Improving welfare for all and promoting Irish culture
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@IrishinLuton
LutonIrish
Luton Irish Forum provides services and activities that support people to improve the quality of their life and wellbeing. We achieve this through a combination of welfare support, social and cultural activities and events.

Welfare support is given through information, advice and guidance at appointments and home visits relating to welfare benefits and relating housing and debt issues, applications for Irish Passports and representation at medicals and tribunals.

We coordinate a range of activities, groups and events which raise cultural awareness including St. Patrick’s Festival, The Emerald Pipe Band, Irish Language Classes, a Literary Society, Calligraphy Group and Art Class on a regular basis as well as additional cultural seminars and workshops throughout the year.

We facilitate social opportunities through our Computer Club, Tuesday and Wednesday Clubs, Tea & Chat, and Baby & Toddler Group.

In addition, we manage an information website This is Luton for young Irish and Polish people who are considering moving to, or who have just arrived in, Luton. We also manage Catching the Boat, an HLF-funded online archive showcasing the working lives of Irish people who settled in Luton from 1940 to 1960.

Working with partners we offer further opportunities that locals can take advantage of, such as yoga, dance, a diabetes self-help group, a 50+ Job Club and an East European drop-in advice and casework service.

We improve awareness and understanding of the Irish community’s experience to the wider public through engaging in research requests and responding to opportunities to promote emigrant and diaspora experience.
The Team

Staff

Noelette Hanley  
Chief Officer

Ewa Depka  
Operations Manager

Nicola McLaughlin  
Welfare Case Supervisor

Mary Fitzmaurice  
Welfare Case Officer

Heather Roy  
Welfare Case Officer

Jackie Humfrey  
Welfare Service Support Worker

Joanne O’Reilly  
Customer Services Officer

Janet Brennan  
Volunteer Officer

Pat Wallace  
Cleaner

Fiona Martin  
Commissioned Youth and Heritage Officer

Majella Morrin  
Post Grad Student Placement

Flora Mtulo  
Post Grad Student Placement

Fiona Doyle  
Student Placement

Caitlin Strain  
Student Placement
The Team

Healthwatch

Lucy Nicolson
Chief Operating Officer

Terri Brooks
Volunteer and Engagement Officer

Lisa Herrick
Project and Support Officer

Trustees

Tom Scanlon
Chair

Frank Horan
Vice Chair

Marion Curtis
Secretary

Pauline Sylvester
Treasurer

Noreen Kellett
Trustee

Mick Maguire
Trustee

Siobhan Rooney
Trustee

Karl Sylvester
Trustee

Joe Ward
Trustee

Mary Winter
Trustee
Our objectives

To relieve persons in need, poverty or distress, particularly, but not exclusively, of Irish descent, through the provision of advice and information concerning health and benefits as well as other support.

To advance the education of the public, particularly in Irish music, drama, arts, the Irish language, and through the holding of an annual St Patrick's Day festival.

Other charitable purposes, particularly the provision of facilities for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively for persons of Irish descent in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the life conditions and wellbeing of those persons in need of such facilities.

Strategic aims for 2016 – 2019

**Improve welfare/quality of life for local vulnerable people**

- Increase capacity of the welfare service.
- Maintain thisisluton.com (an information resource for new Irish and Polish arrivals).
- Develop the use of AdvicePro (customer relationship management system) to monitor trends and non-financial outcomes.

**Promote and retain Irish culture**

- Review St. Patrick's Festival programme in response to decreased resources.
- Secure Heritage Lottery Funding to enable us to engage with second and third generation Irish.

**Other**

- Develop partnerships with Irish business and organisations engaging with second and third generation.
- Develop a wider programme of regular high quality activities to increase engagement.
- Achieve PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) level two quality mark.
- Achieve AQS (Advice Quality Standard) level two quality mark.
- Develop a membership package with benefits provided by local businesses.
It gives me great pleasure to report to you on another successful year at the Luton Irish Forum.

My thanks go to the combined team of volunteers, staff, students, trustees and members for their continued efforts during the past year delivering exceptional outcomes – making us all very proud to serve LIF.

The board of 10 trustees continues to drive the innovative and dynamic work of LIF, despite the challenging climate facing the voluntary sector. Examples of the achievements of LIF during the past year is highlighted in some of the headlines we have been making!

His Excellency, Ambassador Adrian O’Neill hosted our 20th anniversary celebrations at the Embassy of Ireland in February. In celebration of our 20th year, a short film was produced which tells the story of our beginning and showcases our current services and activities. It can be viewed on our channel on YouTube. We are very grateful to the Ambassador for hosting this momentous occasion.

Our welfare service successfully passed the Advice Quality Standard (AQS), a nationally recognised quality mark for organisations like ours providing free independent advice to members of the public. We were delighted to be awarded a 5-year National Lottery grant to enable us to increase our welfare and social inclusion services offer to improve health and wellbeing and reduce loneliness in old age.

We continued with our cultural programme, which commenced with an address and book launch by the well-known lecturer and historian Dr Ivan Gibbons.

Our second annual afternoon tea was held at Putteridge Bury marking the conclusion of an exciting and informative project celebrating the centenary of the first women gaining the right to vote in Great Britain. A group of attendees also joined international development and women’s rights activist and writer Helen Pankhurst in celebrating International Women’s Day in London in March.
Luton St Patrick’s Festival 2018 went ahead despite severe weather conditions. The Festival offered an exciting mix of live music, dancing and a comedy drama. I extend a special thank you to Pat Wallace and his team of stewards, Fiona Martin, Commissioned Youth and Heritage Officer and Luton Culture for last minute assistance.

The Literary Society and Pipe Band continues to entertain us, demonstrating the wealth of talent within their membership. This year Farrell Gallagher decided to step down after a long and valued relationship with the Pipe Band. The LIF Choir were amazing at the Embassy celebrations and their contribution to the St Patrick’s Festival is unrivalled in any Irish community in Britain.

The Calligraphy, Art and Irish Language Classes, Computer Club, Tea & Chat and Baby & Toddler continue to flourish as do the Tuesday and Wednesday Clubs, which have a series of outings planned for 2018. However, new members are always welcome.

We supported several national research and campaign initiatives. We hosted a Women Against State Pension Inequality meeting which is campaigning for fair transitional arrangements for women born in the 1950s who have had their pension age moved for up to six years with no consultation. We engaged members of the Irish and wider communities to contribute to research which will feed into policy briefs that will be submitted to the Department for Exiting the European Union to show the impact of Brexit for everyone in the UK. Finally, we contributed to the Irish government Emigrant Support Programme Grantee Survey.

Further to the tendering process Healthwatch Luton has become Independent as part of a consortium with Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch since 1st of April 2018. We wish them continued success over the next four years and will remain working in close partnership for the benefit of the people of Luton.

It is often said that LIF volunteers are brilliant – now its official with our volunteers being nominated for several awards during the year. Marion Curtis was nominated in the Community Cohesion awards. Frank Horan, founder member, long standing trustee, member of LIF literary society, Irish drama enthusiast and organiser of Luton St Patrick’s Festival for many years, was awarded the High Sherriff Citizenship Award for 2018. In addition, all LIF volunteers were nominated in the group section.

In conclusion I would like to pay tribute to our Chief Officer Noelette Hanley and all her staff for their support and dedication to duty over the past 12 months. Thank you all.
Our Service

Annually

956 people benefitted directly from our services
- 684 people accessed our welfare service – 54% identify as Irish.
- 272 people attended our social clubs – 3 of 4 attendees are Irish.

5,000+ attended Luton St Patrick’s Festival 2018

500 members – 78% are Irish.

We organise and facilitate several other events at our site and across Luton throughout the year, the majority of which are free to attend. This year, these included our annual Literary Society Evening, Afternoon Tea, Indian Cooking Classes, Drama Performances, Film Nights and Cultural Seminars. As some of these are public events we don't collect detailed personal information, but data gathered shows we engaged between 30 and 400 local people at each event.

Monthly

1,923 people visited us
- 1180 visits to reception
- 743 club attendances

1417 contacts were made via calls, mail and in person at our reception – 47% welfare and 53% non-welfare issues

9 other non-LIF activities

“We offer a choice of activities to keep healthy and active, whether it's attending a club or volunteering. Through our events and activities we encourage a more vibrant sense of community and of Irish identity. We help people to maximise income and become financially independent through information, advice and guidance.”

Noelette Hanley, Chief Officer
Partnerships

Luton Irish Forum is a member of Luton Access together with Luton Citizens Advice Bureau [CAL], Luton Rights, Luton Law Centre and Luton Borough Council. We sit on the Luton Action Against Poverty Forum and Older Persons Partnership Board. We are a voluntary sector representative on the local authority Welfare Reform Board and Universal Credit Task and Finish Group.

Locally we work with:

- Cambridge Community Services NHS Trust,
- Comhaltas,
- Consultants,
- East London Foundation Trust,
- Gaelic Athletic Association teams,
- GPs,
- Housing Officers,
- Job Centre Plus,
- Luton Borough Council teams,
- Luton Culture,
- Noah Enterprise,
- Penrose Trust,
- Polish British Integration Centre,
- The Probation Service,
- The Safer Luton Partnership,
- TOKKO Youth Space,
- Shri Guru Ravidaas Sangat,
- Southbank University,
- University of Bedfordshire.

Nationally we work with Irish in Britain and Traveller Movement. We are a founder member of the Irish Support Partnership, a network of Irish voluntary organisations working in partnership to increase the capacity of each other’s organisations, and for the benefit the Irish and wider community in Britain including Irish in Britain, Traveller Movement, the Irish Chaplaincy, Irish Counselling and Psychotherapy, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, Irish Community Care Merseyside, Irish Community Services, London and Irish in Birmingham.

“Whether this is through social, creative or physical activity, work, or belonging to some form of community group... these forms of participation contribute to in excess of 20 per cent of wellbeing.”

A summary of Age UK’s Index of Wellbeing in Later Life
We provide information, advice and advocacy on welfare benefits, housing, returning to Ireland, Irish Pensions, Irish passports, access to health and social care services, and housing and benefit related debt. The service is delivered through one-to-one appointments, telephone, email and social media from our fully accessible centre, and in people's homes if required. We also attend benefit appeals, support our clients at face-to-face assessments for their benefit and attend appointments with the DWP at various locations. The staff undertake case work for clients including form filling, letter writing, preparing for and attending appeals and making representation to local and national government departments on someone's behalf.”

Nicola McLaughlin, Welfare Case Supervisor

Of the 684 individuals we helped directly, 48% were female and 52% male. The largest age group accessing the service is 50-64-year olds (43% of clients). This is because this group are significantly affected by changes to welfare benefits such as having to be reassessed for sickness and disability benefits more regularly, the increase in female state pension age and the increase in qualifying age for Pension Credit. The next largest age range was over 65s (24% of clients), 16% were 35-49 and 17% were under 35.
Some 70% of our work is welfare benefits related, of which 75% is related to disability and sickness benefits. The next most common area of enquiry is housing, a large amount of our work in this area is people looking for help to secure more suitable accommodation, often due to health issues or affordability either related to welfare reform or a significant rent increase. These people would be those unable to access alternative accommodation without our support, which in turn can lead to eviction and/or deterioration in health and well-being.

In December 2017 we were audited for the Advice Quality Standard with Case Work (Welfare Benefits) and successfully maintained the standard. Also, in December, we were awarded the Irish Youth Foundation Annual Quality Award in recognition of ‘excellent service provision to the young Irish people of Luton and surrounding counties.’

Case Studies

Daniel is a young Irish man who has been living on handouts from family members for many months because he has been unable to find work. Daniel was offered employment but needed to be able to travel to a nearby town for the first week until he got his first wages. He approached us on the recommendation of a friend.

We were able to take the time to interview Daniel, confirm the employment and secure a travel pass for his first week of commuting, he had approached other services but had not been able to access the right support. Daniel moved into employment, not only improving his own health and well-being but that of the family members on low incomes who were supporting him.

Kevin is a young Irish Traveller with severe mental health issues, his wife is his full-time carer. They are both in their early 20s and his wife has moved to the UK from Ireland to be with him. Both Kevin and his wife have very poor levels of literacy because they did not attend school consistently, they need help with any official letters and form filling.

We were able to support Kevin and his wife to reapply for sickness and disability benefit, so they are receiving what they are entitled to. We also managed to secure backdating of Carers Allowance for his wife.

Joe is an older Irish man who approached our service to resolve an issue with Employment Support Allowance (ESA) after he made a claim for benefit when he had to stop work through ill health.

We contacted ESA and sought clarification on what Joe could claim as his wife was already in receipt of ESA. We completed a benefit check for Joe and his wife and identified that they might both be eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Joe and his wife were supported to make the claims, complete the forms and attend their face to face assessments.

Both claims were originally turned down. When we challenged these decisions, a successful award was made. We then supported Joe to claim Carers Allowance. The couple are now £135 a week better off and more able to meet basic needs such as heating and decent food.
What Our Clients Said

Prior to engaging with our service

62% said the issues were very much causing them to be anxious, irritable or stressed.

72% felt that the issues were causing them to visit the GP more often.

74% said the issues were causing them to stay indoors more than they would like.

78% were losing sleep.

78% were down or depressed.

After engaging with our service

72% said that they had not accessed another service before coming to us.

80% said because of our support their health had maintained or improved.

82% said our support helped them remain independent.

92% acted on the advice to resolve the issue.

98% said because of engaging with the service they could deal with the issue and feel more in control.

100% said they knew more about what they should do.

100% said they would recommend us to family or friends.

“My life completely turned around.”

“Absolutely brilliant very helpful.”

“An angel sent to help me.”

“A valuable part of the community.”

“More help in my first meeting than from the Jobcentre.”

“Fabulous ... a tremendous service for the people of Luton, the staff are helpful and treat you with dignity.”

“People in the lowest wellbeing group are more likely to report being on means-tested benefits, having poor health and low satisfaction with local services. These challenges however, are compounded because their family, friends and community networks are likely to be small to non-existent, meaning that they are less likely to receive informal support to mediate the adverse effects of their health and financial difficulties.”

A summary of Age UK’s Index of Wellbeing in Later Life
“The Festival is organised by Luton Irish Forum staff and a team of volunteers. The St Patrick’s Festival Parade which falls on the Sunday now attracts thousands of spectators. First held in Luton in 2000, the parade and other events have become one of the leading celebrations in the Luton cultural calendar, bringing Irish music, dance and drama to the streets and entertainment venues of Luton. The Festival showcases the very best, featuring artists and groups from both sides of the Irish Sea – many of them champions in their specific craft. Planning and the event itself includes the following elements: Luton St Patrick’s Festival Brochure – School Workshops – Community Events – Choir rehearsals & Sean O’Riada (Irish sung) Masses – Celebrations on St Patrick’s Day – Drama Performances – and the actual Parade Day of Luton St Patrick’s Festival.”

Mick Maguire, Chair of Luton St Patrick’s Festival
Luton St Patrick’s Festival again delivered an exciting mix of live music, dancing and a comedy drama. Organised mainly by Luton Irish Forum volunteers and staff volunteering their time, it ran from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th March.

Friday featured two hilarious live performances of the acclaimed comedy drama, A Wake in The West, by Cliffoney Dramatic Society in the Library Theatre. This proved to be one of the most popular productions Luton Irish Forum has ever hosted. Typical is this comment from the sold-out evening performance “It was a wonderful show – hope they come back next year”.

Saturday provided a choice of excellent live music and dance at Luton Irish Forum for the St Patrick’s Day Celebration. The Devine Family played traditional Irish music, Eugene Doonan sang Irish country, The Wilsons Show performed a mix of rock and party hits, and the Finbarr Conway Academy of Irish Dancing showcased talented local dancers. The day ended with a spectacular set of traditional music and dancing from the Galway Trad Group.

Due to extreme weather conditions, the Sunday programme was changed at short notice. Unfortunately, the annual parade was cancelled but the main outdoor stage acts were successfully accommodated in the Hat Factory. The Town Hall hosted the annual presentation of shamrock and was attended by a host of dignitaries including Celine Byrne from the Irish Embassy. The volunteers, staging company BT Events, Luton Culture and the wider community responded with overwhelming support and rallied round to keep the show on the road.

Local DJ and Diverse FM presenter Jim Carway was MC for the day, with headline acts including the renowned Tommy Fleming, the multi-talented Rigs and Jeels, and one of Luton St Patrick’s Festival favourites, The BibleCode Sundays. In The Mall, it was business as usual, and the line-up included top class performances from The Wilsons Show, Crosskeys, Ramridge Primary School Choir, Galway Trad Group, and several local Irish dancing schools.

One of the performers (The Wilsons Show) said “Now that has been one hell of a weekend! The Irish Forum team did a superb job of organising and reorganising an outstanding few days. Great entertainment all weekend!”

Festival attendee (Deputy Leader of Luton Borough Council) commented “Great St Patrick’s day celebrations in Luton. Pubs packed, queuing outside, Guinness running out! Great for Local businesses and great for Luton people! Well done all!”

“Engagement in creative and cultural activities makes the highest contribution of 5.75 per cent to one’s overall wellbeing... Social and civic participation and creative and cultural participation are all important, together making up almost 1/8th of total wellbeing in later life. This suggests that active engagement with the world around you is hugely important to us all, whether you go to the opera or participate in a community group.”

A summary of Age UK’s Index of Wellbeing in Later Life
Social Clubs

LIF ran a wide variety of activities and clubs throughout the year that provided opportunities for people of all ages to socialise and to enjoy affordable and culturally appropriate activities in a welcoming and safe environment. In addition, other community groups along with health and wellbeing organisations used the LIF centre for both regular and one-off events, ranging from yoga and social dancing to coping with diabetes and a film club.

LIF activities alone attracted more than 150 people to the centre each week, plus many more attending events such as our literary society evenings and book launches. New members are welcome at all our groups.

**Computer Club**

Adults of any age from complete novices, are supported weekly with accessing the internet and learning online skills. In the past year this has included setting up email accounts, using social media to keep in touch with family and friends, downloading/uploading pictures, shopping safely online, and finding local services.

**Genealogy**

One-to-one advice and support enables people born in Ireland and those with Irish ancestors to trace their Irish roots.

**Tuesday & Wednesday Clubs**

Especially popular with seniors, these clubs offered companionship along bingo and raffles, bread and tea, soup in the winter, and regular chicken & chip lunches. Members also enjoyed days out to the seaside and to a Christmas market.

**Tea & Chat**

In addition to what the name says, this weekly group welcomed regular speakers and presentations as varied as accessing health services to entertainment by a local magician!

**Choir**

Includes both men and women. The Choir particularly enjoys singing in Gaelic and was invited to perform at dozens of events throughout the year, including at a reception at the Embassy of Ireland.
Irish Language
Beginners and advanced – Non-speakers and those who learned at school but haven’t spoken Irish for decades successfully developed their spoken and written skills together in small and friendly groups.

Literary Society
The engine behind many cultural events last year; one of the Society’s popular entertainment evenings featured a short drama written and acted by Society Members.

Pipe Band
Men and women performed at events throughout the year, including playing together with other pipe bands. Just one of the prestigious events our Pipe Band was invited to play at was our 20th Anniversary celebrations at the Embassy of Ireland.

Baby & Toddler Group
Little ones up to five years old plus their mum, dad, grandparent or guardian enjoyed activities such as play, story time, dance, music, arts & crafts (including messy painting!), and seed planting. Healthy light snacks and drinks are provided, and the group welcomed occasional guest speakers on topics of particular interest.

Art Class
This group welcomed adults of any age and ability, or no ability. They enjoyed sketching, painting and more, with support and advice on hand from an experienced group leader and other group members, producing several superb artworks.

Calligraphy Group
In addition to members producing individual pieces of highly decorative lettering, the group worked together on banners and other larger projects last year. The stunningly decorative certificates commemorating LiPs Founder Members, presented by the Ambassador of Ireland at the 20th Anniversary Celebrations, were created by a calligraphy group member.
Near Neighbours funded a project for 12-19-year olds, exploring social messages in street art from around the world. We welcomed Fiona and Caitlin to the project as part of their student placements for their Youth and Community degree courses. The project aimed to empower young people to develop and make artwork and social media campaigns that promote positive messages and ideas. Young people from different communities in Luton worked together to gain an understanding of each other’s cultures, religions and views, including exploring murals and street art from countries who have experienced conflict such as Northern Ireland. Young people learnt how political artwork can have positive and negative effects on communities. They developed artworks about subjects they wish to comment on including:

- how the prospect of student debt is impacting young people’s aspirations to continue to higher education;
- how eastern European communities aspire to speaking several languages;
- how important language is to personal and cultural identity;
- how social media has impacted on friendship;
- how modern technology has made keeping connections with home easier;
- how the tradition of drinking tea and coffee brings people together and how the coffee industry is cashing in on our traditions.

In partnership with Tokko Youth Space we secured funding to deliver a young person’s evening drop in at Ahh Geek Out – Gaming Shop in High Town.
February 2018 marked the centenary of the first Women (those aged over 30 who met a property qualification) and all men over 21 achieving the right to vote. The Representation of the People Act 1918 was only partial suffrage, but it was a victory which propelled the ongoing fight for gender parity. The suffrage movement evolved across the world in places as diverse as India, Ireland and America.

In celebration of the centenary of at least some women gaining the right to vote in Great Britain and Ireland, we created The Vote Project.

Through a series of six free workshops, participants gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the role of women in the early suffragette movement in the 20th century and their contribution to gaining rights for women in their communities. The project engaged women predominantly, but was also attended by men, from the British, Irish and Indian communities in Luton. Through meeting and sharing history, experiences and views, participants gained a greater sense of value for the women who came before them. They also gained a better understanding of European and Indian cultural and religious perspectives of the roles and rights of women and learn more about their current rights and the laws that protect them.

Many participants from an Irish Catholic background who attended the workshops commented that they gained a lot more knowledge of Irish suffragettes and their relationship with the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland 100 years ago. Many commented that it made them question and/or change their perceptions of the Protestant community. One participant noted “I feel ashamed that I have never bothered to look at it from the other side.”

To mark the end of this exciting project we hosted Afternoon Tea at Putteridge Bury country mansion in Luton. A large and diverse group of both women and men attended the event and listened to our guest speaker, Dr Helen Pankhurst – great-granddaughter of suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst, and a leading women’s rights campaigner. Dr Pankhurst shared reflections of Luton Irish Forum members and other women who are included in her newly released book ‘Deeds not Words’ which charts how women’s lives have changed over the last century.

Attendees of the afternoon tea commented:

“I learned lots of new and very interesting information – it should be taught in schools.”
Philomena Cordwell

“Really inspiring and leaves me wanting to learn more.”
Anne Coombes

“It was great to attend with my mum and be able to discuss women’s issues over different generations.”
Rachel Hopkins

“I never knew how it involved other countries or cultures.”
Jane McKenzie
20th Anniversary Celebrations

His Excellency, Ambassador Adrian O’Neill hosted Luton Irish Forum’s 20th anniversary celebrations at the Embassy of Ireland on 8th February.

The Mayor of Luton Cllr Mohammad Ayub, Cllr Hazel Simmons, Cllr Aslam Khan, Lord Bill McKenzie, the High Sherriff of Bedford and Robin Porter from London Luton Airport Limited were in attendance amongst a packed room of members, staff, trustees, volunteers, stakeholders and sponsors.

The crowd were treated to excellent performances from Luton Irish Forum’s Choir and Emerald Pipe Band and a group of traditional musicians from Comhaltas that regularly support Luton Irish Forum activities and events. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of certificates to founder members and the families of late founder members.

A member commented “You should be so proud of all your achievements, building on what was started in such a small way 20 years ago. You have built up such an amazing team and there was such joy and happiness at this exciting and momentous event this evening. I have to say I was especially proud of the pipe band. They really do make it all so special. Thank you for your commitment and hard work, it is so appreciated.”

A stakeholder commented “Many thanks for a superb evening; a true testament to the strength and vitality of the Forum.”

Tom Scanlon, Chair of Luton Irish Forum said “We are indebted to our founding members, sponsors and all those who have supported the Forum during the last 20 years to become one of the most progressive and diverse organisations in Britain. I wish to place on record our gratitude to Ambassador Adrian O’Neill and the staff at the Embassy of Ireland for providing us with long lasting memories of a very special event.”

(L-R) Adrian O’Neill, Ambassador of Ireland, Cllr Hazel Simmons, Council Leader, Cllr Aslam Khan and Cllr Mohammad Ayub, Mayor of Luton.
Sam Gregory-Manning, grandson of founder John Manning.

Billy Griffin, founder member.

Sylvia McCafferty, daughter of founder John McCafferty.

John Hutcheson, founder member.

Frank Horan, founder member.

Joe Ward, founder member.

Noreen Kellett, founder member.

Seamus Mernagh, founder member.

Lauren Singleton, granddaughter of founders Tom & Francis Bourke.
Farrell Gallagher, with encouragement from lifelong friend and long-standing trustee Frank Horan formed Luton Irish Forum’s Emerald Pipe Band in 2003.

Farrell worked tirelessly with his band mates to make it a great success starting with the first bag pipe lesson at the drill hall in June 2003, followed by drum lessons in January 2005. They also worked hard to raise funding for the running costs of the band including tutoring, uniforms and equipment.

Once they had the got their uniforms they practised hard to make their debut performance at St Patrick’s Parade Day 2007. The pipe band played at 10 events alone that year.

The pipe band have played free of charge at hundreds of community events since, in Luton, London, Dublin and France and are the pride of Luton Irish Forum.

Farrell officially stood down this year and there was a special event organised by the Pipe Band to thank him for his outstanding 14-year contribution. The tributes poured in!

“Farrell has done marvellously for community cohesion in Luton and it was a wonderful opportunity to perform our African fusion with the band.”

Maria Lovell, The Ghana Society

“Farrell has certainly created a Legacy by founding the Band. Many in Luton and Bedfordshire have benefited from their Band. As the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, I appreciate their performance at my Garden Party which was truly enjoyed by all the guests.”

Vinod Tailor,
High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2017-18

“Farrell is a valued member of the Glen Trew Pipe Band and he has put in a lot of effort over the years with both the Luton Irish Forum Pipe Band and the Glen Trew. He has been part of several memorable occasions with us such as: The passing of the Olympic Torch relay and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations. We have loved every second of being within Farrell’s presence and it will be very sad to see him step down. Farrell is a very talented piper and we hope he continues to play in his spare time. We will miss you Farrell and hope to see your friendly face at some of our future events to bless us with your lucky Irish charm! Best of luck Farrell. Lots of Love, the Glen Trew Pipe Band!”

“Luton, like any town, is dependent upon a vast army of volunteers who give of their time, energy and passion to help others. Whether supporting vulnerable people, encouraging children in fun, play and learning or contributing to our vibrant cultural mix, it is individuals who contribute so much to the diverse town we call home. Music plays an important role in bringing people together to listen, perform and enjoy. The Irish community with its deep traditions and love for melody, knows this well and on behalf of everyone I would like to thank Farrell Gallagher for his commitment over the years to the Luton Irish Forum Emerald Pipe Band. I know how much he has been valued by so many and I wish him every success as he passes on the musical baton to others.”

Mayor of Luton, Cllr Mohammad Ayub
Statement Of Financial Activities

(incorporating an income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31st March 2018

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<td>983</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>7,975</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,975</td>
<td>13,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74,734</td>
<td>379,373</td>
<td>454,107</td>
<td>441,553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure on charitable activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct charitable expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Net income/(expenditure)            | (33,953)             |
| Transfers between funds             | (13,200)             |
| Net movement in funds               | (47,153)             |

| Reconciliation of funds             |
| Total funds brought forward         | 262,347              |
| Total funds carried forward         | 215,194              |

Continuing operations
All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.
Acknowledgements

Photos supplied by
Christine Sosnowski
Hannah Fishwick
Mal McNally
Victoria Moyo
Vince Shuel

Thank you to our volunteers
“We wouldn't be able to do half of what we do without such a great team of volunteers. Our volunteers support key operations such as reception, administration, finance, event management, gardening and caretaking. They enable us to offer a dozen different social and cultural activities every month. These include elders, baby and toddler groups, art and calligraphy classes, computer club, pipe band, choir, Irish language classes and more. They help us to promote Irish culture to second and third generation Irish people and are absolutely essential to planning, promoting and running the annual Luton St Patrick's Festival. Each week they contribute more than 100 hours and that's not counting all the time planning and organising the St Patrick's Festival. We are truly indebted to them.”

Janet Brennan, Volunteer Officer

Thank you to our funders, partners and sponsors.
With your support, we can enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve in a more rich, successful and meaningful way.