

Brookfield Business Centre
333 Crumlin Road
Belfast
BT14 7EA

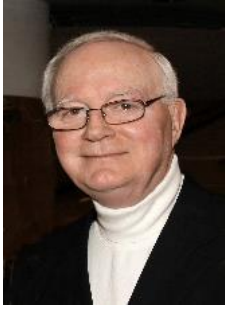
FLAX TRUST REPORT 2023



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

The Flax Trust

Trustees



Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.
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Mrs Maura Lundy



Mr John Patterson



Sr Mary Turley pbvm

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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 7th 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.
- 2022 – The conversion of the Old Mill, new shops and apartments have been completed.
- 2023 – The ABC Trust development has entered the 2nd phase with completion in the near future.

EDUCATION

Future Strategic Education Strategy



Mercy College continues to increase in numbers of children attending the school. An ethnic and multi religious dynamic now exists and therefore the development of an ‘All Faith Education Village’ becomes more urgent at the start of each new academic year. The strain on the school to accommodate these children has become a priority. Flax Trust continues to support the Education Task Group to develop a vision for education in North Belfast.

Then Education Minister Michelle McIlveen (DUP) announced to the Northern Ireland Assembly that 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. It was stated schools would benefit from an estimated capital investment of £794m. The 1st Stage following this announcement has yet underway.



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.



Transform participants involved in formal lectures and a case study provided by a subject matter expert and social entrepreneur.

During the year SSEI with Flax Trust supported **On Purpose – Inspiring and Showcasing Social Enterprise** - partnering with Belfast City Council, Work West and Community Finance Ireland.



Over 100 stakeholders heard from local and national practitioners dealing with issues such as homeless solutions - Alice Thompson/Social Bite Café; digital charity revenue generation, Ronan O’Dalaigh/Thriftify; community childcare solutions, Pamela Hughes/Kids Together Belfast; social enterprise financing, Phelim Servin/Community Finance NI.



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

Bursary Awards 2024 Bridging the Divide



The Flax Trust Arts in rehearsal for a performance showcasing the principal songs from the musical ‘The Hunchback of Notre Dame’, including ‘The Bells of Notre Dame’ and God Help the Outcasts’. The cast will be accompanied by a chamber ensemble.

The Flax Trust Conductor’s CBYO Award



Harrison Kirk, lead Trumpet Player CBYO with Conductor Paul McBride

Harrison Kirk, aged 18, has been a member of the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra (CBYO) for the past 3 years and is currently the lead trumpet player. Harrison is also an accomplished pianist. He has shown not only his maturing as an excellent musician but developing as a strong and sensitive leader. A worthy winner of this prestigious bursary.

Queen’s University Belfast Awards



Emma Blacoe – Flute



Maria Meagher - Soprano

Community Regeneration Projects, North Belfast



Mike O Neil (Washington DC) examines plans for the second phase of the ABC development. Alison and Sean Boland (Jr.) (Washington DC) visit part of BCT NI Ltd training facility on the ground floor. John and Nancy Kelly (New York) check out the second phase of development. ABC is a ‘shared’ community education, health, leisure and arts centre. Flax Trust is working in collaboration with ABC Trust, Urban Villages and Sports NI developing this community regeneration project.

GRANTS / BURSARIES / DONATIONS

Community	
<i>Brookfield Business Centre</i>	100000.00
<i>Adullam Christian Ministries</i>	1500.00
<i>Ardoyne Association</i>	19650.00
<i>Ardoyne & Marrowbone Community Festival</i>	10000.00
<i>Mental Health Movement</i>	3000.00
<i>Peoples Kitchen</i>	2000.00
<i>Flax Trust Energy Support Programme</i>	5000.00
<i>Ardoyne Youth Club</i>	10000.00
<i>Concern</i>	2550.00
<i>ABC Health & Leisure Trust</i>	304243.00
<i>North Belfast Co-Operative</i>	45000.00
Total	502943.00

Sports & Arts

Music & Sport	
<i>Crumlin Star Football Club</i>	5000.00
<i>Friends of City of Belfast School of Music</i>	10500.00
<i>Hugo Reilly Stuart</i>	500.00
<i>Irish Dance Championships.</i>	1500.00
<i>North Belfast Choir</i>	10000.00
<i>Flax Trust Music Awards</i>	1000.00
<i>G Danby – Fiddler Master Class</i>	272.98
<i>Camerata Ireland</i>	1000.00
<i>Queen's University Bursaries</i>	2000.00
Total	30772.98

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.



Nursery Schools

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

Primary Schools

Holy Cross Girls Primary School	13401.00
Holy Cross Boys Primary School	10000.00
Sacred Heart Primary School	10000.00
Total	33401.00

3rd 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
Total	£37,300.00

North Belfast Cross Community Youth Programme



Flax Trust was a sponsor of North Belfast cross community youth group's visit to the United States earlier this year, visiting 3 organisations in New York and 2 in Washington DC.

The main focus was on gang culture, homelessness, drugs and mental health. The group witnessed firsthand the positive impact, the energy and creativity of young people working towards positive change in their communities, through advocacy, education and community engagement. The trip included iconic locations.

The invaluable connections and profound experiences were life changing for these young people.



COMMUNITY REGENERATION PROJECT, North Belfast



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.

Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P. opened the new Eurospar supermarket on the site of the old Flax Centre. with Gavin Wall (The Wall Group) and Martin Conlon Property Development).



Pictured (Kerr



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

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 33rd Flax Trust / America New York Banquet

The 33rd Flax Trust / America New York Banquet took place at The Links on Wednesday 11th October 2023. Chaired by **Tom O'Brien** Chairman, President & CEO Sterling Bancorp/Director Flax Trust America.

Tom O'Brien welcomed guests and invited **Rev. Fr. John Anderson** Vice President, Mission Integration Archdiocese of New York to give the invocation. After which Tom introduced video A History of The Flax Trust and message from **Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.** Founder / Chair Flax Trust

Niall Murray President, Rockabill Development LLC, Director F/T America gave a brief report on UCIT/Community Finance Group Ireland

Anne Marie Moriarty, Real Estate Broker, Brown Harris Stevens, President Sales LLC, Director F/T America gave a brief report on the School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI)

Tom O'Brien introduced honoree **Colin Davidson, Contemporary Artist, Chancellor Ulster University.** Sr. Mary Turley presented Flax Trust Award. Colin then gave his response.

Tom O'Brien invited **Jim Quinn**, President Emeritus Tiffany & Co, President Flax Trust / America to introduce honoree **John Greed, Chairman, President & CEO Mutual of America.** Sr. Mary Turley presented Flax Trust Award. John then responded to receiving the award.

Tom O'Brien invited **John Kelly**, CPCM Managing Partner Hanover Stone Partners, LLC, Director F/T America to introduce honoree **Tania Tetlow, President Fordham University.** Sr. Mary Turley presented Flax Trust Award. Tania responded to receiving the award.

Tom O'Brien invited remarks from: -

- **Helena Nolan**, Consul General of Ireland
- **Ben Brierley**, Senior Policy Adviser for Politics, Prosperity & Economic Policy, British Consulate
- **Andrew Elliott**, Director/Counsellor Northern Ireland Bureau

Sr Mary Turley thanked bursary sponsors and guests, followed by Tom O'Brien who drew the proceedings to a close.



Honourees Colin Davidson, Contemporary Artist & Chancellor Ulster University, Tania Tetlow President Fordham University and John Greed Chairman, President & CEO Mutual of America with Flax Trust Directors John Kelly, Tom O'Brien, Sr Mary Turley, President Jim Quinn and Andrew Elliott, Director/Counsellor, NI Bureau, Helena Nolan Consul General of Ireland and Paul Bartholomew Vice Chancellor and President Ulster University

The 33rd Flax Trust / America Washington DC Banquet Breakfast

The 33rd Flax Trust / America Washington DC Banquet Breakfast took place on 21st November 2023 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.

Jim Boland welcomed guests and invited **Fr. Van Dyke S.J.** to give the invocation. Jim then introduced a video – A History of Flax Trust & message from **Fr Myles Kavanagh C.P.** Founder / Chair Flax Trust, Belfast.

Mike McCurry invited brief reports from Lisa Kardell Director of Government Public Affairs, Waste Management, Director Flax Trust/America. (1) Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT). (2) School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI).

Jim Boland invited remarks from Jim Quinn, President Emeritus Tiffany & Co. President Flax Trust /America

Mike McCurry introduced Honoree **Kristen Welker**, ‘Moderator, NBC News’ Meet the Press’ to receive her award from Sr. Mary Turley. Kristen then gave her response to the award.

Jim Boland invited John Hanley, Senior Managing Director, Multifamily Origination, AFLCIO - HIT, Director Flax Trust/America to introduce Honoree **Timothy Driscoll** President International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers. Sr. Mary Turley presented Flax Trust Award and Timothy Driscoll gave his response.

Mike McCurry, K & L Gates LLP, introduced Mike O’Neil, Director Flax Trust/America to introduce Honoree **Meghan O’Sullivan**, Director Belfer Centre for Science & International Affairs, Harvard University’s Kennedy School. Sr Mary presented the Flax Trust Award which was followed with Meghan’s response.

Jim Boland invited comments from **Hon. Geraldine Byrne Nason**, Ambassador of Ireland to the United States. **James Roscoe**, Deputy British Ambassador and **Andrew Elliott**, Director/Counsellor, NI Bureau

Mike McCurry invited remarks from guests after which Sr Mary Turley thanked the sponsors.

Jim Boland thanked guests and made the presentation to winner of round trip to Ireland courtesy of Aer Lingus and made the presentation to the ‘Jamieson’ winners



Jim Boland, Chair Flax Trust/America. Mike O’Neill, Director Flax Trust/America. Jim Quinn, President Emeritus Tiffany & Co., President FlaxTrust/America. Honorees - Timothy Driscoll President International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers. Megan O’Sullivan, Director Belfer Centre for Science & International Affairs, Harvard University’s Kennedy School. Kirsten Welker, ‘Moderator, NBC News’ ‘Meet the Press’. Andrew Elliott, Director/Counsellor NI Bureau. John Hanley, AFLCIO – HIT, Director Flax Trust/America. Hon. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ambassador of Ireland to the United States. Mike McCurry, former White House Press Secretary, Director Flax Trust/America. Sr Mary Turley, Trustee/Director 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 2023 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:

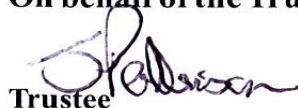
- meeting the Trusts Objects,
- supporting a wide range of third-party organisations who provide services/activities in areas of high social and economic need, and
- facilitating local beneficiary access to the wide range of grant funded activities.

Financial Review for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Flax Trust summary 2023 Accounts indicate that total payments amounted to £0.669 million, of which £0.538 million related to grants to third-party Organisations who facilitated delivery of the Flax Trust Objects, and a further £0.109 million related to activities undertaken directly by Flax Trust, and a further £0.022 million related to the repair/renewal of Assets. Gross Income in 2023 amounted to £0.037 million. Further detail relating to the 2023 Flax Trust Accounts has been submitted to the NI Charity Commission as part of the NI Charity Commission on-line 2023 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 2024

ADVISORY BOARD



John Carson C.B.E



Briega Dobbin



Lady Empey M.B.E.



Jeffe Jeffers



Marian Kane



Paul McBride



Neil McCann



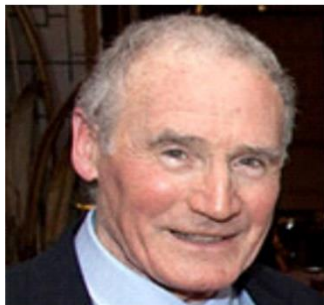
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