

Mary Ann McCracken Foundation

Trustees Report

The trustees, who are also trustees for purpose of company law, present their report and financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Foundation's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The Mary Ann McCracken Foundation was incorporated on 6 June 2019 by Belfast Charitable Society (BCS), which is the sole member of the Foundation. BCS was set up in 1752 to address poverty and continues to do so today.

The objects of the Mary Ann McCracken Foundation as set out in its Memorandum and Articles are:

- a) To advance education of the public about the life and works of Mary Ann McCracken, a leading social reformer and philanthropist, by any charitable means as the directors shall consider appropriate; and
- b) In the spirit of the legacy and work of Mary Ann McCracken, to advance education, to prevent or relieve poverty, to advance human rights and promote equality in any part of the world by any charitable means as the directors shall consider appropriate and to further any other purpose which is exclusively charitable according to the law of Northern Ireland.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the Foundation should undertake.

Achievements and performance

The following achievement and performance reflect the main expenditure in the year and evidence how the public benefit is met.

In relation to the object a) to advance education of the public about the life and works of Mary Ann McCracken:

- **Unveiling of the Mary Ann McCracken Statue** – In March 2024, on International Women's Day, the Mary Ann McCracken and Winnifred Carney statues were unveiled at Belfast City Hall. The Foundation provided historical information to guide the development of the statue.
- **'Mary Ann, The Forgotten Sister' by Kabosh Theatre**- In April 2024, the Foundation part-funded the production of the play, 'Mary Ann, The Forgotten Sister' by Kabosh Theatre. Twelve performances were held in April 2024 with Kabosh reporting that there were 264 attendees.
- **Clifton House 250th Anniversary**: Clifton House is the home of the Mary Ann Foundation and the Belfast Charitable Society and is a building which is widely recognised and synonymous with her life and work. This 250th anniversary was a powerful tool to use to tell her story and keep her legacy to the fore. An important part of the year long programme of work was the facilitation and hosting of a series of challenging conversations around poverty and disadvantage. In February academics, practitioners and the voluntary sector came together to share the findings of two recent seminal reviews on the state of education. Taking a lens of the effect of disadvantage and poverty on education, and the cuts in that sector, discussion and related call to actions brought a new and sharp focus to the work of the Foundation – particularly significant given Mary Ann's role in educating the poor, children and women. In March 2024, Belfast Charitable Society along with the Foundation worked together to highlight the challenges refugees and asylum seekers, particularly women and girls, currently face. The

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audience listened to a discussion with Vicky Tennant, the UNHCR Representative to the UK and the Rt. Hon Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick.

The Foundation participated in Clifton House's 250th anniversary by telling Mary Ann's stories, and those of other women who shaped her life through social media and exhibitions during much of the year. The Foundation worked with St Malachy's College, Ruth Talion, Tom McNeill and Down County Museum to use or share artefacts and images.

An education resource pack was developed with consultants and the students from the Science Shop at Ulster University to help tell the story of Mary Ann and the Belfast Charitable Society to primary school key stage 2 children.

- **Birthday Event:** Dr Catriona Kennedy gave a talk on 'Women, Radicalism and Eighteenth-Century Belfast', focusing on the lives of Mary Ann McCracken and Martha McTier; discussing how the charitable work of these women allowed them to participate in, and influence, Belfast's radical public sphere. This event was attended by 30 people in person and 40 people over Zoom.
- **Tours:** From October 2023-September 2024, 13 public tours were held with private tours for some community groups and a family connected with the McCracken family.
- **Talks, Events & Media Engagement:** From October 2023-September 2024, staff delivered private talks on the life and legacy of Mary Ann McCracken to UU Women's Empowerment. A talk about Thomas Russell and Mary Ann was given to Down County Museum in Q1 as well as a talk about Winfred Carney and Mary Ann was delivered to Shankill Women's Group.
- **Working with Others to Share Mary Ann's Story:** the Foundation participated in Look North Festival, the Cathedral Arts Festival and Feile an Phobail to share Mary Ann's story with a wider audience.

In relation to the second objective and her legacy:

- **Mary Ann McCracken Bursaries:** this bursary programme was set up for students for lower income backgrounds, aged 16 and over, attending schools in the North Belfast area, who wished to continue in education or seek employment but faced financial barriers. In the period Year 3 of the programme was completed; the Foundation partnered with other funders including the Society, LFT, Hunter Smyth Fund, Raj Darshna and the James Kane Foundation. 87 students received bursaries to fund resources, travel and accommodation costs for university; preparation costs for job interviews; training and employment related costs e.g. building site construction cards. Additional funds secured for Yr 4 secured.
- **Working with new communities:** further to the conversation on challenges facing migrants a series of project opportunities have been developed focused on 'Hate Crime and Racism' in educational settings and the Mary Ann Foundation encouraged the Board of the Society to fund the Anaka Women's Collective Education Project for a further two years to enable this work.
- **Education and disadvantage:** began conversation with the local primary school sector encouraging the use of resources such as Clifton House, talks and tours and specifically the development of the education resource pack for Key Stage 2.
- **Developing strategic partnerships:** the Foundation worked closely with Belfast City Council; the National Museums for Northern Ireland, Queen's University, Public Records Office for NI and others.

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Plans for Future Periods

The Foundation has completed a strategic planning process to reflect the overarching objectives of profiling Mary Ann and developing her legacy. The former will be delivered alongside the wider 'telling our story' work of the Society, Clifton House and Mary Ann McCracken. The legacy work centres on two key strategic areas of work to include: the delivery of projects to improve educational opportunities for children from the disadvantaged areas of North Belfast including research into effective leadership, bursaries and stronger links between the local community and school. The second strategic area focused on addressing the challenges for new communities faced with hate crime and racism and specifically how this can be done in educational settings. The operational plan for the financial year 2024-25 has been developed to guide and monitor the delivery of all this work in the incoming year.

This will further contribute to the Foundation's objectives as set out in its Memorandum and Articles.

Financial review

The foundation receives an annual grant of £5,000 from Belfast Charitable Society. During the Financial Year 2023-24. It secured additional income through tickets and book sales, as well as donations.

Structure, governance and management

The Foundation was accepted by the Charity Commission on NI on 17 August 2022 (Registration No: 108857 The Foundation is a company limited by guarantee not having share capital it is registered in Northern Ireland (Registration No: NI662065).

Governing Document

The Memorandum and Articles, as above, govern the Foundation. The Foundation's directors (who act as trustees) and officers, elected by the Foundation at the AGM, guide the activities of the organisation through quarterly meetings that are circulated to BCS Board for noting.

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

New directors receive the Governance policies and procedures, strategic and operational plan and memorandum and articles during their induction. No director received any remuneration in the year and conflicts of interest were declared as appropriate.

Risk management

Risks are considered as part of the wider BCS risk management process and noted on its risk register.

Reserves policy

It is the Board's objective to accumulate sufficient reserves to enable the Foundation to have continued security over its operating activities. Reserves in excess of this will be used for specific projects in the future as and when the Board deem appropriate.

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Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:

Mrs Norma Sinte, (Chairperson)

Mr David Watters

Mr Alastair Adair

Mr Colin Graham

Ms Diane Graham

Mr Les Allamby

Mrs Angila Chada

Dr Margaret Ward

Public benefit

The Mary Ann McCracken Foundation created high levels of public benefit through its key activities (see 'Achievements and performance' section for more detail). In this year, this can be evidenced through: its continued promotion of equal access to further and high education via its post primary and PhD bursaries; talks, tours, and other public engagement; and by supporting other organisations to directly serve those affected by poverty and/or discrimination.

Grant making policies

The Mary Ann McCracken Foundation continues to support the work of others who are involved in projects identified at as being in the spirit of Mary Ann's legacy. It does not run an open grants programme but instead looks at ways that its financial support can invest and transform while making the most positive impact e.g. bursaries awarded to PhD students in Ulster University, researching ways to improve the lives of others using arts and 'big data'.

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Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Mary Ann McCracken Foundation for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Statement of disclosure to Independent Auditor: so far as the Foundation is aware, there is no relevant information of which the Society's independent auditors are unaware. Additionally, the Foundation has taken all necessary steps to make itself aware of any relevant information and to establish that the Society's independent auditors are aware of that information.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 13 MARCH and signed on its behalf by: 2025



Mrs Norma Sinte
Chairperson and trustee