

Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland · Charity number 100911

Details

Status Received

Registered 2014-10-24

Register [View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register](#)

Contact

Address Springhill Community House Ltd
6-7 Springhill Close
Belfast
Bt12 7se
BT12 7SE

Phone 02890326722

Email bhi@sch.ie

Website www.sch.ie

Activities

Purposes: 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)

What the charity does: The prevention or relief of poverty, The advancement of education

How the charity works: Advice/advocacy/information, Community development, Counselling/support, Education/training, Human rights/equality, Medical/health/sickness, Relief of poverty, Welfare/benevolent

Who the charity helps: Addictions (drug/solvent/alcohol abuse), Adult training, General public, Men, Mental health, Older people, Parents, Physical disabilities, Victim support, Volunteers, Women

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£195,779	£179,791	£0	4

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Elsie Best		
Mrs Eilish Rooney		
Thomas Holland		

Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

Accounts

SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOUSE Ltd

Financial Accounts for year ended 31st March 2025

Springhill Community House Ltd

Financial Statements 31 March 2025

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Springhill Community House Ltd

Management Committee Report
Year ended 31 March 2025

Management Committee Responsibilities

The Management Committee are responsible for the preparation of the annual financial statements that give a true and fair view of the affairs of the Charity and of its surplus or deficit for the year. In preparing these financial statements the Management Committee is required to:

1. Select suitable accounting policies and to apply them consistently
2. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
3. Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue its activities.

The Management Committee are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the generally accepted standards of SORP 2015 recommendations. They are also responsible for the safeguarding of the clubs assets and for taking reasonable steps for the detection and prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Trustees

Date 14/11/25



Springhill Community House Ltd

Report of the Trustees for year ended 31.03.2025

The Trustees present their report with financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31.03.2017. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Reference and Administrative details :

Charity Commission NI No NIC 100911

Principal Address : 6-7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7QG

Trustees

Thomas Holland

Elsie Best

Eilish Rooney

Independent Examiner

J Quinn & Company

Certified Public Accountants

44 Glen Road, Belfast BT11 8BG

02890 617438

Structure, Governance and Management Governing documents

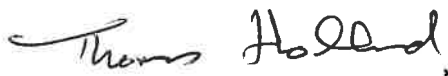
The Charity is controlled by its governing document and is constituted as an incorporated charity.

Risk Management

The Trustees have a responsibility to identify and review risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

On behalf of the Trustees

Date : 14/11/25



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £'s	Restricted Funds £'s	2025 Total £'s	2024 Total £'s
Incoming Resources				
Generated Funds				
Voluntary Income			0	0
Investment Income			0	0
Grants and Fees	0	195779	<u>195779</u>	<u>217666</u>
Total Income	<u>0</u>	<u>195779</u>	<u>195779</u>	<u>217666</u>
Resources Expended				
Charitable Activities				
Charitable		177305	177305	208622
Support			0	0
Governance	0	2486	<u>2486</u>	<u>2799</u>
Total Expended	<u>0</u>	<u>179791</u>	<u>179791</u>	<u>211421</u>
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources	<u>0</u>	<u>15988</u>	<u>15988</u>	<u>6245</u>

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

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	2025 £'s	2024 £'s
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	56801	30285
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	152442	162430
Creditors		
Amounts due within one year	1300	760
Net Current Assets	<u>209243</u>	<u>161670</u>
Total Assets	207943	191955
Deferred Income	0	0
Net Assets	<u>207943</u>	<u>191955</u>
Funds		
Balance fwd	191955	185710
Unrestricted Funds	<u>15988</u>	<u>6245</u>
Restricted Funds	0	0
Total Funds	<u>207943</u>	<u>191955</u>

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees on 14/11/25 and were signed on their behalf by:

Trustee

Thomas Holland

J. Quinn & Co
J. QUINN & COMPANY
 CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
 AUDITORS
 44 Chan Road
 Belfast BT11 8BB
 Tel: 017430 Fax: 019710

Springhill Community House Ltd

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31.03.25

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical costs convention and in accordance with the Financial Standard for Smaller Entities (effective 2008), the Charities Act 2011 and the requirements of the Statement of Practice Recommended Practice. Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Incoming Resources

All incoming Resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Resources Expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under Headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to the activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over estimated useful life , 25% .

Taxation

The Charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity . Restrictions arise when specified by the Donor or when funds are raised for particular purposes.

Further explanations of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2 Investment Income

There was no Investment income

3 Trustees Remuneration, benefits and expenses

There was none of the above.

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

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

<u>Incoming Resources</u>	£s 2025	£s 2024
VSS Funding	127997	124193
Department For Communities	34092	37681
Heritage Lottery	0	23857
Donations	5229	2247
Health Days and Outreach	4005	4550
Class Fees	820	3315
Conway Mill Trust	3806	1423
Refund	836	0
Arts and Crafts Workshop	0	3700
Springhill/Westrock Massacre Campaign	0	150
Book Sales	0	300
Falls Women Centre Training	0	13800
Room Hire	300	600
Stress Packs	454	850
University of Dundee refund	0	1000
BCC Fund	<u>18240</u>	<u>0</u>
Investment Income		
Deposit Account Interest	0	0
Other Incoming Resources		
Activities	0	0
Total Incoming Resources	<u>195779</u>	<u>217666</u>

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

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	£s 2025	£s 2024
Resources Expended		
Charitable Activities		
Direct Charitable Wages	96900	92590
VSS Programme Cost (Respite)	1073	2055
Additionally/Socail Support	1828	4039
Materials	1847	0
Tuition Fees	12493	14939
Ballymurphy Springhill Westrock Masacre	678	352
Class Fees/Exam Fees	403	1459
Health & Wellbeing/Therapies & Wellbeing Day	37800	37800
Falls Women Centre Training	1050	9707
Consultancy	707	0
VTCT & Verification Visits	3686	3285
Subscriptions	106	0
Heritage Lottery	0	23088
Premises Costs	5316	4047
Room Hire	7110	2660
House Keeping	700	1100
Therapy/Outreach	2100	4925
Volunteer Expenses	896	2756
Travel & Subsistence	37	0
Administration	2575	3820
General Expenses	0	0
Governance Costs		
Accountancy	1100	1100
Support Costs	0	0
Management Costs		
Fixtures and Fittings	545	555
Finance		
Bank Fees	250	257
DFC Loan Payback	591	887
Total Resources Expended	<u>179791</u>	<u>211421</u>
Net Income/Expenditure	<u>15988</u>	<u>6245</u>

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 31.03.2025 .

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 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



Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

Accounts

SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOUSE Ltd

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS for year ended 31st March.,2024

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

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £'s	Restricted Funds £'s	2024 Total £'s	2023 Total £'s
Incoming Resources				
Generated Funds				
Voluntary Income			0	0
Investment Income			0	0
Grants and Fees	0	217666	<u>217666</u>	<u>239009</u>
Total Income	<u>0</u>	<u>217666</u>	217666	<u>239009</u>
Resources Expended				
Charitable Activities				
Charitable		0	0	237822
Support			0	0
Governance	0		<u>0</u>	<u>1999</u>
Total Expended	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>239821</u>
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources	<u>0</u>	<u>217666</u>	<u>217666</u>	<u>-812</u>

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

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	£s	£s
	2024	2023
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
VSS Funding	124193	148950
Department For Communities	37681	36169
Heritage Lottery	23857	0
Big Lottery	0	10000
Donations	2247	9704
Health Days and Outreach	4550	0
Class Fees	3315	1180
Conway Mill Trust	1423	6859
Joe Drotter	0	8042
C. Hann	0	110
Arts and Crafts Workshop	3700	0
Springhill/Westrock Massacre Campaign	150	2000
Book Sales	300	0
Falls Women Centre Training	13800	0
Room Hire	600	500
Therapies	0	11486
Stress Packs	850	0
University of Dundee refund	1000	0
Black Mountain	0	500
BCC Covid Support	0	844
Glencree Centre	0	1185
Electric Vouchers	0	1200
Advertising	0	280
Investment Income		
Deposit Account Interest	0	0
Other Incoming Resources		
Activities	0	0
Total Incoming Resources	<u>217666</u>	<u>239009</u>

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

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	£s	£s
	2024	2023
Resources Expended		
Charitable Activities		
Direct Charitable Wages	92590	89418
VSS Programme Cost	2055	5352
Additionally/Capital Grant	0	0
Additionally/Socail Support	4039	37290
VSS Capital/Materials	0	1608
Tuition Fees	14939	11730
Ballymurphy Springhill Westrock Masacre	352	0
Class Fees/Exam Fees	1459	0
Health & Wellbeing/Therapies & Wellbeing Day	37800	37040
Falls Women Centre Training	9707	282
Lagmore Project	0	1000
VTCT & Verification Visits	3285	2161
Big Lotto Voucher	0	11200
Heritage Lottery	23088	19290
Premises Costs	4047	3690
Room Hire	2660	300
House Keeping	1100	1200
Therapy/Outreach	4925	8845
Volunteer Expenses	2756	1710
Advertising	0	280
Administration	3820	4244
General Expenses	0	295
Governance Costs		
Accountancy	1100	1100
Support Costs	0	0
Management Costs		
Fixtures and Fittings	555	594
Finance		
Bank Fees	257	305
DFC Loan Payback	887	887
Total Resources Expended	<u>211421</u>	<u>239821</u>
Net Income/Expenditure	<u>6245</u>	<u>-812</u>

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

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	2024 £'s	2023 £'s
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	30285	30104
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	162430	156366
Creditors		
Amounts due within one year	760	760
Net Current Assets	<u>161670</u>	<u>155606</u>
Total Assets	191955	185710
Deferred Income	0	0
Net Assets	<u>191955</u>	<u>185710</u>
Funds		
Balance fwd	185710	186522
Unrestricted Funds	6245	-812
Restricted Funds	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Funds	<u>191955</u>	<u>185710</u>

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees on 9/9/24 and were signed on their behalf by:

Trustee

Thomas Hoiland

J. Quinn & Co

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

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 31.03.24

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

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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.

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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



Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

Annual report

Springhill Community House Trustees Report

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

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 from the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS £121,322) and the Department for Communities (DfC £31,469).

Busy beavers.

It's been a busy couple of months at the house with all sorts of creative workshops including glass painting, felting, weaving, planting, photography and touring.

It's great to learn new skills and have a cuppa and chat at the same time.

Thanks to everyone who took part, you should be proud of your amazing works of art.





Complementary Therapy Clinics

Our team of complementary therapists continue to deliver weekly therapy clinics in Reflexology, Aromatherapy massage and Homeopathy. We receive funding from the Victims and Survivors Service to deliver therapies with two hundred and forty clients per year each receive five one to one therapy sessions on a weekly basis.

Complementary therapies take a holistic approach to the individual incorporating physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The therapies we offer are designed to work alongside and not intended in any way to replace any medical treatment.

People often use complementary therapies to help them feel better and cope with the challenges life throws at them. Many complementary therapies concentrate on boosting relaxation and reducing stress. They may help to calm your emotions, relieve anxiety, and increase your general sense of health and wellbeing.

Proposed Funding Cuts Protest

Springhill Community House and other community organisations found themselves again protesting at proposed funding cuts by the department for communities.

Déjà vu - Been there, done that, got the Tee-shirt.

But we shouldn't have to be out protesting for Funding again.



Springhill Community House receive funding from the Department for Communities for the delivery of our services. In April 2023 we were forced to take to the street in protest at these proposed cuts and funding on a three-month basis.

It's impossible to plan or deliver services on a three-month basis.

Community groups gathered outside Dfc offices to let officials know that this situation is unacceptable and will have serious negative consequences for local community organisations and their service users and demanded that the uncertainty and ongoing threat to funding must be lifted immediately.

Mighty Oaks from little acorns grow.

Celebrating 10 years of Gairdín an Phobail.

Gairdín an Phobail – Garden of the people beside the Whiterock Leisure Centre had its first growing season in 2013, 10 years on it has blossomed into a social hub for horticulture, arts and culture.



We marked the 10th year by dedication one of the raised beds to Noelle Ryan who was instrumental in the campaign for the community garden and allotments.

Seen here digging the foundations for the garden Noelle championed food for healing and remedies based on plants, flowers and herbs.

She believed in treating the cause and not the symptoms, and in treating the person holistically, body, mind and spirit.

She used Bach remedies everyday of her life and we are still using them today in the Community House.

Gairdín an Phobail was open to all today as part of the Féile a GCloihni Gorma-Festival of the bluebells with loads of activities including, pizza making, foraging, making seed bombs, pesto making and much more.

So it was a fitting occasion to remember Noelle with a named plaque (leaba Noelle – Noelle's Bed) made by Bob McAllister and to celebrate the 10 years of amazing work in the garden by volunteers past and present.

Special mention of Sean Mac Brádaigh of Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) who has revitalised the garden into a blooming success aided and abetted by his team of volunteers.

Whiterock's Garden of the People is absolutely blooming

Joe McCann April 29, 2023 09:55



The Peoples Archive - Fr Des Wilson

It was great to be in the company of so many friends at a presentation of Fr Des' archive in St Comgall's School.

Thanks to Falls Community Council for hosting us today in their beautifully renovated St Comgall's School. It was a fitting venue for the exhibition and presentation. On Display were just a few of the many documents, reports, photographs, posters and artefacts.

One of those present commented "Des was in the room" and indeed he was, we felt his presence.

And through the magic of technology heard his voice which was recorded in August 1971. Among other things Des kept an audio diary. Every night Des retired to his bedroom, smoked 2 gauloises French cigarettes, and recorded the events of that day, who he met and what happened in the community.

Our 18-month archive project is nearing completion but there is still much more to be done.

We'll be having more presentations of the archive in the coming months.

Des always said there is a book in everyone. No matter who he met he encouraged them to record their own story even if it was just for the family. He was very conscious that we must not leave the telling of our history to others. Be inspired by him to make a start

Thanks again to everyone who came and to Falls Community Council for hosting the event.





Supporting Students through exams with Bach Remedy Exam Mix

Exam season is upon us and its always a nerve wrecking time so why not get some of our Bach remedies to help you get through it and focus the mind.

Here's what the remedies are and how they help;

Clematis: for a better concentration
 If you're always daydreaming and have trouble staying focused on the present, Clematis Bach flower remedies may be able to help. This natural remedy can help improve focus, concentration and grounding, making it ideal for those who struggle with staying present in the moment

White Chestnut: to better remember things
 Take if you find your mind ends up with thoughts whirring round and round, particularly at night causing sleep problems before exams.



Gentian: not to respond when in front of an unexpected situation

Gentian encourages the positive potential to put mistakes in context, cope with setbacks, pessimism, and negative outlooks. From small upsets to large difficulties, and when challenges build up, keep Gentian at hand. Approach all challenges with conviction. It helps you to better concentrate and solve problems more easily and quickly. Managing new situations is easier.

Elm: for a surplus of care that an exam requires

Take if you suddenly feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of it all. Could be a good one if your university place is riding on your A-level results, or for those 3rd year University finals.

Larch: to have confidence in your abilities

Take this if you feel like you have no self-confidence, really useful before exams. Keeps you feeling capable; not fearful but determined.

MUST SEE TV!!

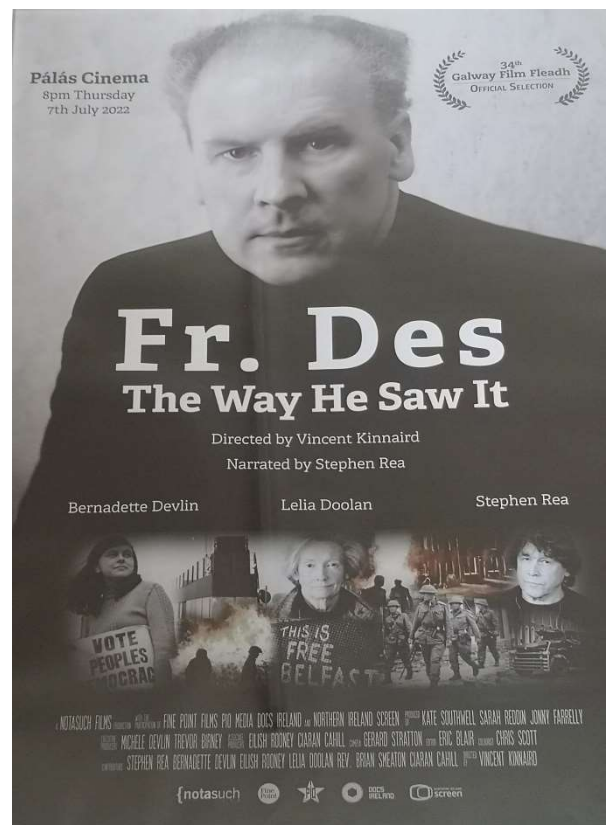
Fr Des - The Way He Saw It.

We were delighted to announce that Vincent Kinnard's film about Fr Des was screened on local TV station NVTV# on the 10th May 2023.

The film narrated by Stephen Rea tells the life-story of Des, the people's priest with a socialist and humanitarian outlook, who spent a full life helping those in need as the British empire's hold on Northern Ireland began to unravel from 1969 onwards.

Amid civil strife he followed the path of Jesus in caring for the downtrodden, and for a long period was ostracised by the hierarchy of his own Church for doing this. Courageously though he continued to work for justice and against inequality to the end of his life in November 2019.

An extraordinary man in extraordinary circumstances.



Féile na gCloigíní Gorma - Festival of the Bluebells

Thanks to Glor Na Móna for hosting a presentation of Fr Des' Archive as part of Féile na gCloigíní Gorma.

Des had a great view of the mountain, the hatchet field and bluebells, he described the Upper Springfield as a beautiful place under the shadow of the mountain. In fact, we used a photograph of a tree in a field of bluebells above the hatchet field on his memorial card along with another photograph of his second favourite place to be Muckish in Donegal.

Des would be delighted that the seeds of festival that were planted way back in 1973 bloom again with the bluebells festival.

Congratulations to Glor na Móna for their fantastic programme of events which is about community, solidarity and Wellbeing.

Springhill Community House celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and this project is one of our key projects in celebration of those 50 plus years.

Des had a minimalist lifestyle, he had few possessions, if he had two shirts he would give one away, but when it came to the archive he was a hoarder and thank god for that.

He advised everybody he met to record their own story if only for their family to look back on.

65 years ago he was advising students in St Malachy's to keep a diary and one of the diaries survives in the Archive.

The first entry in that diary reads:

9th of October 1958

I have begun to write this diary on the advice of Fr Des Wilson. This will, I hope, perhaps be a help to me in the future when I wish to see how my thoughts have developed.

The diary is just one example, many more have followed that advice and published their story, some through the Springhill Local history series which has more than 30 titles including "The gates flew open" by Jim McCann and "Put out that light" by Teresa Donnelly.

If you take anything from the archive project let it be the start of you documenting/recording your story.

Des kept his own diary's both written and recorded.

At night he would retire to his room, smoke 2 Gauloises French cigarettes, and record the events of that day, who he met and events within the community.

We played a clip recorded in August 1971 just a few days after the Ballymurphy Massacre. Des describes visiting the location of Fr Mullan's murder and seeing children leaving jam jars filled with flowers at the site marked by Black crosses, the children blessed themselves and prayed.

What's amazing about the recording is Des was thinking then of a memorial to all who died. He spoke about the possibility of a centre for reconciliation that would remember all victim's protestant and Catholic.

He didn't get the support for it at the time but through the good work of the Black Mountain Shared Space Project that vision will become a reality. They started building a 6.5 million cross community centre for reconciliation on that site.

Our archivist Tiarnan ÓMuilleoir gave a presentation about the archive project and its contents including examples of posters, letters and pamphlets.

Our long term objective is to house the archive in a newly built Fr Des Wilson Interpretive Centre which will tell the story of Fr Des and his work and where the archive contents will be available for all to access.



STOP THE CUTS

The message was loud and clear as we took to the streets again in protest at budget cuts.

The cuts will have a devastating impact on much needed community services.

Services are at risk and the cuts must be stopped.

Thanks to all our service users who joined us to show their support and opposition to the cuts.



Topper Thompson Inquest.

We supported the Thompson family and eyewitnesses as we did at the Public Inquiry into the murder of Paul Topper Thompson at Banbridge Courthouse.

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.



Celebrating our Volunteers

We would be lost without them!

Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community and make it a better place. When you volunteer, you are helping to provide important services to those in need. You are also helping to build a stronger and more vibrant community.

Our volunteers are invaluable in helping keep the project running from reception duties, housekeeping, administration, teaching and more recently helping in the Peoples Archive.

Volunteering is a great opportunity to learn new skills that you can use in your personal life.

The volunteers in the archive project are learning preservation and conservation as well as cataloguing skills.

Volunteering has many benefits for volunteers, including:

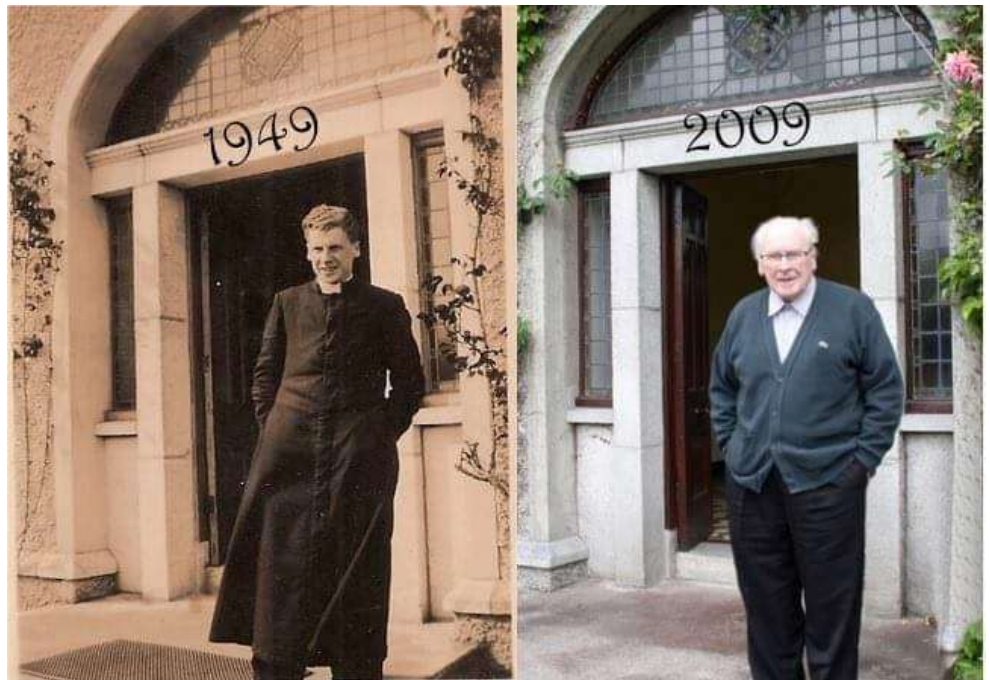
- **Improved mental and physical health:** Volunteering has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and boost self-esteem. It can also help to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and stroke.
- **Increased social connections:** Volunteering can help you to meet new people and make friends. It can also help you to connect with your community and feel a sense of belonging.
- **New skills and knowledge:** Volunteering can help you to learn new skills and gain valuable experience. This can be helpful for your career or for personal development.
- **A sense of purpose:** Volunteering can give you a sense of purpose and satisfaction. It can make you feel good about yourself.



Remembering Fr Des on the 74th anniversary of his ordination.

Much has, and will be said, about Fr Des but we wanted to share this Poem by Fra McDaniel which says it all in our view, a heavenly saint among us, thanks Fra.

A Heavenly Saint
Among Us
In the heart of
Ballymurphy, a
beacon stood,
A man of peace, in
the neighbourhood,
Father Des Wilson, a
caring Christian soul,
Embracing his calling, making broken hearts whole.
With unwavering faith, he walked the path,
Bringing hope to the downtrodden, ending their wrath,
Injustice and discrimination, he fiercely fought,
For the rights of the marginalized, his voice brought.
Jobs and opportunities, he tirelessly sought,
To uplift his community, each battle he fought,
"Give me a call," his resounding motto,
A guiding light in the darkest of sorrow.
Through troubled times, he lent a helping hand,
A rock of support, against a turbulent land,
He preached compassion, understanding, and love,
A testament to his faith, sent from above.
Father Des Wilson, a man revered,
In the hearts of many, his legacy seared,
He left footprints of kindness, etched in time,
A symbol of hope, forever sublime.
Though he may be gone, his spirit remains,
In the hearts he touched, in remembered refrains,
A man of God, a caring Christian, true,
Father Des Wilson, we honour you.
FMD justice for all.



I Did This for You

We were delighted to welcome Margaret McGuckin to the community house with some copies of her book "I Did This for You"

The book tells the story of her life and the enduring impact the abuse she suffered as a child has had over her lifetime.

It details her early years in Nazareth House where she suffered abuse at the hands of nuns and her campaign for redress for all victims.

Springhill Community House have supported Margaret and the SAVIA group for many years and were delighted to see Margaret's story finally in print.



A dip into the archive – St John's & Corpus Christi Parish Bulletins.

St John's Parish Bulletin, later to include Corpus Christi was published between July 1970 to June 1974 and was a great insight into what was going on during that time, including the building of the new church Corpus Christi, the arrival of the new youth worker for the Ballymurphy Tenants Association, Paddy McCarthy, later murdered by the para's in the Ballymurphy Massacre and various sporting events.

It also included an article "Young Dopes" by Fr Noel Fitzpatrick who was murdered in the Springhill Massacre in July 1972, as relevant today as it was then. (Issue 2 page 4)
The Building of new factories at the Whiterock Industrial Estate (Issue 22)
The arrival and Departure of St Mother Teresa (Issues 14 & Issue 38)

An article in issue 20 headed Ranafast is a reflective piece by author RT on the first visit of children to the Gaeltacht in 1926. It's fitting that we share it today just as bus loads of students leave Coláiste Feirste on route for the Gaeltacht 2023 style and not a Model T Ford in sight.

TR recalled making a promise to her fellow students on arrival at Ranafast to only speak Irish, she decided to show off to her friend saying "Ta Muid sa Gaeltacht anois. Caithimid Gaeilg a labhairt" (We are in the Gaeltacht now, we have to speak Irish) Her friend glared at her and blurted out "Aw shut up! I want my mammy!"

The 43 editions in the archive offer a wealth of information and insights into the social, cultural, and religious life of the local community.

The archive serves as a time capsule, preserving the stories, events, and achievements of the people connected to St John's Parish – Corpus Christi and the Ballymurphy area. It offers a unique perspective on the development and transformation of the area, documenting the challenges faced by the community as well as the progress made over the years.

Through the pages of the Bulletins, readers can delve into the rich tapestry of West Belfast's history. The bulletins provide updates on church activities, parish events, and community initiatives. They serve as a means of communication, connecting individuals and families, and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

All 43 Issues can be viewed on our web page.



Remembering Fr Des on his 98th Birthday

The 8th July would be Fr Des' 98th Birthday, he had a long and happy life during which he was a faithful servant of God.

He once told students "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."

He lived his life by that motto and left the world a better place. He enriched the lives of all he met.

Some say legend some say saint, we say both.

He stuck by us in our hour of need and dedicated himself to our community. He became part of us and we became part of him.



Another dip into the archive.

The archive project is progressing well and thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund we've been able to digitise some of the collection.

We've already shared the parish bulletins and today we can share some of the many campaign posters.

Posters are a powerful tool for getting your message across. They are especially effective in campaigning and raising awareness of injustice, a cause or call for change.

In the context of campaigning, they are used for spreading a message and mobilising support.

Fr Des had the foresight to keep a copy of many campaign posters over the years which are now in the Peoples Archive, here is just a few to whet the appetite.



Upper Springfield Festival 2023

It was a great day to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first ever Upper Springfield Festival in August 1973.

The Upper Springfield events team excelled themselves providing Health Stalls – Therapists - Health Bus - Health checks - Beautician's – Barbers – Inbody Machine - Go Karts - Bouncy Castles – Inflatable's –Fun Activities –Family Activities - – Mini Sports – culminating in the amazing colour run.

Thanks to all the community organisations in the Upper Springfield who came together to deliver the festival. Just like the ethos of the 1973 festival it was a great boost to morale during difficult times.

Thanks to Dáithi for kicking off the colour run even though there was a false start. Brilliant day all round.





The People's Archive - Fr Des Wilson

Another packed audience in St Mary's University College for the presentation of the People's Archive by our archivist Tiarnan Ó'Muilleoir who gave an overview of the archive project including examples.

As well as the presentation we had an amazing exhibition of posters, photographs, and artefacts.



Springhill Community House has the key to unlock your potential

Launch of education programme and activities starting September 2023.

Springhill Community House is a community education and development charity based in West Belfast. It was founded in 1972 by Father Des Wilson, who was committed to social justice and community education and development. The house quickly expanded from providing advice to offering a wide range of educational and social services to the local community.

Today, Springhill Community House offers a variety of courses and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. These include GCSE English, Maths, Science and Irish as well as a range of diploma courses in Reflexology, Massage and Thermal Auricular Therapy. The house also hosts a number of social events and activities, women's groups, gardening and community events.

We take a holistic approach and recognise that stress and anxiety can be a barrier to unlocking potential. In addition to the education programs we deliver a number of complimentary therapy clinics in Homeopathy, Acupuncture, Reflexology, Aromatherapy and Massage. Each person gets five one-hour therapy treatments which will help reduce stress and improve their mental health.

We believe that everyone has the right to education and development, regardless of their background or circumstances. The house's programs are designed to help people unlock their potential and build a better future for themselves and their families.

Education for the community in the community has been at the heart of our work since 1972. By providing our service we want to ensure that everyone has access to the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life, regardless of their social or economic background.

Our programs have a number of benefits including improved literacy and numeracy skills, better job prospects, and overall better quality of life.

We have helped thousands of people to improve their lives, and they have made a real difference to the local community.

Springhill Community House believes that everyone has the potential to succeed. The house's programs are designed to help people to realize their potential and achieve their goals.

The house's staff are passionate about helping people to learn and grow. They are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

We have a proven track record of helping people to unlock their potential. The house's graduates have gone on to achieve great things, including getting jobs, starting their own businesses, and making a positive difference in their communities.

Springhill Community House is a valuable asset to West Belfast. The house's programs are making a real difference to the lives of people in the city. If you are looking for an opportunity to learn and grow, Springhill Community House is the place for you.

Our programs are making a real difference to the lives of people in West Belfast, and you can be a part of that difference.



SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOUSE

GCSE CLASSES

Maths Blended Course Essential Skills
Numeracy/GCSE Wednesday
6pm – 8.30pm
English Thursday 6pm – 8.30pm
Science: Wednesday 6pm – 8.30pm
Irish GCSE Thursday 6pm – 8.30pm

LIFE COACHING COURSES

HISTORY & POLITICS

Introduction to Women in History and
Local History 6 weeks

THE PEOPLES ARCHIVE – FR DES WILSON

Volunteers required to assist in
cataloguing and preservation.

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 has arrived.

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 starts again in September and there is something there for everyone, so why not enrol in one of our courses and broaden your horizons.

If at first you don't succeed.

As the dust settles on exam day and grades are awarded don't be too disheartened if you didn't get the grade you wanted.

Be inspired by one of our students who didn't succeed the first time or the second but persevered and got it on the third attempt.

Tis a lesson you should heed—
Try again;
If at first you don't succeed,
Try again.
Then your courage should appear;
For if you will persevere,
You will conquer, never fear,
Try again.



Celebrating Community stalwarts and entrepreneurs - Shop locally!

Mary's shop is back open for business after a refit and the transformation is amazing.

Congratulations to Stephen Snr, Stephen Jnr and Rachel, the next generation of Walsh/Gribben's, who are continuing to provide a much needed local grocery service just as their parents and grandparent did before them Mary Walsh open the shop in Springhill Avenue more than 50 years ago followed by her daughter Ann Gribben and Ann's husband Davey, then their children, Stephen, Kieran, Angela and Paula (RIP)

Since then the Walsh/Gribben family have been providing a much needed local grocery service to the wider community through good times and bad.

Mary's Shop truly is a family run local convenient store that serves the needs of the community.

Not only that it supports community events and initiatives by donating goods and services.

So it's important that we support local family run businesses remain in the community by shopping locally.

When you buy from a small local business, you are not helping a supermarket CEO buy a third property. You are helping a little girl get dance lessons, a little boy get his team jersey, a mum or dad put food on the table, a family pay a mortgage, or a student pay for University.

Your also ensuring that the community will continue to have a great service on their doorstep for many years to come.



A Dip into the archive – This time the Andersonstown News from 1982.

Like ourselves the Andersonstown News is celebrating 50+ years of service and are currently cataloguing and preserving their back issues including many photographs of community events.

The first edition of the Andersonstown News was on 22nd of November 1972 and was the successor to “Internment 71”, a news-sheet published irregularly up to that point by the Andersonstown Civil Resistance Committee.

“Internment ‘71” expressed the outrage of the local community at the introduction of internment without trial, which had affected numerous families from the greater Andersonstown area.

Alongside the wave of grassroots resistance to internment in nationalist communities emerged new forms of independent community expression that challenged the traditional communications monopoly of the Catholic church and the middle classes. Andersonstown was no different, with “Internment ‘71” and local republican newsletters such as the Tattler or Volunteer, often published in haphazard fashion by amateur volunteers, acting as the forerunner to the Andersonstown News in voicing the concerns and opinions of the working class.

A popular page in the paper is always their pictures page of what’s happening in the community that week.

Who was out and about this week in 1982 contains several pictures of Springhill residents including Fr Des presenting medals to the ladies ‘Misfits’ volley ball team and the ‘Old Crocks’ five a side team. Pat Doherty and Geordie McKenna are also presenting medals to some young Sprighillian's during the Springhill Festival.

I think you’ll agree these pictures capture the great community spirit that still exists in Springhill today.



Father Des Wilson presents medals to Westrock 'Old Crocks' five-a-side team at the Springhill Festival in August 1982

Remembering Matt Lundy RIP

A ray of Sunshine was our sunflower project during lockdown. Every house in the Upper Springfield received a sunflower seed in a pot. More than 4500 homes received a seed and watched it emerge from the soil.

It took a lot of helpers to make the project happen, Matt Lundy was one of those helpers.

That was Matt always willing to muck in and get the job done.

He was a great teacher, story teller, activist and friend.

Someone once said;

Life is the soil, our choices and actions the sun and rain, but our dreams are the seeds. Matt planted many seeds in his time, seeds of culture, language, activism, resistance, rights, resilience, confidence, hope, success, joy and love.

From those seeds mighty Oaks will grow keeping Matt's dreams alive.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant." in other words don't judge your day by the rewards you receive, but by the efforts you put in, that was Matt Lundy in a nutshell.

Matt passed peacefully at hospital on 3rd September 2023 surrounded by his loving family. Devoted partner of Margaret, adored father of Grainne and loving daideo of Culann. Much loved father-in-law of Francis.

Our condolences to Margaret, Grainne and the wider family circle.

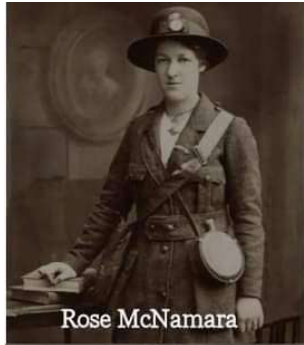
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



Women In Irish History Course

We are delighted bring back by popular demand our 8 week Women in Irish History class.

The course will give an overview of the role of women in Irish History and focus on some of the lesser known women including Rose McNamara, Elizabeth O'Farrell, Kathleen Lynn and Jenny Wise Power.



Rose McNamara

Springhill Community House
Presents
An Introduction to
Women in Irish History

Starts Tuesday 7th November @
6pm



Elizabeth
O'Farrell



Kathleen Lynn



Jenny
Wise
Power

Sagart Pobal - The Peoples Priest

Remembering Fr Des today on the 4th anniversary of his passing. We thank God for Des' priesthood, his faithful and dedicated service of God and for his lifelong service to his people.

Five months before Des died he celebrated his 70th anniversary, although he was ill and frail he sent the following message to be read at mass by Eilish Rooney. Fr Paddy McCafferty celebrated the mass with Des' friends and families while Des followed proceedings online.

I see it as Des saying thank you and goodbye to his community.

“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.”



The Spirit of Freedom awarded goes to the Springhill/Westrock Massacre Families

Harry Gargan, the brother of Margaret Gargan, reflects on receiving the award and what it means to families. "Tonight, the Spirit of Féile award that had been awarded to our families back in the summer now sits proudly alongside our loved ones lanterns in the Springhill Community House. A poignant fitting to end a tough week of our inquest proceedings.

When we were awarded this recognition, it was our families desire for it remain in the heart of the community our loved ones tragically had their lives stolen. The families stated amongst ourselves that this award didn't belong to us, it belonged to John, David, Paddy, Fr Noel and Margaret, as it was them who selflessly and courageously lost their lives whilst trying to help others. We have only given them a voice.

It should also belong to the community, as it is the spirit of the Springhill and Westrock community that is one to be inspired. It was this very community who rallied around us in our darkest days to comprehend the trauma we had endured; it is this community who stood behind us as our families battled for 51 years to seek the truth into our loved one's death's. It is now this very same community during this inquest that is attempted to be criminalised. This community has suffered terribly since this horrific atrocity. We hope to achieve vindication for not only our loved ones but for the remarkable people from this community.

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

- Arthur Schopenhauer



A dip into the archive – Fr Des' Audio Diary's

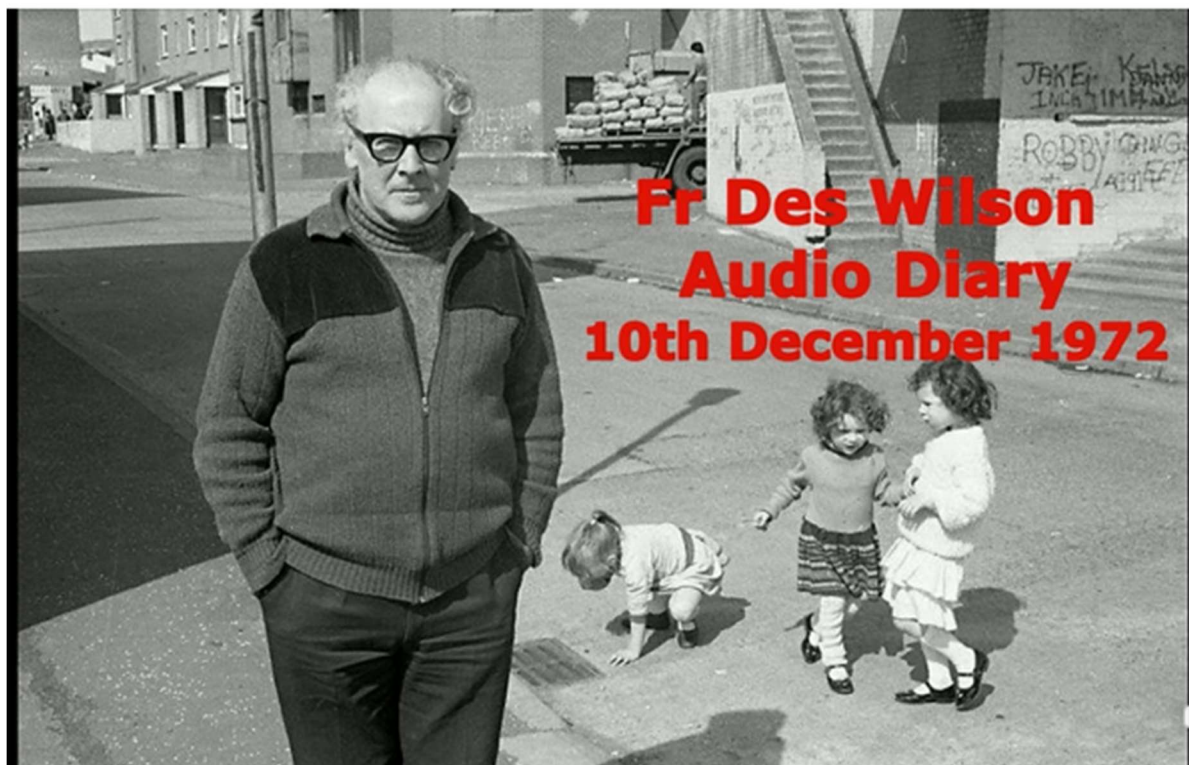
Sunday 10th December 1972

Fr Des had extraordinary foresight to keep copies of correspondence, books, orals histories, videos, sound recordings and photographs. He also recorded diaries on an old reel-to-reel recorder.

This one is from Sunday 10th December 1972, 50 years ago today. As you will hear he was lifted by the British army and put into an armed personnel carrier despite his objections.

He wasn't interested in an apology for himself but wanted an apology for the hundreds of people who had been gravely hurt by British army policy of lifting people into army carriers and dumping them out where they liked.

It's just one of many amazing records in the Peoples Archive – Fr Des Wilson. We are in the process of digitising the recordings and 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.



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.



Remembering Noelle Ryan on her Birthday.

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

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

Originally from Dublin Noelle joined a Dominican 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.

I know that she would be out on the front line during our current crisis advising people of the benefits of the remedies.

“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 business 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.

Happy heavenly birthday Noelle.



Rita Walker RIP

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Rita Walker (née Curran) on 23rd December 2023.

Rita was one of the Curran sisters, the others being Mary (RIP) , Geraldine, Teresa and Lily who were great friends to Fr Des, Noelle and no strangers to Springhill Community House.

Rita was a good neighbour and friend to many in Springhill/Ballymurphy and beyond. Until November of this year she was deeply involved in the parish and community life of Corpus Christi parish as a Eucharistic Minister among other things. When she retired she was presented with a Belfast crystal plaque which said "with love and gratitude for Rita from Corpus Christi parish for her years of devoted service to the Lord, his Church and his people."

The plaque took pride of place in her home.

Rita was a tower of strength and courage as shown through her own health battles. When she lost her son Jim to suicide she helped and inspired others by founding the Suicide awareness and Support Group, who provide intervention services for those at risk of suicide and deliver bereavement support to those bereaved by suicide. The last event Rita attended was a few days before her passing at the tree of hope Christmas service in the garden of reflection in Springhill.

Although very weak she was determined to be there to show her support to all families bereaved by suicide.

Christmas was her favourite time of the year, so perhaps it is fitting that God called her home to be reunited with her daughter Jacqueline and her son Jim at this time. Our thoughts and prayers are with her children Raymond, Margaret, Michele and Tony, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Her surviving sisters Geraldine, Teresa, Lily and her brother Joseph and wider family circle.

Rita shared this verse on the 50th anniversary of her daughter Jacqueline's death and the words are fitting today as her family and friends gather for her funeral.

Forget me not as time goes by,
For you can find me in the sky.
Forget me not for we're apart,
For you carry me within your heart.
Forget me not although I've gone,
For my memory will always live on.
Instead, remember me
In every special way,
Keep me close to your heart
We'll meet again one day.
St Pio Pray for her.



“Christ in the Rubble”

In Bethlehem all Christmas festivities were cancelled to mourn the death of more than 20,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza.

On Christmas eve, in the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church Bethlehem, Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac gave a powerful liturgy of lament, “Christ in the Rubble”. At the altar is a nativity scene with the figure of baby Jesus in a keffiyeh, surrounded by rubble.

In Rev Isaac’s sermon he said “If Jesus were to be born today, he would be born under the rubble in Gaza.”

The nativity scene in Bethlehem brought back memories of Fr Des in the mid-seventies when he said if Jesus were born in Belfast now he would be born into a city of military occupation and army brutality.

He asked local artist Liam Andrews to paint the backdrop for the nativity scene with Jesus in a manger. Liam chose to include images of the everyday life of a military occupied Belfast.

The scenes depict: house raids, barbed wire, armoured tank, internment camps and army searches.



Just as Fr Des spoke to us about Jesus being one of us, Rev Isaac told his congregation that Jesus was at home with the “marginalized, the suffering, the oppressed, and displaced. This is his manger.” “He is in solidarity with us in our pain and brokenness.”

More than 20,000 people have been killed, 9,000 of those are children and 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced.

Rev Isaac described this as an a “annihilation” and called for the genocide to stop “This manger is our message to the world today – and it is simply this: this genocide must stop NOW. Let us repeat to the world: STOP this Genocide NOW. This is our call. This is our plea. This is our prayer. Hear oh God. Amen.”

Des would have been pleased to hear Rev Isaac call out the “complicity of the church” by it’s silence. Des too believed that the church had a moral responsibility to stand up against oppression and injustice and to stand on the side of the oppressed.

Let us pray for an end to the genocide and the senseless killing of innocent Palestinians.



Remembering Joe Drotter RIP



Ciaran Cahill shared this tribute to Joe a lifelong friend and supporter of Springhill Community House.

His former headmaster at Austin Prep, Dr James Hickey, said “ If you want to understand the meaning of Veritas (Truth), Unitas (Unity), Caritas (Charity) you need look no further” than Joe Drotter.

It is true to say that Joe’s early Augustinian education had a lasting impact on his life and work none more so than in Ireland.

Debs Lamby recalled the story of Joe’s first trip to Derry while a student in Cork in 1972. After hearing the media coverage of Bloody Sunday, Joe and three other students hitchhiked to Derry to see for themselves the destruction left behind by the British State.

They arrived at a well-known pub in the Bogside and were promptly sussed out by a few locals.

After confessing they had nowhere to stay they were welcomed into the Lamby and Duffy homes.

Deb’s recalled that they stayed for 10 days and “encountered a lot, one being the distinct smell and taste of tear gas.”

Deb’s remembered Joe returning to her family home to see how her parents were, and always bearing gifts for herself and other family members.

Even when her parents passed Joe kept in touch with the family visiting their home and always enquiring after them. Deb's said "he has been a huge part in my family and has watched us all grow up from we were babies and always kept in contact with us ,and for that I am so proud to call him MY ETERNAL FRIEND. Thank you for the memories and being part of our lives I will cherish your journey with us."

Joe made it his business to revisit Derry regularly to take part in the anniversary march and catch up with old friends he made over the years.

He also kept his connection with Cork where he volunteered with an organisation called 'Between' For over 30 years between delivered programmes to promote human relations and reconciliation with and between communities in the North of Ireland.

The Between House in Spurhill, Togher, Cork welcomed children and families from all over Ireland and provided much needed respite from the worst of the troubles. Joe gave of his time during the summer months to assist in the everyday running of the camp and I have no doubt contributed financially to keep the project running.

Joe loved everything Irish and those three core principles of Truth, Unity and Charity were at the heart of everything he did. He couldn't stand injustice and took every opportunity to expose the injustices perpetrated by the British in Ireland.

He had a long association with Springhill Community House and Fr Des. He was always interested in what was going on, always supportive, encouraging and helpful. When he was working with Cisco he used their matched gifting scheme, Cisco would match charitable donations by employees and Joe took great advantage of the scheme to generate even more income for Springhill Community House. He combined efforts with Cisco & Apple to have equipment donated to the project when it was setting up a new a computer suite in the 90's.

Joe was a regular visitor to the community house on his trips to Ireland calling in for a cuppa and chat with Fr Des.

I can recall one of those trips was during the Drumcree crisis.

The Orange Order insisted it should be allowed to march its "traditional route" to and from Drumcree Church through the Catholic areas and along the Garvaghy Road. The march was sectarian, triumphalist and supremacist, and residents wanted the march stopped.

In 1997, the RUC and British Army locked down the Catholic area and let the march through, citing loyalist threats to kill Catholics if it were stopped. This sparked widespread protests and from 1998 onward, the march was banned from Garvaghy Road. The army blocked the route with large steel, concrete and barbed-wire barricades.

Portadown was like to a war zone and under siege, no one except the media were allowed in. Joe came up with a plan to use his 'newly acquired media pass' to get himself and others through the RUC/Army lines right up to the barricades at Drumcree Church and it worked. Joe proceeded to video document the standoff

giving a running commentary as things unfolded. It would be interesting to see the archive of photos and videos he amassed while in Ireland.

He was never afraid to put himself in the front line to expose the truth about what was going on in Ireland.

Joe's truth, unity and charity wasn't confined to Ireland.

While on a trip to Vietnam in 2003 Joe became aware of the devastating effects of Agent Orange, a chemical used by the US military. Although its use stopped in the 1970s the dioxin contaminant continues to have harmful effects on the Vietnamese people causing deformities, cancer and serious health issues.

Joe decided that he needed to do something to help, he bought and converted a factory into the Tam Binh Centre a school for 20 physically disable children. He became an Emergency Medical Technician so that he could give basic medical care. Joe wanted to educate and train the children, many of whom were deaf, so that they would become productive members of society, helping them reach their full potential.

At the entrance to the school are two signs one with the name of the school "Tam Binh Centre" and the other "Tír na nÓg"

Joe explained "Tam Binh Center is the name of the school meaning peace of mind, but I consider the building to be Tír na nÓg from Irish mythology, - the Land of the Young, the Land of Eternal Youth. An island in the Atlantic where one never grows old and lives forever. Symbolically, these children will stay young "forever" - never to become adults and assume the burdens and responsibilities we all carry. And the Trinity knot is an ancient Celtic symbol, with several interpretations. One of which is very Buddhist-like, of birth-life-death and rebirth - as the knot itself is a continuous, never ending loop. Another school of thought sees the trinity knot as a more metaphysical concept where the three corners represent Mind, Body and Spirit - hopefully, what the children will develop for themselves at Tam Binh Center."

The school is going from strength to strength and hopes to build on its capacity to work with 75 children.

Joe continued to keep a close eye on events in Ireland with his regular visits until his last in 2022. Joe was diagnosed with cancer, It was clear that this was his final farewell trip and he used it to do a whistle stop tour from Dublin to Belfast and Derry to Westmeath visiting and saying goodbye to his many friends across Ireland.

When he returned home he continued communicating his displeasure at the "British Colonialists." He was distraught at the fact that two towns in the US were named after General Jeffery Amherst and I quote Joe "Amherst was a homicidal Brit maniac and it is unconscionable to still have 2 towns names after him. Amherst - who, knowing that the Native American Indians had no resistance to European germs, and died even from catching the common cold, Amherst sent over cholera-infested blankets as a "gift" - to the local tribes in Mass. and NH - and of course it wiped them out. Germ warfare compliments of the Brits. The depths of Brit evil know no bounds."

One of his last messages was about the Brits plundering and pillaging every country they colonised and their refusal to return what they stole, he shared this image of the British museum.

Welcome to the British Museum

Ground Floor: Pillage

1st Floor: Treasure

2nd Floor: Plunder

3rd Floor: Theft

4th Floor Swag

5th Floor: More stuff that doesn't belong to us.

He ended his message with Slan go Foill.

Joe was a true friend who was guided by the principles that life is to search for the ultimate truth, not alone, but among friends with love at the heart of every act and respect for each other. Always aware of the virtues of honesty, integrity, and compassion as fundamental to the way of life.

Veritas, Unitas and Caritas at its best.

Slán go fóill mo chara.

Our heartfelt condolences go to Joe's family and friends.

Springhill/Westrock Inquest.

This is the resumption of the inquest which are on track for completion of evidence before the legacy bill of shame deadline of the 1st may

We have supported families through their campaign for truth and justice and they remain resolute that they have:



We Never Gave Up - We Never stayed Quiet - We Spoke Up Against Injustice

Despite the death of Davey McCafferty they have vowed to see it through for him and their loved ones. We too will stand shoulder to shoulder with them on their journey.

Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

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 31.03.24

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



Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

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
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	2023	2022
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

Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

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"



The People's Archive

FR. DES WILSON



The People's Archive is a wealth of documents: correspondence, diaries, publications, film, sound recordings, broadcasts, oral histories and photographs gathered by Fr Des Wilson and the Springhill/Ballymurphy community.



"The substance of such archival material would provide an authentic historical background, as well as demonstrate and raise awareness, and aid in providing a coherent picture of the invaluable and integral work Fr Des and the community of Ballymurphy accomplished over the years." Sarah Gallagher



"The archive contains valuable lessons for people everywhere who struggle to solve problems and make positive impacts in the toughest circumstances" Eilish Rooney

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.



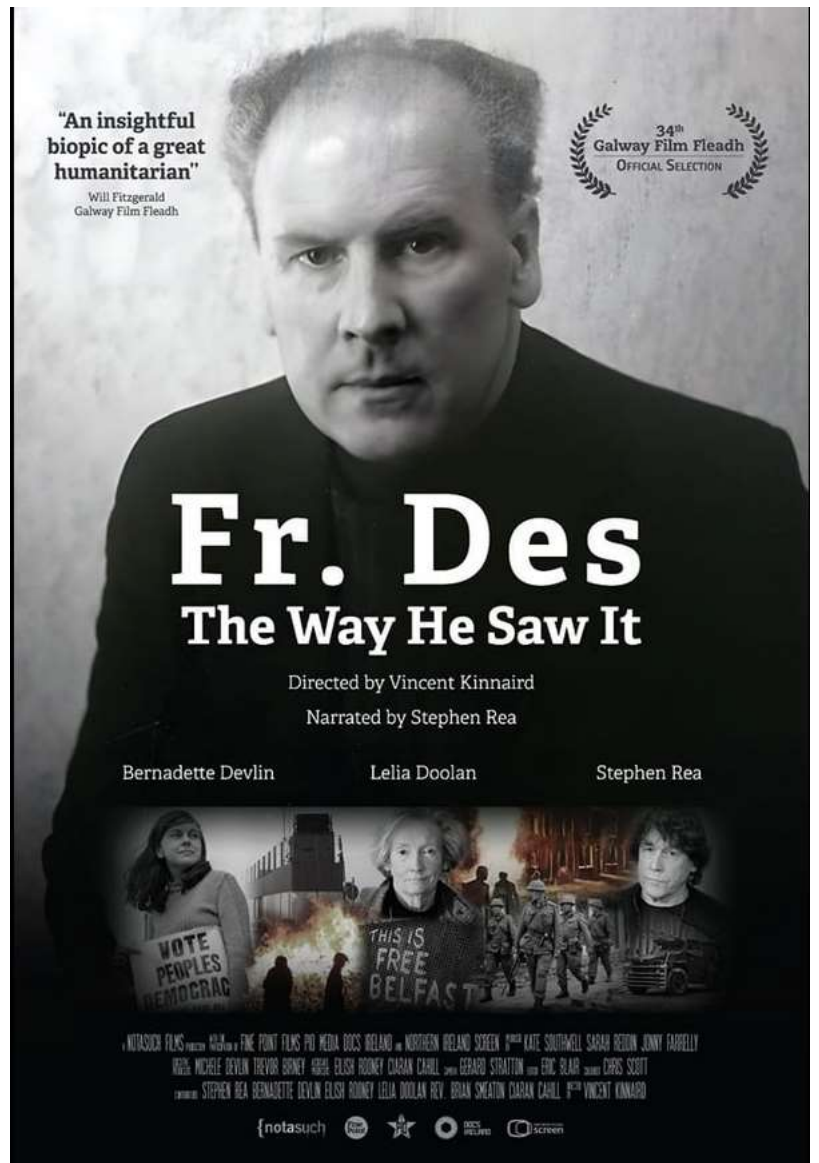
Remembering Fr Des on his 97th Birthday.

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

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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 Anacka 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.

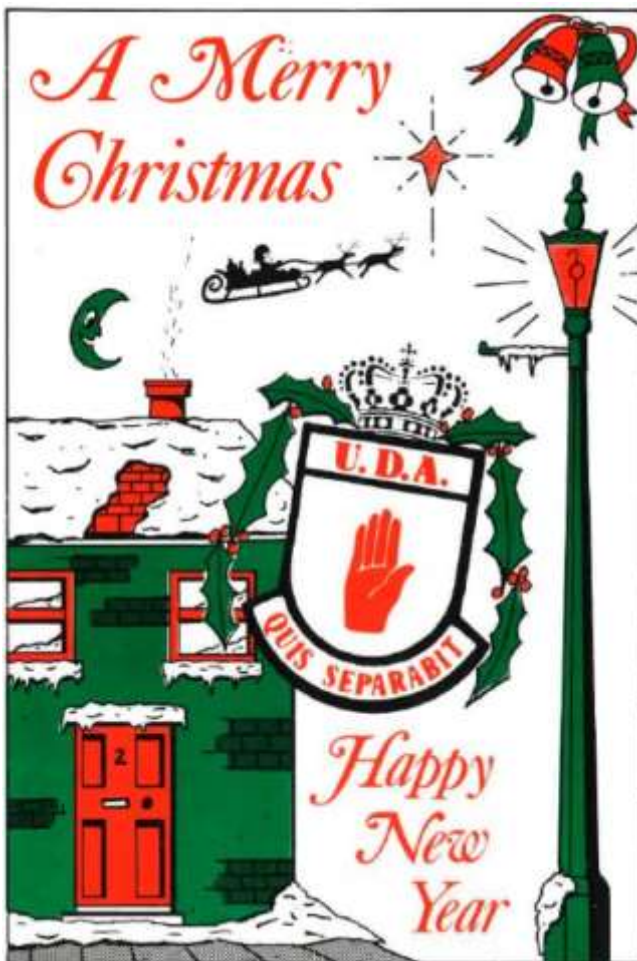
And a number of political Christmas cards, including republican and loyalist organisation's yuletide greetings, as well as cards highlighting the plight of internees and the Birmingham Six.



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 as 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.



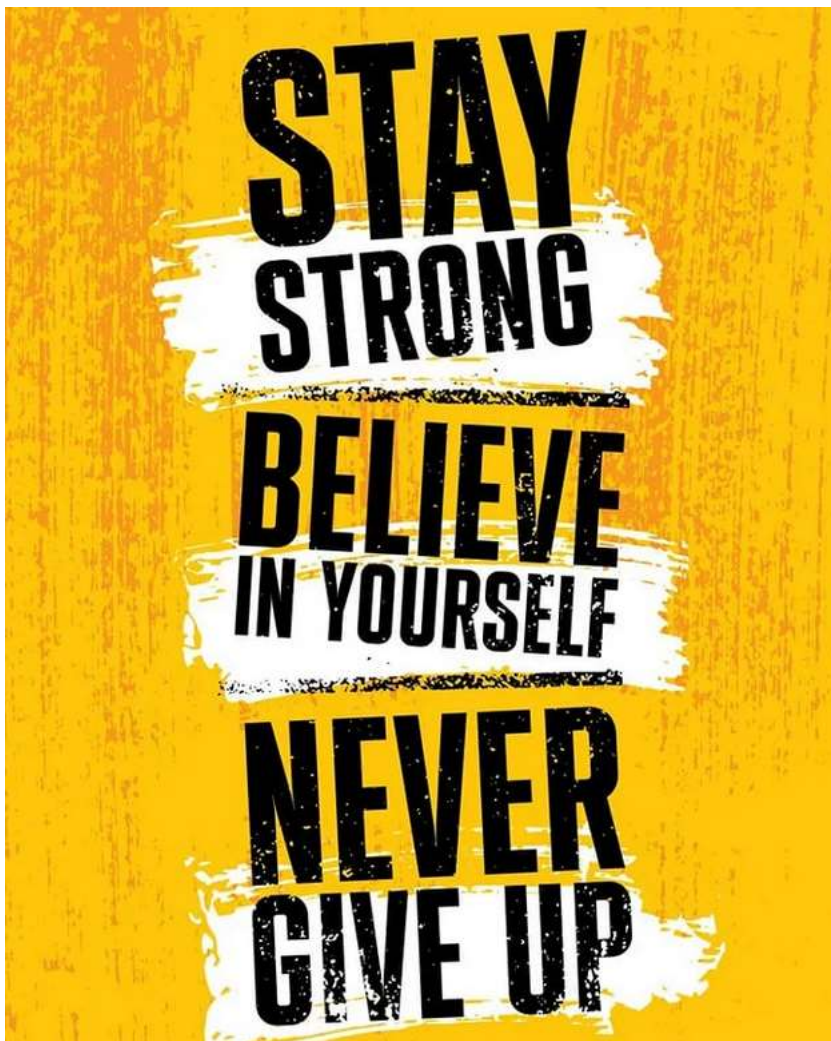
It's okay Not to be okay Campaign

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.



Springhill Community House

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100911

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

