



Cairde Turas
Oirthear Bhéal Feirste

Friends of Turas
East Belfast

Annual Trustees Report & Statement of Accounts:

Year Ending 5th April 2023

Operating base address: EBM Skainos Square
239 Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1AF

Correspondence address: Cairde Turas
EBM Skainos Square
239 Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1AF

Trustees: Andrew McCammon
Carmel Duggan
Elodie Ducloux
Rachel Carson

Main Activities

The objectives in the constitution of Cairde Turas are:

- a) To promote learning opportunities for the historical languages of Ulster.
- b) To encourage reconciliation by promoting understanding of all aspects of shared heritage.
- c) To promote the historical languages and cultures of Ulster through the Arts.
- d) To support the establishment of an Irish language learning community in East Belfast.

The Charity's objectives ('the Objectives') are to:-

- (a) Promote and offer practical support to Turas Irish Language Centre in its efforts to establish an Irish language learning community in East Belfast (the area of benefit").
- (b) Promote learning opportunities for the historical languages and cultures of Ulster through the Arts and other creative and imaginative means.
- (c) Encourage and facilitate reconciliation by promoting acceptance, understanding and appreciation of all aspects of shared heritage.

Turas is once again meeting the increasingly high demand for Irish language events in East Belfast. It has been encouraging this year especially to see high profile individuals and organisations from a variety of communities take an interest in our charity. Learning through social interaction, discussion, debates as well as classroom teaching not only allows people to immerse themselves in the language and culture, but also to meet people they wouldn't otherwise interact with in their daily routine. Through this we are building on social cohesion and reconciliation, not only locally in East Belfast, but now across the city thanks to improved public transport links to our centre. Engagement with other charities and subject matter experts has allowed us to put on bespoke events such as the bilingual boat restoration project in partnership with Silvery Light Sailing, the Great War Gaeilgeoirí exhibition at Linenhall Library and the Gaelic Place names of East Belfast event. As always a huge Míle Buíochas goes to the efforts of the staff at Turas, our supporters, and the ever-willing band of volunteers at Cairde Turas. It is especially great to see regular Irish language social events happening outside of the classroom setting such as Burn's night at Horatio Todds, St Patrick's Day Parade in the City Centre and the now monthly Pop Up Gaeltachtaí that occur in Boundary Brewery. A big thanks goes out to those establishments that are happy to host our slua mór. This helps with the vital work of improving visibility of the Irish language in order to prevent sidelining or marginalisation of it. It gives us an opportunity to show ourselves off as the polite merry bunch that we are and hopefully encourage others to take part with us. Finally these events can only happen because people come along and I am extremely glad that there are so many of you with a heart and desire make Irish language a part of your lives. I hope to see you all at the upcoming events for the 2023/2024 year!

Events

Friday 6th May 2022: Cairde Turas with, funding from the Department of Foreign affairs reconciliation fund, organised a trip to the Bunbeg Gaeltacht. The trip included Irish lessons as well as a trip to Gola Island. This was a fantastic experience of the Gaeltacht for our learners.



Thursday 16th June: Oíche Cheiliúrtha. This was an evening to celebrate the end of the academic year at the Skainos Centre. There was refreshments, music on the night, and opportunities to use Irish and celebrate all our achievements for that academic year.

Monday 27th June 2022: Trip to Ballycarry to Learn about some of the fascinating history regarding the 1798 Uprising, as well as some of the local history of Ballycarry, told by a local poet.

Saturday 30th June 2022: Trip to Cushendall. This was a tour by Paul McAllister, a local expert on the nature and history of the area.

Saturday 17th September 2022: The Prince and Princess Fun Day included a photo booth, bouncy castles, hobby horse racing, face painting, arts and crafts, games and dress up. This was a free event targeted at young families. Due to the ongoing success of Naíscoil na Seolta we have increased the number of events focussed on

young people in order for pupils to engage in learning through play outside of the classroom.

Sunday 18th September 2022: An afternoon at Lisnabreeny Rath. This event featured music, drama, storytelling and a photo opportunity on the Clandeboy Stone chair

Friday 23rd September 2022: The Gaelic Placenames of East Belfast presentation was an evening dedicated to learning more about our locality and the origins of the words we use everyday such as Lisnasharragh, Ballymacarrett and Ballyhackamore.

01 November - 30th November 2022 With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Cairde Turas researched Irish-speakers from east Belfast who enlisted to fight in the First World War. The exhibition highlighted the findings of the research. Over seventy soldiers were identified. They lived in the working class communities that evolved in east Belfast after the arrival of industry, and relied for work on the local shipyards and factories. They included family members, workmates, and Catholic and Protestant neighbours who fought alongside each other, mostly at the Somme. They were drawn from all sides of the community and included some who had signed the Ulster Covenant. Three years before the war, in the census of 1911, all had said they were Irish speakers. The exhibition presents a snapshot of their lives before, during and in some cases after the war. On Wednesday 2nd November 2022 Dr Carmel Duggan, who coordinated the research, gave a discussion on the project at Linenhall Library.

Saturday 26th November 2022: We organised a trip to the historical town of Ballycastle, Co. Antrim where there was plenty of music, dancing, stories, craic and company.

Thursday 15th December 2022: Turas Christmas Event. This event, held at Skainos, featured a Christmas themed Irish language lesson for all abilities, Irish language Carols, a table quiz, and an opportunity to use the Irish language in an informal setting. It was attended by approximately 80 people.



25th January 2023: Cairde Turas organised a Burns Night supper at a local restaurant - Horatio Todds. A traditional Burns Night programme was followed with an Irish language twist. There were Irish language poems and songs as well as bilingual speeches and announcements. Approximately 60 people attended the event allowing for an excellent opportunity to use Irish in a public setting.

10th - 12th February 2023: Trip to the Bunbeg Gaeltacht. We were able to take a small group of learners to the Bunbeg Gaeltacht. The weekend consisted of Irish classes, local tours, accommodation and meals.

Wednesday 1st March 2023: This was our first pop up Gaeltacht held at Boundary Brewery on the Newtonards Road. It was organised as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge. Approximately 35 people attended the event which went very successfully. Following the evening it was decided to try and organise a similar event every month due to its popularity.

Friday 10th March 2023: As part of Seachtain na Gaeilge a special showing of An Cailín Ciúin as well as a short film and talk by Linda Ervine was showcased at Strand Cinema. This drew approximately 100 people and helped support this local enterprise.

Friday 17th March 2023: Cairde Turas took part in the Belfast St Patrick's day parade along with Turas and Naíscoil na Seolta. We had banners and T-Shirts to display. It was an excellent day of celebration and a fantastic experience for the learners and children.

Sunday 26th March: In collaboration with the maritime heritage project called Silvery



Light Sailing we organised a boat restoration day in Newry. This saw 12 of our learners take part in the restoration of a traditional Irish fishing vessel. The shipwright was a Connemara native which meant the day was undertaken bilingually. This was an excellent opportunity to learn new words and to experience something completely new.



Wednesday 5th April 2023 was our second pop up Gaeltacht in Boundary Brewery. This had even more people attending - approximately 40 and again was a very successful night with attendees of all learning abilities.

Support to our learners

This year seven of our learners are studying Irish at tertiary level. It is fantastic that Turas is continuing to support learners from complete beginner right up to tertiary level. These learners are then able to give back as tutors or teachers, completing the circle of language development.

The mentoring programme which sees our more advanced learners pass on their knowledge to new beginners is in full flow with just under 40 learners receiving direct mentoring from 8 mentors. This scheme allows mentors sharpening up their grammar and teaching skills and gives beginners further opportunities to learn and to use their Irish.

Cairde Turas volunteers are continuing to staff the library on a regular basis. The library is open every day and several evenings per week. Volunteers are available to

advise on choice of book / resources and even just to converse. Books that are used for classes can be borrowed from the library.

Cairde Turas provides 'housekeeping' support for Turas classes – making tea, tidying the social spaces and helping wherever is required. This is a huge to our classes as individuals appreciate a cup of tea and a snack in a comfortable atmosphere to break up the teaching sessions.

We also provide volunteers for the Naíscoil (Naíscoil na Seolta), helping to clean and tidy away equipment for the teachers. Again this is a symbiotic relationship with volunteers able to use their Irish in the Naíscoil while helping the teachers and it gives the teachers more time to focus on administration of the Naíscoil after the children have left.

Cairde Turas Volunteers

Membership of Cairde Turas is open to any person aged eighteen years or over irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, race, political affiliation, nationality or religious persuasion who is interested in furthering the objects of the Charity.

Members of Cairde Turas, have continued to be active in fund raising and seeking out sponsors for the many activities and projects being promoted by Turas and Cairde Turas. All financial details are outlined in the treasures report which will be presented at the Annual General Meeting (details of which will be circulated to the membership).

Our membership continues to provide a willing band of volunteers who fulfil various roles in accommodating the smooth running of Turas including serving tea/coffee and biscuits during the mid session breaks as well as greeting visiting speakers and guests. Several members perform clerical tasks on behalf of Turas. Members are active in fund raising and promoting the objectives and ethos of Cairde Turas. Excellent work is carried out by our volunteers to maintain our Irish Language Lending Library. Our collection of books continues to grow providing a source of knowledge and reference for the community here.



Cairde Turas volunteers help with the delivery of the Conn O'Neill bus tours which allows visitors to see and experience the sites relating to the last Gaelic Lord of East Belfast.

Fund-raising

We are grateful to all our sponsors and funders and we encourage you to examine the Treasurers Report for full details. We also wish to thank those members of our charity who have made generous donations.

All classrooms including the additional and refurbished rooms are well equipped with whiteboards, suitable tables and comfortable seating. A wide range of modern audio visual equipment is available to all our teachers for use in the presentation of lessons. Modern AV and communication equipment is ever changing and Cairde Turas plays a vital role by ensuring that funds are made available to keep our AV equipment fit for purpose.

Funding was received to support a trips to the Gaeltacht in 2022/23. These took place in July (Kerry), February (Donegal) and March (Cushendall) and were an excellent opportunity for some of our learners to put saibhreas (richness) on their Irish.

Funding was also received to assist our mentoring scheme which enables peer-learning. We believe that encouraging one to one conversation is the best way to get people to use their Irish, which in turn solidifies what they have learned in classes. It is also a great way to foster new friendships and combat loneliness.

Public Benefit

Throughout 2022/23 Cairde Turas has remained faithful to its stated objectives listed in the preface to this report.

Turas collects information to ascertain the religious affiliation of any member of the public attending classes or activities held under the auspices of Turas or Cairde Turas. The cross community aspect of our work continues to increase, and sponsors are interested to support us in this important role, therefore statistics can be provided on request.

In 2022-2023, 17 weekly classes across a wide range of levels were provided to just under 500 registered learners. This is an increase of 5 classes and approximately 130



learners more than last year.

In every report we feel it is important to reiterate the fundamentals, which underpin our desire as an organisation to promote knowledge, understanding, cross community

cooperation, and tolerance. In doing so we do not claim to be exclusive or in any way superior to any individual or organisation which work to promote the same or similar objectives. At Turas we did not set out to be a cross community project but we believe it has evolved as part of a generic process to become a shining example of what a true cross community project should be. Turas is not just an Irish Language Centre, it is much more. Turas/ Cairde Turas is all about what knowledge and respect can and does achieve. It enriches lives, softens attitudes, promotes knowledge and fosters friendships. As members of Cairde Turas we have continued to fulfil our role in support of Turas, promote its principles, ideals, objectives and foster love of, and promote knowledge of, the Irish Language and other historical languages of Ulster.

We remained active in searching for other sources of funding to support future ventures so if you have knowledge of funding agencies, which might be sympathetic to the principles and objects of Cairde Turas, please make yourself known.

We will continue our support for the staff of Turas, the learners of Turas and all that it seeks to achieve in the furtherance of its objects. Cairde Turas and the members of Cairde Turas will remain active in volunteering and fund raising to:

- Maintain, and where possible improve the quality of the facilities available to our members and visitors.
- Continue the development of the Lending Library,
- Maintain the Cairde Turas website,
- Promote and participate in language based cross community projects and continue our efforts in the furtherance of the objects of our Charity.
- Engage in projects which further knowledge and understanding of our shared past and present and prepare us for a more tolerant and inclusive future.

In Conclusion the trustees of Cairde Turas express great thanks to the members of our executive, our members and the Staff of Turas. Their continued hard work, determination and innovation have seen Turas go from strength to strength. As both learners at Turas and members of Cairde Turas we are privileged to offer our help and support to this truly unique cross community project.

*The Annual General Meeting will be conducted in Skainos on 25th May at 6.30pm
Notice of the meeting have been circulated along with the agenda.*

Signed/Proposed: Andrew McCammon (Chairman)

Date 25th May 2023

Elodie Ducloux (treasurer)

Date 25th May 2023

Rachel Carson (secretary)

Date 25th May 2023