursaries for the Advanced Diploma in Transform Social Enterprise Development Programme in partnership with Ulster University's Business School. Since 2007 The Flax Trust/America has supported bursaries and many of the graduates have subsequently engaged in social enterprise initiatives responding to diverse needs in communities throughout Northern Ireland.

### The 32<sup>nd</sup> Flax Trust / America New York Banquet

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Flax Trust / America New York Banquet took place at The Links on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Chaired by Tom O'Brien, Chairman, President & CEO Sterling Bancorp / Director Flax Trust / America.

Rev. Fr. Robert M. Dunn gave the invocation.

Fr. Myles Kavanagh C.P. founder/chair of Flax Trust Belfast addressed the gathering on screen.

#### **Brief reports: -**

Flax Trust Education Outreach – Elaine Burns, Chair ABC Trust (on screen).

UCIT / Community Finance Group Ireland – Robert Reilly, Fordham Law School.

SSEI / School for Social Enterprises in Ireland – Patrick Grace, President & CEO Grace Institute Foundation.

#### **Honourees:**

**John A Coleman**, President, Friendly Sons of St Patrick in City of New York, introduced by Tom O'Brien.

**Sophie Colgan**, Programme Director, The Ireland – US Counsel, Introduced by Brian McCabe, former President American Irish Historical Society.

**Aer Lingus** – acceptance Bill Byrne, Senior VP Global Sales United States of America, introduced by Alison Metcalfe Exc. President Nr America, Australia, New Zealand Tourism.

**Comments invited from:** - Helena Nolan, Consul General of Ireland; Hannah Young, Deputy British Counsel General & Andrew Elliot, Director / Counsellor NI Bureau.

Sr. Mary Turley presented the Flax Trust Awards and thanked sponsors/guests.



Gerard Crotty Chair Weichert Enterprise 2021 honouree, Bill Byrne Senior Vice President Global Sales U.S.A. accepting award on behalf of Aer Lingus, Tom O'Brien Luncheon chair / Director Flax Trust/America, Helena Nolan Irish Consul General New York, Honouree John Coleman President Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, New York, Andrew Elliott, Director/Counsellor, NI Bureau, Honouree Sophie Colgan Program Director The Ireland US Council, Laura Hickey Deputy British Consul, Shawn Griffin, Partner Harris Beach PLLC, Director Flax Trust/America, Sr Mary Turley Director Flax Trust.

## **The 32<sup>nd</sup> Flax Trust / America Washington DC Banquet Breakfast**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Flax Trust / America Washington DC Banquet Breakfast took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 at the Hay Adams, Rooftop Terrace. Co-Chaired by James Boland, Chairman & CEO Boland, Chair Flax Trust / America and Mike McCurry Director / Professor Centre for Public Theology Wesley Theological Seminary / Director Flax Trust / America.

Fr. Myles Kavanagh C.P. founder/chair of Flax Trust Belfast addressed the gathering on screen.

Fr. Van Dyke S.J. gave the invocation.

### **Brief reports: -**

SSEI / School for Social Enterprises in Ireland – Mike O’Neil, K & L Gates LLP, Director Flax Trust / America

UCIT / Community Finance Group Ireland – John Hanley, AFLCIO-HIT, Director Flax Trust / America.

Flax Trust Education Outreach – Elaine Burns, Chair ABC Health & Leisure Trust / on screen.

Jim Quinn, President Flax Trust/America addressed the gathering.

### **Honourees:**

**Hon. Mick Mulvaney**, former White House Chief – of – Staff & Ambassador & Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, introduced by John Feehery, EFB Advocacy.

**Kelly O’Donnell**, Senior White House Correspondent NBC News, introduced by Mike McCurry.

**Hon. Marty Walsh**, United States Secretary of Labour, introduced by Mike McCurry.

**Comments invited from:** - Hon. Geraldine Byrne Nason Ambassador of Ireland to the United States; Nicolas Alton, Political Counsellor, British Embassy & Andrew Elliot, Director / Counsellor N I Bureau’

Sr Mary Turley presented Flax Trust Awards and thanked sponsors / guests.



Washington DC 2022 honorees. Hon. Marty Walsh, U.S. Secretary of Labor; Kelly O’Donnell, Senior White House Correspondent NBC News; Hon. Mick Mulvaney, Former White House Chief of Staff and Ambassador, Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, Jim Boland, Chair Flax Trust/America; Mike McCurry, Director Flax Trust/America; Jim Quinn, President Flax Trust/America, Sr Mary Turley, Flax Trust.

**Flax Trust America:** President: James E. Quinn; Chair: James Boland; Vice Chair: Mary J. Grace; Co-Founders Fr. Myles Kavanagh C.P.; Sr Mary Turley pvmb.

## **Flax Trust Deed and Objects**

The purpose of the Flax Trust is the advancement and benefit of citizens of Northern Ireland with particular, but not exclusive responsibility for the inhabitants of North Belfast, in relation to:

- supporting establishments for educational and recreational facilities;
- the provision of development and training facilities for employment;
- the advancement and improvement of the quality of life by the promotion and provision of educational and training courses, exhibitions, congresses and other educational activities; and
- the promotion and establishment of scholarships, grants and other educational aids.

The Trust is a registered charity governed by a deed of Trust dated 12 December 1977.

The principal activities of the Trust in 2022 involved the provision of donations to third-party Organisations in order to facilitate delivery of the Flax Trust Objects, as detailed in this report.

In setting Flax Trust objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. Flax Trust has embarked upon material grant making activities during the reported financial year, and the nature of Grants provide public benefit by:

- meeting the Trusts Objects,
- supporting a wide range of third-party organisations who provide services/activities in areas of high social and economic need, and
- facilitating local beneficiary access to the wide range of grant funded activities.

### **Financial Review for the year ended 31 December 2022**

The Flax Trust summary 2022 Accounts indicate that total payments amounted to £2.125 million, of which £1.624 million related to grants to third-party Organisations who facilitated delivery of the Flax Trust Objects, and a further £0.239 million related to activities undertaken directly by Flax Trust, and a further £0.261 million related to the repair/renewal of Assets. Gross Income in 2022 amounted to £0.139 million. Further detail relating to the 2022 Flax Trust Accounts has been submitted to the NI Charity Commission as part of the NI Charity Commission on-line 2022 Annual Monitoring Return.

The trustees regularly review reserves to ensure that there are adequate funds available to meet future plans and commitments. The Flax Trust plans to designate available reserves to facilitate the attainment of the wider strategic vision for the Education Village.

**On behalf of the Trustees**



Trustee

**24th October 2023**

## ADVISORY BOARD



*John Carson C.B.E*



*Briega Dobbin*



*Lady Empey M.B.E.*



*Jeffe Jeffers*



*Marian Kane*



*Paul McBride*



*Neil McCann*



*Cletus McCloskey*



*Eamon McElroy*



*James McGinn*



*Bob McNeill*



*Dr Peter Smyth*



*Ann Tanney*

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