



# THE LINEN HALL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024

THE  
LINEN  
HALL  
BELFAST 1788

The Linen Hall gratefully acknowledges the kind support of the following organisations:



# Contents

President's Report	02
Director's Report	03
Librarian's Report	05
Governors	06
Staff	07
Volunteers & Honorary Members	08
Collections Donations	09
Arts & Cultural Programme	10
Marketing	11
Library Facilities	12
Charity Bookshop	13
Financial Summary	14



# President's Report

2024 was another year that proved to be quite challenging financially, following on from the significant reduction in core funding in 2023. However, due to the unrelenting efforts of our Director Julie Andrews, by the year's end our position had stabilised. We are very grateful to the Department for Communities for their assistance, along with other key funders including Belfast City Council, the Arts Council, the Foyle Foundation and the Ulster-Scots Agency. Our Finance Manager Karen Law has supported the Director by providing all the necessary financial input, analysis and reporting.

Our Librarian Samantha McCombe and Deputy Librarian Monica Cash continue to work tirelessly to gather more materials for our extensive collections, including but by no means limited to our Political Collection and personal archives. They ensure that these are carefully arranged and looked after, and curate and display them for all relevant occasions. It has been remarkable to observe the impact upon high profile visitors to the Library when they are shown items tailored to their own specific history and interests. The digitisation of our collections continues, as does conservation work. Much of these activities happens in partnership with other agencies.

Our wide-ranging programme of live events, led by Patsy Horton, has been attracting ever increasing numbers to The Linen Hall, which is now recognised as a major venue for cultural activity in Belfast. The Linen Hall is an important centre for poetry, as epitomised by our McAdam Lexicon Poetry Jukebox, the result of a collaboration with the British Council and the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris. In February we hosted an exhibition from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and in May the House of Commons Lego Suffragette. We also welcomed many of our local writers and historians, had lively (and usually constructive!) debates and even had a preview of Northern Ireland Opera's production of Eugene Onegin. Also, throughout the year, we had exhibitions in our vertical gallery.

We have been very encouraged by the number of new members, of all ages, joining the Library. As the only subscription library in the country, this is essential to our long-term future. We have introduced a new category of lifetime 'Patron Membership' for those able to make a one-off, more substantial contribution. We have enhanced our corporate membership offer and are planning to develop opportunities in this area.

Our Charity Bookshop has successfully relocated to Royal Avenue, and great credit is due to the manager Damien Cash, and his team of volunteers. Our volunteers who conduct tours of the Library are also great ambassadors for The Linen Hall.

Our Strategy Committee has been busy in 'going back to basics' by looking at our core vision, and how we can continue to resource and implement our historic enlightenment values in the second quarter of the twenty-first century. There are major opportunities ahead, especially regarding our Political Collection.

Finally, I would like to thank our enthusiastic and hard-working staff who keep the doors of The Linen Hall open, our members, our funders, and all those many friends and supporters who know how important The Linen Hall is in the life of this great city.



Dr Philip McGarry OBE

# Director's Report

2024 was an exceedingly difficult year for the staff and Board of Governors. The Linen Hall continued to face funding challenges. Core funding from the Department for Communities had been cut in 2023. Costs continued to rise particularly the cost of energy, then mid-year, issues arose with the gas boilers, which were later condemned. The cost of replacing them was in the region of £70,000. The replacement of the boilers was mainly funded by the Foyle Foundation. Every year, when budgets are set, thought is given to unpredictable income. This includes donations, legacies and fundraisers. In 2024 no legacies were received until December and donations were down. As finances were being carefully monitored, the Department for Communities were asked for intervention funding in July 2024. We were grateful to the Department for £330,000 of intervention funding which helped shore up The Linen Hall's finances in the last quarter of the year. An application was made to Belfast City Council for £175,000 for discretionary funding in December 2024.

A Strategy Committee was set up by the Board of Governors in 2024 to consider a future business operating model. An action plan has been put in place to consider new sources of funding and strategic partnerships.

At the end of 2023 the National Lottery Heritage fund awarded The Linen Hall £248,000 for the development of a feasibility study for Linen Hall 2, which would house the NI Political Collection. A Project Manager and architect-led design team was appointed to consider sites and accommodation required for a new Linen Hall 2 facility. By the end of 2024 this was far advanced in shortlisting potential sites and clarifying accommodation requirements. This project is due to be completed by the end of March 2025.

For the first time in approximately 20 years, we received core funding from the NI Community Relations Council. This allowed us to focus on workplans around student activism and civil rights. We had already received some funding from the Department for Foreign Affairs, but the CRC funding allowed us to extend and amplify that.

We continued our partnership work with the Ulster-Scots Agency and the fourth Ulster-Scots Writing Competition took place in 2024. This is gaining popularity and entries for this competition are growing year-on-year. Unfortunately, we did not receive any funding from Foras na Gaeilge in 2024. However, at the end of 2023 we received funding from the British Council for an Irish language / Breton poetry jukebox. This was in partnership with the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris and was launched at the L'Etonnants Voyageurs Festival in St Malo in 2024. Events also took place in relation to this at the Belfast Festival in October 2024.

Some very significant exhibitions and events happened during 2024. We opened the year with an exhibition from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. This attracted large numbers of visitors, and we were delighted to welcome representatives from the Japanese Embassy and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum to The Linen Hall. We were delighted to hold an exhibition drawing on our extensive May Blood MBE archive. We collaborated with many other partners throughout 2024, including Soroptimists International Belfast, NI Science Festival, Irish Writers Centre, Belfast Pride Festival, Conflict Textiles, Sole Purpose Productions and Northern Ireland Opera.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Governors, staff and volunteers for their help and support throughout 2024. I have a dedicated staff team, and they work incredibly hard to make the organisation a friendly, outward looking organisation.



Julie Andrews





THE  
LINEN HALL  
LIBRARY

ROBERT  
BURNS  
1759-1796



# Librarian's Report

I am pleased to report on Library collections for 2024.

2024 was another busy and productive year in relation to the collections, and thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of the team a lot was achieved, some highlights of which are included below.

Our Robert McAdam Comparative Lexicon was the inspiration for a fantastic Poetry Jukebox curation which put The Linen Hall's collections on the European stage. This was a great example of how our rare and unique collections can be used to inspire contemporary creativity.

Another way we foster and encourage creativity – this time in the art of the short story – is our biennial Michael McLaverty Short Story Award. Michael McLaverty (1904–1992) was one of the foremost proponents of the Irish short story, and his archive was donated to The Linen Hall by the Literary Executors of Michael McLaverty in 2005. In 2024, the award attracted a high level of entries of excellent calibre. Thanks to the judges – editor Emma Warnock and award-winning writer Bernie McGill – for the care and consideration they took with the award. The winning story was *Heavenly Mutha* by Tenaya Steed, with *Under the Bridge* by Helena Close and *The Quiet of the Lake* by Ciarán Folan runners-up. All reflect the richness and diversity of the short story form, and I again offer my congratulations and continued success to all.

Items from the Northern Ireland Political Collection were loaned to the University of Glasgow's prestigious Hunterian Museum for an exhibition by Belfast born, Glasgow based artist Cathy Wilkes. Cathy's exhibition ranged across sculpture, painting and installation, employing materials associated with everyday domestic life to consider social realities, and it was a pleasure to have our collections displayed alongside her thought-provoking and moving work.

Thanks to funding we were able to continue the conservation and preservation of our wonderful collections. Continued support from the Ulster-Scots Agency facilitated the ongoing comprehensive condition checking and conservation of the Gibson Collection of Robert Burns, while the Enkalon Foundation supported conservation of our Belfast and Provincial Printed Books. The Idlewild Trust also generously supported the conservation of three albums of Art Scrapbooks painted c.1840-1850 by Catherine (1815-1892) and Barbara (1817-1859) Gage of the flora and fauna of Rathlin Island. The conservation work ensures these treasures are preserved for future generations.

Under funding from the Northern Ireland Museums Council, we took part in The Playful Museums Festival, with pupils from Hazelwood Integrated Primary's nursery visiting us for a storytelling and crafting session with children's author (and Linen Hall member!) Marianne McShane. Thanks to Marianne and the little ones for bringing such joy to The Linen Hall.

I end, as always, with gratitude to our members who support the collections through membership, and those who have contributed to the endowment fund which facilitates much-needed conservation, and to the hundreds who support us through donations to the collections, a list of whom is included within this report.



Samantha McCombe

## President

Dr P McGarry, OBE, DL, FRCPsych

## Vice-President

Prof M Ó Mainnín, BA, MA, PhD

## Honorary Secretary

Dr S Bridge, MA, MSc, PhD (to June 2024)

## Honorary Treasurer

Mr C McCleane (to June 2024)

Dr S Bridge, MA, MSc, PhD (from June 2024)

## Governors

Dr F Ferguson, BA, MA, PhD

Mr J Fitzsimons, MA(TCD), MSc(QUB)

Ms Lyn Hagan, LLB, DBA, FCA, CTA (from June 2024)

Sir Ian Huddleston (from March 2024)

Prof B Kelly, MA, MD, FRCS, FRCR, FFRRCSI

Ms Cathy Law, MA Hons, PgDip (from June to September 2024)

Mr G Lucy, BA Hons, PGCE (to June 2024)

Mr J McCartney, MSc (to September 2024)

Mr S McKee, BA

Mr J McVey, OBE, MBA, MSc

Ms B Napier, LLB

Ms S Stevenson, ACR



## Management Team

Director: Ms J Andrews, LLB (Hons)

Librarian: Ms S McCombe, MA, MSc

Finance Manager: Mrs K Law, BSc (Hons) Accounting, FCA

Deputy Librarian: Mrs M Cash BA (Hons), PGDip (LIS)

## Library Services

Senior Library Assistants

Ms M Flynn, PGCert (ILS)

Mr S Corr, MSc, PGDip (LIM) (From November 2024)

## Library Assistants

Mr S Corr, MSc, PGDip (LIM) (until October 2024)

Ms C Daly, BA (Hons), MA, PGDip (LIM)

Mr A Dunlop, BA (Hons), PGDip (LIM)

Mr R Gallagher, BA (Hons), MA (from February 2024)

Ms J Hoben, PGDip (LIM)

Mrs L Ogryzko, BA (Hons), MA, MSc

Ms H Rooney, BA (Hons), MA (from December 2024)

## Museum Engagement Assistant

Mr J Danby, BSc (Hons), M. Phil

## Interns

Eve Gilsenan

Dara McLaughlin

Emma Rankin

Lauren Scates

Liam Turner

## Administrative Services

Head of Marketing, Digital & Communications: Mrs A Kanakaki, BA (Hons), MA, MSc (to May 2024)

Head of Marketing, Digital & Communications: Mr S Quate (from September 2024)

Arts and Cultural Programmer: Dr P Horton, MA, PhD

Membership Administrator: Mrs A Wallace

Facilities Officer: Mr R Grainger

Charity Bookshop Manager: Mr D Cash, BA (Hons)

Finance Assistant: Mr B Sloan, MIATI

Operations and Visitor Experience Manager: Ms B Hunter

## Special Projects

Dr M Baird, BSc (Hons), MPhil, PhD

# Volunteers & Honorary Members

## Volunteer Coordinator

Maria McGilly

## Volunteers

Joyce Campbell  
Sara Cathcart  
Ciaran Crossey  
Gerry Devaney  
Janice Medley  
Tabitha Minson  
Lois Newby  
Kathryn Wilson

## Reading Groups

John Bradbury  
Stiofán Ó'Direáin

## Meet & Greet

Martin Allison  
Barbara Forbes  
Janice Medley  
Jacqueline O'Brien  
Bernadette Walsh  
Lavinia Wilson

## Library Tours

John Bradbury  
Gerry Devaney  
Nigel Killops  
Maria McGilly

## Charity Bookshop

John Allen  
Jennifer Austin  
Anna Beavan  
Hari Choudhari  
William Cross  
Norma Gilfillan  
Jim Graham  
David Keane  
Deirdre McCauley  
Lesley McConnell  
Claire Magowan  
Saffron Mohseni  
Evelyn Moles  
Jacqueline O'Brien  
James Orchin  
Craig Richardson  
Shai Schechter  
Liz Taylor  
Juliet Wind  
Madeline Yodel

## Honorary Members

M J Campbell  
Catherine Anne Davies  
Polly Devlin OBE  
Pat Donlon  
Barry Douglas  
Dan Gordon  
Tom Hartley  
Jennifer Johnston  
Brian Keenan  
Michael Longley  
Neil Martin  
Tim McGarry  
George Ivan Morrison OBE  
Sinéad Morrissey  
Glenn Patterson  
John Simms  
Brian M Walker

# Collection Donations

The Linen Hall would like to thank all donors to our collections:

ABC Family History Association; Ben Acheson; Alderman Robert Adair; Gerry Adams; Alien Buddha Press; Graham Andrews; Dr Brigitte Anton; Armagh City FC; Ron Armstrong; Heather Arrell; Mervyn Barkman; FJ Barronwell; Gail Barry; Dr Jessica Bates; Andrew Beattie; Raymond Blair; Natalie Bodle; Patricia Bogue; Anne Boyd; Barbara Boyden; John Bradbury; the family of the late Dr Liam Bradley; Harry Brandsma; Maureen Brennan; Dr Simon Bridge; Colin Brown; Patrick Brown; Anne Cadwallader; Therese Caherty; Lucy Calow; Anthony Canavan; Don Carleton; Sandy Carlson; Citizens Advice Northern Ireland; Carly Collier; Hilary Colmer; Committee on the Administration of Justice; Conflict Textiles Trust; Prof Martin Connolly; Mr Conroy; Seán Corr; The Corrymeela Community; Ciaran Crossey; Dr Bernadette Cunningham; Gemma Daly; Hugh Daly; Joshua Danby; Anne Davies; Deirdre Davison; Kenneth Dawson; Mary Delargy; Eleanor Dent; GR Dilworth; Donaghmore Historical Society; Moyra Donaldson; Damien B Donnelly; Tony Drennan; Orla Duncan; Sara Duncan; Roger Elkin; Evelyn Ellison; Sara Falloon; Tommy Fegan; Michael Fleming; Rev WEC Fleming; Brendan Fulton; Ruairí Gallagher; Michael Gibson; Trevor Gill; Globe Lane Initiative; Rev David and Heather Godfrey; Dr Tuck Goh; Charles A Goldsmid; Emma Good; John Gordon; Margaret Graham; Richard Grainger; Grand Opera House; John Gray; Ian Greer; Stephen Gregory; John Gribbin; Pat Hackett; Chris Hagan; Wilson John Haire; Barbara Harding; Dr Tom Hartley; John Henderson; J Heron; Jo Fredell Higgins; Integrated Education Fund; Irish News; Roberta Irvine; John Johnston; Dr Mark Johnston; Wesley Johnston; Richard Jordan; Roger Kelly; Tony Kennedy; Dr Colum Kenny; Reggie Killops; Irene Kingston; Gordon K Knight; Patrizio Landolfi; Janet Leckey; Gareth Lee; Dr Yves Le Juen; Libraries NI; the family of the late Joan Lingard; William Long; Jane Linskey; Kathleen Madine; Caroline Magowan; Mary Marken; Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media; Graham Mawhinney; Anthony McCabe; Wesley McCann; Maureen McCarthy; Bridget McCombe; Moira McCombe; Finbar McCormick; Douglas McCulloch; Brigid McElhill; DTW McFarlane; Dr Philip McGarry; Bernie McGill; Arthur McKeown; Jack McKinney; Dara McLaughlin; Liz McManus; Prof Eugene McNamee; Margaret McNulty; Georgina Menice; Angus Mitchell; Adrian Monaghan; Fiona Montarry; JA Montgomery; James Montgomery; TH Montgomery; Carol Moore; Dr JN Morton; Robert A Mosher; James Mulholland; Frank Mulligan; Margaret Munro; David NK Murphy; Yvonne Murphy; Kenneth Murray; Yvonne Naylor; New Island Books; Amanda Nichols; Annemarie Ní Churreáin; Paul Nolan; NUS-USI(NI); Dr Manus O'Boyle; Joe O'Donnell; Pat O'Donohoe; Kieran Darragh O'Malley; Marcos Ó Murchú; John O'Neill; Christopher Owens; Pallavi Padma-Uday; Robin Parkes; Di Parkin; Rev John A Pickering; Dr John Poulter; Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland; PRONI; Queen's University Library; Dr Norman Richardson; Christina Robinson; Paul Robinson; Fionnbharr Rodgers; Eilish Rooney; William Hanes Rosenau; Oronzo Russo; Scots Language Society; Larry Sheeran; Takehara Shigehiko; Ben Simon; Mark Simpson; Christine Slater; Dr David Sloan; Sole Purpose Productions; Ed Spence; Mathilde Stevens; Gwen Stevenson; Hugh Stevenson; Dan Stewart; Madeleine Stewart; Eileen Tate; Csilla Toldy; Alan Tongue; Madeleine Tongue; Christine Torney; David Torrans; Liam Turner; Tyrone GAA; Ulster Archaeological Society; Ulster Aviation Society; Ulster-Scots Agency; Kees Veelenturf; Dr Margaret Ward; Barry Watson; Peter Wichert; Dr Fionnuala Carson Williams; Julie Williams-Nash; Cedric Wilson; Delores Wilson; Jane Woods; Frank Worsford.



# Arts & Cultural Programme

During 2024, we held almost 80 events for the public in the Library. Those events supported new writing and new writers and explored Northern Ireland's rich literary heritage. Many writers came to the Library to talk about and read from their work, including Anna Burns, Wendy Erskine, Michael Longley, Shirley-Anne McMillan and David Park, whose literary archive is now part of the Library's collections. The Michael McLaverty Short Story Award and the Ulster-Scots Writing Competition (in partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency) were highlights of our calendar.

It was a strong year for national and international partnerships. We began 2024 with the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Exhibition, which was created by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In May, we welcomed Hope the Lego Suffragette, a life-size model loaned to us by the Houses of Parliament, and curated a programme of events to highlight women's voices, including a performance of Carol Moore's play *Shrieking Sisters*, a launch of Ciara O'Neill's EP, *Woman*, in partnership with Women's Work, and an event that gave the public the opportunity to explore our archival collections.

We were delighted to welcome a Poetry Jukebox to the Library in 2024 and to launch our own Poetry Jukebox curation. In partnership with the Centre Culturel Irlandais, and with support from the British Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, we commissioned new poems (and translations of those poems) in English, Breton, Irish and French that responded to one of the treasures of the Library, the Robert McAdam Comparative Lexicon. Two launches in France were followed by a Belfast launch, which was held in partnership with Belfast International Arts Festival, and which involved a number of the commissioned poets, including Gail McConnell and Scott McKendry.

We collaborated with many other partners throughout 2024, including Soroptimists International Belfast, NI Science Festival, Irish Writers Centre, Belfast Pride Festival, Conflict Textiles, Sole Purpose Productions and Northern Ireland Opera. Our talks for the public ranged far and wide, from Celtic festivals to women theatremakers, and included topics such as the Sunningdale Agreement, Mary Ann McCracken, the Roman presence in Ireland and Belfast punk band, Ruefrefex.

We were delighted to hold an exhibition drawing on our extensive May Blood MBE archive and to welcome Baroness Blood's family to the Library as part of an event to celebrate her life and work. It was also an honour to welcome Kenneth B. Morris, the great-great-great grandson of Frederic Douglass, to the Library to talk about the Douglass family as part of Douglass Week 2024.

In 2024, The Linen Hall navigated a dynamic landscape, leveraging both traditional and digital marketing strategies to enhance our visibility, engage audiences, and promote our rich cultural offerings.

- Our website served as a central hub for information, events, and resources. We observed a 47.5% increase in website traffic compared to 2023, totalling 7,666 average total users per month in 2024.
- Facebook: Achieved significant increase in audience by reaching 33,000 people in 2024 vs 404 people in 2023.
- Twitter: Maximised visibility with over 200,000 impressions in 2024.
- Instagram: Reached on average over 7,000 accounts per month.
- LinkedIn: 39% increase in followers compared to 2023.
- Our monthly e-newsletter proved effective in disseminating information about upcoming events, exhibitions, and Library news to a growing base of subscribers.
- Press Coverage: We enjoyed coverage in prominent local and national publications, including Coleraine Chronical, Down Recorder, Belfast Telegraph, Andersonstown News, Daily Star, Daily Mirror, Sunday Life and Irish News.
- Broadcast Media: Our events and initiatives were highlighted in a number of radio and television segments, including ITV1 and various BBC Radio programmes.

Engagement metrics including likes, shares, and comments, saw a substantial increase across platforms, indicating a deeper connection with our audience which we plan to maintain and grow upon.

# Library Facilities

The Linen Hall's listed Victorian building in the heart of Belfast offers a range of function rooms for hire, including the atmospheric Governors' Room, an intimate, booklined meeting space; the well equipped Performance Area, and the Northern Room / Members' Area with its privileged viewpoint overlooking Belfast City Hall and Donegall Square.

These rooms are available for all kinds of events: meetings, performances, talks, book launches, and conferences, to name a few. The Linen Hall is also a sought-after filming location, and some couples have chosen to have their wedding photographs taken against its unique interior backdrop. The Linen Hall's unique range of gifts, for lovers of all things literary and local, is always expanding and is popular with members and visitors alike. We have expanded our range of locally produced jewellery, gifts, crafts, and linen.

We have also, from September, increased our offering from the Charity Bookshop and have some very interesting, rare books available for sale. Revenues are returning to strength post-pandemic, thanks to the support of members and local visitors, and the welcome return of tourists and cruise ships to Belfast. All income from gift shop sales helps to promote The Linen Hall's financial sustainability.

## Library Facts and Figures

### Circulation & Cataloguing Stats 2024

General	4,574
Irish	3,779
Total	8,353
Total Collection Queries	3659
Irish & Local Studies	2306
Newspapers	306
NIPC	951
Theatre	96
Other	0
Total items added to the catalogue	3,737



# Charity Bookshop

## Charity Bookshop

The Linen Hall Charity Bookshop, now in its thirteenth year, started 2024 in The Linen Hall and spent the weekends in St George's Market. We had a great time at St George's Market, it was a pleasure to be able to trade at such a historic market. We also had an online presence on eBay (The Linen Hall Charity Bookshop) and AbeBooks (Linen Hall Library).

Then in July, we were able to reopen the physical shop, in the old Spinning Mill building opposite the entrance to CastleCourt on Royal Avenue. The new shop in Royal Avenue has been an amazing success and we are glad to see many old and new faces visiting us in our new premises. The Charity Bookshop remains a significant source of income supporting the Library's charitable mission. We extend thanks to our loyal customers, benefactors, volunteers, and friends whose unfailing support has made the shop the success that it is.

## Bookshop Donations

Noleen Brennan  
David Hall  
Daithi MacSithign  
R Martin  
H L McCracken  
Jennifer McCready  
James McIntosh  
Ken McFowl  
Louise McMahon  
F A Mezza  
Anne Miskelly  
Manus O'Boyle  
Liam O'Ruirc  
Michael Shaw  
Andrea Snowden  
Barry Stroud

# Financial Summary

Summaries of the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2024 and the Statement of Financial Position as at that date are set out on the following pages. Full financial statements have been published separately and are available on request from The Linen Hall or online at [www.linenhall.com](http://www.linenhall.com).

## Overview

The Linen Hall continued to face funding challenges in 2024, having suffered a cut in 2023 of one third of its core funding from the Department for Communities, which coincided with a period of rising costs, particularly the cost of energy to keep the building open to the public and irreplaceable archives in the conditions necessary for their conservation. The experience of recent years has shown that there is a need for a reliable source of additional core funding if The Linen Hall is to be financially sustainable.

The Department for Communities was applied to and granted additional funding early in 2024, and £330,000 of Intervention Funding was received in the last quarter of the year. Belfast City Council contributed an additional £20,000.

Despite these concerns, The Linen Hall's programme of cultural events, exhibitions, classes, book clubs and writing competitions has gone from strength to strength. Work continued on several funded projects which had begun in 2023, alongside successful applications for further projects, some carrying on into 2025; all of which served to enhance The Linen Hall's contribution to society and to support its financial sustainability. Notably, the "Linen Hall 2 – A Museum of Contemporary History in NI Scoping Study" project was substantially completed in 2024, funded by a grant of up to £245,480 from National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Linen Hall's net income, before actuarial movements on the pension scheme and net gains/losses on revaluation of investments and fixed assets, was £163k in 2024 (2023: net expenditure £423k). Its overdraft balance fell from £236k at the end of 2023, to £101k on 31st December 2024. The Linen Hall normally operates within a bank overdraft facility of £150k to finance its day-to-day operations and aims to minimise reliance on this facility in the medium term.

In 2025, The Linen Hall will work to increase and diversify its income streams, investigating potential new core funders, growing its membership base, and continuing to identify new projects. Domestic and international partnerships will be strengthened. The fully funded feasibility study into Linen Hall 2 is a further step towards improved resilience and sustainability.

## Income

The Linen Hall's grant income from all sources was £1.1m in 2024, compared to £441k in 2023. Funding for special projects increased by £195k and grants towards core operating costs went up by £463k. Total income excluding pension scheme adjustments grew by 65% in 2024, and the proportion of income obtained from all types of grant funding increased from 47% to 71%.

Income from membership subscriptions and associated Gift Aid was £146k in 2024 (2023: £141k), and the Governors and staff remain grateful for the loyal support given to The Linen Hall by its members; they will strive to keep the membership offer relevant and attractive in 2025 and beyond.

Commercial rental income rose from £120k in 2023 to £131k in 2024. The Linen Hall Charity Bookshop found new premises in Royal Avenue in July 2024, having operated only online and at St George's Market from September 2023; this resulted in an improvement in

# Financial Summary

its annual sales from £26k to £36k. However, café income, gift shop sales, facility fees and tour income all suffered from the closure of the Linen Hall Café from May until a temporary operator was installed in August.

Income from donations and legacies fell from £95k in 2023 to £58k in 2024; all gifts and legacies are gratefully received, whether to general funds or to the Linen Hall Library Endowment Fund.

## Expenditure

Core staff costs represented 37% of all The Linen Hall's costs in 2024, down from 45% in 2023, but employment costs overall remain the largest single area of expenditure. Average staff numbers, on a full-time equivalent basis, fell from 19 to 17 in 2024, including additional project staff, and overall employment costs including pension scheme adjustments fell from £811k to £765k. Other running costs are continuously monitored and controlled, and a detailed breakdown of all expenditure is set out in notes 5 to 10 to the separately published financial statements.

## Pension Scheme

The Linen Hall operates a defined benefit pension scheme through NILGOSC, and The Linen Hall's section of the scheme was in surplus by £2,541k on 31st December 2024, an improvement of £979k over the previous year's surplus position; however following a change in the advised accounting treatment of such surpluses, this pension asset is no longer included in the Statement of Financial Position. Actuarial movements on the pension scheme are beyond The Linen Hall's control. Net finance income and operating charges related to the pension scheme amounted to a return of £61k (2023: £56k) and this is included in reported net operating income.

## Grants

The following table sets out recent levels of support from each of The Linen Hall's top five funders in 2024.

Funder	2024	2023	2022	2021
	£k	£k	£k	£k
Department for Communities	660	213	309	291
National Lottery Heritage Fund	211	94	157	376
Belfast City Council	53	36	34	49
The Foyle Foundation	50	0	0	0
Community Relations Council	50	0	0	0

Grants awarded for defined projects in pursuit of The Linen Hall's mission, from all sources, increased from £221k in 2023 to £416k in 2024, and grants towards core operating costs rose from £220k to £683k. Full details of all grant income and the awarding bodies are set out in Note 2 to the separately published financial statements, and further information on the funded projects undertaken in 2024 can be found at note 23.

## Donations

We are grateful to all those who made donations to The Linen Hall in 2024; your continuing generosity and support are essential to its charitable mission and unique contribution to the cultural life of our society.



# Financial Summary

## Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Endowment Funds £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total Funds 2024 £'000	Total Funds 2023 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from</b>					
Donations and legacies	25	863	416	<b>1,304</b>	<b>677</b>
Rental income	-	131	-	<b>131</b>	<b>120</b>
Income from investments	-	81	3	<b>84</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Income from charitable activities</b>					
Other trading activities	-	109	-	<b>109</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>1,007</b>
<b>Expenditure on</b>					
Rental expenses	-	2	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Raising funds	-	63	-	<b>63</b>	<b>68</b>
	-	65	-	<b>65</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>					
Projects and events	-	-	437	<b>437</b>	<b>318</b>
Library operating costs	-	963	-	<b>963</b>	<b>1,042</b>
	-	963	437	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,360</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>1,430</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>(423)</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before recognised gains and losses</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>(423)</b>
Net gains on investments	13	-	-	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
Loss on revaluation of fixed assets	-	(592)	-	<b>(592)</b>	<b>-</b>
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	-	918	-	<b>918</b>	<b>212</b>
Adjustment for restriction on pension asset recognised	-	(2,541)	-	<b>(2,541)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>(2,054)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(2,039)</b>	<b>(197)</b>
<b>Fund balance brought forward</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>7,786</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>8,436</b>	<b>8,633</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>5,732</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>6,397</b>	<b>8,436</b>

# Financial Summary

## Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	3,438	4,107
Heritage assets	2,760	2,760
Investments	350	312
	<b>6,548</b>	<b>7,179</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Stocks	11	15
Debtors	93	62
Cash at bank and in hand	63	63
	<b>167</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(318)</b>	<b>(445)</b>
<b>Net current liabilities</b>	<b>(151)</b>	<b>(305)</b>
<b>Net assets excluding pensions asset</b>	<b>6,397</b>	<b>6,874</b>
<b>Pension asset</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,562</b>
<b>Net assets including pension asset</b>	<b>6,397</b>	<b>8,436</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		
- General fund	(712)	750
- Revaluation fund	6,444	7,036
	<b>5,732</b>	<b>7,786</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Endowment funds</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>6,397</b>	<b>8,436</b>



[www.linenhall.com](http://www.linenhall.com)

17 Donegall Square North | Belfast | BT1 5GB | +44 (0)28 9032 1707 | [info@linenhall.com](mailto:info@linenhall.com)

The Linen Hall (Belfast Library And Society For Promoting Knowledge) is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 104 564.