

DONAGHMORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Charity Number: 103617

Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2022-31st March 2023

Address: The Heritage Centre, Pomeroy Road, Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. BT70 3HG

Governance of Donaghmore Historical Society:

Donaghmore Historical Society is governed by its constitution which outlines how the society is governed and managed.

Related Organizations:

Donaghmore Historical Society is a member of the Federation for Local Studies.

Structure and Management of Donaghmore Historical Society:

Donaghmore Historical Society is organized with the purpose of safeguarding and protecting the rich heritage of historic Donaghmore parish. The objective of the society is to collect and preserve all relevant documents and artefacts relating to the area. The society aims to promote the history of the area among local people and those from further afield through public lectures, workshops and other events. The society also aims to bring people of all traditions and backgrounds together to understand and enjoy their history and to contribute their own knowledge to the society.

Donaghmore Historical Society is managed by a committee of eleven members elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The committee may co-opt others if approved. The officer bearers are the chairperson, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and PRO. They, along with the other members of the committee, plan, organize and implement public lectures, research workshops, archiving of materials, genealogical research, projects with local schools and conducted history tours of the area. Minutes of all meetings are kept by the secretary, with the treasurer being responsible for all bookkeeping records.

Maintenance of Donaghmore Heritage Centre

The Heritage Centre is the property of the Parish of Donaghmore, and its upkeep and management is the responsibility of the Trustees of Donaghmore Historical Society.

Charitable Purposes:

The purpose of Donaghmore Historical Society is to advance education, citizenship, heritage and culture as well as promoting the benefit of the people of the parish of Donaghmore and its environs of Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as "the area of benefit") without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organization and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants and in particular to:

1. Educate the general public by promoting awareness of the history, geography, culture and heritage of the area of benefit;
2. Advance the education of local pupils by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities outside the provisions of the school when requested;

3. Carry out research into local history by collecting and recording artefacts and information, and in particular by maintaining and increasing our archive of works relating to the area of benefit.
4. Promote learning for pleasure for both retired people and people in work, to help them with the continued development of their individual capabilities, skills and understanding of the history of their local area.
5. Further the enrichment of the social bonds which we have established between our various communities.
6. Expand our presence on the internet via our website and social media.

Area of Benefit

The Area of Benefit focuses on East Tyrone, but serves many people much further afield.

Activities of Donaghmore Historical Society April 2022-March 2023

1. Despite the Covid pandemic and the widespread restrictions, the committee of Donaghmore Historical Society worked both in person and on Zoom and a lot was achieved. We returned to live meetings in the Heritage Centre in September 2022.
2. On June 7th 2022 the unveiling of the Memorial Stone and Garden of Reflection in the grounds of South Tyrone Hospital in memory of those who died in Dungannon Workhouse between 1842 and 1948 and were interred in the burial ground on the site of the hospital took place in a small socially distanced ceremony at the site. The ceremony was attended by the Chief Executive of the Southern Health and S. S. Trust, the Chief Executive of Mid Ulster Council, Clergy from the local churches and members of Donaghmore Historical Society. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Bertie Foley, Chairman of Donaghmore Historical Society who expressed a strong wish that there would be no more buildings erected on the site, that the workhouse dead could now rest in peace, and that the circle had been closed.
3. On 12th September 2022, we had the successful launch of Dungannon Workhouse website in Ranfurly House which was also on Zoom. Over 90 people attended in person and all local historical societies had been invited. Our Chairman Bertie Foley introduced the event and committee members Averil Morrow and Mary Mac Ginty were among the speakers. Mary spoke of the past five years of meetings with the Southern Health and Social Services Trust that had ended up with the Memorial stone and Garden of Reflection and thanked Mid Ulster Council for enabling the creation of Dungannon Workhouse website. Dr. Ciaran Reilly of Maynooth University who did the research for the website, launched it. It is now live at www.dungannonworkhouse.com. Those developments were followed up by interviews on BBC TV, BBC Radio Ulster, local newspapers, and various social media sites.
4. The year 2023 is Donaghmore Historical Society's 40th year in existence and to celebrate the event we are currently planning to produce a 40th Anniversary journal which we hope to have ready in the autumn 2023.
5. A grant was obtained from Fibrus Limited, via the Community Foundation NI, to enable the Society to have Internet access from the Heritage Centre. This was installed in January 2023 and we 'Zoomed' out our first talk from the Centre in February 2023.
6. We successfully competed for a DAERA Micro capital grant which was awarded in December 2022. This enabled the society to buy a new projector and video-conferencing equipment.
7. The Society was also awarded a grant by the Good Relations programme of Mid Ulster District Council, to support our programme of activities throughout the year.
8. Preparatory work on the 7th century monastic mill is ongoing, in the hope of building a full working version of the mill. Funding is still required.

9. The Society's safe-guarding and equality policies were updated.
10. Over 300 people attended our events throughout the year 2022-2023

The programme of talks was as follows:

- Our first talk of the season in October and was given in our centre by society member, Patricia Bogue, the topic being "The Great Famine in Dungannon Union and Beyond (1845-1852)". It was our first night back in the Heritage Centre since the pandemic.
- The early November talk on "The Penal Laws" was given by our Chairman Bertie Foley.
- Our last talk of 2022 was given by Roddy Hegarty "Cooking the Goose - The Truth About Christmas Past."
- Our January 2023 talk was given by Dr. Roger Mac Ginty of Durham University on the theme of "The Place of Diaries and Personal Memoirs when Researching Local History."
- The February talk was given by Dr. Liam Campbell and the topic was "Around Lough Neagh." Our new Internet connection enabled us to Zoom this talk to members in other places for the first time.
- In March we had a talk from Richard Scott called "Down Memory Lane in Dungannon" based around his photographic collection, mainly accumulated during his time as a reporter and photographer with The Tyrone Courier in Dungannon.

Achievements of Donaghmore Historical Society and its Impact and Benefit to the Public

Donaghmore Historical Society was founded 40 years ago and it has been a vibrant society ever since. It has had a major impact on the social life and inter-community activity in the Area of Benefit. The historical archives it has created will be of lasting benefit to succeeding generations. Members have been busy with genealogical research for the many people from abroad who have contacted us during the year. People seeking their roots have begun to return in person.

The trustees of Donaghmore Historical Society have complied with their responsibilities in regard to the 'Charities Commission Public Benefit Requirement'. There is no private or personal benefit arising from the purposes of Donaghmore Historical Society.

Those who benefit from Donaghmore Historical Society include not only its own members but members of the wider public both locally, nationally and internationally. Our Internet connection has enabled those in our community who are unable to attend our meetings in person through reasons of frailty, illness and distance to benefit from our activities and to integrate with those present in person. Our public lectures are well attended with some lectures attracting a capacity crowd in the Centre. Talks are attended by members of all communities and the Heritage Centre provides a safe and friendly space where people can meet, listen, learn, discuss and appreciate our shared Heritage. The Covid pandemic highlighted for all of us the importance of social contact and the resumption of our physical meetings was particularly appreciated by members of the local community. We provide refreshments to encourage people to socialise with each other at the end of the meetings.

This report has been signed on behalf of the trustees who have approved it at their meeting on Monday 27th December 2023

Report Authorization:

Name of Trustee:



Date 30th November 2023

Name of Trustee:



Date 30th November 2023