Arts & Business Northern Ireland’s Investment Programme is aptly named. Spending on the arts is, indeed, an investment. It benefits everyone: business, arts, the communities and the places in which we all live, work and play.

Our communities are strengthened by the presence of a rich creative culture and an enterprising business sector, just as they provide a source of inspiration for our artists and a source of revenue for our businesses.

So it is greatly heartening to see, in the pages of this programme, a breadth and depth of inspirational creative projects that will have touched many people’s lives. These projects are a testament to what can be achieved when local businesses and arts organisations come together and dare to dream something new.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, as principal funder, is proud of our long association with Arts & Business Northern Ireland, an organisation of critical importance for the continuing development and strengthening of partnerships between our two sectors. I want to congratulate them on the success of the Investment Programme, which seems to reach new heights with every year, and thank the business community for the generosity of their support for the arts.

That support is a vital component of a healthy and thriving arts and cultural community. This reception is a very welcome opportunity to celebrate the successes of these pioneering partnerships and I trust they will provide the inspiration for many more to follow.

Roisin McDonough
Chief Executive
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
In an environment where every penny counts and there is increased pressure on all sources of funding, public and private, coming together to showcase and share the value of this Investment Programme fund has never been more important.

Each year Arts & Business NI makes the case and applies for the Investment Programme fund within our Arts Council of NI application. We know that when speaking to the 57 arts and business partners who benefitted from this fund across the year that we are speaking to the converted.

This fund offers arts and business partners a safe space, an R&D fund, to test opportunities that use creativity through the arts to support private sector business in addressing key business issues such as retaining and attracting talent and creatively developing staff. It is also enabling business and arts partners to come together on creative initiatives that are of benefit to both organisations, but are also helping to address important societal or wellbeing issues in communities and the workplace.

Ultimately this fund is critical in strengthening and deepening these important cross sectoral partnerships. The citations in this booklet just touch the surface of these successes. We encourage you to talk to the business and arts partners highlighted in this booklet to learn more about their stories of success.

We ask for all our arts and business partners who have already benefited from the fund to help us spread the word. Encourage your peers to partner with the Arts, utilise the opportunities from this Investment Programme fund and let’s all work together to inspire many more new and creative collaborations that can benefit so many.

Martin Bradley MBE
Chair, Arts & Business Northern Ireland
£130,000 was awarded to 32 partnerships through the investment programme

28% of projects took place outside Belfast

19 Business Partners were first time sponsors of the arts

14 Arts Organisations designed projects that supported their Business Partners to realise their CSR ambitions

12 Arts Organisations created inspirational projects that defined their business partners brand

6 Arts Organisations developed creative programmes to enable their Business Partners to retain and engage their staff

For over 35 years Arts & Business NI has been investing in arts and business partnerships, supporting cultural organisations to provide creative solutions to business challenges.

The Investment Programme is designed to encourage inspirational, sustainable partnerships between businesses and the arts organisations they sponsor, to maximise the benefits of working collaboratively.

We are delighted that, despite ongoing economic pressures, so many businesses have continued to support and invest in the Arts in 2018-19.

“This project and the opportunities it has created for local artists would not have been possible without the support of Arts & Business NI. The advice and expertise they offer are invaluable to us as a young company looking for creative investment avenues in this arts funding crisis.”

Anna Leckey & Elisha Gormley
Three’s Theatre Company

“Thanks to the introduction from Arts & Business NI to Tinderbox, we now have a thriving relationship and have rolled out a series of theatre based Mental Health Awareness workshops, open to all staff throughout 2019.

We have five diversity networks in Citi Belfast and Tinderbox, utilising the Arts & Business NI Investment Programme support, have developed a series of fantastic events with each network this year.”

Leigh Meyer, Managing Director, Citi Belfast Site Head

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2018-19 Investment Programme
Many businesses have used culture to generate positive and sustainable changes to their work. Incorporating the arts into CSR strategies allows businesses to strengthen their reputation of good corporate citizenship through improved community links and stronger staff development programmes.

Photo: Ulster Carpets and Ulster Orchestra showcase concert at Ceara School, Lurgan
BookTrust and Belfast Harbour have established a mutually beneficial partnership to encourage an interest in reading in babies, children and young people. Both partners recognise that a love of books changes lives and children who read for pleasure are more likely to do better at school as well as be more socially, culturally and emotionally prepared for life.

This year’s four month project saw 200 post-primary pupils across Belfast engage with award winning author Sarah Crossan and her latest teen novel ‘Moonrise’.

A secure online platform was designed where pupils could find out all about Sarah Crossan, review her books and post comments. Sarah responded, so pupils could build a relationship before the author visited in person. Each pupil received a copy of Sarah’s book Moonrise to have signed as a memento of the occasion - a fantastic legacy of the project. Each book carried a ‘pridevoly supported by Belfast Harbour’ sticker.

A creative writing competition was organised which was judged by the author, Belfast Harbour and BookTrust. The project culminated in an author event at Belfast Harbour office, including book signing and prizes awarded to competition winners.

The three-year partnership enables Belfast Harbour to achieve its strategic objectives: to encourage young people to aspire to their very best. BookTrust’s priority is to get children excited about books as children who read are happier and do better at school. The partners were introduced to each other by Arts & Business NI and so a project to boost children’s creativity and language skills began.

The airport had a request from an employee to support a school project in recognition of her life as a football journalist and author. “It is important for us to work with partners, such as BookTrust NI and A&BN to develop projects that will inspire our local communities and create meaningful educational experiences for the children within our community. The BookTrust NI initiatives with Nick Sharratt and Dan Freedman have made reading fun for the students as well as aiding educational development, social skills and emotional growth. These types of author events go a long way to inspiring a generation of readers.”

Jaclyn Coulter, HR Manager, Belfast International Airport

Belfast International Airport’s Corporate Responsibility pillars focus on community and education, ‘encouraging young people to aspire to their very best’. BookTrust’s priority is to get children excited about books as children who read are happier and do better at school. The partners were introduced to each other by Arts & Business NI and so a project to boost children’s creativity and language skills began.

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Belfast Photo Festival and Bywater are perfect partners in that they are both recognised for doing things a little bit differently, for being brave and for loving Belfast. The partners plan to host a world exclusive exhibition with the international publication i-D, which will act as a high profile spectacle that will bring new life and new visitors to Gresham and Winetavern Streets. Consisting of large-scale photographs hanging from the building facades and at ground level, the project enables Bywater to reinforce a neighbourhood feel with creativity literally on the doorstep.

They will also commission artists to acknowledge and celebrate the surrounding area and the community that resides there. In the Constructed Landscapes workshop, participants will be provided with local vintage photographs that they are invited to re-appropriate by collaging, drawing, scratching or layering fragments of the reconfigured imagery. The workshop will reflect Bywater’s respect for the past and the desire to build on it and see it renewed, while maintaining strong roots in the past.

The project will also include a pop up Camera Scanner Studio where portraits are taken with a flatbed scanner converted into a camera. Participants receive a copy of their portraits and their images will be displayed on screens in the area and the community that resides there. They will also commission artists to acknowledge and celebrate the surrounding area and the community that resides there. In the Constructed Landscapes workshop, participants will be provided with local vintage photographs that they are invited to re-appropriate by collaging, drawing, scratching or layering fragments of the reconfigured imagery. The workshop will reflect Bywater’s respect for the past and the desire to build on it and see it renewed, while maintaining strong roots in the past.

The project will also include a pop up Camera Scanner Studio where portraits are taken with a flatbed scanner converted into a camera. Participants receive a copy of their portraits and their images will be displayed on screens during the festival. This element of the project will allow Bywater to start new conversations and build relationships and connections with the local community.

This project enables both companies to build brand development, engage meaningfully with the local community and differentiate themselves through an innovative large-scale cultural project.

Connorwater Shopping Centre and EastSide Arts are both committed to ensuring that everyone in the community is welcome at their events. However, the high cost of putting on an event can sometimes make this difficult.

As part of the EastSide Arts Festival, Connswater sponsored the ‘Big Fish Little Fish’ performance of ‘Big Fish Little Fish’ in the Big Top in C.S. Lewis Square. The ‘Family rave’ attracted an audience of approximately 300 people from across Belfast, and Connswater branding at the event encouraged people to walk the short distance to Connswater Shopping Centre where there were arts and crafts workshops. The Investment Programme supported a community ticketing initiative that allowed community leaders to distribute tickets to events throughout the EastSide Arts Festival to members of their community that they felt would love to attend festival events, but couldn’t afford to do so.

The Community Awards event at the Festival recognises the local heroes who give their time and energy to make East Belfast better and the Investment Programme was also pleased to support an Arts Award category to celebrate the achievements of these leaders and their groups. In addition, Connswater has introduced a free reading corner, with donated books, and an integrated free book swap to recognise the importance of C.S. Lewis in encouraging children to read and nurturing a life-long love of stories, imagination and reading in East Belfast.

The project enabled Connswater to creatively engage families in their local community, encouraging increased footfall in the shopping centre whilst recognising East Belfast Community Champions.
Over the past three-years the Verbal Arts Centre (VAC) has worked in partnership with Eason and Foyleside to deliver a successful literary based community engagement programme aimed at families. The current project will help the partners to develop new audiences and reach beyond Foyleside. Whilst Derry / Londonderry’s Halloween festival is known of worldwide and is expanding year by year, the older generation is often forgotten about. This partnership enables Foyleside and Eason to support Verbal in bridging the gap between young and old with shared stories and conversation.

In Northern Ireland there are currently 9,677 people aged 65+ who live in care homes. It is critical that as our older population continues to grow, that people are supported to remain connected with their community. The Stories Through Time project facilitated and built connections between the partners and two care homes in Derry and Omagh, enabling all parties to understand and support stronger community connections. They worked with and matched local primary schools to each care home to deliver an intergenerational setting, using literature as a tool to support young adults with learning difficulties with the skills to help them in the working world, by utilising drama and role play with professional drama facilitators. Stage Beyond helped the Millennium Forum recruit and train participants and after training, participants were offered work placement and mentors. Feedback was excellent from participants and their new co-workers. Various workshops were held and learned, including those that some people take for granted such as self-expression, communication and the effective use of body language and voice. The course was tailored to a customer service based environment, helping participants to take instructions, greet customers and answer customer queries.

“Achieve Beyond” builds on the award winning Access initiatives of the Millennium and helps us build more awareness of disabilities and hidden disabilities. It will create real employment opportunities for young disabled adults with the Millennium Forum and our sponsor Foyleside Shopping Centre.”

Cara McCartney, Sponsorship and Development Officer, Millennium Forum

“We are delighted to partner with the Millennium Forum on this project. They are leading the way in accessibility in the arts and we can learn from each other. We are committed to making the customer experience at Foyleside as accessible as possible by breaking down barriers; this is also true for recruitment and staffing.”

Fergal Rafferty, Shopping Centre Manager, Foyleside

Hagan Homes embarked on a partnership with Cinematic, to commemorate the business’s 17th birthday. Supporting the welfare and development of young people sits at the very heart of both organisations’ ethos. Cinematic pro-actively work with young people from post primary schools and encourage them to increase their skillsets and knowledge of the film industry.

The 3 day film training programme offered 24 young people the opportunity to work with industry professionals to learn about the process of film making, whilst also gaining skills in time keeping, budgeting, leadership, confidence and communication skills. The participants devised and produced their own short films around the theme of ‘Home’.

The collaboration enabled Hagan Homes to showcase its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility in a fun, creative and impactful arena, to promote its business by reaching out to new and existing customers (in particular first-time buyers and young families), to build and promote their profile, and to offer employee and customer engagement opportunities at Cinematic events.

From Cinematic’s perspective, the partnership allowed them to showcase their highly effective teaching and learning tools and the impact they can have beyond the classroom, enriching and supporting local communities.

“We build affordable, quality homes that are the basis of stable and thriving communities. We recognise the role creativity plays in enhancing communities and the ‘Home’ project, delivered by Cinematic, provided a way for 24 young people to channel their creativity and develop short films.”

James Hagan, Chair and Founder, Hagan Homes

EastSide Arts and Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors have been working together since 2012, with Hewitt & Gilpin supporting EastSide Arts to deliver two annual festivals in east Belfast – the EastSide Arts Festival in August and the C.S. Lewis Festival in November. Together they developed events that are of genuine local benefit and engage people with the arts, but also offer excellent networking, business development and branding opportunities for Hewitt & Gilpin.

A Business Breakfast at C.S. Lewis Festival was devised to appeal to the local business community, both in terms of content and timing. The event centred around a ‘keynote’ type speech by one of the festival speakers, the topic being carefully chosen to explore the relevance of C.S. Lewis’s writings to contemporary business practices and the role of business in modern society.

Each year a C.S. Lewis / Narnia themed community lantern parade takes place in East Belfast, starting on Belmont Road and finishing in C.S. Lewis Square. With the support of Hewitt & Gilpin, the reach of the parade was widened by delivering artist-led workshops in lantern making, costume making, drumming and prop making. Hewitt & Gilpin were able to get fully involved by taking part in the parade with their own lanterns.

“Our staff members are seeing the positive opportunity presented in working alongside EastSide Arts in delivering these events as a way of contributing to wider societal needs within East Belfast.”

Graeme Hamilton, Director, Hewitt & Gilpin
In 2018 Phoenix Natural Gas commenced a new project with the Grand Opera House to deliver a “Creative Spaces” event, designed to raise the profile of Phoenix across County Down. The partners delivered a unique and exciting day in Newcastle which enabled young people in the community to get involved in the arts through innovative workshops and showcase performances. From Phoenix’s perspective it allowed them to increase brand awareness, and enhance public perception of the brand and company, in an area where their continued growth had inevitably caused some disruption.

104 children signed up to take part in the events, with 54 parents attending the showcase at the end of day.

“Phoenix Natural Gas has been a longstanding supporter of the Arts in Northern Ireland and this project was specifically created to help develop and nurture the artistic talents of young people in the Newcastle area, where we are currently working to extend the natural gas network. Through our partnership with the Grand Opera House, we are proud to be able to extend our partnership arts programmes to the East Down area.

Jonathan Martindale, Director of Sales & Marketing, Phoenix Natural Gas

“Partnerships with local businesses are vital for the sustainability of the Arts in Northern Ireland and the additional support from Arts & Business NI Investment Programme was a fantastic opportunity to underpin and promote the business and arts communities working together.

Áine Dolan, Creative Learning Manager, Grand Opera House

Silver Screenings has enabled Specsavers to associate their brand with a project that taps directly into a core target market for their business.

Silver Screenings was established by the Strand Arts Centre to meet an evidenced need to reduce isolation and loneliness amongst the older population of East Bellast, in particular those in supported housing or nursing homes. The audience for Silver Screenings is predominantly older people.

Specsavers has attended the Silver Screenings on several occasions to provide audience members with free hearing tests and information prior to the film screenings. The weekly screenings of popular classic films include free tea/coffee, a chance to chat and reminisce with others beforehand and short talks afterwards. Arts & Business NI support has allowed community reach to be extended by providing free transport to and from the Strand; the cost of transport having previously been cited as a major barrier to attendance.

Specsavers Connswater values the PR and social impact benefits of the project, which enables them to address their business objective of making a positive contribution to the area in which it operates.

“We’re delighted that by supporting the Silver Screenings project at the Strand Arts Centre, our local cinema, it has enhanced the social wellbeing of the older population in the area.

“We are committed to improving the lives of the community in which we operate and are keen to engage with audiences about the hearing and audiology services that may benefit them.”

Lynsey Caldwell, Director, Specsavers Connswater

In 2017 Arts & Business NI introduced Translink to Replay Theatre Company to explore the possibility of delivering a bespoke youth engagement project focused on rail safety.

The initiative commenced with a series of drama workshops with 660 young people, who shared their views and suggestions on safe train travel and explored how any potential accidents may impact on those involved. Feedback from the school workshops led to the development of a new play #CrossingTheLines, produced by Replay, which demonstrated the unintended consequences of anti-social behaviour, violence and trespass on lines.

“This partnership with Translink allowed us to involve young people in the creative development process, while using the Arts to explore issues around rail safety with teenagers who use trains on their commute. We welcome the value that Translink places on the Arts as a vehicle to communicate its messages to the local community.”

Brian Mullan, CEO, Replay Theatre Company

“The #CrossingTheLines initiative and production has allowed us to work with students in a positive, creative and engaging way. Working with young people to influence other youth audiences and passengers makes our campaign even more credible and will help us to encourage safe and responsible behaviour at stations and on board our trains and to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all our customers.”

Richard Knox, Head of Rail Service Operations, Translink

This project was so successful, that Translink are exploring a further school tour to engage more young people with their important messaging around rail safety.

Ulster Carpets strive to improve the quality of life in their local community through providing opportunities for participation and the development of specialist skills. This year they specifically wanted to raise awareness of the Girls’ Choir and the Charles Wood Festival and Summer School, the associated benefits to the community and of Ulster Carpets’ support of the Arts.

The Ulster Carpets and Charles Wood Festival project spanned three areas of activity for the Girls’ Choir 2018. Firstly, auditions were extended to include Portadown, Lisburn and Dublin; secondly a lunchtime concert took place in St. Mark’s Church, Portadown and finally Ulster Carpets produced a short film profiling the Girls’ Choir across the Festival week. This film is now shared on social media platforms and will be an excellent recruitment tool for the future. To provide access to the choir for those in financial need, one NI and one ROI choir member, who had presented a financial difficulty but demonstrated enormous talent, was each awarded a £300 bursary. The support of Arts and Business NI has enhanced the relationship between the organisations with increased interaction, particularly around the filming of the Girls’ Choir video, and with some excellent brainstorming sessions which paid dividends and brought about fresh thinking for both partners.

“The support of Arts & Business NI has enabled us to be more ambitious, to learn from the business world and to present ourselves impeccably.”

Richard Yarr, Chairman, Charles Wood Festival and Summer School

“The company’s support was richly rewarded by the joy, delight and pride shown by the girls and all the audiences.”

Dolreen Buchanan, Business Support Manager, Ulster Carpets
The partnership between Ulster Orchestra (UO) and Ulster Carpets commenced in 2016, enabling the business to enhance its investment in the local community and support the development of young people and their realisation of what they can achieve. The collaboration focuses on engaging pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Ceara School, Lurgan who have limited access to orchestral music.

The external facilitator, Chris Blake, worked with two classes in the morning alongside three UO musicians and in the afternoons worked with a third class of pupils on music which formed part of the final showcase concert, at which the school choir also performed. The resulting impact was that the project reached more pupils and more teachers and evolved into a ‘whole-school’ collaboration.

“Ulster Carpets have been an extremely supportive sponsor of UO’s Learning and Community Engagement programme, and the project has been greatly enhanced by their active involvement.

Lucy McCullagh, Director of Learning and Community Engagement, Ulster Orchestra

“This orchestral music project was delivered to an exceptionally high level and the year on year development has been astonishing. The programme planning between Ceara School Principal and the Ulster Orchestra each year has established the foundation for the delivery of orchestral music programmes that exceed the expectations of everyone and push the boundaries of fun and engaging inclusive holistic sensory teaching to new levels. The benefits to the children, the school and the entire team involved were clearly palpable.”

Dalreen Buchanan, Business Support Manager, Ulster Carpets

Yellowmoon, a high-profile film and television post production company, wanted to develop a new area of activity within the arts and to give something back to their local community.

To achieve this they have partnered with Cahoots, for the first time, to enrich the lives of some of our most deserving families. Developed for families where a child or parent has been diagnosed with a life-threatening condition and is in treatment at home, is in respite care, or at end of life care in NI Hospice, 'The Magic Menu' is a travelling personal performance. The programme is devised to be flexible to meet the circumstances of individual families and to create as little disruption as possible to the routine of the household. It offers some much needed fun and laughter at a time of great upheaval in family life, to provide distraction from the illness and the routine of treatment, and to relieve the long periods of isolation which concern about infection can impose on children.

After their personal performance, the children are gifted a magic set to play with and enjoy long after the magicians have gone. Yellowmoon and Arts & Business NI Investment Programme together allowed this fabulous programme to extend its reach beyond hospitals and hospices to now also include Barnardo’s.

“As a local business it is important for Yellowmoon to give back to the local community, this partnership allows the company to help improve the lives of local sick children and their families.”

Greg Darby, Managing Director, Yellowmoon
CULTURAL BRANDING

Arts and culture can reinforce brand value, allowing businesses to differentiate themselves in crowded marketplaces and to connect with target markets creatively.

Photo: Linen Biennale 2018 Fashion Showcase, staged by R-Space, William Clark and partners
Business Partner
Alexander Boyd Displays
Arts Partner
Belfast Photo Festival

Alexander Boyd Displays have been working with Belfast Photo Festival since 2017 and each year they have pushed their boundaries to further develop their creative partnership. As outdoor printing specialists, Alexander Boyd Displays produce high quality reproductions of the festival photographic works for display, in all weathers and situations, to turn Belfast into an outdoor photography gallery, free for everyone to enjoy.

Their new collaboration goes a step further with one of the highest profile names in photography and design coming to Belfast to deliver a Q&A session which brings the business and the creative worlds together at one event, designed to challenge and inspire. The talk by Oliviero Toscani will be a highlight of the Belfast Photo Festival 2019 and will give local photography and design enthusiasts and professionals a unique opportunity to come together, find out about the iconic Benetton campaigns designed by Toscani, and be inspired to push their own creative boundaries. The talk perfectly complements the 2019 Belfast Photo Festival theme exploring Truth & Lies through photography, particularly with advertising campaigns playing a major role in the spreading of ideas and perceptions.

“Alexander Boyd Displays are proud to be involved with the Belfast Photo Festival—Michael Weir and his team have turned this in to a world class event. It’s great to bring unusual exhibitions to unexpected outdoor locations in large format. The partnership allows us to showcase our cutting-edge outdoor print and digital display capabilities to a wider audience.”

Barry Desmond, Sales & Marketing Director, Alexander Boyd Displays.

Business Partner
Bullitt Hotel
Arts Partner
Three’s Theatre Company

‘Date Show: After Dark’ by Three’s Theatre Company (TTC) is an immersive, site-specific, promenade performance which explores the theme of dating in Belfast. The innovative project enabled Bullitt to promote the hotel in a way that conventional marketing cannot do and positioned Bullitt as a vibrant and sexy venue.

Technical, immersive and promenade performances of this style and standard have not been performed in Belfast before. It showcased local talent including six writers, nine actors, and supporting crew.

A previous running of Date Show at the MAC sold out 12 performances with a long waiting list; TTC was confident of bringing an established audience to Bullitt Hotel. The production brought 400 customers into Bullitt, many of whom were TTC followers. TTC took them on a journey through the hotel, showcasing the courtyard, main bar/restaurant, a bedroom, an en suite and Babel and Baltic bars. Bullitt and Belfast are part of the same company and building but their entrances are separate, TTC specifically tailored the logistics of the show to feature all entrances and incorporated Bullitt’s ‘living wall’ into their scripts. TTC set aside two performances for arts professionals and corporate clients of Bullitt.

“This project and the opportunities it has created for local artists would not have been possible without the support of Arts and Business NI. The advice and expertise they offer are invaluable to us as a young company looking for creative investment avenues in this arts funding crisis.”

Anna Leckey & Elisha Gormley, Three’s Theatre Company.

Business Partner
Caldwell & Robinson Solicitors
Arts Partner
City of Derry International Choir Festival

Caldwell & Robinson Solicitors became first-time supporters of the City of Derry International Choir Festival in 2018. First held in 2013, the Festival has become a major event in the musical life of Derry and in the international choral calendar and includes concerts, competitions, workshops, educational events, international symposia and choral trails. The Festival represents a good fit with Caldwell & Robinson’s stated ambition to sustain and improve the cultural life of the city through support of high-quality arts events that will nourish Derry/ Londonderry’s existing residents and help convince new people both to work in the city and to make it their home. The Festival also offers opportunities for the legal company’s staff and clients to engage with the Festival and advance the company’s brand.

The Investment Programme supported the opening gala concert of the Festival, which featured the Festival Chorus, an ensemble of 100+ singers drawn from across the choirs of Derry, accompanied by the Ulster Orchestra. The Festival has been hailed as an outstanding success for its artistic quality, the numbers participating and the benefit brought to the local economy.

“We see in the City of Derry International Choir Festival the promotion and celebration of community and global excellence, and the reality of their interconnectedness in Derry. Caldwell & Robinson shares the same values, and our sponsorship of the Festival has allowed the firm’s brand values to be promoted as partner values in a very visible way to an audience containing our key client demographic... And our team believe it is the right thing to do.”

Philip Gilliland, Senior Partner, Caldwell & Robinson.

Business Partner
Destination CQ BID
Arts Partner
Young at Art

Young at Art (YAA) and Destination CQ BID entered a new partnership to deliver synergy between Destination CQ BID’s 450+ business members situated within Belfast’s Cathedral Quarter and YAA’s Belfast Children’s Festival. The collaboration benefitted the commercial and community development in the area and supported CQ BID’s Business Plan themes to Create, Celebrate, Invite and Inspire.

The partnership repositioned the Cathedral Quarter as an essential part of the cultural and civic life of the children of this city, and demonstrated that the Cathedral Quarter is not just a night-time economy destination but a creative cultural area with a strong family-friendly offering.

The Cathedral Quarter became the centre of the 21st Belfast Children’s Festival’s key event, the family fun day. Entitled ‘inSPIRED’ the programme of events included a special one-off edition of the ever popular Baby Rave at St Anne’s Cathedral, and a wide range of free events and activities across the Cathedral Quarter.

“Thanks to Destination CQ BID and Arts & Business NI, almost 6,200 children, young people and their families have experienced a high-quality creative experience that will stay with them for many years to come.”

Eibhlín de Barra, Director, Young at Art

“Creating spaces that are welcoming and appealing to the family market is intrinsic to the rejuvenation and revitalisation of our City Centres. Belfast Children’s Festival reaffirmed this and has catalysed a city-wide conversation about regeneration and child friendly spaces, which has been welcomed by the business community.”

Gareth Neill, Managing Director, Destination CQ BID.
Celebrating Creative Partnerships

25

Business Partner
Forestsde Shopping Centre

Arts Partner
EastSide Arts

“The Collective in Concert” enabled Forestside to demonstrate its commitment to support and nurture young creative talent to a much wider audience. Making this event part of the EastSide Arts Festival allowed Forestside to publicise this important element of its business to thousands of people who may not have known that the shopping centre also runs a Young Artist Development Programme as part of its core business.

A group of musicians from the Programme were mentored by Anthony Toner through the process of developing two of their own songs for performance with a professional band. They rehearsed with the full band, participating in the musical arrangements. EastSide Arts saw this as the perfect development of the EastSide Emerging Programme, as it met their business objectives of supporting young artists, developing and nurturing talent, and presenting excellent content in the festival.

“This was such an exciting project to be part of. Forestside have a genuine passion for the development of young artists which makes them the perfect partner for EastSide Arts Festival. It was thrilling to watch the young singers perform their own songs with a band of musicians at the top of their game, and so highly respected within the industry, and to see how much the professional band enjoyed the experience.”

Rachel Kennedy, Director, EastSide Arts

“Forestsde were delighted to work with EastSide Arts Festival on The Collective project. Our young singer songwriters had the opportunity to work alongside Northern Ireland’s leading musicians benefiting from mentoring, musical arrangement and stagecraft. Without doubt this was an event that they will remember for the rest of their lives and it accelerated their performance skills to a whole new level.”

Lee Cutler, Centre Manager, Forestside

“My dream was to one day have a band support me and my music – Anthony, Davy, John and Nick gave me the opportunity to see my dream was achievable and the thirst to strive for it in the future.”

Lucy Bell, Performer

Business Partner
Forestsde Shopping Centre

Arts Partner
Sunflowerfest

With the support of Arts & Business NI, Forestside sponsored Sunflowerfest’s Village Stage this year, to increase engagement with shoppers, and potential future shoppers, aged 25 or under.

The collaboration enabled the partners to produce a diverse and engaging programme of entertainment with first class production. Two stretch marquees were joined to create ‘The Forestside Village Stage’ as a central hub to the Sunflowerfest Village with a fully programmed Forestside branded stage, a full kitchen for demonstrations and mixed level seating. Forestside programmed all the music on the stage with artists from its own outreach programmes, whilst the Forestside Cookery School delivered all food demonstrations. The Forestside Village Stage was extremely popular and this area became the hub of the Sunflowerfest Food Village and in turn the whole festival site.

“Forestside was delighted to be working with the Sunflowerfest team this year to achieve our joint objectives. This project gave the Forestside Artist Development Programme a massive boost by opening up over 20 stage slots on the Village Stage over the 3 days. Artists from both our Young Singer Songwriter and +45’s Singer Songwriter groups were given 30min slots in front of a very appreciative family audience. Just as important as the stage time and experience, the artists each received a payment for the performance. This project also contributed to our aim of engaging an under 25 demographic both through the audience and the artists themselves.”

Lee Cutler, Centre Manager, Forestside

Business Partner
Hit the North

Arts Partner
Community Arts Partnership

Hit the North relies on business collaboration so strongly that, without it, the festival would not exist. The coalition of business interests, from those who provide the sites to paint, to the establishments that feed and water the artists, to the businesses in the area that help to lobby for a better recognition of the artwork, are the only reason the festival can survive and thrive.

This partnership between Community Arts Partnership and Heverlee represents the opportunity to show that community led, grass roots arts activity has the potential to deliver on business objectives while at the same time delivering on a corporate responsibility level.

Business Partner
ISL Waste Management

Arts Partner
Grand Opera House

As a commercial waste management company dedicated to the best environmental practices, including a zero waste to landfill commitment, ISL prioritises supporting education on the sustainable management of resources and works with communities to change perceptions surrounding waste.

ISL Waste Management partnered with The Grand Opera House and Beat Carnival to deliver an exciting new project ‘Electro Funk Junk’ for Primary 7 pupils in 11 schools across Belfast and Lisburn, encouraging them to think more about recycling, while engaging them in music workshops and technology.

The unique project combined traditional hands-on instrument building skills with sound design and percussion techniques and encouraged children to see waste not just as something that should be recycled, but as items that can be modified and reused.

“Working collaboratively with ISL Waste Management and Beat Carnival Electro Funk Junk inspired school pupils to take recycling to a whole new level. Through this fun and innovative project, children learned, not just about the importance of waste management and its impact on our environment, but also about technology and its variety of applications.”

Áine Dolan, Partnership & Development Manager, Grand Opera House

“Creating music from junk was a fascinating idea and the creativity of all the young people involved has been a joy to support. Opening their minds to the fact that we cannot live in a world of single use products is vital and at ISL we are dedicated to helping our children lead the way.”

Michael McLarnon, CEO, ISL Waste Management
TG4’s vision is to promote Irish language and culture, ensure a central place for TG4 in Irish people’s lives and enable the creation of world-class content and support economic growth.

DocFest Ireland is the first industry-focused all-Ireland International Documentary Festival and Belfast Film Festival have worked hard to ensure that it is based in Belfast. As well as affording the public the chance to watch a huge variety of documentary films, with the support of TG4, filmmakers also have the opportunity to meet top decision-makers, international funders, broadcasters, distributors and exhibitors.

TG4 are particularly supporting a whole section on music documentaries including local work which displays all the raw energy and excitement of the 1970s punk rock scene in Northern Ireland. Many of these documentaries have lain largely forgotten and this is a fabulous chance to revisit and celebrate the incredibly rich history of local music. TG4 are commissioning artists to complement the music and arts section of the festival programme and to provide a season of inspirational programmes. They will also enhance documentary presentations with live events giving local talent an opportunity to exhibit to an international audience.

This Partnership with DocFest Ireland enables TG4 to extend audience reach of its bi-lingual programming and to bring a focus to its arts and music output, animated by exciting live events.

The NOIRELAND International Crime Fiction Festival provides a platform for the wealth of talent emerging from Ireland, on the page and on screen. Translink has supported the festival from its launch, through in-kind advertising and in 2019 with financial funding in addition to a widespread promotional campaign. This year’s partnership delivered a pop-up event in the Europa Bus Centre, designed to raise the profile of the festival and to provide an enhanced journey experience for Translink customers, animating a key transport hub.

Irish author Claire Allan delivered a live reading in the Europa Bus Centre which was broadcast via the public announcement system, offering a unique experience not often encountered in a bus station and guaranteed to enhance the customer journey, a key objective for Translink. Additional activity included author readings, detective characters distributing information, as well as a NOIRELAND bookstand and box office.

Competitions for employees and customers, with a chance to win tickets to festival events, helped to make the festival more accessible and attracted more people to the digital platforms used by both partners.

Translink’s advertising campaign brought NOIRELAND to the attention of travellers, commuters and visitors across Northern Ireland.

The partnership has been mutually beneficial, fulfilling both partners’ objectives – promotion of the festival and the benefits of using public transport. Working with Translink challenged NOIRELAND to update its travel policy, encouraging participants and audience to travel by public transport.

R-Space Lisburn developed a collaboration with William Clark Ltd, Loft Trading, Stoker Mills, Style Academy and Gayfield Projects to create a professionally staged Linen Biennale 2018 Fashion Showcase that celebrated both existing and new initiatives within NI’s linen-oriented clothing and textile business community. In promoting innovative product development, primarily from local companies, the showcase celebrated Northern Ireland’s linen heritage and offered exciting ways forward at a time when slower, more sustainable design process must be promoted as a contrast to fast transient fashion.

The event was staged at PRONI Titanic Quarter and celebrated the sustainability of linen and flax fibre in clothing. The focus was on enduring styling for everyday life: clothing that is both elegant and inclusive for a range of figure types and age groups. Collections included work by established designers Maria Cardenas, Graniline, Loft Trading, as well as Celia Homewood (France) Sirpa Morsly (Finland), Claudia Escobar (Scotland) Tara St. James (USA) and from the Showcase host, Jane McCann. Student collections celebrated emerging talent from the China Women’s University, Belfast Metropolitan College, Ulster University and Chelsea College of Art.

The team acknowledges the invaluable support of Arts & Business NI, the British Council, and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in helping to make the showcase happen. The Fashion Showcase provided a stunning catwalk finale to the Linen Biennale 2018, which enabled the partners to showcase Northern Ireland’s indigenous linen heritage and future possibilities.

Golden Thread Gallery has partnered with CastleCourt Shopping Centre (owned by Wirefox Castle Property), to animate a unit with a series of exhibitions and open public workshops for families.

This project was designed to engage the public in free arts-based activities, with the aim of increasing engagement in the arts in an area of high social deprivation. By providing a range of family-friendly workshops, people of all ages, as well as families, are offered an accessible, creative outlet.

“The Golden Thread Unit is an excellent example of how artistic expression can be seamlessly woven into a retail space creating a point of difference in a shopping environment. The additional funding and ongoing support received from Arts & Business NI has not only demonstrated how partnerships can flourish but also provide something different for our shoppers, utilising empty space and adding value to the shopping experience. The Gallery showcases a number of art exhibitions throughout the year and also provides art workshops in the unit, creating engagement and increasing customer dwell time in the centre. This is a win-win partnership and we look forward to working with Arts & Business NI on a number of other projects.”

Binder Tohani, Marketing & Mall Commercialisation Manager, CastleCourt
Drama, music, dance and magic are all underpinned by strong methodologies that can be applied for business Learning and Development outcomes. The arts offer a fresh perspective on employee motivation, leadership and skills development.

Photo: Baker Tilly Mooney Moore staff engagement podcast, delivered with Bounce Culture
It took Arts & Business NI to recognise how a team of creative industry facilitators brought together through DJ experts Bounce Culture could meet the needs of an international accountants and advisory firm, Baker Tilly Mooney Moore (BTMM), to attract new audiences in a creative and engaging way. Twelve months, five podcasts and an Allianz Arts & Business NI Award win later, neither partner has looked back!

Bounce Culture's passion for music, creativity and connecting people meant their collaboration with BTMM was the most natural of fits. Common ground was quickly established, resulting in a pilot scheme, in which the partners collaborated to produce a podcast, featuring industry expert and BTMM consulting partner, Donal Laverty. The resulting feedback from the business and community sectors prompted BTMM to produce a further three thought leadership podcasts featuring BTMM experts.

BTMM also addressed the issue of recruitment, engagement and retention by providing interactive training which prepared graduates to script and deliver a dedicated podcast, exploring their career choices and working life. Capturing interviews with senior management and consultants in the graduate podcasts gave BTMM a fresh and informative insight to the ever-shifting workplace and how it impacts them.

“As an accountancy and advisory firm, we’re operating in a very competitive market. Graduates want to know what it’s like to work in different places and choosing which firm to apply to is a big decision. Hearing first-hand from our graduates through the podcasts has been really powerful. We have just completed a recruitment campaign and have seen an increase in application requests and a greater awareness of the firm.”

Jane Campbell, Marketing Co-ordinator, Baker Tilly Mooney Moore

Both BTMM and Bounce Culture are passionate about attracting and retaining graduate talent in Northern Ireland.

“If young people see a workplace as offering a cool experience, surely that is something that will tip the scales for them. In a wider context, young people need to be convinced they are part of something emerging. The activity has to be relevant to their social environment and co-designed by them.”

Kwa Daniels, Founder & CEO, Bounce Culture

This was the first time that Bank of Ireland UK (BOI UK) worked with Culture Night Belfast, to promote contactless payment in an innovative, creative and fun way. Using the phrase ‘tap pay go’, the partners worked collaboratively to come up with ideas which could bring this to life, present financial services in a fresh and original way whilst capturing the spirit of Culture Night in its tenth anniversary year.

They came up with the idea of BOI UK hosting an attempt to break the Guinness World Record™ for the ‘largest tap dance lesson’ – inspired by how easy it is to make contactless payments with a simple ‘tap’. Staged at the Europa Hotel, the event had 445 participants, including staff from BOI UK, partner companies, Alzheimer’s Society (BOI UK Charity of the Year) and the general public. Participants ranged in age from 2-87 and they successfully managed to break the record. The event received a considerable amount of press coverage and social media traction. Alongside this they staged several BOI UK customer experiences including ‘Culture Night Cabaret’ at the MAC, a trip on Lagan Boat Cruises and a quiet space in a BOI UK branch for Alzheimer’s Society and people living with dementia.

“It was a great experience to work with BOI UK on these projects – the tap event was challenging but extremely rewarding. Our partnership with BOI UK was a real highpoint of Culture Night Belfast 2018”.

Susan Picken, Director, Cathedral Quarter Trust

“We were extremely proud to be a headline sponsor for Culture Night 2018 and a key part of our support was joining forces with Visa to help make it easier for people to make fast, simple and secure contactless payments on the night. We also wanted to embrace the ethos of Culture Night by organising the world’s largest tap dance lesson – which was a fun play on how easy it is to make contactless payments with a simple ‘tap’. We would like to thank everyone who took part, they certainly tapped into the spirit of the event to beat the world record and put Belfast on the world stage.”

Ian Sheppard, Managing Director, Northern Ireland at Bank of Ireland UK
Citi place a high importance on personal health and well-being, inclusion and diversity with five networks in place to support, nurture and celebrate staff, families and clients.

On World Mental Health Day 2018, Citi scheduled a ground breaking on-site performance of Tinderbox's 'The Man Who Fell to Pieces', a production which depicts the invisibility of Mental Health in a visible and practical way, followed by a post-show discussion with the cast. 120 Citi staff attended the performance and Citi’s newly appointed Mental Health Nurse addressed the audience.

The partners agreed to follow up the onsite performance with nine dedicated staff workshops across three Citi offices. Tinderbox’s Perception Programme will focus on the importance of Inclusion and Diversity, providing the opportunity for Citi staff to explore and celebrate their unique identity and place in the world, promoting a strong sense of confidence, health and well-being.

“We were immensely proud to collaborate with Arts & Business NI and Tinderbox to play our part in helping to reduce the stigma attached to Mental Health in Northern Ireland. We had a number of external visitors attend the play on World Mental Health Day which has helped to raise awareness of the great work Arts & Business NI do in Northern Ireland. Thanks to the introduction from Arts & Business NI to Tinderbox, we now have a thriving relationship and are already planning a series of Mental Health Awareness workshops, open to all staff, in 2019”.

Leigh Meyer, Managing Director, Citi Belfast Site Head

Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) have embarked on a new partnership with Belfast Ensemble, a truly innovative staff engagement project entitled ‘Intermezzo’. 20 members of staff will be taught an orchestral instrument for one year, working towards Grade One, offering HSF people the chance not just to develop skills in the musical arena, but also to develop soft skills that are equally complimentary to their legal career such as collaboration, commitment and creativity. In addition, the project will reinforce HSF’s focus on mental health and wellbeing amongst their staff.

Running alongside this, the HSF senior leadership team will receive conducting classes, where they will learn what it means to ‘lead without words’, focusing on non-verbal communication and connection skills, broadening and challenging their perspectives of leadership. The project will culminate in a public performance, where the Belfast Ensemble will be conducted by the HSF senior leadership team, and will be joined by the 20 trainee instrumentalists.

The innovative project will enable HSF to promote their brand whilst also positively impacting levels of staff retention and engagement in the business as a whole.

“Like most businesses, we want to minimise turnover of our people. As business leaders, we have to face the fact that young people in today’s market want more than just the 9-5pm office experience. As competition for good people strengthens, we firmly believe that our Arts and Business partnerships enhance the Herbert Smith Freehills working experience, and secure and enrich our future as a business.”

Gerarda Morton, Legal Manager (Disputes), Herbert Smith Freehills

Written and performed by Carol Moore, ‘The Experience of Being’ is a one-woman play which challenges perceptions of age and explores adjusting to and embracing age and the possibilities for growth and change.

Miskimmin Wealth embarked on their first sponsorship of the Arts by partnering with their client Carol to support ‘I AM’ creative community workshops with U3A Holywood branch. The workshops focused on the theme of Carol’s play, ageing and associated challenges, and worked with people aged 60+.

Miskimmin Wealth places a high focus on staff training; creatively explaining how staff might ‘walk in other people’s shoes’ was of immense interest. Carol conducted a bespoke Miskimmin staff workshop where staff engaged with the artist and the creative process to encourage them to think creatively about problem solving and interactions with clients. The collaboration enabled Miskimmin Wealth to develop a more creative, self-aware team.

“Mark Miskimmin has supported my creative journey with The Experience of Being by inviting staff to engage with me the artist. It provided a platform to discuss creativity in the workplace and to reach out into the community and begin a discussion about ageism in society.”

Carol Moore, Artist

“We have enjoyed being part of Carol’s journey of thinking about age and the value of experience to others. As advisers to a wide range of people we want to continually develop our understanding of their perspectives. This process allowed us to do this. Well done Carol.”

Mark Miskimmin, Managing Director, Miskimmin Wealth

Ulster Bank recognises the need to invest in young people and to help them develop the skills and qualities they need for their education, their future employment and their transition to adult life.

Ulster Bank recently partnered with the Millennium Forum to deliver a unique outreach project, which flipped Ulster Bank’s normal approach on its head. ‘Mentor the Mentor’, supported by Arts & Business NI, provided Ulster Bank staff in Culmore Road the opportunity to learn from young performers on dealing with nerves, performances and pitching, all key skills that are often required in the corporate environment.

“We’re proud to be a key part of the communities that we serve. It’s through supporting initiatives like this with the Millennium Forum that we can really demonstrate meaningful help for our customers. Mentor the Mentor has been really beneficial for our team and I would encourage any organisation with the opportunity to take part to explore how it might work for their business.”

Chris McGuinness, Local Director, Ulster Bank

“Mentor the Mentor was a great example of how people in the business community and young performers can learn from each other in a practical and fun way. The performance in the Culmore Road branch delighted customers and the boardroom workshop enabled the young performers to share their tips on dealing with performance nerves and how they prepare for presentations and auditions”

Cara McCartney, Sponsorship and Development Officer, Millennium Forum
Mark sees the Young Professionals on Arts Boards programme adding to his constantly evolving learning curve, but is also keen to share his knowledge and experience in his adopted new home. Outside of work, Mark enjoys listening to music, reading, swimming, design and technology, as well as travelling.

**Christian Faloon**
**Dale Farm**

Christian Faloon is the Powder Production Manager at Dale Farm, managing milk intake and powder production. Christina graduated from Queen’s University Belfast in 2014 with a first class honours degree in Food Quality, Safety and Nutrition with Professional Studies. During her placement year Christina worked in Marks & Spencer’s head office in London and Scotbeef in Glasgow.

Upon graduating from University, Christina joined Dale Farm as a New Product Development graduate. During her time as a graduate she completed a Chartered Management Institute level 5 certificate in management and leadership through Cardiff University.

Christina comes from a farming background and enjoys travelling and socialising in her spare time.

**Aoife Fee**
**Tourism Northern Ireland**

A former first class honours graduate of the BA (Hons) Hospitality Management programme at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Aoife commenced her career within the sales & marketing department of Mount Juliet Conrad in Co. Kilkenny in 2005.

Following that, she spent over three years as part of the core project management team of a Fáilte Ireland funded project for the Tourism Learning Networks based in WIT, a business development programme for small to medium tourism and hospitality businesses situated throughout the south east and south west of Ireland.

During this time Aoife also had the opportunity to feed into a number of academic publications prepared in the Institute, presenting a number of tourism and hospitality papers at various academic conferences.

Aoife joined Tourism Northern Ireland in 2010 (based in the Dublin office) working as a member of the ROI PR and Marketing team, arranging and organising PR and publicity opportunities and activity for Tourism NI in the ROI market. In 2013, Aoife completed a post graduate Diploma in Public Relations at the Fitzwilliam Institute in Dublin.

In 2017, she transferred from PR to the Business Solutions team within Tourism NI, building and establishing relations with a wide range of domestic and international tour operators and travel trade, closely liaising with Tourism Ireland market offices, participating in international trade missions and promoting Northern Ireland as a tourism destination with a large range of international stakeholders.

A native of Co. Kilkenny, Aoife is currently based in Co. Meath, however her work frequently takes her to Belfast and various other locations throughout Northern Ireland.

**Sean Fitzpatrick**
**Mourne Seafood Ltd**

Sean is currently undertaking his Masters in Human Resource Management (HRM) at Ulster University Business School. Upon completion Sean will also obtain a professional qualification, Associate Membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The focus of the Masters programme is to develop his knowledge and skills within human resource management, training and development or employee relations. Previous learning and development has included completing a degree in sociology at Queen’s University Belfast and a level 5 diploma in HRM at Belfast Metropitan College.

Sean has been able to put his academic knowledge in to practice throughout a number of business disciplines including stakeholder engagement. This has primarily been achieved within his role as Company Director / Operations Manager within Mourne Seafood Ltd and its sister company Belfast Cookery School.

Sean enjoys new challenges, which is something he is currently experiencing within the Belfast Cookery School in relation to social media and online marketing. To enhance his understanding of this communication tool he is currently completing an OCN diploma in digital marketing.

Sean values himself as someone who strives to support others, his experience at senior management level has allowed him to develop his people skills to include building relationships, problem solving and demonstrating a balance between a person centred and task focused approach.

Sean is proud to be a part of the Young Professionals Arts Board Programme. He hopes to contribute his knowledge, skills and experience to the programme and looks forward to the learning and connections it will bring.

**Katherine Hughes**
**Ulster Carpets**

Katherine graduated from University of Leicester in 2011 with a BSc in Communications and Media and went on to study a Diploma in Management Practice from the University of Ulster. Katherine now works as a Marketing Executive within a busy team at Ulster Carpets. With seven years of experience gained in the textile industry she is furthering her love for interiors by studying for a diploma in Interior Design.

She specialises in social media, merchandising, blogging about trends and “making things look pretty”.

In her spare time she loves to “go somewhere and do something. When I’m not travelling my favourite place to be is the North Coast, surfing with friends”.

Katherine is looking forward to finding her place on a board, learn from the experience and meet new people to share some of her skills with.
Tom Hughes  
Queen’s University Belfast  

Tom is a designer, film-maker and musician based in Belfast. Currently leading the video content team in Queen’s University Belfast’s marketing department, he has worked in brand and digital agencies, in-house marketing departments and for arts organisations across Northern Ireland and Ireland. He has performed extensively as a cellist and bass player across the UK and Ireland and is a co-founder of the Ormeau Community Choir.

Patricia Kingston  
Tourism Northern Ireland  

Patricia currently coordinates all corporate and industry events for Tourism Northern Ireland, and has been working in event management within the NI tourism sector for over 10 years.

Prior to taking up her role at Tourism NI, Patricia studied at Queen’s University Belfast, graduating with a Bachelor of Science honours degree in Pure and Applied Mathematics. She then completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Management through the Première Graduate Programme and worked as an account overview officer within the anti-fraud and money laundering team at Northern Bank (now Danske Bank).

She has a passion for travel and exploring new places and cultures, having visited over 15 countries so far and counting. This included living in Thailand for a month after university to teach English to local children and hospitality workers, which ignited an enthusiasm for Tourism when she returned to her home town of Belfast. She is passionate about helping Northern Ireland put its best foot forward via delivering development programmes for the local tourism industry, encouraging them to aspire to become best in class in all they do.

When not working or travelling, Patricia is also a keen DIY fanatic and furniture up-cycler having refurbished her 1920s townhouse herself, with just a little help from the experts. She is always on the look-out for a new skill to learn and recently completed her first patchwork quilt after inheriting a sewing machine from her grandmother.

Ronan Marlow  
Forde Campbell  

Ronan joined the Forde Campbell commercial litigation team in April 2018. Ronan joined from a large commercial firm where he practised in the financial services disputes team. Principal areas of law include:

- Dispute Resolution
- Intellectual Property
- Defamation & Privacy

Ronan originally qualified as a barrister and was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2010. He practised in the areas of criminal and civil law until October 2014, acting in a range of cases at various court levels. Ronan then worked in compliance and legal roles in an international investment bank. Ronan completed the Bar to Solicitor Conversion Course and was admitted as a solicitor of the Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland.

Education:
- Queen’s University, Belfast
- Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Queen’s University, Belfast

Laura McIlvanna  
Dunbia  

Laura is the Group Packaging Developer for Dunbia, strategically managing packaging innovations and finding new technologies to support customers on their journeys to becoming more sustainable. Laura graduated from John Moores University Liverpool with a Bachelor of Arts in Product Design & Digital Modelling. She continues to create and design through her own freelance projects.

Laura moved back home to Northern Ireland in February 2017 after 10 years studying and working in Liverpool. She has gained experiences from different industries, across a range of products. She is very self-motivated and enjoys a challenge.

Laura comes from a musical family and enjoys any live event. She has recently picked up the piano again after years of not playing. In her spare time, she is a keen traveller and enjoys socialising.

Sean O’Grady  
Dale Farm  

Sean works as a Business Development Manager within the ingredients division in Dale Farm having previously worked in the business improvement and supply chain function for 4 years. During this time, he has gained a professional qualification in management from the CMI and a Lean Leadership qualification from the University of Cardiff. Sean also has several years management experience in retail before joining Dale Farm.

Sean studied Business Management (BSc Hons) at Queen’s University graduating in 2013. Outside of work Sean enjoys travelling, socialising with friends and playing golf.

Claire Sharpe  
Tourism Northern Ireland  

With a keen interest in Advertising and Marketing, Claire obtained First Class with Honours in her degree in Marketing at Ulster University before taking on a role in a large Belfast-based agency. Working with a range of clients on a global and local scale to deliver strategic and comprehensive marketing campaigns, she soon developed a curiosity for the developing digital world. Since moving from agency to the client side of marketing, she has established a passion for tourism, in particular developing the skills of the tourism industry to meet the needs of the ever-growing visitor numbers to Northern Ireland.

Claire is a strategic thinker with a desire to work with businesses to utilise developing digital platforms and technologies in order to remove inefficiencies and complexities, and reinvent the Digital Experience.
At Arts & Business NI everything we do aims towards getting the arts and business sectors to work together. For over 35 years the A&B NI Board Matching programmes have recruited, trained and placed business people with the boards of local Arts organisations.

**Noyona Chundur**
Head of Campaigns & Digital Solutions at Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI), was placed on to the Board of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (CQAF) via the Arts & Business NI Board Bank programme. As a passionate lover of the arts Noyona felt that experience on an arts Board would not only build her leadership skills but would help her make a positive contribution to the sector.

Now Chair of CQAF, Noyona observes “Being on the CQAF Board hasn’t been without challenge. Arts organisations have big ambitions but typically are small operations that run a tight ship, with income and funding secured annually, leaving little room for strategic planning. You get to meet incredibly talented, passionate and creative people, who know their craft inside out, but who have also had to deal with some hard knocks along the way given the backdrop of diminishing funding for the arts. CQAF was no exception, so early on I decided my focus would be to help build long-term sustainability by improving strategic direction, governance, resilience and succession planning.”

Noyona continues “There is no doubt that the Arts & Business NI Board Bank helped to hone my leadership skills and augment my track record. Invest NI has also seen benefits; as a member of their senior leadership team, I lead cross-cutting strategies for the Northern Ireland economy, deliver against both Programme for Government and corporate scorecard targets, and develop resources and capability to drive business transformation.”

**Aaron Roddy**
Assistant Solicitor at Carson McDowell who was placed on to the Board of thrive says “From a professional perspective I have further developed many skills which are complimentary to a career in legal practice. For example, the strategic and critical thinking which is required on a board carries over to the advice which I provide to my clients in private practice. I have also grown in confidence from stepping out of my comfort zone and continuing my own professional development. Finally, from a personal perspective, I enjoyed the training and the friendships I formed with my fellow Young Professionals and hope that those relationships will continue throughout my career.”

**Wayne Nickels**
Partner Cunningham Coates Stockbrokers says “Arts & Business NI Board Matching programmes benefit the future of your firm as well as empowering your employees with additional skills and knowledge. It also allows the business to give back to the Arts community” says Wayne Nickels, Partner, Cunningham Coates Stockbrokers who are active supporters of our matching programmes. “We have a strong people focus, wanting to recruit - and more importantly retain - the best talent for the future”.

**Margaret Henry**
Chief Executive, thrive is another advocate for our programmes. “We have been involved for 10 years in A&B NI’s Young Professionals programmes, as it’s a great source of new and fresh voices to add to the balance across the board. We know we will always get a high calibre of board members who are well trained, so they are clear about their role and responsibilities when joining the board. It also helps that the A&BNI team know thrive and our ethos as an organisation so they can match up with young professionals that fit, which is great.”

If you would like to find out more about our Board Matching programmes, please contact Tania Carlisle, Development Manager on t.carlisle@artsandbusinessni.org.uk
We’re not just an ‘and’ or an ‘also’. We help the arts prosper and businesses grow. We set up dynamic collaborations and initiate creative partnerships. We add value and differentiation. We inspire and innovate.

& usually means ‘and’, but to our members, it means more.

To discover how much we could mean to your business, call our membership manager Maeve McKervey on 028 9073 5151 or email m.mckervey@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

www.artsandbusinessni.org.uk