

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

Northern Ireland · Charity number 102803

Details

Known as	FOCB
Status	Overdue
Registered	2015-09-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register

Contact

Address	Bangor Abbey Church Office 1 St. Malachys Way Bangor County Down BT20 4jf BT20 4JF
Phone	02891852391
Website	www.friendsofcolumbanusbangor.co.uk

Activities

Purposes: The Society is established to advance public education and raise awareness among the general public in Northern Ireland ('the area of benefit') and to encourage appreciation of the life and work of Columbanus and knowledge of his historical and cultural heritage

What the charity does: The advancement of education, The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science

How the charity works: Cultural, Education/training, Heritage/historical, Religious activities, Research/evaluation, Volunteer development

Who the charity helps: Children (5-13 year olds), General public, Older people

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2023-12-31	£5,835	£10,340	£0	0

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Deborah Girvan		
Maire T Foley		
Martin Mcrandal		
Mr Brian Alfred Samuel Wilson B.Sc. M.Sc.		
Mr James Hamilton O'fee B.A.		
Mr John Alexander Kenneth Irvine LI.B. Solicitor		

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

Northern Ireland - Charity number 102803

Accounts

Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Friends of Columbanus Bangor

I report on the accounts of the Friends of Columbanus Bangor for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out.

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

Name: Linda Milby

Relevant professional qualification or body: Accounts Manager (Retired)

Address: 3 Finchley Vale, Belfast BT4 2EU

Date: 13th January 2025

Signed.....

Linda Milby

FRIENDS OF COLUMBANUS BANGOR BALANCE SHEET 2023

Balance at Bank	£5,571.17		
	INCOME		EXPENSES
Bank compensation	£200.00	Advertising	£915.00
Columban Way book sales / Donations	£188.00	Annual subscriptions Zoom and domain	£153.47
Grants	£3,858.06	Artists / Speakers	£650.00
Insurance refund	£434.00	Catering / Hospitality	£616.55
Membership fees	£630.00	Columban Way book	£6,000.00
Ticket sales	£459.00	Gift to Breton visitors	£60.00
Tour guide income	£66.00	Graphic design / Printing / Pin badges	£1,013.50
		Hall Hire	£97.50
		Insurance	£274.63
		Tour guides	£270.00
		Workshops	£290.00
	£5,835.06		£10,340.65

Treasurer	STARTING BALANCE	£5,571.17
Martin McRandal	INCOME	£5,835.06
	EXPENSES	£10,340.65
	BALANCE AT BANK	£1,065.58

Date

Signature

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

Northern Ireland - Charity number 102803

Accounts

FRIENDS OF COLUMBANUS BALANCE SHEET 2022

Balance at Bank	£	2,895.38
Grants	£	5,500.00
Membership	£	675.00
Catering	£	70.15
Concerts Ticket sales	£	305.00
Calaigraphy	£	40.00
Artists	£	192.00
Sustainable Journeys	£	36.00
	£	9,713.53

EXPENSES

Insurance	£	302.36
Printing/Zoom	£	1,718.00
Catering	£	201.75
Artists	£	1,275.25
Hall Hire	£	290.00
Equipment Hire	£	200.00
Transport	£	155.00
	£	4,142.36

INCOME	£9,713.53
EXPENSES	£4,142.36
BALANCE AT BANK	£5,571.17

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

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Annual report

Friends of Columbanus Bangor Annual Report 2023

Prepared by the Chairperson Deborah Girvan

AGM 30 January 2023

1. Introduction

It has been another busy year for the Executive/ Events Team. The programme of events and activities has increased considerably over the past year which has put a lot of pressure on a small team of committed people to co-ordinate and organise visits, trips, walks, and events.

2. Membership

Membership continues to grow and I am pleased to report that we now have 55 members. This is an increase of 64% since January 2019.

3. Columbanus Leaflet

3,000 copies of the Columbanus leaflet were designed, printed and distributed. Thanks are extended to Maire Foley and Brigid Watson for writing the leaflet which has been critically acclaimed by the clergy, academics, and members. A further 3,000 leaflets have been reordered.

4. Grants 2022

FoCB was successful in being awarded total grants of £8,281.06

- Council Heritage Grant £500 Zoom and Columbanus leaflet
- Council Community Festival Grant £2,781.06 Columbanus Festival
- David Cross Foundation £5,000 CW Feasibility Study Co Down

4. Website

The new FoCB website was launched in February 2022. I want to pay tribute to FoCB member Charlie Reid for volunteering to design and set up the new website which is helping to promote FoCB and keep the legacy and heritage of Columbanus alive.

5. Columban Way Feasibility Study

With funding from the David Cross Foundation, a small team of volunteers was set up to walk and map the Columban Way in Co Down. FoCB members Cllr Cadogan Enright and Charlie Reid plus colleague Duane Fitzsimmons have been working on this project for the past nine months. The objective of the study is to produce a document of walking routes that will incorporate a long-distance walk from Armagh to Comber that can be branded as the Columban Way. Once completed, it will be presented to local Councils, government departments and tourism organisations. It is hoped that Councils will then be able to apply for funding to develop the route in their specific areas.

6. Visits and Events

- **18 -20 February 2022:** Official launch of the beginning of the Columban Way, Myshall, Co Carlow. Thanks to member Charlie Reid for representing FoCB at this important event.
- **25 March 2022:** Visit to the Livingston Centre, Killinchy Parish Church
- **25 March 2022:** £5,000 Cheque handover by Terry Cross at the Hinch Distillery
- **25 March 2022:** Meeting at Ards Arts Centre with CEO Ards and North Down Council and Jim Shannon MP to discuss development of Columban Way
- **1 April 2022:** Visit to Ulster Museum to attend a talk on the Clonmore Shrine. Thanks to FoCB member Barbara Boyle, a green badge tour guide, for organising and delivering the talk.
- **14 May 2022:** Book Launch of archaeological findings in France at St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor
- **3- 5 June 2022:** 12 members travelled to Carlow for the weekend to attend the Columbanus Walking Festival organised by the Myshall Friends of Columbanus

- **17 June 2023:** Guided walk for 30 people from Comber via Scrabo Tower to Movilla Abbey as part of the Columbanus Folk Festival organised by Ards CCE. Thanks extended to members Charlie Reid, Brigid Watson, Pat McNally, and Maire Foley for helping to organise this walk.
- **29 - 31 July:** Chairwoman Deborah Girvan represented FoCB in St Coulomb, Brittany, for the annual Columbanus Festival
- **5 September 2022:** FoCB welcomed a group of 25 Italians from Bobbio who were visiting Bangor to learn about Columbanus. We organised a mass in St Comgall's, a walk to Strickland's Glen and lunch with the Mayor in Bangor Castle
- **17 September 2023:** Visit to St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. Thanks are extended to FoCB member Adeline Cully for organising the tour which also has links to Columbanus.
- **24 – 25 September:** 6 members of Myshall FoC visited Bangor for a weekend of Columbanus activities. The Myshall group had received funding from Irish government to co-ordinate a partnership programme of exchanges and visits with FoCB. Thanks to David Lennon for co-ordinating the programme.
- **29 September 2022:** Deborah Girvan attended the launch of Shared Island Funding in Cavan where the Taoiseach announced a grant of 250,000 Euros to develop the Columban Way on the island of Ireland.
- **8-9 October 2022:** Deborah Girvan, Charlie and Rachel Reid travelled to Carlow to participate in a walk along the River Barrow, a guided tour of St Mullins monastic site and attend a youth musical concert. This was the reciprocal visit as part of the partnership agreement with Myshall FoC
- **17 -20 November 2022:** Columbanus Festival weekend. 900 people participated in a series of events which included a drama production by Bangor Drama Club, Columbanus Talks, Columbanus Concert, Columbanus Walk, Calligraphy workshops, storytelling in local Primary Schools and a cross-community church service in St Comgall's Church

7. Priorities for 2023

- Continue to increase membership
- Publish and distribute 3000 copies of the 2nd edition of Columbanus leaflet
- Co-ordinate the launch of the Columban Way Feasibility Study Publication
- Participate in the Ards CCE Columbanus Folk Festival in June
- Appoint someone to manage social media
- Co-ordinate a visit to St Gallen, Switzerland, 7 -10 July 2023 to attend the launch of the Columban Charter partnership and the annual European Columban Day
- Co-ordinate a series of events throughout the year to educate and promote the legacy of Columbanus in Bangor and beyond
- Organise the annual Columbanus Festival in November 2023
- Apply for relevant grants to help run FoCB and organise events
- Set up Friends of Columbanus group in Enniskillen
- Welcome a group of 40 Friends of Columbanus from Brittany in September 2023

8. Thanks

I wish to thank the hard-working members of the Executive/Events team committee members: Vice Chair David Lennon; Roberta Dunlop, Treasurer; Brigid Watson, Secretary; Sharon Kayes, Education Officer; and committee members Maire Foley, Barbara Boyle, Adeline Cully, and Pat McNally. I would also like to thank Charlie Reid for managing and updating the website and organising walks, and Cllr Cadogan Enright for co-ordinating the Feasibility Study. And finally, I would like to thank the members of FoCB for their support and encouragement throughout the year

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

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Annual return

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Friends of Columbanus

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Independent examiner's statement

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

Name: Mrs Linda Milby

Relevant professional qualification or body:
Accounting Technician

Address:
3 Finchley Vale
Belfast BT4 2

Date:
31st January 2023

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

Northern Ireland - Charity number 102803

Accounts

FRIENDS OF COLUMBANUS AUDIT 2021

INCOME

Balance at Bank	£ 2,013.71
Membership 2021	£ 490.00
Membership 2022	£ 50.00
ANDBC GRANTS	£ 2,560.00
ANDBC GRANTS	£ 250.00
Ticket Sales	£ 246.20
	£ 5,609.91

INCOME

EXPENSES

BALANCE AT BAN

EXPENSES

Insurance	£	440.00
Advertising, Printing	£	1,720.00
Website, Zoom	£	320.54
Artists	£	800.00
Equipment	£	159.99

£ 3,440.53

£ 5,609.91
£ 3,440.53
£ 2,169.38

Friends of Columbanus (Bangor)

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Annual report

Chairperson's Report

Friends of Columbanus Bangor AGM

March

The last thing I did before the first Covid Lockdown on 23 March 2020 was to hand deliver an application to Ards and North Down Council for a Community Festival grant to run the Columbanus Festival in November 2020. And like so many well laid plans pre-Covid it was all downhill since then!

April

With Covid at its height in Northern Ireland in April, it was obvious that we would not be able to hold physical meetings in the near future. A decision was taken to buy a Zoom package which would allow us to have meetings that lasted longer than 40 minutes. I would like to thank all the members who have joined us on those meetings.

June

I had organised a trip to Luxeuil-les-Bains, St Gallen and Bregenz in June which had to be cancelled; we had a year long programme of walks, talks and festival planned. We were successful with our grant application to run the Columbanus festival and had been awarded £4,800 but this was withdrawn because of Covid.

July

As Covid gathered pace in Europe, a trip planned to visit Bangor in July by a Swiss group was cancelled. This was swiftly followed by the cancellation of a trip planned by Friends of Columbanus in Brittany to cancel their trip to Bangor in September.

August

In August we got the very sad news that our esteemed treasurer, Brendan Hehir, had died. Brendan had been a member of FoCB since its inception and had held the post of Treasurer for three years. He is sadly missed by us all. I am forever grateful to Maire Foley for agreeing to be our acting treasurer.

September

However, last year was not all doom and gloom. In September, after talking to Simon Doogan, the Minister of Columbanus Church of Ireland at Ballyholme, we came up with the idea of recording an online cross-community ecumenical service which would be aired on U-Tube on Sunday 15 November 2020. With the help of Alderman Scott Wilson who offered to do the filming, recording and editing for free, we invited St Columbanus Church of Ireland; St Comgall's Catholic Church on the Brunsiwck Road, 1st Bangor Presbyterian Church and Ballyholme Methodist Church to take part in the service which was filmed and recorded in Columbanus Col. We selected a range of music to accompany the service including Ards CCE, Bangor Ladies Choir, Ballyholme Primary School, Columbanus Hugh School, the Breton Male Voice Choir, and an Italian choir from Imperia.

Columbanus Project

In September, I set up a meeting with Councillor Ray McKimm, Jane Morrice and Martin Craigs to discuss how we could make the Columban Way happen and ensure that Columbanus was enshrined in the Queen's Parade development in Bangor. Since then we have had regular meetings about the Columbanus Project and are developing a business case to set up a Columbanus Centre in the town. Ray McKimm will be telling you more about that later.

November

The Feasibility Study on Long Distance Walking routes in Northern Ireland was finally published in November 2020. Apart from Ards and North Down Council, the response from the other Council areas where the pilgrim route will pass through was disappointing with none of the Councils committing resources to develop the Columban Way in their respective areas at this time. The study proposed that the route should be called 'The Way of the Saints' but at a Council meeting on 3 November, I proposed that it should be called the Columban Way as that was the original plan from the outset. I am pleased to report that this was unanimously agreed at the Council meeting.

You Tube

The cross-community service was launched on YouTube on Sunday 15 November on YouTube. This was a huge amount of work for a very small group of people. I would like to thank Scott Wilson, Maire Foley, Manuella Berchconi in Italy and Simon Doogan as without their voluntary contribution the service would not have happened. At the last count, the film had almost 400 views.

Show video

The Way Forward

Everyone has had to adapt to living with Covid and so we must adapt too in order to keep the legacy of Columbanus alive both here in Northern Ireland and in Europe. Plans for this year are to apply for grants to write a new membership leaflet and develop the website. I would like to thank James O'Fee for contributing to the first draft of this publication. I would like to think that by this time next year we will have purged and updated the website, managed to get online banking set up and a programme of events which will include walks, talks and music. I am delighted to report that the Council has recently been awarded a sum of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the first phase of the Columban Way in our Borough from Comber to Newtownards through the Clandeboye Estate, to Helen's Bay where it will join the coastal path to Bangor. Ards and North Down Council are leading the way and hopefully when the other Council and Tourism NI witness the success of the pilgrim route that they too will join us in the next couple of years.

Show logo here

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow office bearers – Maire Foley, Acting Treasurer; Roberta Dunlop, Secretary; and Kenneth Irvine, President for their work and support.

European Update

As you are aware, the European Association of the Columban Way was not working and the French, Rol, Northern Ireland and Swiss members decided to leave the Association and concentrate on developing the Columban Way in their respective countries. To keep connected, a Columbanus Charter was drafted and sent to member countries to sign to say that they support the development of the Columban Way and to keep people informed of developments.

An international Zoom meeting will be held next week to discuss how the Columban Way can become a Cultural Route of Europe and gather together the evidence to submit an application in September 2021.

France

The **Via Columbani**, a satellite navigation website that charts the Columban Way across Europe was launched in July 2020. The French Associations have raised the funds to pay for this system and so far it has cost 48,700 Euros.

The French have formed their own Federation which comprises representative from across France representing Brittany, Brie, and Luxeuil les Bains and will be responsible for planning the route across France.

Switzerland

In June 2020, the Swiss Friends of Columbanus launched their route called the Kolumbansweg. The route is starting to gain momentum with many people now walking the route. St Columban's Day Festival, which was to be held in St Gallen Switzerland in July 2021, was cancelled because of Coronavirus.

Austria

I have recently had contact with a former mayor of Bregenz and have passed on the contact to Stephen Reid, the Chief Executive of Ards and North Down Council who is following up with an invitation to invite the current Mayor of Bregenz to visit Bangor. Incidentally, both Stephen and the director of regeneration were scheduled to travel to Bregenz last June but this too was cancelled because of Covid.

Italy

We have had very little contact from the Italians in northern Italy but by all accounts they have mapped out their route. However, our connection with our friends in the Liguria region continue to be strong. I am delighted to welcome Manuella Bertoncini who has been instrumental in setting up exchanges and connections with schools and organisations in her area with similar organisations in our Borough.

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Annual return

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Name: Mrs Linda Milby

Relevant professional qualification or body:
Accounting Technician

Address:
3 Finchley Vale
Belfast BT4 2

Date:
8th November 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Milby', is written below the typed name.