

The Northlands' Heritage Group's Annual Report to Charity Commission NI

Summary of Activities: From inauguration in late 2022 to 31st. December 2023

1. The Derry Inner City Trust, Magee Campus of Ulster University, St. Eugene's RC Cathedral and Christ Church Londonderry initially planned to establish a Company Limited by Guarantee as a registered Charity with a Board of Trustees, suitable bank accounts and as first ventures, a Choral Scholars' Scheme in St. Eugene's RC Cathedral and an Open-Door policy at Christ Church Londonderry.
2. Having formally established the charity, we introduced the Choral Scholars scheme to the Cathedral Choir and received general support. Control of the scholars' scheme was vested in an elected body of officers from the Choir with its own bank account. Following carefully arranged auditions sensitive to protection policies and fairness, around a dozen scholars were selected for the first cohort which proved highly successful for six of them but resulted in early resignations by others for a variety of reasons. This learning experience for us was carried forward to August 2023 with a much clearer commitment required to provide eight scholars for season 2023 - 2024.
3. A major achievement has been the funding of this scheme, including an Arts Council NI Grant, an annual pledge from the Derry Inner-City Trust, a number of regular donations with Gift Aid from existing choristers, a donation from the choir itself as well as the Bishop's Office and a substantial event and fund-raising achievement together with the Altnagelvin Hospital Choir. Such funding secures the scheme for at least two coming seasons.
4. The scholars have integrated positively into the Choir, been used on several occasions as soloists and as a chamber group, and have elevated the performance and morale of the choir leading to the purchase of new choir robes and folders and an increased awareness of performance discipline.
5. The Christ Church Open Door project has led to the Church being open daily to the public for the first time in several generations with a number of display guides to the Church located around the building and a Volunteers of the Year award by the National Churches Trust in November 2023 for this achievement. A significant part of this aspect of our work has been a "First Wednesday Lunchtime Recital" scheme to encourage young local musicians to perform on the first Wednesday of each month and a "Celebration Concert Series" of four Sunday concerts per year given by significant recitalists. As before, the response to these initiatives has been excellent both in audience attendance and donations from interested individuals and public bodies.
6. The Open Door policy has also led to increased use of Christ Church by renowned groups and individuals as a concert venue; international stars Malachy Frame and Ruth McGinley; the Codetta, Sestina, and Altnagelvin Hospital Choirs; and the Ulster Orchestra.

Public Benefit

The Northland Heritage Group gives public benefit by providing recreation and spiritual comfort to community members in the use of both Christ Church and St. Eugene's Cathedral for both religious services and visitor facilities. It also encourages the educational development of young people through its Scholars' Scheme and concert programme while also providing a cultural improvement to the area. This has been achieved by the selection and encouragement of choral scholars and equally, by the significant improvement to Christ Church as a community resource. The cultural life of the community has also been encouraged by the performances of young soloists in the Service and concert programmes.

Financial Review

The Northland Heritage Group holds two current accounts in Danske Bank, the general account and the St. Eugene's Choral Scholars' accounts, which together maintain a balance of £9,380.17 at 31st. December 2023. Thus the financial position is secure with funding to cover its activities for at least the next two years. The Group has no reserved accounts nor capital assets.

Trustees

Chairman: James Kelley
Secretary: Helen Quigley
Treasurer: Rosemary Finan

Other Trustees: Rev. Paul Farren, Damian McAteer, Sean McGinty Archdeacon Robert Miller, Professor Malachy O'Neill

Administration

The Northland Heritage Group is administered by its Board of Trustees, appointed annually at the AGM and known as "the Committee" with a sub-committee responsible for the St. Eugene's Cathedral Choral Scholars' Scheme consisting of adult Cathedral choristers. The Charity is governed by its Constitution, approved by General Meeting on 26th. August 2022.



Chairman, Northland Heritage Group
Northern Ireland Charity Number NIC109069 Company Number 688509

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