

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland · Charity number 100878

Details

Status	Received
Registered	2014-12-09
Register	View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register

Contact

Address	Springhill Community House 6&7 Springhill Close Belfast Bt12 7se BT12 7SE
Phone	028 9032 6722
Email	admin@ballymurphy massacre.com
Website	www.ballymurphy massacre.com

Activities

Purposes: The charities objects are: The promotion and dissemination of knowledge, information and understanding of the circumstances in which, between the 9th and 11th of August 1971, eleven people in Ballymurphy area were killed. To advance the education of the public in the study, research and enquires into such deaths To procure justice for the victims of these deaths To raise awareness of human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations) To cultivate a public sentiment in favour of human rights equality and diversity.

What the charity does: The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity

How the charity works: Advice/advocacy/information,Criminal justice,Education/training,Human rights/equality,Research/evaluation

Who the charity helps: Children (5-13 year olds),General public,Men,Victim support,Women,Youth (14-25 year olds)

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,637	£221	£0	0

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Mrs Alice Harper		
Mrs Briega Voyle		
Mrs Carmel Quinn		
Mrs Rita Bonner		

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Accounts

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

PREPARED BY:-

**OUTSOURCE FINANCE
Upper Springfield Development Trust
689 Springfield Road
Belfast BT12 7FP**

Tel No 028 90236677

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE CHARITY MEMBERS OF
BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE**

I report on the financial statements of the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee for the year ended 31st March, 2025, which are set out on pages 1 to 2.

Respective responsibilities of the trustee and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- * examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- * follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65 (9) (b) of the Charities Act
- * state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65 (9) (b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me the cause to believe:

1. That the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act.
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act.
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independents examiners statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with the following the Direction of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Anne McEvoy
OUTSOURCE FINANCE
Upper Springfield Development Trust
689 Springfield Road
Belfast BT12 7FP

Tel No 028 90236677

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Generated Income		
LAOH \$2000	1,562.40	
Donations		
Bank Interest	-	
Ballymurphy Poems memorabilia	75.00	
	<hr/>	
		<hr/> 1,637.40

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	£	£
<u>Income</u> (from page 3)		1,637.40
<u>Expenses</u>		
Travel & Accomodation	146.05	
Telephone	0	
Materials		
Memorials	44.69	
Inquest Expenses	-	
Bank Fees	30.35	
Legal Fees	-	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
		221.09
Surplus/Deficit for year		1,416.31
Balance c/f previous year		74,958.70
		<hr/> <hr/>
		76,375.01

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

BALANCE SHEET
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Equipment		-
Total		<u>-</u>
Current Assets		
Bank Account	76,375.01	
Grants Due		
Total	<u>76,375.01</u>	
Current Liabilities		
Accruals		
Creditors (transfers owing)		
Total	<u> </u>	
Capital Grant Reserve		<u>-</u>
Net Assets		<u>76,375.01</u>
Capital		
Balance at 01 April 2024		74,958.70
Surplus/Deficit for year		1,416.31
Total		<u>76,375.01</u>

For the year ended 31 March 2021 the above accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime as set out in Parts 15 and 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

"Director's responsibilities:

* The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

* The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records, accounts and the preparation of accounts."

Approved by the Board of Directors 23/06/25

And

Signed on their behalf by



(Date)

(Director)

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Accounts

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

PREPARED BY:-

**OUTSOURCE FINANCE
Upper Springfield Development Trust
689 Springfield Road
Belfast BT12 7FP**

Tel No 028 90236677

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Anne McEvoy
OUTSOURCE FINANCE
Upper Springfield Development Trust
689 Springfield Road
Belfast BT12 7FP

Tel No 028 90236677

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Generated Income		
Fr Des Memorial Donations		
AOH \$4500+6000	8,149.26	
LAOH \$4000	3,112.83	
Donations	918.34	
Bank Interest	-	
Ballymurphy Poems memorabilia	85.00	
	<u>592.59</u>	
		<u>12,858.02</u>

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	£	£
Income (from page 3)		12,858.02
Expenses		
Travel & Accomodation	273.28	
Telephone	0	
Materials	92.81	
Memorials	253.00	
Inquest Expenses	-	
Bank Fees	31.75	
Legal Fees	-	
	<hr/>	
		<hr/> 650.84
Surplus/Deficit for year		12,207.18
Balance c/f previous year		62,751.52
		<hr/> 74,958.70 <hr/>

BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE

**BALANCE SHEET
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Equipment		-
Total		<u>-</u>
Current Assets		
Bank Account	74,958.70	
Grants Due		
Total	<u>74,958.70</u>	
Current Liabilities		
Accruals		
Creditors (transfers owing)		
Total		<u>-</u>
Capital Grant Reserve		<u>-</u>
Net Assets		<u><u>74,958.70</u></u>
Capital		
Balance at 01 April 2023		62,751.52
Surplus/Deficit for year		12,207.18
Total		<u><u>74,958.70</u></u>

For the year ended 31 March 2021 the above accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime as set out in Parts 15 and 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

"Director's responsibilities:

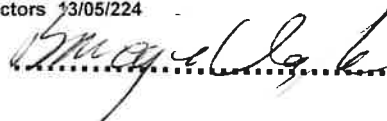
* The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

* The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records, accounts and the preparation of accounts."

Approved by the Board of Directors 13/05/224

And

Signed on their behalf by



(Date)

(Director)

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Annual report

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Trustees Report

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Charity Contact Details:

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

C/o 6&7 Springhill Close

Belfast

BT12 7SE

Tel 02890326722

www.Ballymurphy massacre.com

Charity No: 100878

Charity Aims and Objectives

The Ballymurphy Massacre Committee (TBMC) represents and supports victims of state conflict in Ballymurphy and its surroundings by campaigning for redress for victims of human rights abuse. TBMC does this by promoting and dissemination information about the circumstances of the deaths of eleven people in the Ballymurphy Massacre in August 1971 and other such atrocities. By educating the general public in the study, research and enquires into such deaths. TBMC raises awareness of human rights issues and in particular the Ballymurphy Massacre by facilitating debate, organising lectures, seminars, exhibitions, lobbying politicians and information session. Providing educational talks on human rights to conferences, schools, universities, human rights organisations, NGOs and to public and private institutions, including government departments. TBMC is committed to supporting individuals deal with past traumas through programmes of social support so that they can examine their past in order to move forward and reconcile their inner conflict; this is an essential part of the healing process. Where appropriate TBMC will, undertake commission and promote research in all aspects of human rights issues, bringing all useful findings to the widest possible audience. TBMC is committed to International Advocacy of Human rights and in particular to the events of the Ballymurphy Massacre, this is achieved by campaigning, advocacy, lobbying of International Governments to ensure the implementation of human rights legislation domestically. For all those who suffer as a result of the conflict in Northern Ireland dealing with the past is a major issue, resolution can only be achieved by addressing and resolving human rights issues and past trauma, TBMC seeks to procure truth and justice for the victims of these events by assisting

individual's healing and exhausting all legal/professional avenues that result in positive outcomes for individuals.

Charity Purpose

The objects of the Company shall be exclusively charitable and be for The promotion and dissemination of knowledge, information and understanding of the circumstances in which, between the 9th and 11th of August 1971, eleven people in Ballymurphy area were killed.

To advance the education of the public in the study, research and enquires into such deaths.

To procure justice for the victims of these deaths.

To raise awareness of human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations)

To cultivate a public sentiment in favour of human rights equality and diversity.

In making decisions and in all activities the trustees have adhered to the charity commission's guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee's aims and objectives are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

Charity Trustees

Briege Voyle - Chairperson

Alice Harper

Rita Bonner

Carmel Quinn

Income and Expenditure Accounts Prepared by:

Outsource Finance

Upper Springfield Development Trust

668 Springfield Road

Belfast

BT12 7FP

Bank

Danske Bank
Kennedy Centre
564-568 Falls Rd,
Belfast BT11 9AE

Financial Review

The organisations income and expenditure accounts are set out in detail in the prepared accounts by Outsource Finance.

In the year ending the 31st March 2024 the income has increased by £4450 over 22/23's income. The expenditure compared to the previous financial year 22/23 decreased by £528, the decrease in expenditure is due to less travel for campaign purposes.

The charity is in a healthy financial position with cash in bank. The directors will review the funds that the charity requires to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil the charities continuing obligations.

Funding

Funding for the charity relies on fundraising activities, donations (£918.32) and memorabilia which consists of badges/charms and Christmas cards (£592.59). In this financial year donations received from the AOH (£8149.26) and from the LAOH (£3112.83). The sales of the Ballymurphy Poems booklet (£85.00)

Activities

Much of the campaign activities outlined during this period centre around opposition to the British Governments proposed Legacy Bill of Shame. Families have campaigned tirelessly to have their loved one's declared innocent which was achieved in May 2021, almost immediately the British Government proposed new laws that would end all inquests, civil cases and investigation into troubles related murders. All families deserve the truth which is enshrined in the human rights bill we will focus our efforts and campaign on stopping this bill and supporting other families and campaigns to get truth and justice.

The following is Briega Voyle's moving contribution to a multi-denominational service broadcast on RTE to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

I am Briega Voyle, my mummy Joan Connolly was a mother of 8 and a wife to Denis. She along with 10 other Ballymurphy residents, including our Parish Priest, was unlawfully killed by the Parachute Regiment in August 1971 in what is now known as the Ballymurphy Massacre.

Like Jesus they were victims of state terror and in their deaths their names were blackened by lies.

For 50 years we tirelessly campaigned to establish the truth about what happened to our loved ones and fought a difficult battle against the establishment.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement we are thankful that it gave us families the space to openly investigate the Massacre which before then had remained hidden. It also brought about the mechanisms that allowed us seek out truth and to hold those to account for what they did.

It has not been an easy road but what sustained us on our journey was the knowledge that the truth can never be hidden.

In May 2021 the truth was exposed before the whole world. Our loved ones were declared entirely innocent of any wrongdoing.

The inquest verdict won't bring our loved ones back or make up for everything that we have had taken from us. But, it has cleared their names and restored their good reputation. The verdict has helped us to overcome another hurdle in our quest for truth.

We firmly believe the innocent victims of the Ballymurphy Massacre are martyrs, they bear witness to God who is love and truth
Their lives were brutally taken from them.

They are witnesses to us of everything that is good, loving, kind and generous.

Father Hugh Mullan,
Frank Quinn
Noel Phillips
Joan Connolly
Daniel Teggart

Joseph Murphy
Eddie Doherty
John Lavery
Joseph Corr
Pat McCarthy
and
John McKerr

These are God's children, the very best of human beings.

They embody the qualities that God calls us to have, created in his own image. Without exception they demonstrated ultimate love by laying down their lives for their friends, for their community. Each of them left a place of safety to go to the aid of others. Let us be inspired by their example;

To love,
To be kind,
To be generous and
To treat others as we would like to be treated.

Today we are reminded to "love one another, as I have loved you." This was something I grew up with; my mother, who was a devote catholic, instilled this belief in our family from a young age.

This has stayed with me throughout our campaign for truth and justice. It's easy preaching to the converted but what is more difficult is reaching out to those who hold different beliefs, views and opinions and realising we have more that unites us than divides us. It costs nothing to extend the hand of friendship.

An injustice for one is an injustice for all.

I want to take this opportunity to remember our loved ones, everyone in our community and beyond who has died in violent circumstances and those who mourn their loss. Our pain is the same no matter who we are.

Let us pray that God's love will bring them peace, truth and justice.
Amen



END THE BILL OF SHAME NOW!

John Teggart spoke at vigil against the British Government's legacy Bill of Shame outside the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. He was calling again on the Irish Government to take an interstate case against the British Governments proposals.

The vigil was organised by the Pat Finucane Centre who had on display shoes from 'In Their Footsteps' exhibition.

Each pair of shoes represents a person who was killed or injured during the conflict.



Statement from the Ballymurphy Massacre Families Saturday 6th May 2023.

Today is a day to remember victims of state violence.

As King Charles III and his wife are crowned King and Queen of the British empire, we the Ballymurphy Massacre families will not be watching the spectacle.

Instead we will be remembering our loved ones who were brutally murdered by the British Parachute Regiment, the same regiment that Charles is the Colonel-in-Chief of.

The para's have been directly involved in over forty murders in the recent conflict in Ireland not to mention mass brutality, torture and waterboarding.

When he became king he became the Commander-in-Chief of all British Armed Forces who were responsible for almost 400 murders in our recent past.

We listened this week to speech's by Charles on reconciliation and how he is amazed at the good work of people on the ground, a lot of this work is done by victims groups like ourselves.

Yet Charles hasn't even tried to reconcile with victims of the regiment that he commands. If the monarchy is interested in reconciliation why did they choose 11th May 2021, the day the Ballymurphy Massacre victims were declared entirely innocent, to put their Royal stamp of approval on the Tory Government's Legacy Bill of Shame.

This bill will put an end to all inquests, investigations, civil cases and prosecutions. How can you call this an act of reconciliation?

The Ballymurphy Massacre Families will wait to hear what King Charles III has to say to victims of state violence when he lands on Irish soil.

Sorry would be a good start to reconciliation and right past wrongs.



Ballymurphy Massacre Inquest Verdict Video of Reflection

This day two years ago Lady Chief Justice Dame Siobhan Keegan published her verdict in the Ballymurphy Massacre inquests in which she declared all victims "Entirely Innocent."

In this film the Ballymurphy Massacre families reflect on the roller coaster of emotions they went through as they listened to the verdict and their elation afterwards as the Ballymurphy community greeted them.



Full Open letter from the Ballymurphy Massacre families calling on ICRIR Chief Declan Morgan to resign.

24th May 2023

Dear Chief Commissioner-designate,

Thank you for your letter of 23rd May 2023 requesting an opportunity to meet with the Ballymurphy Massacre Families.

We would like to state from the outset that we are strongly opposed to the Conservative Party's Legacy Bill or "Bill of Shame".

The Ballymurphy Massacre families and other victims have campaigned vigorously in opposition to this Bill.

We maximised the support of all victim's groups and all political parties in Ireland, North and South.

With the exception of the Conservative Party all other political parties in both houses at Westminster have met with cross community victim's representatives and pledged their support in opposition of this Bill.

Opposition to this bill also comes from all NGO'S, Amnesty international, US administration and the European Union and many more human rights organisations.

Those who suffered the most, victims and survivors of the conflict, should be at the centre of any legislation dealing with the past. This bill runs roughshod over them and offers no real way forward.

In your letter you speak of a "new approach, where the past and current processes aren't working." We disagree totally with your assertion, our inquest which you facilitated is proof that the existing processes do work and will work for those families still awaiting inquests. You meeting victims' families in Belfast as the Lord Chief Justice and your five-year plan on inquests strengthened our confidence in the justice system. For the first time we believed justice can be served and the needs of victims can be addressed.

We are very surprised and deeply disappointed that you have taken this position given your sterling work in recommending mechanisms for dealing with legacy issues included in your 5-year plan.

This bill flies in the face of that plan and will deny others the opportunity our families were given.

It is also surprising to us that you agreed to take up your post before it has even been legislated for.

For many year's families had no faith in the courts or the legal system but in 2011 we took the legal route searching for truth and justice, although we were apprehensive we carried on and started to see some good decisions coming from the courts.

We feel badly let down that a figurehead like yourself, who we have always trusted, who has championed victims' rights through the courts, should take such a position of denying legal rights, whether its inquests, civil or criminal avenues for victims' families to pursue.

We as victims believed the Stormont House agreement and the mechanisms therein for dealing with our past is the way forward for most if not all victims.

We would rather remember you for your previous good work and that to be your legacy, than to be remembered as the head of a British Government department that denies truth and justice.

There is nothing right or honourable about denying truth and justice to victims and their families we therefore ask you to do the right thing and resign now.

John Teggart
Ballymurphy Massacre families

Supporting Topper's Family during their inquest.

Topper's inquest started at Banbridge Courthouse the coroner Mrs Louisa Fee heard evidence from eyewitnesses into the murder of Topper Thompson.

It takes courage to give evidence to an inquest, even when the event happened only a few days ago. But to do so 30 years later is a truly courageous.

The inquest will hear evidence from eyewitnesses about what they seen and heard on that tragic day.

Despite the passage of time, the eyewitnesses' memories of Toppers murder were still vivid. They described how they had tried to help Topper who was dying in the taxi, and how they had been powerless to prevent his death.

It was clear that they are still traumatised by what they witnessed and by having to recount their evidence.

Their courage and bravery should be commended, they showed great strength and determination in coming forward to tell their stories, even after all these years.

The eyewitnesses' evidence is crucial to the inquest, it helps to establish what happened on that day and helps to ensure that the truth about Toppers murder will finally be revealed.

Topper was murdered in a loyalist gun attack in Springfield Park on 27th April 1994, at 25-years-old. He was shot dead whilst being given a lift in a taxi,

Members of the Springfield Park community were subjected to regular attacks conducted by loyalist paramilitaries. They consider that the RUC and other state agencies, including the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), were aware of these attacks and the method by which these paramilitary groups entered Springfield Park was known to both the RUC and the NIO.

On the morning of 27 April 1994, residents notified the RUC, NIO and their Member of Parliament (MP) that the 'peace line' separating Springfield Park and Springmartin Road had been compromised by the creation of a hole and no action was taken to either repair it or provide security for the members of the community, though it was known that the area was subject to regular attacks by loyalist paramilitaries.

A Community Public Inquiry was held in September 1994 into the circumstances of Paul's death, involving international jurists and lawyers, including Judge Andrew Somers, Gareth Pierce, Judge Dan Coburn, Richard O'Meara, Dr Ray Murphy, Tom Fox, and Angela Ritchie. Documents were reviewed, statements were taken, evidence heard, submissions received, and a report produced in 1995.



Victims speak out against legacy bill of shame.

Susanne McKerr, granddaughter of John McKerr one of eleven victims in the Ballymurphy Massacre, is asking us to join her and other victims campaigners to send a clear message to the British Government that the bill must be withdrawn.

The Legacy Bill is a betrayal of victims and survivors of the Troubles. The bill will create an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), Sir Declan Morgan, who will be responsible for investigating Troubles-related deaths and injuries.

The bill will also grant immunity from prosecution to anyone who provides information to the ICRIR, regardless of whether they were involved in a crime.

This means that perpetrators of violence would be able to get away with murder, torture, and other serious crimes. This is a clear injustice to the victims and survivors of the Troubles, who have waited decades for truth and justice.

Recent amendments to the bill will stop any inquests, civil cases and prosecutions already at an advanced stage as well as those waiting to commence.

The bill has been widely condemned by victims' groups, human rights organizations, and legal experts. Amnesty International has called the bill "a whitewash" that "will let perpetrators of serious crimes off the hook." The Irish government has also expressed its "deep concern" about the bill, saying that it "risks undermining the rule of law and the right to justice."

The British government has defended the bill, saying that it is necessary to "move on" from the Troubles and to "build a shared future" in Northern Ireland. However, this argument is disingenuous. They simply want to sweep the past under the rug and allows perpetrators of violence to escape justice.

The British government must abandon this bill and instead focus on delivering truth and justice for the victims and survivors of the Troubles. This is the only way to build a truly reconciled and peaceful future in Northern Ireland.

In addition to the concerns raised above, the bill has also been criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability. The ICIR would be able to operate in secret, and its findings would not be subject to judicial review. This means that there would be no way to ensure that the ICIR is conducting its investigations fairly and impartially.

The British government must withdraw this bill immediately. It is a betrayal of victims and survivors, a threat to the rule of law, and a major step backward for human rights in Northern Ireland.



Time for Truth - British State Cover-up Protest Belfast June 2023

John Teggart spoke at a protest in opposition to the British Governments' legacy Bill of Shame.

Ballymurphy Massacre Families welcome the Attorney General's decision to open a fresh Inquest into the death of Kelly who was murdered in July 1974.



Murdered Turf Lodge teen Leo Norney 'entirely innocent': Inquest

Leo Norney (17) was shot dead by a member of the Black Watch regiment on 13 September 1975 soon after he left a black taxi. The soldier who shot him, L/Cpl John Ross MacKay, died in 2015. The inquest heard that MacKay had gone out that night "to waste someone".

Murdered Turf Lodge teen Leo Norney 'entirely innocent': Inquest

Anthony Neeson June 30, 2023 17:04



Springhill Westrock Massacre 51st Anniversary March

It was great to see so many out today in solidarity with the Springhill Westrock Massacre families as they remembered their loved ones on the 51st anniversary of the massacre.

Natasha Butler, granddaughter for Paddy Butler. said "We are not going away. We cannot and will not be silenced. We are never giving up until the truth has been told and our loved ones have been legally vindicated."

Harry Gargan spoke about their ongoing inquest and thanked all the civilian witnesses for their courage and in giving evidence despite the "bizarre and questionable" cross-examination of the MOD/PSNI. He hopes that the inquest will finish despite the implementation of the legacy bill of shame and pledged to stand by other families who will follow.

Mark Thompson of Relative for Justice said "The Bill of Shame is not going to be accepted" There is no support for it from political parties, human rights organisations or victims groups.

He pleaded with the Irish Government to "Stand up for families" saying that the "Good Friday agreement provided a changed landscape and a level playing field, it provided rights and entitlements."

It's the duty of the Irish Government not only to stand up for rights but to stand up for the Good Friday Agreement.

Ballymurphy Massacre Feile 2023 event dates for your diary

Here are some Féile events you might be interested in over the coming weeks.

Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign Exhibition

Location: St Marys University

Date: Thursday 3rd to Friday 11th August 2023

Time: all day

Admission: Free

Families have just completed erecting this amazing exhibition which documents the Ballymurphy Massacre Campaign through the eyes of the media using photographs, press statements, speeches and news reports.

Ballymurphy Massacre: Panel Discussion – “The Ballymurphy Model?” and Feile launch of “Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence” book.

Location: St Marys University College

Date: Wednesday 9th August 2023

Time: 1pm

Admission: Free

Professor Phil Scraton, said the Ballymurphy Massacre inquest had “changed the inquest system forever” which had a resonance not only at home but all the way to Australian inquests where families of indigenous Australians have taken hope from the Ballymurphy families who have “exposed the lies of institutionalised power.

Yet through the British Government’s Legacy Bill of Shame they will end all inquests stating the current systems don’t work.

The Panel discussion chaired by Professor Leah Wing and panel members including Ballymurphy Families and Human rights lawyer Pdraig O’Muirigh will examine the Ballymurphy Inquests as a model for seeking truth.

At the beginning of the inquests in 2018 families were given the opportunity to tell the court about their loved ones in the form of pen portraits.

These moving pen portraits shine a light on the victims as loving family members, they were not just a number or statistic, they were real people who will be missed by their families, friends and wider Ballymurphy Community. The full unedited pen portraits as spoken by families are published in this book “Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence” Extracts from the book will be read at the beginning of this event and the book will be available afterwards.

Ballymurphy Massacre 52nd Anniversary Mass

Location: Corpus Christi Church

Date: Saturday 12th August 2023

Time: 6pm

Admission:

The vigil mass will be offered on the 52nd Anniversary of the Ballymurphy Massacre. .

Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth

Location: Starts Springfield Park

Date: Sunday 13th August 2023

Time: assembles assemble 12 leaving at 12. 30pm sharp.
Admission: N/A

You're invited to our main event of the year the Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth. This will be the last formal Ballymurphy Massacre March of Truth, going forward families will continue to remember the anniversaries of our loved ones with a walk of truth following the same route and other events during Féile

We are calling on all our supporters to stand side by side with us in opposition to the British Government's Legacy Bill of Shame. It is very important that we send a strong message to the British Government that victims will never give up in their search for truth and justice. Guest speakers will reflect on their own campaigns and how this Bill of Shame will affect them. We are asking other campaigns, organisations and individuals to bring their banner and photos of their loved ones to take part in the March.



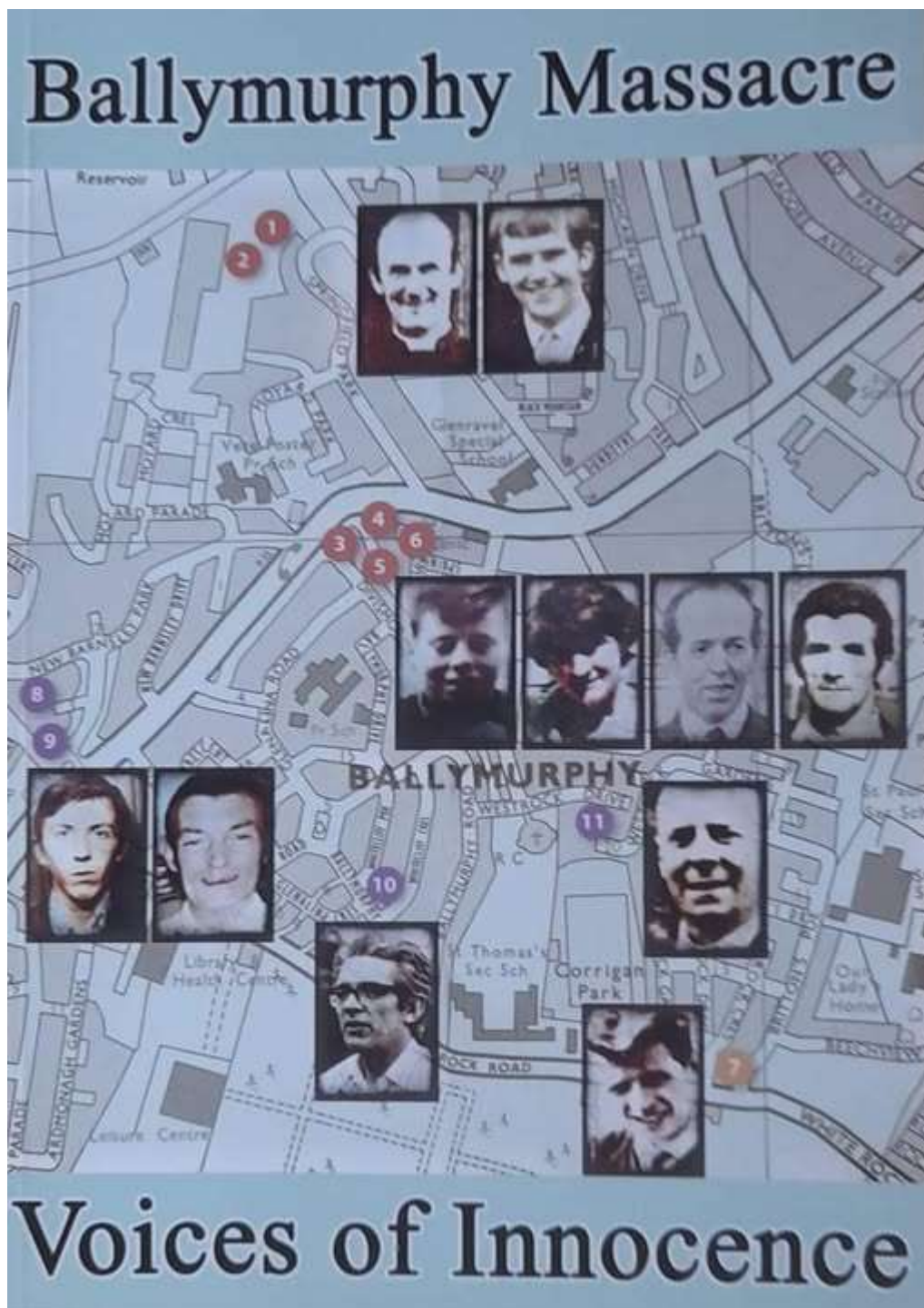
Ballymurphy Massacre: Panel Discussion – “The Ballymurphy Model?” and Feile book launch of “Voices of Innocence”

Professor Phil Scraton, said the Ballymurphy Massacre inquest had “changed the inquest system forever” which had a resonance not only at home but all the way to Australian inquests where families of indigenous Australians have taken hope from the Ballymurphy families who have “exposed the lies of institutionalised power.”

Yet through the Legacy Bill of Shame the British Government will end all inquests stating the current systems don't work.

The Panel discussion chaired by Professor Leah Wing and panel members including Ballymurphy Families and Human rights lawyer Pdraig O'Muirigh will examine the Ballymurphy Inquests as a model for seeking truth.

At the beginning of the inquests in 2018 families were given the opportunity to tell the court about their loved ones in the form of pen portraits.



Remembering the Ballymurphy Massacre Victims.

"Entirely Innocent" civilians who "posed no threat" to anyone, not my words, the words of Justice Siobhan Keegan in her verdict.

Today families remembered their loved ones on the 52nd anniversary of the massacre with a minutes silence during their feile event "The Ballymurphy Model" and book launch of "Ballymurphy Massacre - Voices of Innocence"

Geraldine McGrattan , Fr Mullan's niece, read her pen portrait about her uncle Hugh and Annette Peake, Frank Quinn's niece, read her cousins pen portrait about Frank.

The panel chaired by Dr Leah Wing examined the Ballymurphy Massacre inquests as a model for truth recovery.

Eleven minutes before Justice Keegan finished giving her verdict the British Government released the following Statement:

"It is clear that the current system for dealing with the legacy of the past is not working well for anybody, with criminal investigations increasingly unlikely to deliver successful criminal justice outcomes and failing to obtain answers for the majority of victims and families.

'The Government will introduce a legacy package that delivers better outcomes for victims, survivors and veterans, focuses on information recovery and reconciliation, and ends the cycle of investigations."

The Law Society of Northern Ireland on the other hand said they "consider that this Legacy inquest demonstrates the value of an independent judicial investigation as a means to providing victims and their families with access to Justice."

Padraig O'Muirigh, who represented families, said the new legislation will replace inquests with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation & Information (ICRIR) which in his view will not deliver the same for families as inquests.

The ICRIR will not have the same family/public participation that inquests afford, nor will it provide the same level of disclosure or engagement with experts that are available through the inquest system. Crucially the ICRIR will not allow families legal representatives to examine evidence or eye witnesses.

The clear message from families is this legacy bill of shame must be stopped.



Remembering Joseph Murphy Snr & Joseph Murphy Jnr on the 50th Anniversary of their deaths.

The small community of Ballymurphy has seen its fair share of loss and tragedy, there isn't a street that hasn't lost someone to the conflict.

Whitecliff Drive for example, home to the Joseph & Vera Murphy and Clann.

On the night of 10th August 1973, 22-year-old Joseph Murphy Jnr was visiting his brother in law in Musgrave Hospital when he was murdered by a Loyalist murder squad as he left. By the time the awful news reached his parents it was the early hours of the 11th August, on hearing the news of his son's murder Joseph Murphy Snr took a heart attack and died. The heartbroken Murphy family were left dealing with a double tragedy which doesn't bare thinking about.

Remembering also Mrs Vera Murphy who I had the privilege of knowing. She never got over the death of her husband and son, but she was a strong and resilient woman who had great faith and the love of her family to get her through it.

Thinking of Sheila, Marie, Vera and Gerard and the wider Murphy family. Joseph Murphy Jnr is picture with Fr Noel Fitzpatrick who was murdered by British soldiers the previous year July 1972 in the Springhill/Westrock Massacre. Vera gave this moving account to Jim Ó'Muadhaigh in 1994.

Young Joseph lived across the street, you could see his front door from my living room. His wife Mary always called in here before going over to make his supper.

So that Friday night she called in and said that her brother had been taken to Musgrave Park Hospital as he had hurt his leg and that her and young Joseph were going over to visit him. So Joseph then called and I told him not to bother making a dinner because I would make them something at my house. So they had some dinner and then got ready to leave. I walked them to the door, saying cheerio and that I hoped that Mary's brother would be alright. I remember it as clear as it was a lovely summer evening.

My husband Joe had just come out of hospital two weeks before as he was diagnosed as having angina. The doctor said that he would live for another 50 years provided he didn't get any severe shocks with all the trouble that had been going on. However, Joe was in great form that night and I remember him dancing and playing with my Kathleen's two children who had visited us. So after young Joseph and his wife left for the hospital I had a wee doze.

I remember waking and my other daughter Vera was there, she was sewing a pair of trousers. At about 10.30. The news came on and it said a man in his 30's had been shot dead in Kennedy Way. I jumped up in shock, but my daughter Vera told me not to worry, saying that Joseph was only 22. My husband Joe also agreed that it could not be our Joseph. But I was convinced that it was my son, especially when the later news came on and said the man was shot in the company of his wife and that they were both coming out of Musgrave Park Hospital. I couldn't rest and was in and out from the front door all night until my daughter Vera came in and said: "Mummy, you're going to upset daddy and he has angina" She tried to reassure me and again said "Our Joseph is only 22, the man killed is in his 30's".

During all this I was looking over to Joseph's house and there was no sign of either him or his wife. It was then I remember Joseph saying when he left the hospital he was going to Gerard Walsh's house in the Whiterock to go out for a drink. So, of course I wanted to go down to see if he was there or if he had called in. However, I didn't want to upset my husband Joe so I told him that I was going to get cigarette's. My husband said to me "Wait a minute, there's cigarette's here, I know what you're thinking, you thinking that was our Joseph". Of course I said that I didn't.

By this stage I couldn't wait anymore and went to Paddy Stott's house to ask him to bring me to Gerard Walsh's house. Just prior to that I went over to Joseph's house and rapped the door and threw stones at the window; the lights were out and there was no reply.

I saw Evelyn Clarke coming down the hill and told her what I thought. Then Lily Toner came out from next door and they both tried to reassure me.

Neither Paddy Stott nor myself knew where Gerard Walsh lived in the Whiterock so we asked around until we found his house and I went over and asked had Joe called. Gerard explained that Joseph was supposed to call in but hadn't arrived yet. At that I got on my knees and screamed that Joseph was dead and it was then Paddy Stott had to drag me to the car. On the way back home he Paddy told me not to worry and to calm down for Joes sake.

When we arrived back Joe was standing at the door and his face was a wax colour. It was then I noticed the rosary beads in Joes hands. I told him that Joseph wasn't there, but explained that he had probably gone to his mother in laws house with his wife. It was my turn to reassure him. It was now about midnight when a car appeared at the steps at the bottom of our entry. Joe said "There's your son now!" I thanked God and ran away, leaving everyone standing there. When I reached the steps I saw the car pulling in and noticed that Joseph and his wife were not in it but his two sister in laws were there with another girl. They got out and I said "Where is my son, where is Joseph, where is your sister, where is Mary?". One of them said "Mr's Murphy, wait a wee minute" I

then shouted "Where's my child? He's dead, I know he is dead!" I screamed again and in the midst of my troubles all the lights came on in our street.

(Back at Mrs Murphy's front door, Joe was standing with his daughter Vera. Vera takes up the story).....

I was standing at the door with my daddy and he said "Is it Joseph?" I said that it was. He then heard my mummy scream, he got down on his knees and beat the path and he cried "My son, my son, I loved my son!" I was trying to hold him because of his heart condition but he collapsed on the path with my arms around him. I can't remember who came after that but he was put in an ambulance and taken to hospital. My mummy was in an awful state. She asked where daddy was and we told her he was out at the path, we couldn't even tell her he had been taken away in an ambulance. He died shortly after.



Ballymurphy Massacre Anniversary Mass.

Thanks to Fr Brian Watters for remembering the Ballymurphy Massacre victims in this evening's vigil mass.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families campaign is a long and ongoing struggle for justice. The families have faced many challenges in their campaign, including denial of justice, indifference from the authorities, and even threats and intimidation.

However, they have never given up hope, and their campaign has inspired people here and around the world.

The families' campaign can be seen as a test of their faith. They have had to believe that justice would eventually be done, even when it seemed like all hope was lost. They have had to trust that God would see them through, even when they were feeling lost and alone.

The story of the Ballymurphy Massacre families is similar to this evening's gospel, Matthew 14:22-33.

In this passage, Jesus' disciples are struggling in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. They are afraid and they are losing hope. But then Jesus appears to them, walking on the water. The disciples are amazed and they are filled with faith.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are like the disciples in the storm. At times during their campaign, they were struggling. The MOD delayed, denied and obstructed their inquests at every opportunity.

But they never lost hope because they knew God was with them, even in the midst of the storm. And they found the strength to keep going.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are an inspiration to us all. They show us that it is possible to keep fighting for justice, even when it seems like all hope is lost. They show us that it is possible to have faith, even when we are afraid. And they show us that it is possible to find peace, even in the midst of the storm.

The families' campaign is not over yet. They are still fighting for justice for their loved ones. But they are closer than ever to achieving their goal. And their story is a reminder that hope can never be extinguished.



Ballymurphy Massacre March for Truth 2023

The threat of rain didn't dampen the spirits or resolve of those who turned out in your hundreds to walk shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the Ballymurphy Massacre Families on their last formal March for Truth.

Going forward they will continue with a walk for justice retracing the locations of their loved ones deaths and events during féile.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families campaign has been a long and ongoing struggle for justice. They have faced many challenges in their campaign, including denial of justice, indifference from the authorities, and even threats and intimidation.

However, they have never given up hope, and their campaign has inspired people here and around the world.

At times during their campaign, they were struggling. The MOD delayed, denied and obstructed their inquests at every opportunity.

But they never lost hope and they found the strength to keep going.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families are an inspiration to us all.

They show us that it is possible to keep fighting for justice, even when it seems like all hope is lost.

They show us that it is possible to have faith, even when we are afraid.

And they show us that it is possible to find peace, even in the midst of the storm.
The families' campaign is not over yet.

They are still fighting for justice for their loved ones. But they are closer than ever to achieving their goal.

And their story is a reminder that hope can never be extinguished, never give up!



Ballymurphy massacre Families statement

Today the British government Bill of shame was passed by an 83 majority vote, it now goes back to house of lords next week.

We had no doubt that this bill would be successful by the majority of the Tory party in government.

From an early stage, when the government were in their committee rooms and tried to bring through a statute of limitations, we campaigned against it. Let's remember some shameful unionist politicians were supporting the statute of limitations for ex-veteran's state forces with cases pending of unlawful activities. That idea was shelved when on legal advice that it would have to be an amnesty for all actors involved in the conflict of our recent past.

Now we are in a worse situation. We have a bill that in law will overturn all laws and legal avenues for victims and campaigners. This bill will take away any chance of unfinished or pending inquests, civil cases, prosecutions and an end of funding for the police Ombudsman's office.

All to save a handful of ex-veterans from going to jail where they belong. Our thoughts today are with all victims' families and survivors, affected and traumatised by today's disgraceful and shameful outcome.

On a positive note Labour Shadow Secretary of state Hillary Benn committed in the chamber to repeal today's decision if Labour Party get into government next Term.

We have asked in recent weeks to meet with the Irish Government urgently, that has not happened, we now call on them to listen to victims and immediately progress an Interstate case against the British government. And to take note of the Labour party immediate interventions against this bill today.

We now will see in coming days or weeks this bill rubber stamped by royal assent, by the commander in chief of the British Parachute Regiment & land forces Charles of Windsor. We will not rest until we defeat this bill of shame.

We will focus on what we can do, Here, in Dublin, America, Europe and we will support the pending legal challenges ahead, there is still work to be done, we are #nevergivingup.

The Ballymurphy Massacre families attended an impromptu silent protest at Newforge Conference and Sports Complex.

The Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was present to announce £850 million peace funding for Northern Ireland.

Families were there to highlight to the Taoiseach the need for the Irish Government to take and interstate case against the British Governments disastrous Legacy Bill of Shame.

The Bill of Shame finalises in the House of Lords tomorrow, Tuesday 12th September 2023 before it goes for royal assent.

Speaking at the protest John Teggart, son of Daniel Teggart said;

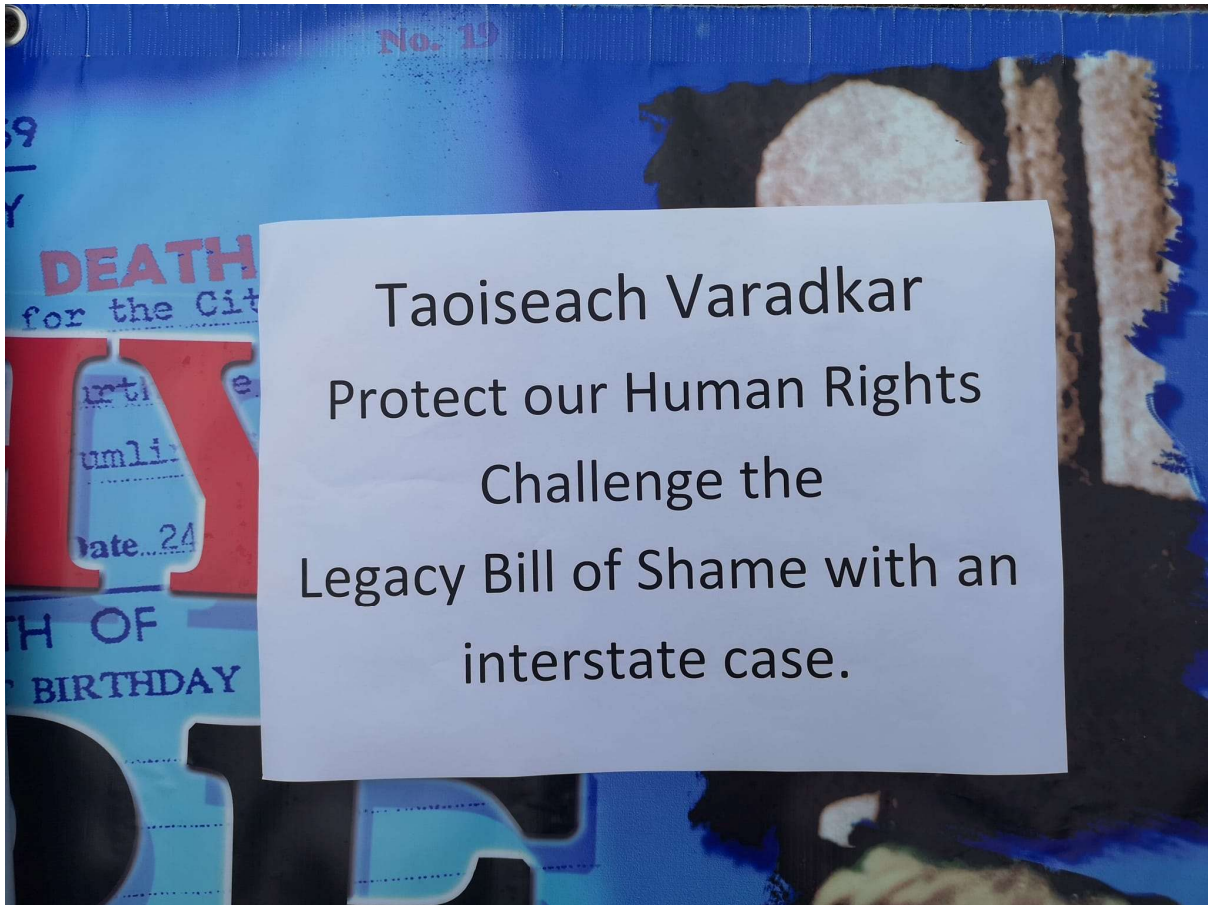
"It is disgraceful that families like ourselves are still having to stand in protest after 50 years. We feel we have not heard from the Irish Government a full and committed response to this disrespectful Tory bill of shame, we want to hear that they will take a case to the European courts of human rights on victims behalf. Don't leave us behind we need this interstate case to be taken immediately against the British Government.

We acknowledge today it is good news day, we welcome all the funding that has come forward from PeacePlus to the many groups and community organisations particularly those providing services to victims and survivors. We support their good work.

But what you have to remember is that families like ourselves are not at peace. We can't be at peace until this legacy bill of shame is binned and that can only be achieved by an interstate case taken by the Irish Government which is the fastest way to defeat it.

We say to the Irish Government don't be leaving victims behind,

Protect our human and civil rights by taking an interstate case immediately."



'A Young Life Stolen'.

Ballymurphy Massacre families were delighted to attend the launch of Gerry Armstrong's book 'a Young Life Stolen'.

Gerry's book is an autobiographical account of growing up in Ligoniel during the conflict – school, work, friends, and everything in between.

But primarily the book is the story of Gerry's 18-year-old brother Paul, who was abducted, tortured and murdered by the UVF on 8 November 1974.

Paul's murder was never properly investigated, nor has his killers been brought to justice. Gerry took every opportunity to speak about his brother Paul and has memorialised him in this book.



The Ballymurphy Massacre Families joined other victims families at a protest outside the office of Sir Declan Morgan the commissioner for the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR).

They are calling on Sir Declan to resign as the commissioner and expressed their opposition to the implementation of the legacy bill of Shame.

Protesters shout "Resign" as Sir Declan entered his office at Goodwood House Belfast.

The sister of 15 year old Danny Barrett addressed the Protesters. Danny was killed by a British soldier in Ardoyne on July 9, 1981. The schoolboy was hit by shots fired from an army observation post as he sat on the front garden wall of his home at Havana Court.

She too called on Sir Declan to resign and said the commission was not independent or human rights compliment and therefore did not have the support of victims.



Ballymurphy Massacre families welcome the resumption of the Springhill/Westrock Massacre Inquest.

The court will heard evidence from civilian witnesses into Incident 2 Surrounding the deaths of Patrick Butler, Fr Noel Fitzpatrick, and David McCafferty.

We send our solidarity as families go through the ordeal of listening to horrific evidence.



Legacy Bill Protest

Patricia Burns, daughter of Thomas Burns who was shot dead by the British army in July 1972 spoke at today's protest she said the British Government's legacy Bill was in breach of their international human rights obligations including the European Convention on human rights.

She said "The legacy act will pull the shutters down on the fundamental right of all families to an investigation, inquest and civil action. In law it will over ride the rights of all victims." She called on the Irish Government to take an interstate case against the legacy bill and told those gathered that families will never give up until the get truth and justice.

Remembering the Victims of the Ballymurphy and Springhill Westrock Massacres this Christmas.

Briege Voyle spoke at this years annual candle light vigil saying

"As we gather together this Christmas, our hearts are filled with the warmth of family, the joy of giving, and the hope for a brighter future. Yet, amidst the festivities and cheer, we must also pause to remember those who have been taken from us too soon, those who have suffered the devastating consequences of state violence.

Tonight, we honour the innocent lives lost in the Ballymurphy and the Springhill Westrock Massacre's, just two of the many atrocities during the Troubles. These massacres, perpetrated by

the British Army, serve as stark reminders of the human cost of conflict and the need for justice and accountability.

In Ballymurphy, eleven unarmed civilians were killed and dozens more injured. The victims, including our priest, were murdered by the British Army. Yet, the British government has consistently refused to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence of their soldiers' wrongdoing.

In Springhill Westrock, five more innocent lives were lost, three teenagers, a priest, and a father-of-six were again murdered by the British soldiers who had taken up positions in Corrys timber yard. Like in Ballymurphy the victims were on errands of mercy going to the aid of others.

We stand in solidarity with the Springhill Westrock Massacre families as they go through their inquest and commend the civilian witnesses who have courageously given evidence despite aggressive questioning by the Ministry of Defence who are attempting to criminalise the entire Springhill Westrock community.

We say this to the Springhill Westrock families, the truth will out and you will be victorious just as we were.

The Ballymurphy and Springhill Westrock Massacre's are not mere historical events; they are wounds that continue to fester in the hearts of the bereaved families and the wider community. The victims were not combatants; they were mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and children who had done nothing wrong. Yet, they were treated as if they were enemies, their lives snubbed out by British soldiers.

As we remember these innocent victims this Christmas, we must also recognise the importance of holding those responsible to account. The British government's continued attempts to protect their soldiers is an insult to the victims and their families. It is a betrayal of justice and a barrier to healing.

That is why we must oppose their legacy Bill of Shame, which seeks to grant immunity to soldiers who committed murder during the Troubles. This bill is a blatant attempt to whitewash history and to deny the victims the justice they deserve.

We must never forget the Ballymurphy and the Springhill Westrock Massacres. We must remember the innocent lives lost, the families shattered, and the community scarred. We must continue to demand justice for the victims and oppose any attempt to cover up war crimes.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, let us remember those who have been taken from us, and the victims of state oppression around the world. Let us recommit ourselves to the pursuit of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Let us work towards a world where no one is ever again subjected to the horrors of state violence that we have endured.

We will gather on this spot every year in remembrance, honour, and respect for our loved ones.



A Life Devoted to Truth & Justice: Remembering Davey McCafferty RIP.

At the weekend we heard the sad news of Davey McCafferty passing.

Davey was a father transformed into an unwavering advocate for truth and justice.

His passing marks the end of a life that was defined by a commitment to seeking answers for his son, David, who was one of the victims of the Springhill Westrock Massacre in 1972.

The loss of his son was a devastating blow for Davey his wife Norah and their family, but it also ignited a fire within them. Davey, supported by his family, refused to accept the official narrative, which placed the blame on the victims and labelled them gunmen. Instead, he embarked on a relentless quest to expose the truth of what happened that horrific day.

Despite facing numerous obstacles and setbacks, Davey never wavered in his pursuit. He believed that his son David, Fr Fitzpatrick, Paddy Butler, John Dougal and Margaret Gargan deserved the truth to be told and he was never going to give up until it was uncovered. Earlier this year he had his day in court and gave evidence to the Springhill Massacre Inquest.

Davey's determination saw him campaign for the Springhill Westrock Massacre victims and for those seeking truth and accountability for the victims of state violence. His pursuit of truth and justice inspired others to speak out too.

Davey's legacy extends far beyond his own personal grief. It is testament to the collective strength of families who refused to be silenced by the injustices perpetrated upon them. He embodied the courage of those who dare to challenge the power of the state, demanding that it be held accountable for its actions.

As we remember Davey, let us honour his unwavering spirit by continuing the fight for justice and accountability.

Let us oppose the state's efforts to hide their war crimes.

Let us remember those who have lost their lives due to state oppression.

Let us carry their voices forward, echoing their demands for truth and justice.

Davey's legacy will live on in the hearts of those he touched and in the pursuit of truth and justice for all who have suffered and will resonate for generations to come.

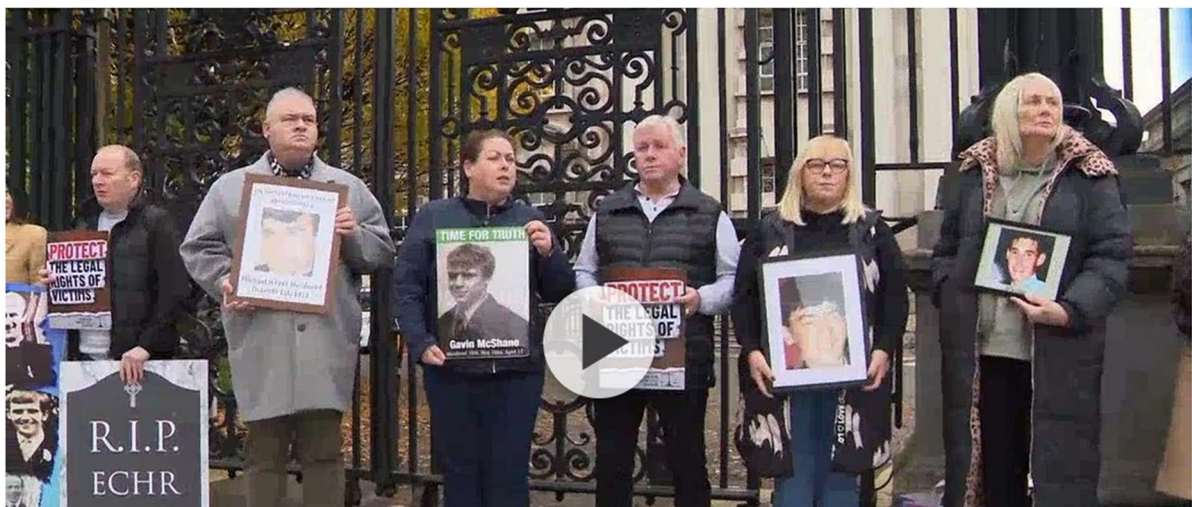
Our heartfelt condolences go to Davey's children and wider family circle. We know that they were by his side throughout his quest for truth and justice and will take up his mantle. The Truth will out.



It took a while to decide but finally the Irish government will take an interstate case against the British Government's legacy Bill of Shame. The first interstate case taken by the Irish government since the 70s.

NI secretary says case by Govt over NI Legacy Act 'unnecessary'

Updated / Thursday, 21 Dec 2023 06:56



From Derry to Gaza free Palestine

The 52nd Bloody Sunday anniversary March was in solidarity with the people of Palestine. A minutes silence was held in memory of the Bloody Sunday victims and all those killed in Palestine.

Huda Ammori the co-founder of Palestine Action was the guest speaker at the March. Huda has organised direct action protests at Elbit Systems, which produces and supplies Israel with specialist electrical equipment for military use including drone parts.

She said she will continue to take direct action to destroy Israeli weapons of war made in the UK and Ireland.

She said " They can try and beat us, they can arrest us, they can imprison us, they can take us to court, but we will never give up and we will never in and we will never surrender."



Ballymurphy Massacre families welcome "significant" settlement made by Martin and Edward Butler against the MOD.

Edward and Martin Butler were shot and injured when members of the Parachute Regiment opened fire on civilians in the Ballymurphy area of west Belfast in August 1971

Ten people were killed over three days after the introduction of internment.

The dead included Joan Connolly, a mother of eight, and Father Hugh Mullan, a priest shot as he tried to give the last rites to a dying man.

Both the Butler brothers gave evidence to the Ballymurphy Inquest.

In 2021 a coroner found that all of the victims were “entirely innocent” and that British soldiers were responsible for the deaths of nine of those killed.

She also found that the use of lethal force by troops was not justified.

Edward was just 11-years-old, while his younger brother Martin was aged 9 when they were shot and wounded in an area known as ‘The Manse’ field, which was opposite the Henry Teggart British Army barracks.

Four other people were killed in the area during the massacre.

The brothers had taken action against the Ministry of Defence and PSNI chief constable.

Pádraig Ó Muirigh, of Ó Muirigh Solicitors, confirmed that a settlement has been reached in the case.

“The confidential nature of the settlement prevents me disclosing the settlement figure,” he said.

“I can confirm, though, that the figure is significant and that our clients are satisfied with the outcome of this litigation.”

The events of Augusts 1971 would not be the last time the Butler family was impacted by the Troubles.

Less than a year later, their father Patrick Butler was one of five Catholics, including a priest and three teenagers, shot dead by British soldiers in what became known as the Springhill/Whirerock Massacre in July 1972.

The inquest into those killings is currently ongoing.

Under the British government’s controversial Legacy Act, all inquests that have not reached their findings stage by May 1 will be closed down.

Mr Ó Muirigh said “robust legal proceedings have provided much information about what happened to those families who lost loved ones and those who were left with serious injuries at the hands of the British army”.

“This draconian legislation is a clear breach of the European Convention of Human Rights and other international human rights standards and should be repealed immediately,” he added.

Brothers shot during Ballymurphy Massacre to receive ‘significant’ settlement





Mother and Catholic priest among Ballymurphy dead

Expand



Martin (left) and Edward Butler

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The Springhill/Westrock Massacre Inquest resumes to complete hearing evidence before the legacy act deadline of May 1st and the Military denial continues.

Military witnesses deny any involvement or knowledge of Springhill Massacre killings.

After thirty-seven days of the Springhill inquest families still do not know the identities of the soldiers who killed their loved ones. The inquest has now heard evidence from eleven former British soldiers of the regiment that shot dead the five victims. All of the military witnesses so far have given their evidence anonymously by video link and screened from sightlink public view.

After two weeks of hearing former British soldiers giving evidence by video link, the Springhill inquest still does not know the identity of the seven soldiers who killed the five victims. The soldiers who were all members of 1 King Regiment, were known only as soldiers A to G. They claimed they had shot dead gunmen from Corry's Timberyard where they were based. The 11 military witnesses were also members of 1 King Regiment and most of them were in charge of soldiers during their time in Belfast. Despite this all have claimed that they were not involved in the deaths of the victims, three teenagers, a father of six and the parish priest or that they knew which soldiers under their command fired the fatal shots.

One former commander in 1 King Regiment told the inquest that it was more than likely that it was soldiers from C Company 1 King Regiment that were involved in the shooting dead of the five victims. He had taken command of C Company when the regiment was based in Hong Kong in 1974 and he had heard that soldiers from C Company 7th Platoon had shot civilians dead when they were based in Corry's Timberyard in July 1972. However, he said he did not have any knowledge or details of their involvement and did not know the identities of soldiers.

Most of the evidence given by the military witnesses focused mostly on the command structures and tactics of the British Army during their tour of duty in West Belfast. They also described shooting incidents and intense firing carried out by gunmen at Corry's Timberyard when they were based there. One former commander stated that they were based in a "hostile environment" where the local community did not want a British Army presence in their area. A former Intelligence Officer for 1 King Regiment, who was based in Springfield RUC Station at the time of the incident claimed he knew nothing about five people being killed by his regiment. Another former commander talked about the 'fog of war' and how this had clouded everyone's judgement and recollection of events that occurred in July 1972.

Counsel for the victim's families cross examined the witnesses at length to try and establish the identities of the soldiers who shot dead their loved ones. Despite the best efforts of the families' counsel the military witness' evidence painted a picture and a narrative that it was soldiers that were under constant attack from the IRA and that when they did open fire it was at gunmen who were trying to kill them.



The Ballymurphy Massacre families joined other victims families at the high court for Justice Colton's ruling on the British Government's legacy Bill.

Justice Colton ruled that the provisions for conditional amnesty for perpetrators of Troubles killings, is a breach of victims rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Mr Justice Adrian Colton said there is no evidence that granting of immunity would contribute to reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

It's a good day for victims, hopefully this ruling will be the beginning of the end of this legacy bill of Shame.



Families 'vindicated' after High Court rules Legacy Act 'breaches' human rights

Conor McParland February 28, 2024 11:55



Paul Topper Thompson Inquest

Toppers inquest was due to restart last week but the PSNI chief constable and secretary of state (SoS) launched a legal action over a decision by the coroner to provide a summary of security force intelligence about Toppers sectarian murder in 1994.

Topper was murdered after loyalists cut a hole in a fence in Springfield Park. Hours earlier neighbours reported the breach in the fence to the RUC and NIO. However, they failed to act.

The coroner Louisa Fee was due to give a summary of the intelligence material when the PSNI and SOS took legal action to stop her.

Concerns had already been raised about the PSNI's failure to disclose information which was described as an attempt to run down the clock. If legacy inquests are not at findings stage by May 1st they will be stopped under the legacy bill of Shame

Today Toppers brother Eugene was joined by friends and supports outside the high court in Belfast as the legal challenge began.

The case was timetabled for a full hearing next Friday.

Eugene is determined to get truth and justice for Topper and will continued to fight the PSNI and British Government until the truth is out.



PSNI and government lose court battle to prevent disclosure of sensitive information at inquest.

Another victory for Eugene Thompson in the fight for truth and justice for his brother Topper.

The British Government and PSNI have used every trick in the book to conceal their own collusive involvement in Topper's murder.

But thankfully judges are seeing through their delay and deny tactics. Hopefully the coroner can now proceed with the remaining evidence and finish the inquest.

PSNI and government lose court battle to prevent disclosure of sensitive information at inquest

UTV | TROUBLES | NORTHERN IRELAND | ⌚ Monday 25 March 2024 at 3:23pm



Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Annual return

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE CHARITY MEMBERS OF
BALLYMURPHY MASSACRE COMMITTEE**

I report on the financial statements of the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee for the year ended 31st March, 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 2.

Respective responsibilities of the trustee and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- * examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- * follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65 (9) (b) of the Charities Act
- * state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65 (9) (b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me the cause to believe:

1. That the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act.
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act.
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independents examiners statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with the following the Direction of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Anne McEvoy
OUTSOURCE FINANCE
Upper Springfield Development Trust
689 Springfield Road
Belfast BT12 7FP

Tel No 028 90236677

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Accounts

SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOUSE LTD

Financial year ended 31st March.,2023

Springhill Community House Ltd
6 - 7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7QG

Statement Of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £'s	Restricted Funds £'s	2023 Total £'s	2022 Total £'s
Incoming Resources				
Generated Funds				
Voluntary Income	0		0	15007
Investment Income			0	0
Grants and Fees		239009	<u>239009</u>	<u>187870</u>
Total Income	<u>0</u>	<u>239009</u>	239009	<u>202877</u>
Resources Expended				
Charitable Activities				
Charitable		237822	237822	173239
Support			0	0
Governance	1999		<u>1999</u>	<u>2359</u>
Total Expended	<u>1999</u>	<u>237822</u>	<u>239821</u>	<u>175598</u>
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources	<u>-1999</u>	<u>1187</u>	<u>-812</u>	<u>27279</u>

Springhill Community House Ltd
6 - 7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7QG

Detailed Statement Of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

	£s	£s
	2023	2022
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
VSS Funding	148950	112510
Department For Communities	36169	32532
Heritage Lottery	0	23858
Big Lottery	10000	0
Donations	9704	10638
Health Days and Outreach	0	15007
Class Fees	1180	805
Conway Mill Trust	6859	2268
Joe Drotter	8042	0
Photocopying and Printing	0	377
C. Hann	110	0
Springhill/Westrock Massacre Campaign	2000	2433
Room Hire	500	756
Therapies	11486	0
Stress Packs	0	1005
Black Mountain	500	0
BCC Covid Support	844	688
Glencree Centre	1185	0
Electric Vouchers	1200	0
Advertising	280	0
Investment Income		
Deposit Account Interest	0	0
Other Incoming Resources		
Activities	0	0
Total Incoming Resources	<u>239009</u>	<u>202877</u>

Springhill Community House Ltd
6 - 7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7QG

Detailed Statement Of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

	£s 2023	£s 2022
Resources Expended		
Charitable Activities		
Direct Charitable Wages	89418	80213
VSS Programme Cost	5352	27845
Additionally/Capital Grant	0	12227
Additionally/Socail Support	37290	0
VSS Capital/Materials	1608	9870
Tuition Fees	11730	11296
Class Fees/Exam Fees	0	2900
Covid Response	0	1615
Falls Women Centre Training	282	0
Lagmore Project	1000	0
VTCT & Verification Visits	2161	0
Wellbeing Day	37040	0
Big Lotto Voucher	11200	0
Heritage Lottery	19290	2601
Premises Costs	3690	2912
Room Hire	300	4375
House Keeping	1200	1250
Therapy/Outreach	8845	5530
Volunteer Expenses	1710	2475
Advertising	280	730
Administration	4244	7174
General Expenses	295	226
Governance Costs		
Accountancy	1100	550
Support Costs	0	0
Management Costs		
Fixtures and Fittings	594	792
Finance		
Bank Fees	305	1017
DFC Loan Payback	887	
Total Resources Expended	<u>239821</u>	<u>175598</u>
Net Income/Expenditure	<u>-812</u>	<u>27279</u>

Springhill Community House Ltd
6 - 7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7QG

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	2023 £'s	2022 £'s
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	30104	30698
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	156366	156584
Creditors		
Amounts due within one year	760	760
Net Current Assets	<u>155606</u>	<u>155824</u>
Total Assets	185710	186522
Deferred Income	0	0
Net Assets	<u>185710</u>	<u>186522</u>
Funds		
Balance fwd	186522	159243
Unrestricted Funds	-812	0
Restricted Funds	0	27279
Total Funds	<u>185710</u>	<u>186522</u>

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees on 19/7/23 and were signed on their behalf by:

Trustee

Thomas Holland

Joseph Quinn
J. QUINN & COMPANY
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
AUDITORS
44 Glen Road
Belfast BT11 0BB
Tel: 017433 Fax: 019710

Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Annual report

Springhill Community House Trustees Report

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Charity Contact Details:

Springhill Community House

6&7 Springhill Close

Belfast

BT12 7SE

Tel 02890326722

www.sch.ie

Charity No:100911

Company No: NI017628

Charity Aims and Objectives

The purpose of Springhill has and will continue to be about empowering people to take control of their own lives. This remains at the heart of what SCH is about and involves tackling the apathy and frustration felt by individuals through programmes of personal development, life coaching, education, training, health awareness and confidence building. SCH has continued to build on its early ethos of free learning and provides a wide spectrum of courses: Statistics show that many in the West Belfast have little or no qualifications on leaving school and that mainstream schooling has been a negative experience for them. This negative experience has tainted their view of mainstream education and acts as a barrier for returners to education. SCH is about overcoming these barriers by providing programmes in a relaxed and informal environment that puts participants at their ease which creates a positive learning experience. Programmes include: Accredited and non-accredited courses, Life Coaching, Information Communication Technologies, Complementary Therapy Clinics and Training, Premises are used as a Community Resource, Victims Advocacy Support

Charity Purpose

The objects of the Company shall be exclusively charitable and be for the advancement of education (including the provision of training or re-training courses and facilities) and the relief of poverty in West Belfast particularly (but so that the Company shall not be limited to pursuing its objects only in such area nor shall those who participate in the activities of the Company be drawn exclusively from the residents of West Belfast)

The trustees have paid due regard to the charity commission guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that Springhill Community House's aims and objectives are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit and that the activities outlined in this report meet the public benefit requirements.

Charity Trustees

Tommy Holland – Chairperson

Elsie Best – Secretary

Eilish Rooney - Treasurer

Independent Auditors

Joe Quinn & Company

Certified Public Accountants

44 Glen Road

Belfast BT11 8BB

Bank Bank of Ireland 202 Andersonstown Road Belfast BT11 9EB	Solicitors Delaney & Co 54 Andersonstown Road Belfast BT11 9AN
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Financial Review

The project's current financial position remains healthy with no significant changes, the current assets and reserves are sufficient to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise in the event that current levels of funding is not maintained, the directors will review the amount of funds that the charity requires to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil the charities continuing obligations.

Funding

Springhill Community House continue to receive funding up to March 2022 from the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS £114995) and the Department for Communities (DfC £34990).

VSS additional funding as follows:

- Recorded Lived Experience programme £1800

In respect of one year on video for Ballymurphy Inquests

- Spring/Summer Social Isolation Programme £10790

Delivery of a number of programmes including arts/crafts, basket weaving workshops, bus trips, photography, fun day, football and guided tours.

- Social Isolation Programme £7178

Delivery of a number of programmes including arts/crafts, basket weaving, bus trips.

- Additional therapy provision £4900
- Additional Heat & Light in respect of increased energy costs £1081

Fr Des Wilson – The People's Archive

Since the beginning of the project the archivist has been working on cataloguing the materials and has established a searchable database. He has also engaged in a number of outreach events including the launch event in Conway Mill.

The People's Archive - Fr Des Wilson Launch Event

It was great to see so many friends at the launch of The People's Archive - Fr Des Wilson in Conway Education Centre.

As well as an amazing exhibition of posters, photographs, and artefacts we were treated to a presentation by Springhill's archivist Tiarnan O'Muilleoir who gave an outline of the archive project and examples of the archive material.

The archive project will catalogue Fr Des' collection of correspondence, books, oral histories, videos, sound recordings and photographs. These will then be digitised and made accessible for historians and researchers as well as the general public.

In the long term, we will establish the Fr Des Wilson interpretive centre which will house the collection permanently and tell the story of The People's Priest.

Tiarnan said "Collectively, this material tells a story. They are invaluable historical documents that give an insight into a community which was often rendered voiceless by the powers-that-be"

Fr Des Wilson archive officially launched

Michael Jackson May 25, 2022 08:45



The work in the archive continues to highlight the work of Fr Des and the Community House with a regular dip into the archive –



“All men are equal before God”

Fr Des took up the prestigious post as spiritual director at St Malachy's College with responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the students going into the priesthood.

On this day 9th April 1961, 60 years ago today, Des celebrated mass in St Malachy's Chapel, the service was broadcast on BBC radio. In this snippet he talks about all men being equal before God and as Christians we can have differences of opinion but we must love our fellow citizens, an Easter message that is as relevant today as it was then.

Des would spend the next 15 years preparing young men for the priesthood just as he had done. He was excited about taking up the post having just left the Mater hospital which was overshadowed by sadness and grief.

Here he would help better prepare the young seminarians for what lay ahead drawing on his own experience. His excitement was short lived when he came to realise that like in his own day “students were made to study, and teachers were made teach, what was chosen for them by panels rather than encouraged to search out what interested themselves.”

He was determined to instil his own view that the church should be of the people for the people and that priests should be as close to the poor and suffering as possible. In a talk to 4th year students Des said; “Our view is that the world must be better when we leave it than when we entered it; that for every day of our life there should be someone who has more to eat, to wear, or to live for.”

There is no doubt that Des had a lasting impression on the students under his supervision, their abiding memory is that he made them question everything and think for themselves. One Student recalled “coming to one's notice as the months passed, was a man whose head suggested venerable wisdom and whose face was perennially young; a point of light in the

darkness, a man of common-sense and decency, of warm humanity; a man who clearly believed that the Gospel meant far more than what was being served up to us. He told us quietly, with utter conviction, that we were already totally acceptable to Jesus Christ and could count, with extravagant certainty, on His unfailing understanding, compassion and forgiveness."

Des advised students to keep a diary recording their thoughts and impressions while at St Malachy's. One of those diaries survives in Des' archive, in it a student records his thoughts on the sermons from 1958 to 1961 and in particular this entry dated 7th of March 1960.

"There are sometimes when I feel so tremendously moved emotionally that I feel I must put my thoughts on paper. I have just heard one of the finest sermons Father Wilson has ever preached to us. Like his two best of last year, ('Love of the Poor', 'Generosity') it included to some extent the priests relations with the people. I think we might call it a sincere polemic against the conventional conception that a priest should have a comfortable middle-class existence. Oh God how sincere he was in his request of us never to forget that the priesthood was a Life of suffering, of hardship, of pain, of abandonment. Sometimes this came to me, more often (in Ireland) we must impose it on ourselves lest we become dis-attached from the people - Our people. We must examine our consciences frequently and ask ourselves: how does this or that affect my relationship to my people? Am I reading this many years hence? Question: Have I a comfortable middle-class existence? Am I so wound-up in the compromises of this situation, this semi pondering to myself that I have forgotten in the midst of comfort that I have dedicated my life (ie 8am to 10am) to taking up my cross daily, denying myself daily, and following him daily. What place does the golf course play in my life? The cinemas, books the theatre, TV, amusement in general? Do I lead a frugal existence in which I can easily be united to God and his chosen people? OR do I lead a comfortable life and approach his people as an "Outsider" a Quasi Prince a condescending nobleman. God help me if I do I have failed as a Priest of God."

This really was thinking and questioning at its best.

Highlighting the work of the archive on Blas BBC Radio Ulster

Our archivist Tiarnán Ó Muilleoir will be speaking with presenter Dáithí Ó Muirí tonight on Blas on BBC Radio Ulster about our People's Archive - Fr Des Wilson.



Launch of Ballymurphy Massacre Film - Ballymurphy Massacre Inquest Findings - A Year Later

This day last year Lady Chief Justice Dame Siobhan Keegan published her verdict in the Ballymurphy Massacre inquests in which she declared all victims "Entirely Innocent."

In this film the Ballymurphy Massacre families reflect on the roller coaster of emotions they went through as they listened to the verdict and their elation afterwards as the Ballymurphy community greeted them.

Threads that connect us through time.

Weavers were back in the Falls Flax Spinning Mill today 180 years after it opened its doors.

Originally owned by James Kennedy and Sons of Clonard House, the family merged with McConnell to form the Falls Flax Spinning Company in 1865, by that time they were spinning and weaving linen.

With the boom in the linen trade Belfast became the linen capital of the world. Falls Spinning Mill was able to keep its doors open longer than many of its contemporaries, but in 1972 it was forced to close.

In 1982 Springhill Community House took over the 2nd floor and established Conway Education Centre no the largest community Education Provider in West Belfast.

Springhill was back today in the footsteps of previous mill weavers delivering a weaving workshop. We were able to use some of the original linen threads left behind 50 years ago. Thankfully working conditions have improved and I'm sure you'll all agree the weaving looks amazing.

Conway Mill is presently owned and managed by Conway Mill Preservation Trust. The trust was set up in 1999 as a registered charity with the aim of preserving, protecting, and restoring the mill complex for the benefit of the inhabitants of Belfast and of West Belfast in particular.



Outdoor screening of Ballymurphy Massacre Film

Today marks the 1st anniversary of the publication of Justice Keegan's verdict into the Ballymurphy Massacre.

We launched a film of families reflecting on the "entirely innocent" verdict and the welcome received from the Ballymurphy Community.

We will be screening it tonight at 9pm on an outdoor screen in Springhill Close, outside Springhill Community House, your welcome to join us.

Due to weather conditions the film was screened in the community House.

Paws for thought.

It's a sad day here at the community house as our resident cat, Silver, of 17 years has gone to cat heaven.

He was born in the roof space of the house opposite and was spotted on the roof before we rescued him from falling.

He stayed with us in the back garden for the next 17 years keeping the house and garden mouse free.

He would appear at the window at feeding time and his favourite place was wrapped around the heating flu for warmth. In his later years he ventured inside for the comfort of the sofa.

He enjoyed human interaction and a pet but only on his terms, a quick snap with his razor sharp teeth was the signal that he'd had enough.

Thanks to Silver who brought joy to many of our visitors to the Community House and is now reunited with his heavenly friends.



"Bread for all and Roses too" in Gairdín an Phobail

American women's suffrage activist Helen Todd spoke those words in 1910, later explaining that bread represented home, shelter and security, and Roses; music, education, nature, books and culture. Her slogan later inspired the poem "Bread and Roses" by James Oppenheim.

The meaning of this was never more evident than today in Gairdín an Phobail when we were treated to Opera, foraging and food.

Northern Ireland Opera provided the music and singing and Gairdín An Phobail provided the foraging and food including delicious pizza cooked in the onsite pizza oven.

It was beautiful to see and hear children from local schools interact with singer Fionn Ó hAlmhain in a rendition of Baidín Fheilimí.

Well done to all involved for organising today's event and to Northern Ireland Opera's Fionn Ó hAlmhain (Singer) Tristan Russcher (pianist) for the pop-up Opera. No doubt there will be more Bread and Roses events to come.



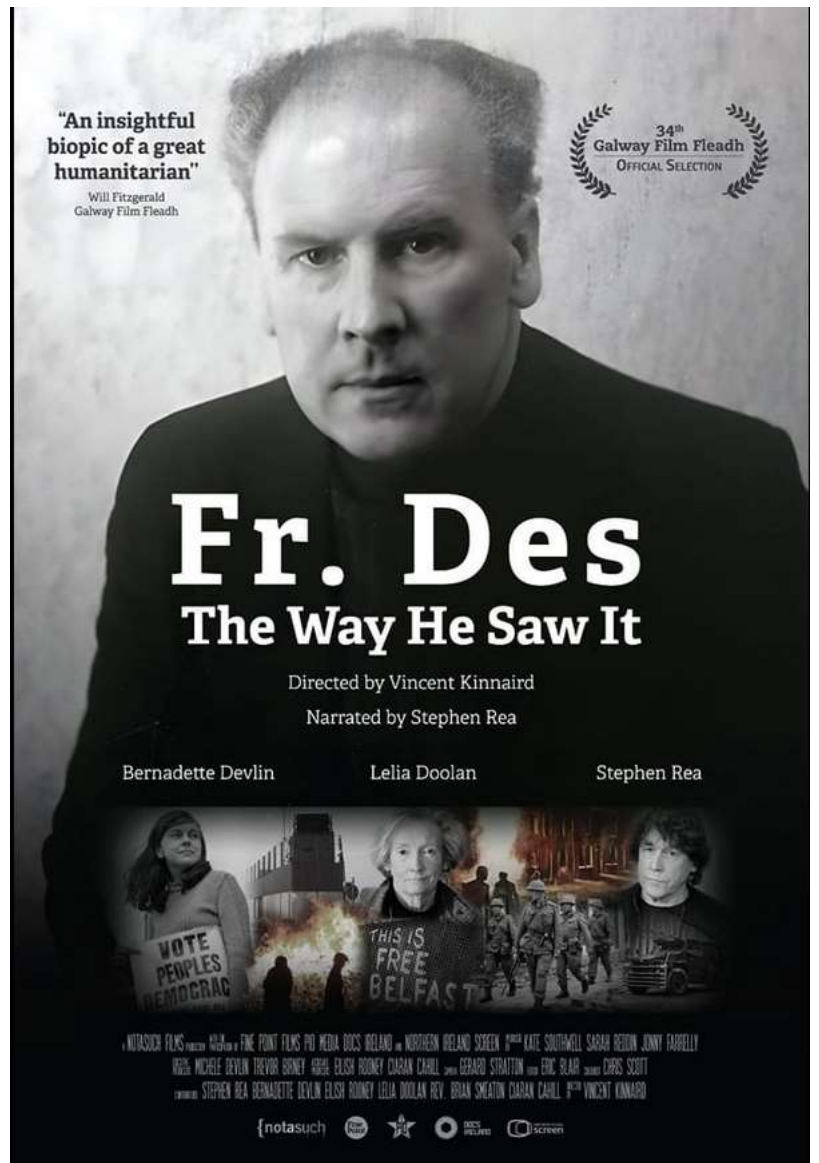
Remembering Fr Des on his 97th Birthday.

The screening of Vincent Kinnard's film "Fr Des The Way He Saw It" at the Galway Film Fleadh was to coincide with Fr Des' 97th birthday.

He was on a level with everybody he met and you always left his company feeling better.

I've said it before and it's worth repeating, he walked in the footsteps of Jesus like no-one else I know and was a true disciple.

We were blessed to have him with us and his legacy continues in the many community initiatives he started.



He wrote this poem on his 90th birthday.

The Young Man on his Ninetieth Birthday

On his ninetieth birthday
The young man said,
Why do I live so long, when after all,
My father died at fifty eight
Hale and hearty as you might say
While I at ninety am still inhaling heartily.
On the other hand,
His father, my Grandpa, lived to be a hundred and two — or four
We don't argue about it —
After a lifetime believing he wasn't well.
Every market day he'd visit the doctor in the town
Saying he wasn't well.
Until the doctor — to confirm his best suspicions you might say — Said, "Mr Wilson, you are
right, you are suffering
From a severe surfeit."
He never needed to see the doctor again
Happily spending his life busy and between times
With his friends all trying to work out what a severe surfeit was.
Happily it was nothing at all.
He passed away in great dignity
Still wearing the glasses the chemist gave him
Which helped him to see
Happily and busily for the rest of his life
Although they had no magnification in them at all.
Maybe that's the secret of a long life.
Happy mystification without the unnecessary magnification.
Maybe the truth is my two grandpas and two grandmas
Had so many things really right with them
They had to invent
Things wrong with them to show they were normal.
So on his ninetieth birthday
The young man said, "Why should I live so long?"
Why not? I would like to live
To a hundred and two
Or a hundred and four — we'll not argue about it.
Or even live to a hundred and twenty
But only if all of us could do it together.

Not all heroes wear capes.

It's been tough for us all during COVID and lockdowns but more so for the residents and staff of nursing homes who felt the force of it more.

We were delighted to deliver 130 remedy packs for the staff of Our Lady's Home in Beechmount.

Receiving the remedies were manager Isobel Nerves, staff nurse Siobhan Regan, support worker Maureen Delaney.



Thank you to all our frontline workers who are continuing to battle with the virus ours was just a small gesture of thanks and gratitude for all their work.

Springhill Community House, literally at the heart of the community.

Since installing our defibrillator in 2020 it has been accessed 4 times, thankfully each time was a positive outcome and it wasn't required.

It is located in a white box on the wall outside the community house, 6 Springhill Close, Belfast, BT 12 7SE.

It is available 24/7.

No need to ask, just take and return when finished.

The defibrillator can be used for adults and children as it has both pads supplied.

We know of 2 other defibrillators accessible to the public in the Upper Springfield area.

Gort Na Móna GAC

Location: Outside Gym

Accessibility : 24/7

Address:

25 Avoca Ct, Belfast BT11 8QT

Centre for Health and Wellbeing

Location: Indoors at reception

Accessibility: Office Hours

Mon - Thur 9 to 5pm

Friday 9 to 1pm

Address:

689 Springfield Rd, Belfast BT12 7FP

Thanks to our funders, the Victims and Survivors Service, we were able to purchase the defibrillator and deliver training with 10 people from the Upper Springfield area.



50th Birthday - Back to the future celebrations



Springhill Community House is Celebrating 50 years of delivering much needed education and health services at the heart of the Community.



To celebrate and thank the local community we are sponsored the Springhill Fantastic Fun Day on Friday 29th July just as we did in the early 70's

Activities on offer for the whole family included football, cribby, walking, bingo, wheelie bin race, cinema night and bouncy castles for the kids.

Again we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents in the Upper Springfield for your continued support and our team look forward to continuing our work for the next 50 years.

And it kicks off the start of our amazing fun packed day celebrating 50 years of Springhill Community House with the football tournament for the Fr Des memorial cup and more fun packed activities throughout the day.



Great morning of football playing for the Fr Des Memorial cup, teams paraded around the pitch just before the final playoff.

What an amazing setting in the springhill play park with a backdrop of the beautiful black mountain.

Well done to all the participants.





Congratulations to The winning team Manchester United, but as the tournament coach Joe said we're all winners, it's not about the winning it's about taking part.

In the 1970's festival Jock Cush presented the medals and Trophies so it was great that his daughter Marian came today to do the same.

On to the cribby tournament now.

Cribby results Great community spirit at the final of the cribby tournament Geri v's Eileen and Eileen is victorious.



Our 50+ tea party and bingo is in full swing, plenty of prizes on the go.
The Free Fantastic family funday is about to get underway so why not bring the kids along to
springhill Park.



Fantastic Funday, free icecream and slush puppies to all the dancers.



There was great excitement for the long awaited wheelie bin race and Springhill Avenue was packed with onlookers, supporters and flour throwers. Seamus Bracken was the winner.

belfastmedia.com

NEWS SPORTS ARTS OPINION PLACE AD EVENTS FAMILY NOTICES E-PAPERS GAELGE PODCASTS POLITICS DONATE Q

WATCH: Wheelie fun day celebrating 50 years at Springhill

James McCarthy August 01, 2022 12:18



Marty McFly & Doc Brown would be proud of our Back to the Future Fun day and what a day it was.

We had sunshine a beautiful location at the foot of the Black mountain and a fantastic community who took part in football, cribby, seniors football, ladies rounders, 50+ tea party, family funday and the fantastic whellie bin race.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our community for supporting Springhill Community House over the last 50 years and for joining us today in celebration.

We also have to thank everyone involved in organising the events, the Springhill Team, Pete & Louise Maguire, Margaret Hyland, Ciaran Cahill, also Tommy Holland, Paul Conlon, Joe McDonnell, Julia O'Hollaran , and Cillian Mcgovern. Big thanks to Martin Keenan and Mark Allsop from Bayview Media.

Big congratulations to all those who took part in our events and received our limited edition 50th Anniversary medal.



Educational Touring Club revisited 2022 style.

In 1973 Noelle Ryan started the Educational Touring Club, the idea behind it was to allow people the opportunity to travel outside their own community and to learn or experience new things. A minibus was purchased with a grant from the Susan Langley trust. The first trip was to the lyric theatre to watch Jesus Christ Super Star and the last to Falcarragh Co Donegal with the Irish Class.

As part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations we revisited that idea with a trip to Kilmainham Gaol and Glasnevin Cemetery.

Kilmainham Gaol opened in 1796 as the new County Gaol for Dublin. While most of the prisoners were common criminals, it also held political prisoners involved in Ireland's struggle for independence. Included amongst those held here were Robert Emmet, Anne Devlin, the Fenians, Charles Stewart Parnell, Countess Markievicz and the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, 14 of whom were executed by firing squad in the Stonebreaker's yard. The Gaol was closed in 1924 but was preserved as a national monument in the 1960s and restored by the Kilmainham Gaol Restoration Committee.

Glasnevin Cemetery holds the stories of 1.5 million people who are buried there. It's Ireland's largest burial place, a beautifully restored Victorian cemetery featuring epic monuments to our past. From poets and presidents, singers and suffragettes, the ordinary and the extraordinary - the stories of those who shaped our nation's history are brought to life through the tours and visitors centre.

The youngest person to be imprisoned in Kilmainham was 3 year old Thomas Roberts who was imprisoned for begging in 1856.

Michael Carey 11 years old, Francis Street Dublin was the first burial in Glasnevin Cemetery. The burial of Peadar and Kathleen Timmins resonates with Ballymurphy, they welcomed refugees into their home in Finglas during the early 70's. Its people like the Timmins who are unsung heroes.



Crafty Crafters

Great work at our craft workshop, decoupage, book folding and rock painting all in the great outdoors.

Looking forward to seeing the final results.

Well done all our crafter.



“Our revenge will be the laughter of our children.”

Movie night in Springhill Close 9th August 2022 is in stark contrast to this night 51 years ago when 600 Paratroopers invaded Ballymurphy leaving 11 innocent civilians dead, many more wounded, and a community traumatised.

Our streets were filled with very different sounds and it wasn't children laughing at the Goonies movie.

The army log for the 9th August records- 04.45 am “ Screams and shouting all over Ballymurphy”

“200-300 outside the Henry Taggart Hall, Stoning and Petrol Bombing”.

This was the community's reaction to the arrest and detention without trial or conviction of more than 300 men.

So we were delighted to hear laughter, cry's of more popcorn please, and smiling faces to mark Springhill Community House's 50th Anniversary, these faces are our future leaders.



Twit Twit Twoo.

Building Bird feeders and learning about common garden birds in Gairdín an Phobail.

Local environmentalist Aaron Kelly came along to talk about his work reforesting and rewilding on the Black Mountain and about some of his discoveries of pine martins, long eared owls among other animals.

Aaron spoke about protecting our natural resources not just for us to enjoy but for future generation.

He is a fierce defender of the Black Mountain and urged everybody to respect and appreciate it's natural beauty.

Everybody left with a better understanding and appreciation for nature as well as a few things to encourage birds into the garden including bird feeding table, binoculars, bird ID cards and bird food.

So why not become a twitcher rather than tweeter and get out into the great outdoors, even if it's for just for one day.

Come along and get involved in the Gairdín an Phobail who are planning to work with Aaron on reforesting and clean ups of the mountain.





Launch of Education Programmes

Springhill Community House is celebrating 50 years of delivering much needed education and health services at the heart of the community.

We are now recruiting for our programmes starting in September, if your interested please PM or call 02890326722 to reserve a place.

Here's a potted history of Springhill Community House.

In August, 1966, at a few days' notice, Bishop William Philbin removed Fr Des Wilson from his post as Spiritual Director at St. Malachy's College and sent him to St. John's on the Falls Road - as a junior curate with responsibility for Whiterock-Ballymurphy, one of the most deprived areas in Western Europe at the time.

Des was not prepared for the level of poverty and the culture shock that his new appointment would bring. He was appalled by the living conditions, social deprivation, unemployment and standard of housing due to years of official neglect.

He found that his parishioners "faced a constant struggle to make ends meet and to live with dignity". Des discovered that estates like Ballymurphy were built by the Belfast cooperation to house what they called 'unsatisfactory' or 'problem' tenants giving the estate a bad name. It was a constant battle fighting against the negative newspaper reports which he felt "gloried in describing degradation" and printed untrue stories just to sell papers.

In fact, he found the complete opposite, he described the tenants as "courageous and self-sacrificing" and found that the people of West Belfast had "done so much to understand,

define, suggest remedies for their problems and to propose plans for their future prosperity" than people in any other part of Belfast.

Des felt powerless. On the one hand was the poverty of the people, and on the other the wealth within the church, but as junior curate he had no input into decision making within the parish.

The priests of St. John's inhabited two large houses: one next to the church, the other (the Parish Priest's) on the far side of St. Kevin's Primary School. Des and his colleague, Fr. Hugh came up with the idea of securing a council house in Ballymurphy so that they could live and work with the people.

The idea was not well received initially, however, Bishop Philbin later purchased a house for Fr Mullan in Springfield Park. On the 9th August 1971 Fr Mullan left this house to attend to an injured man in a field opposite and was himself murdered by the British Army's Parachute Regiment, ten others would also die in the following days.

Des' idea of the worker priest, living and working within the community, never left his mind. The introduction of internment and subsequent attacks on the community by the British army strengthened his resolve to proceed. In December 1971 he secured the tenancy for a council house at 123 Springhill Avenue, however he didn't move in until January 1972.

This was a leap into the unknown and a journey that would see Des become the People's Priest and an integral part of the community. Springhill would be his home for the next 50 years during that time he: built peace, created work opportunities, organised education programmes, held public inquires, staged entertaining and thought provoking plays. All this to allow people to see the potential in themselves and to encourage them to take back control of their own future.

Des wasn't sure how the people of Ballymurphy would react to 'the priest' moving in and it was some time before local people came to realise that 123 Springhill Community House was an "open house".

It was one of the few places in the area with a working phone, and each day the house rapidly filled with distraught women making desperate inquiries about the non-arrival of social benefits without which they and their families could not survive, or they were distressed by what had happened to loved ones.


The Community House was an "open house", it was a place of neutrality committed to finding a better way of doing things. Springhill Community House facilitated what the people perceived as relevant to their needs by promoting the concept of "free learning" - learning not imposed from above, but devised by the individual.

While others contented themselves deciding from afar who was fit and who was not fit to be listened to, Des made it a basic policy from the very beginning that evil started by telling others that they were not welcome or had no contribution to make.

Great things start from small beginnings, and we have Des to thank for giving us Springhill Community House, through this small project he has given us all so much to live for. The junior curate done alright!

From its inception the purpose of Springhill Community House/ the People's School, has and will continue to be about empowering people to take control of their own lives. This remains at the heart of what Springhill Community House is about and involves tackling the apathy and frustration felt by individuals through programmes of personal development, life coaching, education, training, health awareness and confidence building. SCH has continued to build on

the early ethos of free learning that Des started and provides a wide spectrum of courses and services.



SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOUSE

GCSE CLASSES
Maths Blended Course Essential Skills
Numeracy/GCSE Wednesday
6.45-9.15pm
English Thursday 6.45-9.15pm
Science: Monday 6.45-9.15pm
Irish GCSE Thursday 6pm - 9pm

COMPUTER CLASSES
"Meet The Ancestors"
Introduction to online
Family Research - By arrangement

LIFE COACHING COURSES

HISTORY & POLITICS
Introduction to Women in History and
Local History 6 weeks

THERAPY TRAINING
Diploma Courses in Reflexology
& Flower Essence, participants
must meet victim's criteria.



**THERAPIES OUTREACH
BEFRIENDING**
We have a team of Therapists who offer
treatments in Aromatherapy and
Reflexology at Springhill Community
House. This programme is funded by VSS
and participants must meet victim's
criteria.

GAIRDÍN AN PHOBAIL
Volunteers wanted to help in the
Peoples Garden at the Whiterock Leisure
Centre. Getting involved is a great way
to learn how to grow your own
fruit and veg, what we grow we share.
Fridays 10am - 12noon

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
Need help with English or Maths? We
can help you, just call in for a cuppa and
a chat.

OTHER CLASSES
Digital Photography

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ANY
OF THE ABOVE CALL INTO**



Springhill Community House, 6&7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7SE

T: 02890326722

Springhill Community House is funded by the Victims and Survivors
Service & DSD/Belfast Regeneration Office Neighbourhood Renewal.

Exam Results Day

Congratulations!! to all our students who received their results today, its the reward for all your hard work. Best Wishes from all of us in Springhill Community House for the future.

But remember exams are a test of your memory, not a measure of your worth as a human being. Grades don't define you as a person or shape your future you are in control of that. Our programme of courses start again in September and there is something there for everyone, so why not enrol in one of our courses and broaden your horizons.

We have a great team in Springhill Community House who work hard to provide education, training and health awareness opportunities for our local community.

Each year hundreds of people benefit from our services and we are delighted that they realise the potential locked away inside them, all we do is encourage them to see it.

We're not about asking for thanks but when it comes it's very much appreciated and reminds us what our work is all about.

So we were delighted to receive this message of thanks from Pat Gregory who like many of our students went onto University and completed a degree course.

"Thanks everyone for the kind words on me getting over the line in uni. It was hard going at times a big thank you to everyone who helped me. especially everyone in Springhill Community house where i got my History GCSE which helped me get into uni."

Pat was a bit different to many of our students, his studies were interrupted after a stroke, but his grit and determination got him through it and he proudly holds his degree certificate.

Well done Pat and all our students from all of us in Springhill Community House you're an inspiration and the reason we do the work we do.



Last of the summer wine planting workshop.

And there wasn't a drop in sight, not even rain.

Just finished our last summer workshop planting in Gairdín an Phobail this morning. Everyone had a great time planting Azalias, Hebe's, chrisanthymum's and spring flowering daffodils which will look lovely in any garden. It's not just about the gardening, we also had great craic and plenty of food provided by the Anaka Women's Collective.



Photography for beginners workshop

"Taking an image, freezing a moment, reveals how rich reality truly is"

Sometimes we just need to stop and capture the richness of life before it passes us by. The saying a picture paints a thousand words is very apt for these pictures from our photography for beginners students.

Thanks to tutor Mal McCann and everyone who took part, more pics to come.



More examples from the archive highlighting Fr Des' work.

This time a brief letter of thanks addressed to Father Des from 'Red Ken', Ken Livingstone, for his support in the wake of Livingstone's 1988 suspension from the House of Commons.

Livingstone caused controversy when he condemned Patrick Mayhew, the then-British Attorney General, as "an accomplice to murder," following an official report which whitewashed allegations of 'shoot-to-kill' operations operated by the RUC in the North.

And a number of political Christmas cards, including republican and loyalist organisation's yuletide greetings, as well as cards highlighting the plight of internees and the Birmingham Six.



The BIRMINGHAM SIX...



Remember Them This Christmas



FROM: KEN LIVINGSTONE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

11 February 1988

Fr Desmond Wilson
123 Springhill Avenue
Belfast BT12 7QF

Dear Fr Wilson.

I am writing to thank you for the kind and supportive letter which you sent me recently after I was banned from the House of Commons.

Please forgive the brevity of this note, but I have been inundated with letters of support. I've found it very heartening to hear from so many people, all over the country, and they have both cheered me and strengthened my resolve.

I am very grateful to you for taking the time and trouble to write.

Yours sincerely

Ken Livingstone.

Fr Des - The People's Archive Outreach presentation

Great to see so many young people from Coláiste Feirste's A'level history class attending a presentation on Fr Des' Archive.

Our archivist Tiarnán O'Muilleoir gave a fantastic overview of the archive, its contents and importance in local history.

Our long term objective is to house the archive in the Fr Des Wilson Interpretive Centre where it would be available to the public, researchers and academics.

I hope the audience left today with an understanding of the importance of recording and documenting our own history and not relying on the 'official' version.

Thanks to Glór Na Móna for hosting today's event as part of Feile Na Carraige.



Derry Focus Project Visit

We welcomed the Focus Project from Derry who meet with the Ballymurphy Massacre families who shared their their powerful stories of loss, resilience and continuing to fight for justice.



Honouring the Saints

Light is an important symbol in many religions it symbolised joy and life giving power. Stained glass windows from which light streams represents purity, the heavens, spirituality and genesis and usually depict saints and biblical stories.

How fitting that Conway Mill commissioned one of their resident artists, Alice McGuinness, to create a stained glass window in memory of our own two saint's Fr Des Wilson and Noelle Ryan.

Fr Des & Noelle's story is biblical in many ways, they like no others I know, they have walked in the footsteps of Jesus. They took on the might of the authorities and won despite being the

underdog. They stood by their people in their hour of need. They feed and clothed the hungry and championed the poor. They exposed injustice, inequality and brought about peace.

This window was unveiled last week as part of Conway Mill's 40th Anniversary celebrations and I'm sure you'll agree it a beautiful piece of work and worthy of the saints it honours.



Remembering Fr Des on the 3rd Anniversary of his passing.

It's hard to believe it's been three years since he passed and much has happened in those years.

The work that he started continues here in the Community House delivering education, training, health awareness, therapies and supporting victims of the conflict.

We miss him every day, but he has left us a wonderful legacy in the work that he has done; the projects that he started, many of which continue today.

We thank God for Des' priesthood, his faithful and dedicated service of God and for his lifelong service to his people.

To celebrate Fr Des' 70th anniversary of his ordination Fr Paddy McCafferty said Mass in Corpus Christi. It was just a few months before Des' passing and he couldn't be there in person but he wanted to say the following which was read out at mass.

It was his last public announcement and I think he used the opportunity to say thanks and goodbye to the community he loved.

"Seventy years. I never thought I would get this far. There were more than 80 priests ordained the same day as I was ; most of them are gone from this world, a mere handful of us laughing about which of us will reach the hundredth birthday first.

What I want to do now most of all is to thank God for allowing me to live among such good family, friends and neighbours during those years. You taught me what life means , you taught me that especially during the bad, sad times . I believe we are seeing the beginning of a renewed Ireland, a renewed Christianity , a renewed city of Belfast - and we are privileged to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the city - between the beautiful mountain that is full of surprises like the feast of bluebells in the beginning of summer to the snow topped hills in Winter, between that and the sweeping magnificent valley of the Lough and Lagan. This must surely be one of the most beautiful places for a city to be in.

This is where I learned the best lessons about life and I am grateful to family, friends, neighbours who taught me and even had great patience when I learned so slowly. I learned how good people show their dignity even during the hardest of times, show it most of all during the hard times.

So I am grateful to God for being here, grateful , to all whom I have had the privilege of being family and neighbour to. And very , very hopeful for the future. Coming out of the worst of times we could now be facing into the best of times. May God and good people make it so.

Father Paddy, like our friend Father Aiden, you are with us all at the beginning of a newly awakened church and a people refreshed by what they have suffered and achieved. together. We have good reason to be thankful for that and for each other."



Nothing worth having comes easy.

We love it when our students call to collect their certificates.

Well done Bridgeen, now a fully qualified therapist in Thermal Auricular Therapy.

All the hard work was worth it, congratulations to all our students.



A picture paints a thousand words phot exhibition

The culmination of our photography class was a photo exhibition in Conway Mill.

The photographs looked amazing framed and displayed.

Congratulations to all our photographers.

We'll be doing the course again in the new year so watch this space.



Picture Perfect

Springhill community House was delighted to deliver an introduction to photography course with award winning local photographer, Mal McCann.

The course for beginners was designed to help participants improve their knowledge of photography using mobile phones.

Over a number of weeks our budding photographers made use of the beauty on our doorstep including the Black Mountain, Titanic Quarter and the Bog Meadows, all became subjects in their finished work.

Conway Mill Theatre was the perfect venue to display the fruits of their labour. More than 20 framed photographs lined the walls of a once derelict mill which is now a shining beacon of arts, crafts, education, social enterprise and cultural expression.

The exhibition was the first time our photographers, as well as their family and friends, saw their masterpieces on display, and they were literally lost for words.

This project wasn't just about learning new photography skills, it was about bringing people together, sharing experiences and exploring the beauty of nature that we have around us. This poem, written by Bernie Robinson, one of our budding photographers, best describes our recent photography for beginners course.

Picture Perfect

It started with a vision,
A group of five or six,
Signed up for weekly lessons
On how to take good pics.
With their phones they fumbled,
As they learned some new techniques,
Slowly they became obsessed,
Turned into "camera geeks".
They saw the world through different eyes,
Buildings, nature, faces,
Opportunities to snap
In many different places.
Masterpieces were produced,
And hung upon the walls,
Gratitude and pride was felt
In the Mill just down the Falls.

... have ... end Eamon Martin, Right Reverend ... and ... Dr John Kirkpatrick, Reverend David ... on our hearts, with our hearts to ... welcoming and meeting the needs of ... those who arrived here." ... both practitioners of Christ's teachings ... meaningful social justice and elimi- ... nate poverty across this island." ... in that our vision of such an Chris- ... tians, we have a sure and certain ... hope of new creation in Christ".

Discovering the joy of photography in west Belfast



ALLAN PRESTON
a.preston@wstnews.com

BIDDING photographers in west Belfast have displayed their work for the first time in public for a new exhibition.

In recent weeks, a course for beginners was taught at Springhill Community House with award-winning Irish News photographer Mal McCann.

Those taking part were able to increase their knowledge of photography using mobile phones to capture landscapes such as Black Mountain, Titanic Quarter and the Bog Meadows.

The results are now on display at Conway Mill Theatre, with more than 20 framed images lining the walls of the once derelict mill, which has been revitalised as a hub for culture, arts, crafts, education and social enterprise.

Springhill Community House coordinator Ciaran Cahill said: "The exhibition was the first time our photographers, as well as their family and friends, saw their masterpieces on display, and they were literally lost for words. "This project wasn't just about learning new photography skills, it was about bringing people together, sharing experiences and exploring the beauty of nature that we have around us."

Established in 1972 by Dr Desmond Wilson, the People's School at Springhill Community House has been dedicated to empowering the local community through education. Many of those attending over the years have had a negative experience within school settings which discouraged them from returning to education. Through offering classes and training in a relaxed setting, the project puts participants at ease and acts as a stepping stone to other service providers. As well as gaining formal qualifications, those taking part can also build their self-esteem.

The photography course will run again in the new year, with those interested asked to call Springhill Community House on 028 90326722.

LAUNCH: Far left, Mal McCann with Liam, Phil, Bernie and Ciara of the exhibition launch
PICTURE: Mal McCann

Photos from far left by Ciara McKay, Bernie Robinson and above, by Liam Shannon

PICTURE: Ciara McKay



History on our Doorstep

In partnership with Black Mountain Shared Space Project, Springhill Community House was delighted to facilitate a cross community tour of the Shankill area.

Tour guide, Bobby Foster, gave a fascinating history of the Shankill area including the graveyard and St Matthews Church.

The Shankill Graveyard, known now as the Garden or Rest is one of the oldest cemeteries in Belfast.

It is formed on the grounds around an ancient church or monastery in the nearby Glencairn which was once known as Monks Hill. The Shankill name comes from the Irish 'Seanchill' meaning 'old church'.

The church was situated beside the River Farset on the slope of the hill, avoiding the low-lying marshy area around the Lagan.

It was used for active burials for more than 1,000 years. Since 1934 it has no longer been an active burial site. The oldest standing headstone was erected to the memory of George McAuley who died in 1685. The gateways and railings are listed as being of historic and architectural interest.

Among those interred in the cemetery are thousands of victims of the famine, plague and blitz.

A notable burial is that of Francis Anderson Calder who was interred in 1855. A well-known philanthropist, Calder was the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. He is best known as the founder of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Belfast. Through his work water troughs for horses and livestock were erected in Belfast. Though his headstone no longer remains at the cemetery, the Calder Memorial Fountain can be seen outside the Customs House in Belfast.

Archaeological finds of pieces of a late eighth or ninth century crozier (a bishop's ceremonial staff) prove the ecclesiastical building here pre-dates the Anglo-Norman invasion. The highly decorated bronze fragments, discovered in the Shankill Graveyard, are held in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. One segment appears to be the ferrule (the bottom of the staff) and another the reliquary box (a small container within the shaft containing a relic). By the 1860's the effects of disease, famine and urbanisation of the region meant that the graveyard had reached saturation point. Belfast Corporation was forced to look for alternatives and in 1869 opened Belfast City Cemetery.

Today the graveyard has been taken over by Belfast City Council and transformed into a Garden of Rest.

In 1872, at the corner of Shankill and Woodvale Road, St Matthew's Church of Ireland was reconstructed. St Matthews Church takes its name from the very first church that was built in the Shankill Graveyard.

St Matthews Church sits at the junction of the Woodvale and Shankill Roads and has served the community since 1869.

Designed and built by the renowned architects, Welland and Gillespie, who built many Church of Ireland churches throughout the North and South of Ireland.

St Matthews is built in the shape of the shamrock and the ancient Irish symbol of a round tower. It has a stained glass window in honour of St Patrick. This site is believed to be the oldest Christian site in Belfast, dating back to around 455AD. It is said that St Patrick himself visited this site.

There is a Ballaun stone outside the church, which was recovered from the neighbouring Shankill Graveyard. Folklore has it is that it is of Druid Origins and the old church used it for Christian baptisms. But, generations have known it as "the wart stone" because of its alleged mystical powers to cure warts.



History on our Doorstep Take 2

Last week it was the Shankill this week it was Ballymurphy.

Unfortunately the weather prevented us from walking but we had the next best thing a virtual tour of Ballymurphy and surrounding townlands.

Thanks to local historian Risteárd Ó'Murchú for a fascinating insight into the history of a small town land with a huge history.

Hill Hamilton was the landlord of Ballymurphy and rented land and buildings to a host of residents including Dan O'Neill. O'Neill Lane named after him ran from Brittons Parade up to Highfield and was known as the place to court. The New estate built on Beechmount pitches is now called O'Neill Lane.

In 1864 Hamilton evicted the residents of Ballymurphy House (now Corr's Timber yard) and Pipers House (now Sunny's or O'Hare's Farm).

Risteárd's tour included ring forts located just of the Whiterock Road at the junction of Brittons Parade.

To duels of honour in the Falls Bleach Green between Jack Lawless for Catholic Emancipation and Fortescue Greg against.

Brothers William and John Sinclaire founders of the United Irish men. John was the owner of the Falls Bleach green John invited Wolftone who visited his bleach green and later described standing on a hill (probably the Black Mountain) which had a view over three Lough's. Risteárd's tour also included murder on the hatched field, the rock dam, trolley buses and much more.

There's history in them thar hills is very apt for the black Mountain and the Town land of Ballymurphy.



History on our doorstep take 3.

Black Mountain Shared Space Project's genealogy/area history project finished up today with a tour of the Public Records office PRONI.

We were given a guided tour of the facilities and archive accessible to the public. Everything from Church records to private estate collection.

The staff were amazing and put on display some of the original documents including. BG/24/GJ/1 Newry board of guardians offence and Punishment Book 1850-1910.

Entry number 101, 29th Sep 1856, Mary Corry, Offence - going to the toilet without obtaining permission - punishment - Milk stopped at supper for one week.

D654/B/7/1/3 Travel journal "A narrative of travels to Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, Naples etc"
This velvet bound journal with ornate silver clasp recorded these journeys including hand painted illustrations.

D4563/1/3/3 Diary of Eva Chichester 1916. This is a fascinating account of 'three Ulster Women in the Sinn Fein Rebellion' Eva and two friends travel to Dublin April 30th 1916 to do some shopping, attend concerts and a church synod and find themselves caught up in the Easter Rebellion. They find themselves locked into St Stephen's Green and were not happy that the 'Sinn Feiners' had disputed their plans.

D3838/4/2/1 Diary of Roberta Hewitt - 1947-1950. The diary was a gift from Johnny for Roberta to record her story in her words "I write in this diary.. That it might be read when we are no more and fill in a part of the Belfast Picture.

I hope the worst thing in it will be my spelling".
Johnny began the diary with a beautiful poem.
For Roberta with birthday greetings and my Love.
let this blank page receive,
report of what occurred.
The wren, the falling leaf,
the wise, the friendly word,
the name to bring the face
back to the drowsy mind.
The actors, dancers grace
tho vanished, here defined,
all gain from life and art,
the weather of the sky,
the weather of the heart.
Here write your history.
From Johnny 1947

We should all take a leaf from Roberta's book and record our own history, start your own diary and record your family history.

PRONI is well worth a visit, get yourself down there and read Roberta's diary or Eva's account of 1916, fascinating stuff.



Eager Weavers

Our weavers were learning how to make bird feeders this morning in the first of 3 workshops in partnership with Gairdín an Phobail.



Ballymurphy Massacre - Patchwork of Innocence

We received a warm welcome in Portaferry today for the launch of the Ballymurphy Massacre Patchwork of Innocence.

Thanks to Fr Mullan's niece, Geraldine McGrattan, and his brother Patsy Mullan & family for hosting today's event.

Springhill Community House has supported families throughout their campaign and inquests. This took many forms, providing therapies, counselling, social events, encouragement, reassurance, and keeping a daily record of the inquest proceedings.

Families recognised that support would be much needed after the inquest verdict and through conversations, they came up with a number of projects including the Patchwork of Innocence quilt, Publication of their Pen Portraits, a film marking the first anniversary of the verdict and a digital photo memorial project.

The quilt project involved each family designing a square that would remember their loved one and reflect on the inquest verdict when Justice Siobhan Keegan declared all the victims in Ballymurphy, 'Entirely Innocent'.

Over a number of weeks, families came together to plan, design, and make the patchwork squares.

This process became therapy in itself allowing them to share their innermost thoughts, feelings, highs and lows of the campaign and inquest process.

Springhill Community House was delighted to be asked by families to contribute a square representing our support for them.

The Springhill square is made up of hands joined in the shape of a house to represent unity, strength, support, togetherness, and family.

We included the universally recognised saying, 'we shall overcome' and when things got tough during the inquest we reminded families of this.

The panel to the left of the quilt depicts the eleven doves that were released in Ballymurphy after the innocent verdict was announced.

The panel to the right represents the 50 years' journey families have been on from 1971 to 2021. The verdicts were announced during Covid lockdown and families organised a cavalcade through the streets of Ballymurphy to thank the community for their support. The cars bearing white flags in the left panel are symbolic of that too.

Before returning home we gathered at Fr Mullan's grave to lay a wreath from the Ballymurphy Massacre families and pay tribute to the priest who lay down his life for his flock.

The quilt will be on display in a number of events during the year.



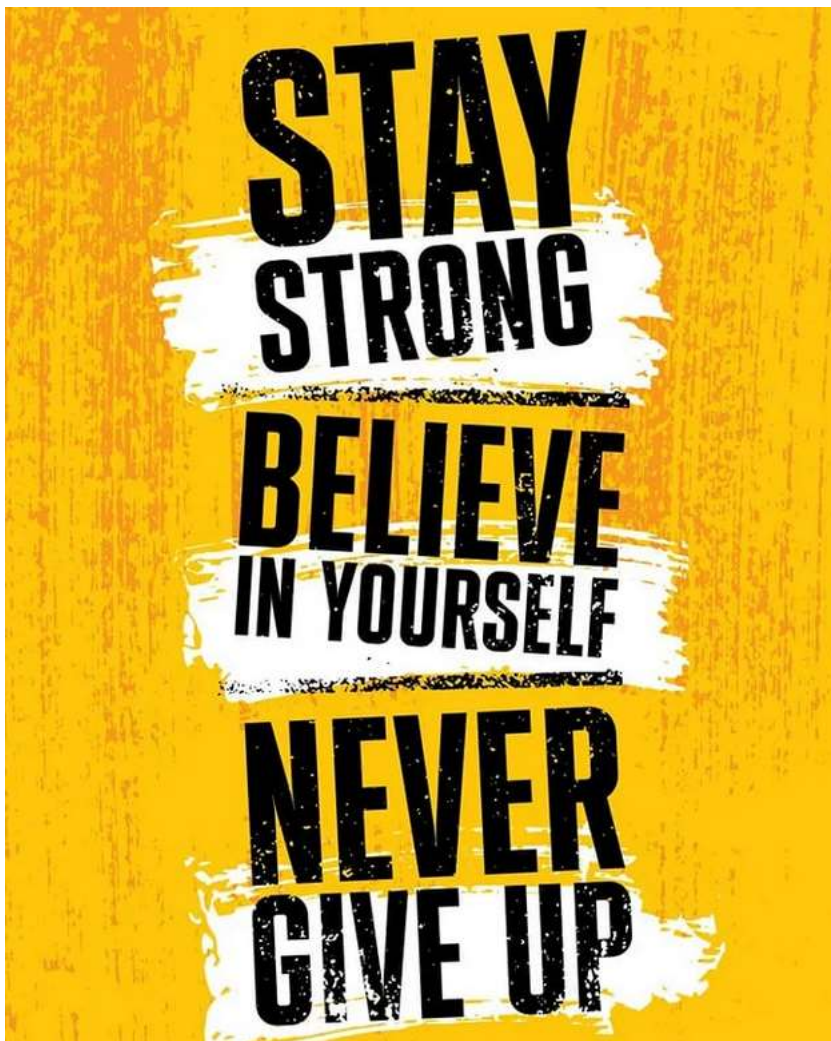
It's okay Not to be okay Campaign

You are the master of your fate and we are here for you, just reach out and we can help.

Stay strong, believe in yourself, never give up.

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.
In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.



Remembering Noelle Ryan on the 9th anniversary of her passing.

Noelle was a remarkable human being who always saw the good in people.

She dedicated her life to the service of God and the people of Belfast.

Originally from Dublin Noelle joined a Domician convent in Drogheda, it was an enclosed order that had no direct communication with the outside world, a life of contemplation and prayer. For anyone who knew Noelle that was never the order for her. She left after 6 years and became a street sister working in Lourdes, Liverpool, Dublin before arriving in Belfast. She met Fr Des and knew Springhill Community House was the place for her, over the next 40 years Noelle brought work opportunities, education and health awareness to the people of West Belfast and beyond, her work continues today.

She chose to live and work in Springhill and was a great advocate of Bach Flower remedies. She believed in the power of nature to heal us and we are still using back remedies in our work today.

“We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers”

This quote from fellow angelic troublemaker Bayard Rustin reminds me of our own angelic troublemaker Noelle.

Bayard Rustin was an American civil rights activist who was an adviser to Martin Luther King, Jr., and who was the main organiser of the March on Washington in 1963.

There are many stories of her civil and human rights activism, but a couple stand out.

While driving in Belfast city centre she crossed a one-way system and the police fined her, she took the opportunity to raise awareness of strip searching in Armagh gaol. She refused to pay the fine in the hope it would go to court and she would be sent to Armagh. Either the authorities got wind of her plan or someone unknown paid the fine, but the penalties were dropped and she didn't get her day in court. But this just demonstrates what she was prepared to do to highlight human rights abuses.

On another occasion she started a boycott campaign against M&S who were making substantial donations to the tory party. On different days she would go to all the stores in Belfast, fill the trolley with non-perishable goods and proceed to the checkout, when all the goods went through the till she would refuse to pay and ask for a manager. In a loud voice she would tell the manager and anyone in close proximity that M&S were implicit in all that the tory government were doing as they were major donors.

In a similar vein she and others started a boycott of the Northern Bank, the slogan at the time was “the bank that doesn't like to employ Catholics”. As part of the equality campaign, businesses who had an atrocious record of employing Catholics were targeted and the Northern Bank was one of them. Individuals and community organisations were asked to close accounts with the bank in protest at their unfair employment practices and they did. After a lengthy international and domestic campaign fair employment legislation was introduced, although not perfect it was a start in the reversal of unfair employment practices against Catholics.

So you can't get any more angelic than a former nun who gave a life of service to the people of Ireland and beyond, some might call her a troublemaker, I prefer revolutionary.



Ballymurphy Massacre Committee

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100878

Annual return

Independent Examiner's report to the charity trustees of Springhill Community House Ltd

Report on the charity accounts of the organisation for the year ended 31.03.23

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

As the charity trustees (and also directors of the company for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law, and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to : examine the accounts under section 65 of the charities act, follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for N Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for N Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act. The examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning and such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe,

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of Companies Act 2006
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records,
3. The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK .
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiners statement

I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because i am a registered member of the Certified Public Accountants Association that is a listed body.

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and , in connection with the following of the Directions of the Charity Commission for N Ireland , I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Name : Joseph Quinn FCPA , 44 Glen Road, Belfast BT11 8BG

Relevant professional body : Certified Public Accountants Association

