

# Pollen Studios and Gallery

## Trustees Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

### Contents

Charity Details .....	2
Trustees and membership.....	2
Charity Constitution .....	3
Summary description of Charity Purpose .....	3
Charity Activities .....	4
Main Activities to further purposes for public benefit .....	4
Main Achievements of the year .....	4
Public Benefit Statutory Statement .....	8
End of Year Financial Review.....	8
Deficit details .....	8

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## Trustees Annual Report

### 1st April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

#### Charity Details

**Charity Name:** Pollen Studios and Gallery (also known as Pollen Studios and as Pollen)

**Address:** 7 North Street, First Floor, Belfast, BT1 1NH

**Northern Ireland Charity Number (NIC):** 100099

#### Trustees and membership

##### **Charity Trustees** (1st April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025)

Jayne Cherry  
Alice Clarke  
Ray Cashell  
Aisling Magee

##### **Pollen Studio Members** 1st April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Aisling Magee (Chair) June 2016 – Jan 2025  
Aimee Magee (Treasurer) April 2016 - present  
Emmanuela Mae Agrini (Secretary)– May 2023 – present  
Conor McGinley April 2023 – Jan 2025  
Jack McGarrigle Jan 2025 - present

#### Charity Constitution

The Pollen Studios and Gallery Constitution is laid out in a 13-page document dated **December 2013**, reviewed as required and administered by the Management Committee. Full membership of the organisation is open to individuals aged 18 years and over whose application are accepted by the committee. Such members are called Full Members and are entitled to vote at Association meetings.

Persons who, in the opinion of the committee, have special knowledge or experience to offer the Association can be called Associate Members and will not have the right to vote at meetings.

The Management Committee meets not less than 2 times per year and consists of not less than 3 and not more than 7 people elected at an Annual General Meeting. Committee members may hold office for up to 3 years. On retirement members are eligible for re-nomination.

The Charity Constitution clearly contains information under the following headings; Administration, Objects, Membership, Termination of Membership, Management Committee, Disqualification and Removal of the Management Committee, Functions of the Committee, Chairing Meetings, Finance, Trust Property, Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting, Notice, Adjournments, Rules of Procedure at all Meetings, Standing Orders/Rules, Dissolution and Indemnity and Insurance.

Full details of the constitution are available on request.

There is no other organisation or individual with the power to appoint charity trustees, such as another charity or government department.

## Summary description of Charity Purpose

The purposes of the charity are:

- To advance the education of the public in all aspects of art including; Performance Art, Sculpture and Installation, drawing and painting.
- The development of public appreciation of art by the provision of a gallery and the presentation of public performance and exhibitions.
- To further the social and cultural welfare of the community of Town Parks Belfast and Beyond.

The vision that shapes our annual activities remains the promotion and fostering of knowledge and the appreciation of the arts by the provision of facilities for the education and recreation of the public in the field of art. The charity also has the general aim of contributing to the quality of life of the people of Belfast by expanding their horizons through the provision of exciting, challenging and accessible professional and community art events. Pollen Studios and Gallery also promote and improve art and the production of objects and works of artistic merit for the public benefit by the establishment and maintenance of affordable studio space for fine artists and makers (including painters, illustrators, sculptors, photographers, printmakers, textile and other multi-media designers) upon terms appropriate to their means.

## Charity Activities

### Main Activities to further purposes for public benefit

The strategies employed to achieve the charities aims and objectives are:

- To present a broad range of art exhibitions and performance happenings for the enjoyment and education of our local community
- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in arts activity, exploring their own creative powers

- Provide facilities for the public, professional artists and community groups to develop artistic practice
- Concentrate on involving young people in the arts to promote a culture in which different age ranges play a complementary part
- Celebrate the diversity of cultures in our society by programming presentations by, and with artists of different cultural backgrounds.

Members of the charity invigilate all openings, talks or workshops and encourage feedback, verbal and written, at all events. Feedback is discussed and recorded in minutes at our regular meetings. Minutes and action points are recorded and available to all members, with follow up and reviews at consecutive meetings until any issues are resolved. The membership takes the views of our audience very seriously and without compromising the integrity of the programme, we seek to respect the diverse ethnic, faith, sexual orientation and lifestyles of our community and audience.

Pollen Studios and Gallery encourage and welcome exhibition and performance proposals.

## Main Achievements of the year

### Programme of Late Night Art Belfast, Exhibitions and Community Engagement 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

#### Overview

During 2024–2025, Pollen Studios & Gallery delivered an ambitious and diverse programme of exhibitions, markets, workshops, and community engagement activities. The year was shaped by the continued delivery of our **ACNI-funded Rural Engagement Programme** and the successful expansion of our **Elevate & Connect** programme, supported by Arts Council Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, and the National Lottery. Despite ongoing challenges relating to our premises, we supported a wide range of artists—both local and external—while deepening our engagement with communities across Belfast and beyond.

Date	Event
April 2024	Charlotte Dixon – Solo Show: Put Together Part 2 – audience participation performance and exhibition – ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
April 2024	Late Night Art Market for local artists
June 2024	Conor McGinley Solo Show: Animals by MWAK – painting, illustration, mixed media exhibition - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
July 2024	Stephen Fagan Solo Show: FAIGY – stained glass, painting, illustration exhibition – ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
October 2023 – July 2025	ACNI Funded Rural Engagement Programme: PSG & Mayobridge Youth Club – creative workshops for young people delivered by our members
September – November 2024	Anne Acheson x Belfast Artist Paper Society – group show, workshops and tours carried out in Millenium Court, Portadown – ABC Council funded project

November 2024	Late Night Art Market for local Artists
November 2024	Emanuela Agrini Solo Show: Palette Perspectives – portraiture painting and London Fashion Week illustration exhibition – ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
November 2024	Emanuela Agrini artist led life drawing workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
November 2024	Conor McGinley artist led illustration workshop – ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
December 2024	Festive Late Night Art Market for local artists
December 2024	Aimée Magee Solo Show: White Witch – painting, mixed media illustration, sculpture and puppetry film installation folklore exhibition – ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
December 2024	Charlotte Dixon artist led life sculpting workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
December 2024	Aimée Magee & Aisling Magee artist led textile, needle and wet felting workshops - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Riona Kearns artist led image transfer workshop - Image Transfer Workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Heather Richardson artist led gelli plate printing workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Heather Martin artist led ekphrastic poetry workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Marta Lopes Santos artist led creative writing workshop “Dreaming Together”- ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Bethany Millican artist led introspection and collage workshop “Symbol Play”- ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Grainne Mullan artist led punch needle embroidery workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Jack McGarrigle Solo Show: Parading Yersel’ – sculpture, audio, textile, mixed media installation exhibition - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project
March 2025	Jack McGarrigle artist led badge and patch making workshop - ACNI & BCC funded <i>Elevate &amp; Connect</i> Project

### **Description of Events 2024/25**

#### **April 2024: Charlotte Dixon – *Put Together Part 2***

In April 2024, Pollen welcomed back Charlotte Dixon for *Put Together Part 2*, an audience participation performance and exhibition supported through the ACNI & Belfast City Council *Elevate & Connect*

Project. Building on the success of the first iteration, this exhibition invited participants to reunite with ceramic works they had previously created, collaboratively completing them through glazing and colour exploration. The project focused on emotional responses to colour and collective making, reinforcing long-term relationships between artist, audience, and artwork. The exhibition emphasised process, care, and continuity—encouraging audiences to “show up and finish what we started.”

#### **June 2024: Late Night Art Market for Local Artists**

Pollen hosted a Summer Late Night Art Market in June 2024, providing local artists with the opportunity to sell work, connect with new audiences, and build professional networks. The market attracted strong footfall as part of Late Night Art Belfast, supporting artists through direct sales while strengthening Pollen’s role as a hub for creative exchange and community gathering.

#### **June 2024: Conor McGinley (MWAK) – *Animals***

Also in June, Conor McGinley, working under the name MWAK, presented *Animals*, a solo exhibition of painting, illustration, and mixed media works. Supported through the Elevate & Connect Project, the exhibition showcased vivid, energetic depictions of wildlife that captured the raw movement and spirit of animals. The show was accompanied by an art market and an artist-led illustration workshop, broadening public engagement and offering participants hands-on creative learning opportunities.

#### **July 2024: Stephen Fagan – *FAIGY***

In July 2024, Stephen Fagan presented *FAIGY*, a solo exhibition combining stained glass, painting, and illustration. Known for his work as a street artist and stained-glass practitioner, Fagan used the exhibition to share works-in-progress for commissioned memorial windows, alongside fantastical and psychedelic paintings. The exhibition offered audiences rare insight into an artist’s working process and bridged traditional craft with contemporary visual language.

#### **October 2023 – July 2024: ACNI Rural Engagement Programme – Mayobridge Youth Club**

Throughout the year, Pollen continued delivery of the ACNI Rural Engagement Programme at Mayobridge Youth Club and Community Centre. During June and July 2024, a focused series of textile-based workshops culminated in a large-scale commemorative artwork celebrating the centre’s 60th anniversary. Created collaboratively by young participants, the final piece combined felting, embroidery, patchwork, and archival photography, presented across four panels depicting the building through the seasons. The artwork now hangs permanently in the youth club as a lasting legacy of the project. Feedback from participants, staff, and funders was extremely positive, highlighting increased confidence, skill development, and community pride.

#### **September – November 2024: *Paper Magic x Anne Acheson* – Millennium Court, Portadown**

From September to November 2024, Pollen partnered with the Belfast Artist Paper Society (BAPS) to deliver *Paper Magic x Anne Acheson*, a group exhibition and public engagement programme at

Millennium Court Arts Centre, Portadown. Funded by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the project celebrated the legacy of Portadown-born sculptor and WWI medical innovator Anne Acheson. The exhibition featured large-scale paper sculpture, collage, and mixed media works, alongside workshops and school tours with Presentation Primary School. The opening was attended by the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, reflecting the project's strong civic and community impact.

### **November 2024: Late Night Art Market & Emanuela Agrini – *Palette Perspectives***

In November 2024, Pollen reopened its gallery space with a Late Night Art Market alongside *Palette Perspectives*, a solo exhibition by Emanuela Mae Agrini. Supported through Elevate & Connect, the exhibition showcased portraiture and fashion illustration, including work connected to London Fashion Week. The event marked a strong return of Pollen's art markets, combining professional exhibition opportunities with direct income generation for local artists.

Emanuela also delivered an artist-led life drawing workshop, offering adult participants structured skill development in a welcoming studio environment.

### **December 2024: Festive Programme – Exhibitions, Markets & Workshops**

December 2024 marked one of Pollen's busiest months, featuring a Festive Late Night Art Market supporting local artists, alongside Aimée Magee's solo exhibition *White Witch*. This immersive folklore-inspired exhibition combined sculpture, illustration, puppetry film, and installation, exploring seasonal mythology, local witch lore, and the figure of the Cailleach.

The month also included multiple sold-out and highly attended artist-led workshops, including life sculpting with Charlotte Dixon, textile and wet felting workshops with Aimée Magee and Aisling Magee, and additional participatory events that made high-quality creative learning free and accessible to the public.

### **March 2025: Artist-Led Workshops & Jack McGarrigle – *Parading Yersel'***

March 2025 saw an intensive programme of external artist-led workshops as part of Elevate & Connect, including image transfer, gelli plate printing, ekphrastic poetry, creative writing, collage, and punch needle embroidery. These sessions welcomed a broad range of participants, many attending Pollen for the first time, and significantly expanded our creative networks.

The month concluded with Jack McGarrigle's solo exhibition *Parading Yersel'*, a mixed media installation exploring fabric, queer identity, desire politics, and tradition. The exhibition was accompanied by a badge and patch-making workshop, reinforcing Pollen's commitment to participation, dialogue, and experimentation.

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## **Achievements and Performance**

Our situation at Flax Artist Studios remains unchanged, with ongoing challenges relating to space, building condition, and short-term lease security. Despite these constraints, Pollen has continued to deliver a high-quality programme supporting artists, communities, and audiences.

The Elevate & Connect programme has significantly strengthened our capacity to support emerging and mid-career artists through paid exhibition opportunities, professional workshops, and public engagement. We have supported both resident and external artists, increased access to free creative learning, and reached new audiences through partnerships and outreach.

Through Late Night Art Markets, we have continued to provide vital income-generating opportunities for local artists, increasing their visibility, confidence, and professional networks. Our exhibitions programme has offered artists a professional platform to develop ambitious new work and engage meaningfully with audiences.

An ambitious and resilient collective, Pollen continues to seek a more suitable long-term premises and sustainable funding pathways to build on this momentum and further our mission of connecting artists and communities through accessible, high-quality arts programming.

## Public Benefit Statutory Statement

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's Guidance on public benefit and we will endeavour to encourage all within our community to take part in our activities and to attend our exhibitions when it is safe to do so under guidance from Stormont. We also openly encourage the local community, local schools and higher education colleges to visit the gallery space to enjoy and learn from the art we provide or host.

## End of Year Financial Review

Pollen Studios and Gallery does not hold any funds as a custodian trustee.

At 31 March 2025, the charity held **£4,132.60 in cash at bank**, and the charity's bank account was in credit at the year end.

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, the charity was funded through a combination of **restricted project funding from public funders** and **unrestricted income**, including studio rental income and donations. Restricted funding formed the majority of income during the year and supported the delivery of specific projects and programmes.

Although the charity recorded a **net deficit for the year**, this arose due to a planned and managed reduction in unrestricted income following changes in studio membership, while core operating costs continued. The deficit was met from available cash resources and did not result in any fund being overdrawn.

There were **no funds held by the charity that were materially in deficit** at the end of the financial year. Restricted funds held at 31 March 2025 are designated for future project delivery in accordance with funder conditions.

The trustees are satisfied that the charity remains financially stable and able to meet its obligations as they fall due.



Signed by The Trustees -

Date – 19/01/2026

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The trustees are satisfied that the charity remains financially stable and able to meet its obligations as they fall due.

Signed by The Trustees -

Date – 19/01/2026

Handwritten signature of Ashley Magee in black ink.

Date – 19/01/2026

Handwritten signature of Joanne Connolly in black ink.