

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP – FRS 102) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Scotch-Irish Trust of Ulster was set up by a Scheme of Incorporation under Section 10 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964, dated 20 August 1969 and continues to work in accordance with the Declaration of Trust which is the governing document. The Trustees took responsibility for the management of The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies (MCMS) with effect from 1 April 1998. The charity was registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 4th February 2016 (charity number 103343). The main address for the Trust is The Ulster American Folk Park, 2 Mellon Road, Omagh, BT78 5QU.

Trustees

The Trustees who served during the year are:

Mr John Gilmour (Chairman)	Mr David Moore
Mr Michael Beattie	Mr Alan McFarland
Dame Geraldine Keegan	Mr Gerard Broderick JP MBE
Professor FJ Smith	Dr Philip Mowat
Ms Eimear Murnaghan OBE	Ms Ann Robinson

Recruitment and appointment of Trustees

The recruitment of new Trustees is conducted in accordance with the governing document – the Declaration of Trust. Induction and training as required, is carried out by the Chairman and one other experienced Trustee. New Trustee appointments are based on a Skill's Audit, designed to highlight current gaps in management expertise and academic specialisms, which ideally need to be filled.

Organisational Structure

The charity is managed by the Trustees who meet throughout the year to oversee all operational matters relating to the Trust and the work of the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies. All decisions are made by the Trustees in accordance with the Declaration of Trust.

From its inception, the Trust has endeavored to meet the Charity Commission requirement to operate in the interests of public benefit, by providing visitor and education programmes; museum and conservation projects; and library, information and archive services.

The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies (MCMS) is now the main undertaking of the Trust, which it governs and funds. To further its aims, it is supported by an Advisory Committee of MCMS, whose primary purposes are to:

- Advise the Trust on the policy and strategic direction of the Centre
- Support and challenge the Director and Centre colleagues in the delivery of the Trust's goals and objectives
- Ensure that the Centre operates in an efficient and effective manner.

The Chairman of the Trust currently chairs the meetings of the Committee. In addition, membership comprises the MCMS Director, three Trustees, one co-opted member and one representative from each of the partnership bodies, including Libraries NI, PRONI and the Queen's University of Belfast, which collaborate with and support the work of MCMS. Members currently total 11, but numbers may fluctuate according to changing priorities and new programme initiatives.

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

Summary of Purposes

When first established, the primary purpose of the Trust was 'the encouragement of research into the study of the history and culture of the people of Northern Ireland and in particular those known (in the USA) as the Scotch Irish and the links of that history and culture with those of other countries, and the advancement of the knowledge of the public in those subjects.' (*Declaration of Trust 1967*) Over the years the remit of the Trust has broadened to focus on the process and impact of historic migration both into and out of Ireland and the global impact of the Irish Diaspora.

The Trust's purposes also include the provision of scholarships, bursaries and grants for the research and study of migration and for the publication of books, treatises and academic papers. It may also acquire, restore, preserve and maintain for the public benefit, buildings and lands which have 'an historic association with the history and culture of the people of Northern Ireland; or which have a historic association with the culture of the people of Northern Ireland in other parts of the world.' (*Declaration of Trust 1967*).

Compliance with the above enabled the Trust to set up the Ulster American Folk Park and to develop and manage it for over 20 years and from 1998 onwards to establish, govern and fund the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies (MCMS) which promotes research, teaching and publication of the process of Migration.

The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies. (MCMS).

MCMS is housed in a modern Research Library, open to the public, which was originally built, equipped, and stocked by the Trust. In partnership with Libraries NI, the Trust/MCMS provides research, library and information service to the general public during normal library and museum opening hours. Users have the benefit of free access to a specialist Migration History Library and an Irish Emigration Database and, by appointment the expert services of Library and Academic Staff. The benefits are demonstrated through raised awareness and increased knowledge of Migration, Irish American history and culture, and genealogy.

What we do?

The MCMS vision is of 'an informed community, confidently and creatively engaged with its migration history, culture and heritage' and its mission is 'to serve the community as a leading international institution for the study of human migration, focusing on the peoples of Ireland world-wide'. With funding support from the Northern Ireland Assembly, through the Department for Communities (DfC), the Centre works in partnership with other DfC-funded agencies (particularly the Ulster-American Folk Park/NMNI, Libraries NI, and PRONI) to implement the 'Community Cohesion' strategic priorities of 'bringing divided communities together', 'tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity', and 'maximising public benefits from the culture, arts and leisure sectors'.

Who are our users?

A significant number of the visitors to MCMS are also visitors to the Ulster-American Folk Park. About 50% of the users come from North America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, with most of the other half coming from Ireland, north and south, and about 2% coming from other parts of Europe and the rest of the world. The global pattern of users of the Centre's online resources is similar.

The local users of our facilities include research scholars, teachers and lecturers, third level students, school pupils, authors and family historians.

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2024

MCMS Programme highlights 2023-24

The highlights of this reporting year were as follows:

- 1 **Bad Bridget Book Clubs** : a five week programme to graduate and undergraduate students with the Good Relations Office of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council looking at the lives of emigrant women in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A podcast was recorded at the Ulster Museum with QUB, NMNI and UU.
2. **Rural Community Network** : study of photographs and archive materials on local heritage and migration stories
3. **Loughs Agency: Stream keepers'** project delivered 10 workshops on themes of migration bridges and routes.
4. **East Tennessee State University** : programme of lectures delivered online to graduate and under graduate students.
5. **QUB Liberal Arts** : working with students and staff on a Migration and Ageing project.
6. **Strule Shared Campus, Omagh**. The Director and staff of MCMS continue to work with principals, governors and local secondary school students in the development of the concept of migration and its practical application in contemporary society.
7. **Omagh Literacy Festival**: presentations by MCMS using original emigrant letters from database
8. **Study abroad programme** : hosting students from East Tennessee State University for lectures and field trips.
9. **Irish Heritage Trust: Shared Island** programme to present workshops in Newry and Strokestown
10. **Association of European Migration Institutions, Slovenia**. Presentation by Director MCMS.
- 11 **Heritage Lottery Fund**: Advised Glenock Church Newtown Stewart on a major refurbishment project.
12. **Museum of American Frontier Culture, Virginia**. MCMS provided academic advice on interpretation.
13. **Ulster American Folk Park**: collaborative working with NMNI and the Scotch Irish Trust on the long term development of the Folk Park.

MCMS staff continue to work with community and local history groups, right across the province to deliver lectures and workshops, as well as dealing with the daily research and information needs of a diverse range of users, including international tourists, academic scholars, and local schoolchildren.

The Scotch Irish Trust as the governing body of the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies, remains committed to maintaining the current levels of resource funding for its operation, in partnership with the Department of Communities.

Financial review – Annual accounts 2023-24

Results

The statement of financial activities for the year is set out on page 10 of the financial statements.

The total net incoming resources of the Trust for the year before gains on the revaluation of investments were £6,273 (2023:£26,472). The Trust has total assets of £3,234,954 at the year-end as compared with total assets of £3,204,870 at the end of 2023.

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

The Trust maintains a portfolio of investments which is managed by the Trustees in conjunction with quarterly reviews which are carried out by advisors, Evelyn Partners. During the year to 31 March 2024 these investments generated £97,507 of income for the Trust. Other sources of income included: Rental income from lands held and rented to the National Museums NI (£24,000); Grant receipts from Department for Communities (£62,000); and other income from The Irish America Partnership (£12,407) and Lectures and other income (£14,788).

The total expenses for the year amounted to £204,524. The main costs related to staff salaries and pensions totaling £131,000. The employees are involved in the delivery of the Trust's objectives and are involved with managing the research, teaching and study of migration. A breakdown of all the expenses is set out in Note 7 to the accounts.

The net assets of the Trust at 31 March 2024 amounted to £3,234,954 (2023: £3,204,870). The main reason for the increase in the year related to the unrealised gains on the market value of the investments.

Reserve policy

The Trust has free reserves (that is unrestricted funds) of £3,084,408 as at 31 March 2024. Deducting the fixed assets of £2,922,580, the Trust has 'liquid' net assets of £161,828. This represents 1.14 years of unrestricted expenditure. The Trustees believe that due to the volatile nature of the investment market, and the future plans to further develop The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies, this level of free reserves is necessary.

The Mellon Homestead at Camphill Fund (restricted funds) represents monies received from the Irish American Partnership that can only be utilised for the upkeep and repair of the Mellon Homestead. The fund balance is included within the cash resources of the Trust. (Note 17)

Investment policy

The Trust has engaged Evelyn Partners as investment managers to pursue a policy of maximising income whilst maintaining some capital growth. The Trustees have the power to invest in such assets as they see fit. The Chairman is responsible for liaising with the investment managers and reporting to the Trustees at each Trustee's meeting. The investment performance for 23/24 yielded investment income of £97,507 (2023: £109,082). This is slightly below the objective of achieving a return of between 5-8%.

Taxation

The Trust is a registered charity, and as such is entitled to certain tax exemptions on income and profits from investments, and surpluses on any trading activities carried on in furtherance of the Trust's primary objectives if these profits and surpluses are applied solely for charitable purposes.

Risk Management

The Trustees are aware of their responsibilities to regularly review the major risks to which the charity is exposed. The aim of such a review is to implement a management strategy, which comprises:

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

- an ongoing review of the risks which the charity may face;
- the establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the review;
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise the impact on the charity should any of the risks materialise.

Public benefit statement

In setting our 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.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

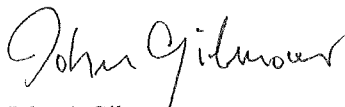
The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, as amended by the Charities Act 2006, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

So far as each of the Trustees in office at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the Trust's auditors are unaware; and
- as Trustees, they have taken all the necessary steps to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Trust's auditors are aware of that information.

By order of the Trustees



John A Gilmour
Chairman

Dated: 23rd October 2024