



Applications open for the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme

Applications have opened for The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme, a course which aims to preserve heritage building skills that are at risk of being lost by supporting those already working in the construction sector to push their skills to the next level.

Developed by The Prince's Foundation in partnership with the Heritage Council in the Republic of Ireland and the Historic Environment Division of Northern Ireland's Department for Communities, the programme will benefit aspiring craftspeople from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is supported by Benefact Trust, one of the UK's largest grant-making charities.

The course will begin in July and has been specifically developed to meet the demand for upskilling in heritage building skills in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to spend 12 months engaging in collaborative learning experiences while honing their heritage craft skills and gaining invaluable experience working on historic sites. It will help preserve skills that are at risk of being lost such as traditional carpentry, lime work, thatching, blacksmithing, and stonemasonry. To ensure it is accessible to all, successful applicants will be awarded a full scholarship and will be provided with a monthly bursary to help cover the cost of travel and accommodation.

Ben McCabe, All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme Coordinator for The Prince's Foundation, said: "All of the partners involved in The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme believe that it is crucial to preserve the wisdom and knowledge that embodies many of the heritage building skills that have shaped our historic built environment. As many workers in the sector now reach retirement age, it is vital that these skills are passed on to the next generation of craftspeople to ensure that we can continue to restore and conserve our history, and demonstrate the significant role that these skills can play in creating new spaces and places.

"The programme is aimed at those with quantifiable experience in craft areas such as stonemasonry, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, blacksmithing, plastering, thatching, roofing and tiling, painting and decorating. The ideal applicants will have an interest in developing their craft with a focus towards heritage methods."

Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive of The Heritage Council, said: "The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme is a showcase project with immense potential. It promises to develop the skills of our craftspeople, allowing them valuable time 'on the tools' and gaining an appreciation of drawing and conservation principles, not only broadening their career prospects as specialists in the conservation sector but benefiting society by helping to preserve our traditional heritage crafts. The multi-jurisdictional nature of this collaboration is important as it provides an opportunity to share ideas with and learn from our partners, and gives course participants the opportunity to share ideas, skills and perspectives with people from a variety of backgrounds."

Paul Playford, Grants Officer for Benefact Trust, said: “We are delighted to support the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme which will expand heritage craft skills training into Ireland. The programme will help to ensure that at-risk traditional skills can continue for generations to come, and it will support talented craftspeople to grow and develop their skills which is an investment in the future of the heritage sector.”

Iain Greenway, Director of Historic Environment Division in the Department for Communities, said: “The increase in heritage craftspeople is one of our key objectives as we seek to help communities understand and realise the value of our historic environment. These skills are essential for completing works to heritage assets in ways that preserve their special character and make them central to the enjoyment of places by residents and visitors. The skills will become of increasing importance as emission reduction targets require greater reuse of existing buildings. I am therefore delighted that we are able to play a key role in the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme, including at the NI Heritage Skills Centre in Moira.”

Applications for The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme are open until 12pm on Monday 23 May 2022. To apply, or to find out more, visit <https://princes-foundation.org/education/all-ireland-programme> (will be updated at 09:30 on Friday 6 May)

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For more information, email media@heritagecouncil.ie

Notes to Editors

Department for Communities is the largest of Northern Ireland’s nine government departments. Within the Department, Historic Environment Division records, protects, conserves, enhances and promotes the historic environment to secure its benefits for current and future generations. It passionately believes that the historic environment is of value to us all and that we should all be able to enjoy it and participate in sustaining it. It believes that protecting and investing in our historic environment is essential to creating a better future, because it supports our prosperity, strengthens our society, and shapes our character.

Established under The Heritage Act 1995, **the Heritage Council** is a public body based in the Republic of Ireland whose mission is to develop a wide understanding of the vital contribution that our heritage makes to our social, environmental and economic well-being. The Heritage Council has a particular responsibility to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in national heritage. The Heritage Council also provides policy advice for government on heritage including issues impacting the built, natural and cultural heritage. To find out more, visit <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/> or follow @HeritageHubIRE on Twitter

The Prince’s Foundation provides holistic solutions to challenges facing the world today. It champions a sustainable approach to how we live our lives and build our communities, runs a diverse programme of education and training for all ages and backgrounds, and regenerates and cares for places where communities thrive and that visitors enjoy, The charity works nationally and internationally but at the heart of the organisation is the heritage-led regeneration of the Dumfries House estate and its wider community, where its principles and philosophies are explored and put into practice.