

8 April 2025

Dear Christine,

The John Hewitt Society is pleased to inform you that the John Hewitt International Summer School of Literature & the Arts Festival (JHISS) will take place this year from **Monday 28th July to Saturday 2nd August 2025** at our festival base in The Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre, Armagh. In 2024 we were delighted to receive support for a bursary award for Mid Ulster District Council residents. We are now writing to invite the Council to participate in the JHISS 2025 Community bursary scheme.

Inspired by the Belfast poet John Hewitt's ideas and ideals, the Summer School provides those with a passion for writing (creative, poetry, prose, journalism), social justice, peacebuilding and global politics with a unique and inspiring experience. It features lectures, discussions, and debates that address themes that strongly resonate here in Northern Ireland as well as globally.

Now more than ever, we need to provide and grow spaces that are multi-partial and offer the wider community the opportunity to meet, listen, reflect and create new ways together. In addition to expanding their creative capacity and networks, participants at JHISS have the chance to engage with participants and speakers from diverse nations, backgrounds, and perspectives, helping them explore issues of difference and tolerance, and expand their understanding of identity and belonging.

This year, despite the ongoing cost challenges faced by society, and the arts and charitable sectors, we have been able to maintain the rate for bursary students at £550. I hope that the Council will recognise the massive benefit of supporting residential bursary places at the JHISS in Armagh, and the unique opportunity to encourage local writers whose personal circumstances put them at a disadvantage.

A full sponsored residential bursary award per person provides the following;

- Free tickets to all programmed events including talks, recitals, gallery exhibitions, networking events, interviews and plays.
- Creative writing workshop course of choice, with 6 hours free tuition over 3 days.
- B&B for five nights in a single ensuite room, within walking distance of the venue.
- Invitation to all receptions.
- Morning break refreshments.

While the cost of a bursary fee this year is £550 per person, the actual value is much higher at £713.50 as outlined below:

- Accommodation - £350
- Tickets - £268.50
- Creative writing workshop course of choice, with 6 hours free tuition over 3 days - £70
- Morning break refreshments - £25

The JHISS 2025 theme (attached) is:

Our Country Also: Difference and Belonging

*This is our country also, nowhere else;
and we shall not be outcast on the world*

John Hewitt: The Colony (1949)

This year JHISS will feature a number of talks, recitals, performances and workshops including Professor Peter Shirlow, conflict journalist and author Sally Hayden, a tribute to the recently deceased Michael Longley, talk and interviews with crime writer Ian Rankin, performances of new plays “Grace” and Lisdoon Nirvana”, and workshops with world recognised poets and authors to name but a few.

Online applications for the JHISS 2025 Community Bursary Award Scheme will open towards the end of April for one month. It will be marketed across multiple media channels, networks and organisations and will include acknowledgement of all supporters and funders. We will ensure that you receive the marketing material to help promote the scheme and the festival across your Borough.

We hope that you know how valued your investment over the years has been and we thank you for your understanding and continued support. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



David Price

Director

The John Hewitt Society

The John Hewitt Society - Individual report for your Funder:

Dean Black Mid Ulster Council

I wasn't sure what I set out to achieve at the JHISS other than to take myself seriously as a writer and I think the exposure to so many emerging and established voices has allowed me to do just that. For me, this is the core takeaway from the weekend alongside establishing core friendships with people from a variety of backgrounds. As a queer man, it was reassuring to see that there were many minority groups that were in receipt of the bursary including other queer bursary recipients and people of colour. As someone who is not from a writing background - I am an architect - and who hasn't engaged with poetry much before, I found it really surprising that poetry came most naturally to me as a way of writing within the writing workshops. I felt like this has opened up a part of my skill set that I am excited about and has the potential to really enhance my current writing skills. The short timed writing activities used in the workshop are definitely going to be useful for me in my future writing journey. I have also gained new skills around public speaking and question making that I was not overly confident in before. Overall, the thematics of the talks and workshops of the week around 'living with strangers' was really inspiring and has taught me of the nuances and complexity of what it means to in and with the world around us. These I find are not only important for my writing journey but for how I go about living on this tricky yet beautiful island.

BELFAST TRADFEST BURSARY SCHEME

SPONSOR A YOUNG MUSICIAN

ETHOS

Removing financial barriers for young musicians to access to world-class traditional music tuition.

BENEFITS TO RECIPIENT

This week-long immersive program enables students to learn from world-class musicians, participate in workshops, perform at iconic venues like Belfast Cathedral, and build lifelong connections within the traditional music community.

BENEFITS TO SPONSOR

You will receive complimentary concert tickets, social media recognition, and an invitation to a photocall drinks reception, opportunity for PR opportunities.

Make a lasting impact on the lives of aspiring young musicians and contribute to the future of our traditional music heritage.

Hi Catherine,

I hope you're well.

I'm reaching out to invite you to be part of an exciting opportunity to support the next generation of young musicians.

Through the **Belfast TradFest Bursary Scheme**, we aim to help talented young traditional musicians attend the **Belfast Summer School of Traditional Music**, taking place from **27 Jul – 1 Aug 2025** at **Ulster University**.

This **week-long immersive program** allows students to learn from world-class musicians, participate in workshops, perform at iconic venues like **Belfast Cathedral**, and build lifelong connections within the traditional music community.

The value of a bursary is £150 and includes;

- [5 days of masterclasses with some of the world's best traditional musicians](#)

However, for many young musicians, financial barriers stand in the way of this invaluable experience. **Your support can make a real difference** by sponsoring a bursary that covers the cost of tuition for a deserving student.

We would like to offer bursaries to students from **Mid Ulster**, and were wondering if the Arts Office would be in a position to sponsor the bursaries?




By sponsoring bursaries, you will:

- ✓ Give a young musician access to a world-renowned summer school.
- ✓ Help preserve and promote our rich musical heritage.
- ✓ Be recognised as a valued supporter of Belfast TradFest, with opportunities for brand visibility and acknowledgment in press and publicity.

Sponsorship Options:

- £150** – Sponsors one student
- £250** – Sponsors two students
- £500** – Sponsors four students
- £1,000** – Sponsors eight students
- £2,000** – Sponsors fifteen students

Benefits to Sponsors:

-  **Complimentary concert tickets** – ideal for promotions or personal use
-  **Social media recognition** highlighting your sponsorship and promoting your organisation
-  **Invitation to a photocall & drinks reception** with students for press and marketing opportunities

Your support will provide invaluable opportunities for young musicians while ensuring the future of our traditional music heritage.

"It has completely opened up a whole new connection and confidence for me for traditional Irish music. It always felt so inaccessible...but this past week has changed all of that." - Bursary Recipient, 2024

To **sponsor a bursary** or **learn more**, please visit our [Bursary Sponsorship Page](#).

Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of aspiring musicians.

Kind regards

Dónal O'Connor

Artistic Director | Belfast TradFest



St. Patrick's Music Weekend: 14th - 17th March 2025

Belfast TradFest: 27th July - 3rd August 2025

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Belfast TradFest is a NI Registered Charity No. NIC104823

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