



Annual Report

Year ending September 2020

Objects

Founded in 1752, Belfast Charitable Society is the city's oldest known charity which was incorporated in 1774 by an Act of the Parliament of Ireland. In 1996, to ensure that the Society was "able to serve the present day and likely future needs of the community", a new Act of Parliament, 'Belfast Charitable Society Act', was passed. It sets out the objects, powers, constitution and management of the Society. The Objects of the Society as stated in the Act are:

(a) To pursue all or any charitable activities which advance the interests or are for the benefit of persons appearing to the Society to be disadvantaged, primarily in Northern Ireland, including the care of the elderly, the relief of poverty, homelessness, distress, infirmity and sickness and providing for the educational and other needs of such persons; and

(b) To participate in and encourage all forms of co-operation among appropriate parties which are calculated to achieve any of the objects mentioned in paragraph (a) above.



North Belfast Youth Choir



***Minister Nichola Mallon at Great Place
North Belfast Urban Design Meeting***



***Belfast Hospital School
at Donkey Sanctuary***

Belfast Charitable Society

(Incorporated 1774)

PRESIDENT

Sir Ronald Weatherup

BOARD MEMBERS

Mr David Watters (Chair)
Mrs Una Macauley (Hon Secretary)
(Resigned August 2020)
Mr William Osborne (Hon Treasurer)

Mr Colin Graham
Ms Diane Graham
Mr Nicholas Harkness
Mr Matthew Higgins

Mr Alan Money Penny
Mrs Norma Sinte

CLIFTON HOUSE CENTRE LTD

(Incorporated 2012)

DIRECTORS

Mr Colin Graham (Chair)
Mr Philip Hall
Mr Matthew Higgins
Mr Erskine Holmes
Mr William Osborne

MARY ANN MCCRACKEN FOUNDATION

(Incorporated 2019)

DIRECTORS

Mrs Norma Sinte (Chair) Ms Diane Graham
Mr Les Allamby Mrs Una Macauley (resigned)
Ms Angila Chada Dr Margaret Ward
Mr Colin Graham Mr David Watters
Ms Paula Reynolds (Company Secretary)

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief Executive Officer - Ms Paula Reynolds

Chair's Report

I begin with a massive thank you to Paula and her brilliant team for managing to achieve so much on our various projects whilst faced with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in the second half of the year being reported on. Sadly we are still impacted and I must thank the staff in the Residential Home for their continued exceptional care. I would also offer heartfelt condolences to those families who have lost loved ones to this pandemic.



Since March of this year, the Society has flexed its working practices in order to minimise disruption and maintain effectiveness. It is worth noting that since the building was first occupied in 1774, it has only been vacated four times and those were during the 1798 rebellion, the WW2 blitz, the building refurbishment in the late 1990s and now due to the restrictions imposed in the battle with COVID-19.

The closure of Clifton House required the team to innovate by changing methods of service delivery from face to face talks and tours to the development of a more diverse range of talks presented online, which were extremely well attended.

I know I can speak on behalf of the Board when I say that we are extremely proud of our 'schools project' in response to COVID-19, ensuring in a matter only a couple of weeks that over 200 children in North Belfast from less well-off backgrounds had access to online learning at home. We brought together a group of funders to enable the purchase of 225 laptops and additional educational resources ensuring students could continue to learn during and post COVID-19.

The Society also signed up to a funding statement, which we shared with our awardees to let them know that we would be more flexible with the monitoring requirements of our grants.

We listened to their needs and allowed them to develop and change their activities in light of the ongoing crisis. For example Age NI were able to create telephone 'Check in and Chat' service for older people across Belfast rather than their planned door-to-door service.

We were sad to see our long standing tenant at Clifton House, the Royal College of Psychiatrists Northern Ireland Division leave us during the year. Again this was principally a decision to become more home based. Thankfully the office space was snapped up immediately by another funder.

The Society continued to use the majority of the asset that is Clifton House throughout the year to address the needs of older people through its strategic partnership with Radius Housing and the Residential Home. All of these changes and opportunities were possible within such a short space of time because we have developed a series of trusted partnerships and relationships with so many of our stakeholders in recent years. These vital connections are the lifeblood of our organisation, again reflected in another successful year of Barbour funding, reaching out with the family to improve the lives of others by either enhancing their employability or, in the case of older people, reducing social isolation.

This year's report has been designed in both graphic and narrative detail to summarise all that we have achieved. Like me, I am sure you will be taken by the volume of work staff have managed to deliver but also by the additional value of resources we have been able to draw in to address disadvantage - 'Our mission since 1752'.

Thanks to all the Associates and volunteers who worked alongside the staff on numerous projects throughout the year. My final thanks must also go to the Trustees and Directors for their continued support and encouragement throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Warren". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

I commend to you this report for the year.

Treasurer's and CEO's Report

Finances, Activities and Impacts of Belfast Charitable Society

The Society's first strategic aim is: to lead and influence how philanthropy is delivered and developed in Belfast and beyond through a series of special initiatives. Its work in the year is summarised below.

BCS Loan and Award Investment Summary 2019 – 2020

£317,085
across 26 approved projects

£171,000: Loan awards
£146,085: Grant awards



**BBF
Loans
£171,000**

11 approvals

**Barbour Fund
Awards
£18,500**

6 approvals

**BCS other
projects
£206,715**

12 approvals



Belfast Charitable Society has now been jointly responsible for approving 71 loans worth a combined total of £1,341,275 since the Building Better Futures Loan programme began in 2016

Leverage on BCS Investment

- Investment made by BCS in terms of its grants and loans has resulted in the leverage of additional economic resources from wider funding bodies and organisations such as National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Ulster Garden Villages, National Lottery Community Fund, Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland, Access for All and Ulster University.
- A total £325,000 of additional investment reflects a ratio of 1:1.64, which means a return of £1.64 for every £1 spent on BCS charitable grant investments (£206,715).
- The scale of such impact should not be underestimated, particularly given the challenging circumstances created by COVID-19. In addition to which, the economic funding secured from the NLHF Emergency Fund has ensured the survival and helped improve the sustainability of fellow members that belong to the North Belfast Heritage Cluster.

**BCS secured a return of £1.64 for every £1
spent on its charitable investments (grants) from
Oct 2019 to Sep 2020**



- This economic return does not take into account non-monetary leverage and resources which have been accrued from BCS and its charitable investments. For example, the development of strategic partnerships with other key organisations like Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast and Funders Forum for Northern Ireland, enables the capacity to support Belfast Charitable Society advance its charitable objectives in the short, medium and long term.

Building Better Futures Fund (loan approvals)

- Through this loan programme the Society supports grassroots organisations to address disadvantage and encourages them to diversify their income streams to become less grant dependent.
- This year 11 loans were approved for different community-based projects to the value of £171,000.

Barbour Fund Approvals (grant awards)

- Since its inception, the Fund has approved over £130,000 of grants for projects in Lisburn and North Belfast.
- This year six grant awards, totalling £18,500, were approved to support children outside of mainstream education, older people's activities, bursaries to break down barriers to education, and as a direct response to the COVID-9 crisis.

Belfast Charitable Society Grants

- The Society provided £206,715 of support to other community-based projects including Great Place North Belfast Project, the North Belfast Family Support Hub, the North Belfast Community Choir, QUB bursaries etc.
- The table below summarises the level of BCS investment in community-based projects with respect to each of its philanthropic objectives for the year.

BCS Strategic Objective	Level of Investment
Addressing social and economic disadvantage	£175,500 (Loans and Grants)
Addressing the needs of older people	£32,085
Education	£42,000
Promoting philanthropy	£22,500

Philanthropy Today - Our Grants

The Society supported a wide range of projects aimed at addressing disadvantage in all of its forms across Northern Ireland.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Society initiated an **Immediate Access Learning Project** to aid local students without access to remote online learning. This project enabled these students to continue their studies safely at home by gifting 225 laptops and additional resources via five post-primary schools in need.

The Society also encouraged its grant recipients to re-profile grants if required in the face of the pandemic to ensure that funds were spent more appropriately. **Age NI** experienced a huge increase in calls from older people anxious about the crisis and so the Society permitted it to expand its vital '**Check in and Chat**' telephone service for older people self-isolating in Belfast.



The **Great Place North Belfast** is a three year project of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster. It is supported by the NLHF and the latter is comprised of 14 organisations responsible for historic assets spanning from the city centre into North Belfast. This project, led and co-funded by the Society uses our unique built heritage and authentic character to catalyse regeneration in this part of the city. It works to explore opportunities for tourism, tell stories of the buildings and communities and develop the skills and sustainability of those organisations responsible for the buildings.

The Society supported the award winning cross-community **North Belfast Youth Choir** which provides alternative learning environments through music and song, access to collaborations and increased awareness amongst students of their shared cultural heritage.

A vital link in the local community, supported by the Society, is the **Family Early Intervention Support** project. This is a multi-disciplinary team of more than 60 organisations which work directly with North Belfast families facing financial hardship and requiring early intervention. The Society funded two part-time home visitor posts and vouchers for those most in need, continuing in a modern way our original outdoor relief scheme.

Education and training was a key philanthropic objective in the year for the Society's grant making decisions. Awards in these areas in the year included **Stepping Stones NI** for their social enterprise café, 2nd Avenue, which provided people with learning disabilities hospitality-accredited training and **Queen's University Belfast** were second year students from less well-off backgrounds where supported to continue their studies in their chosen fields through a package of bursaries.

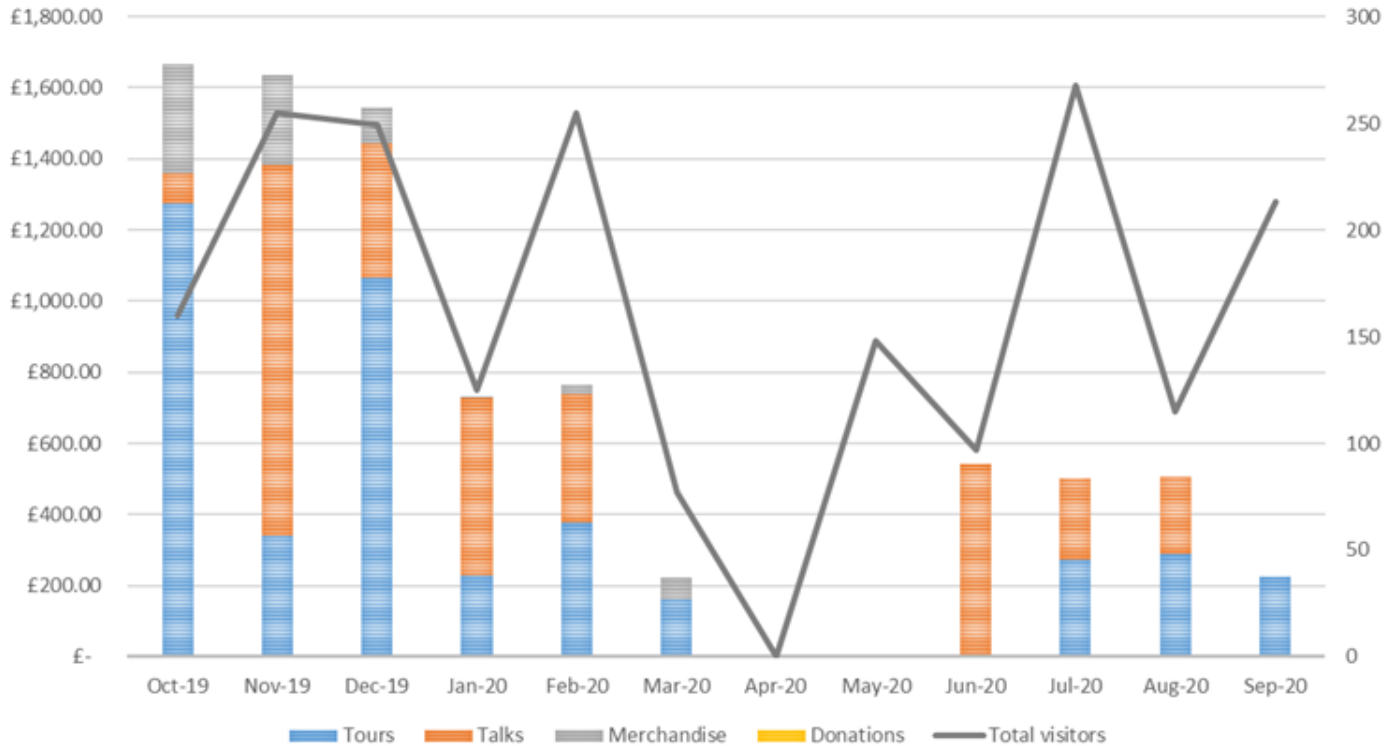
Finances, Activities and Impacts of Clifton House Centre Limited

The Society's social enterprise delivers on its second aim: to preserve and promote the heritage of the Society; to inform, educate and entertain; and to profile the work of the Society thereby raising awareness of its philanthropic past and the work it does to address disadvantage today. The activities in the year, which were severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis are summarised below.

- The Centre had a total of 1,962 visitors attending talks and tours - a monthly average of 122.
- Before the lockdown in March 2020, the average number of monthly visitors was 209 – an increase of 21% on last year.

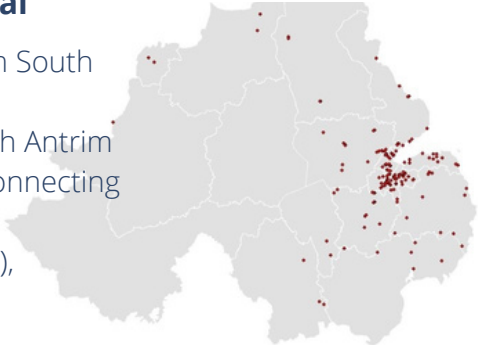
- The breakdown of talk visitors (625) to tour visitors (1,337) was 1:2.
- The combined income generated by the tours, talks and merchandise sales was £8,343.
- The breakdown of this income was as follows: tours 51%, talks 40% and merchandise 9%.

Breakdown of Income Vs Visitors



Spatial Distribution of Clifton House visitors, in person and virtual

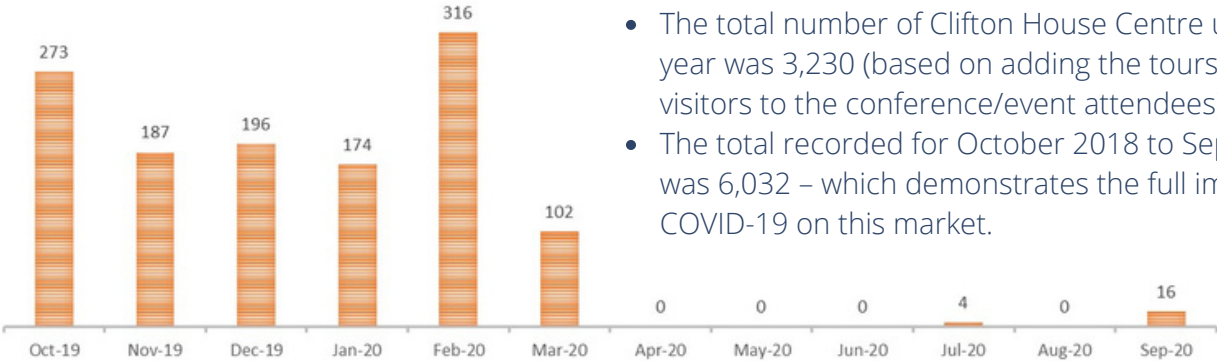
- 17% (nearly a fifth) of the mapped visitors (in person and virtual) were from South Belfast which represented the highest visitor share.
- The next and third highest visitor share were North Belfast (13%) and South Antrim (11%) Assembly constituency areas, demonstrating how Clifton House is connecting well with local users and audiences.
- 11% of Clifton House visitors were from outside NI (not shown on the map), representing another increase.



Conference and event attendance through room hire activities

Clifton House Centre had a total of 1,268 users attending various conferences, events or availing of its Room Hire facilities. Given the enforced closure it is understandable that it had little or no bookings from mid February.

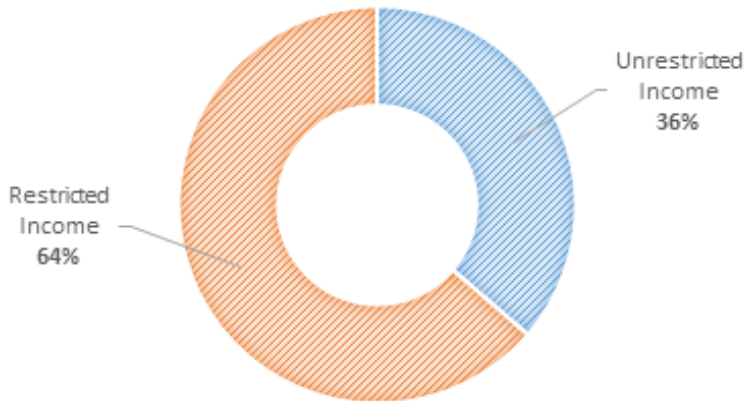
Conference/Event Attendees



- The total number of Clifton House Centre users in the year was 3,230 (based on adding the tours and talks visitors to the conference/event attendees).
- The total recorded for October 2018 to September 2019 was 6,032 – which demonstrates the full impact of COVID-19 on this market.

Income Breakdown

- The breakdown of the income generated by Clifton House Centre between restricted income (grant or funding) and unrestricted income (generated from commercial sales or room hire) was 64:36. In comparison the ratio recorded for last year was 53:47, again demonstrating the impact of COVID-19:



- Social distancing restrictions reduced opportunities to generate income through room hire and events.
- Clifton House Centre was the recipient of an emergency funding grant from the NLHF, which has been used to help sustain operations in the short term.

Volunteering Capacity

- A positive legacy of the NLHF 'Our Place' project (2017/18) was the development of a bank of volunteers who can provide their skills to support operations as and when required, eg leading visitor tours of the house and graveyard or providing event management support.
- This volunteering activity is equivalent to a combined total of 235 voluntary support hours and a voluntary input value of £2,350 based on the NLHF's lowest proxy rate of £10 per hour.

Volunteering Activity

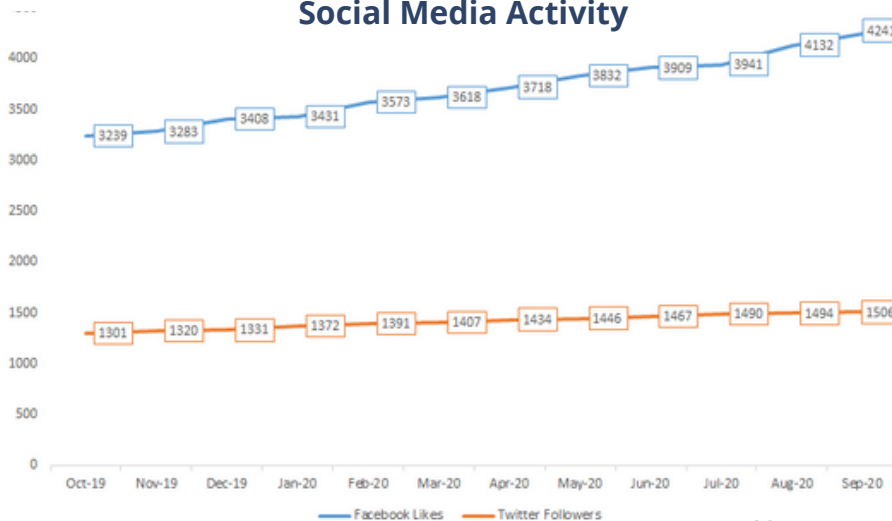


Social Media Activity

All of the Society's social media activity is driven through Clifton House Centre and our presence continues to grow on Facebook and Twitter.

- In the year the number of Twitter followers increased by 16%; a 43% increase from October 2018.
- Facebook accumulated 44,325 likes this year; a 36% increase from last year.
- Both these social media analytics demonstrate that the organisation is continuing to connect well online alongside the in-person audiences. This is important, particularly given the challenges created by Covid-19.
- There is a continued effort to share and communicate Clifton House's heritage product and the Society's good news stories across numerous different platforms.

Social Media Activity





Mary Ann McCracken's Belfast 1770-1866

Abolitionist
Philanthropist
Reformer



Finances, Activities and Impact of the Mary Ann McCracken Foundation

The Society's third aim was to develop the Mary Ann McCracken Foundation. Its aim is to 'advance education of the public about the life and works of Mary Ann McCracken', which was incorporated in June 2019.

In February 2020, independent Directors were recruited from a range of backgrounds reflecting the various activities of the life and legacy of Mary Ann.

Within the period it republished 'The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken (1770-1866) A Belfast Panorama', a seminal biography on Mary Ann originally written by Molly McNeill which had been out of print for a number of years and the revised edition enabled Mary Ann's story to be brought to a new generation. The book was launched by Dr Marianne Elliot at Clifton House and this was followed by a Dublin launch in the Royal Irish Academy.

The Foundation also planned to mark the 250th anniversary of Mary Ann McCracken's birth, in association with a number of key stakeholders including Ulster Scots Agency, Linen Hall Library, Calling Women Association, Belfast City Council, Francis Hutcheson Institute, African and Caribbean Support Organisation NI and Reclaim the Enlightenment. It planned a series of events for June and July 2020 but these were postponed due to COVID-19. The Foundation did deliver a virtual talk on her life and a broadcast of Groundbreakers episode Rebel Heart. A talk on Mary Ann's life and times was also held as part of the 2020 digital Féile an Phobail.

In relation to its work to deliver the legacy and work of Mary Ann McCracken the Foundation hosted the African and Caribbean Organisation NI (ACSONI) event "Hidden Connections: Slavery and Northern Ireland" in October 2019 examining slavery and its impact on the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Panellists at the event included members of ACSONI, Dr Christopher G Stange, Consulate General of St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Paula Reynolds, CEO of Belfast Charitable Society.

The Foundation also facilitated the loan of archive material from Belfast Charitable Society to the Linen Hall Library for a temporary exhibition as part of the Links and Legacy 400 project. The Foundation subsequently received a special recognition award for its involvement in the project.

Other activity included the creation of a walking tour of Belfast based on her life; a series of events, virtual and in-person; partnership work with key stakeholders to mark 'Mary Ann 251'; and an artwork representing her life and activities. A range of marketing and publicity materials are currently in development and will be available in this coming year including a timeline pop-up stand of her life, a leaflet on Molly McNeill, Mary Ann's biographer, and a map of locations associated with Mary Ann McCracken.



Mrs Norma Sinte, Chair of the Foundation receiving the Special Recognition Award from ACSONI



Press picture prior to the launch of the 'Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken'



Delivery of the re-published biography 'The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken'

Thanks

Belfast Charitable Society and its subsidiaries, Clifton House Centre and Mary Ann McCracken Foundation, would like to take the opportunity to thank its members, clients, volunteers and partners and all of those who have supported our work in addressing disadvantage, including:

174 Trust
African and Caribbean Support Org NI
AGE NI
Ashton Community Trust
Association of Charitable Foundations
Awards for All
Barbour Family and Eric Barfoot
Belfast City Council
Belfast Hospital School
Belfast Junior Chamber of Trade
Belfast Metropolitan College
Belfast Orange Hall
British Broadcasting Company (NI)
Calling Women Association
Carnegie Library Oldpark
Cathryn McWilliams
Community Finance Ireland (UCIT)
Consarc Design Group
Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin
Dr Christopher G Stange
Dr Eamon Phoenix

Dr Margaret Ward
Dunlewy Addiction Services
Feile an Phobail
Francis Hutchinson Institute
Fredrick Street Meeting House
Great Place North Belfast
Halifax Foundation for NI
Indian Community Centre
Irish Academic Press
Linen Hall Library
Literary Trustees of Molly McNeill's Estate
Lord Mayor of Belfast
Milbern Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
National Museums Northern Ireland
NICVA
Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities

NI Institute of Fundraising
Northern Ireland Water
North Belfast Working Men's Club
North Belfast Youth Choir
Professor Marianne Elliott
Professor Tom McNeill and family
Public Records Office
Queens University Belfast
Radius Housing
Reclaim the Enlightenment
Redeemer Central
Santander Universities
St Anne's Cathedral
St Malachy's College
St Mary's Church, Crumlin Road
St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street
Ulster Scots Agency
Ulster University
Unitorah
Volunteer Now



CEO and Staff Team, marking the Crossed Fingers Selfie Day to celebrate the work of National Lottery funded projects.



Clifton House is home to our archive, heritage and conference centre, residential home and sheltered accommodation. The Centre is available for hire for a variety of events , including meetings, conferences and receptions. Public and private group tours of Clifton House and Clifton Street Graveyard are offered throughout the year.



For more information on our services, please visit our Website, Facebook or Twitter or contact us on 028 9099 7022



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