



Shared Island: Building Connections, Exchanging Knowledge

**An all-island conference for heritage professionals
by the Heritage Council**

Monaghan Peace Campus | 2 September 2026



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Shared Island
Initiative

Welcome to Monaghan, and to the Heritage Council's first all-island conference for heritage professionals.

Today's conference is the first event of the Shared Island Heritage Networks Programme, a five-year initiative connecting the people who deliver heritage in local authorities across the island of Ireland. The work of heritage is the work of connection: between people and place, past and future, and communities across this island. I hope today sparks conversations and collaborations that will carry far beyond this room.

Virginia Teehan,

Chief Executive, the Heritage Council



About the conference

‘Shared Island: Building Connections, Exchanging Knowledge’ forms part of the new Shared Island Heritage Networks Programme, led by the Heritage Council and funded through the Shared Island initiative.

Over five years, the programme will build an all-island professional network for local authority heritage professionals, with shared training, funded collaborative projects and a common home for local heritage knowledge.

Today brings heritage professionals and senior management from across Ireland and Northern Ireland together for a day of discussion, exchange and connection.

The morning programme will focus on the strategic role of local authorities in supporting and delivering heritage at local level, including how heritage is led, resourced and delivered across the island and the opportunities for greater collaboration and learning.

In the afternoon, three professional exchange sessions will explore:

- **Built heritage, placemaking and regeneration**
 - **Nature restoration**
 - **Cultural heritage, archives and collections**
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Conference Programme

09:30	Registration
10:00	Welcome Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive, the Heritage Council
10:20	Video: Local authority heritage professionals
10:30	Leading heritage delivery at place level (Chief Executive perspectives) <i>Chair: Bryan Dobson</i> Robert Burns, Chief Executive, Monaghan County Council Alison McCullagh, Chief Executive, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Lar Power, Chief Executive, Kilkenny County Council
11:30	Coffee break
12:00	Keynote address Fergal Keane, author and former BBC journalist
12:45	Lunch
13:30	Optional tours of Monaghan County Museum, and biodiversity around the Peace Campus
14:30	Professional exchange sessions (choose one of the following) 1. Built Heritage, Placemaking and Regeneration <i>Chair: Ian Doyle, Head of Conservation, the Heritage Council</i> Natalie O'Rourke, Assistant Director, Department for Communities Historic Environment Division Nicola Matthews, Senior Architect, National Built Heritage Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Melanie McQuade, Heritage Officer, Westmeath County Council Yvonne Doyle-Curtis, Architectural Conservation Officer, Wexford County Council Shane Kelland, Regeneration Manager, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council 2. Nature Restoration <i>Chair: Catherine Casey, Head of Climate Change, the Heritage Council</i> Dr Una Fitzpatrick, Chief Scientific Officer, National Biodiversity Data Centre Dr Patricia McCreesh, Biodiversity Officer, Monaghan County Council Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer, Belfast City Council Sharon Casey, Planning Ecologist, Cork County Council 3. Cultural Heritage, Archives and Collections <i>Chair: Lisa Shortall, Head of Research, the Heritage Council</i> Janet Hancock, Head of Preservation & Collections, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Adam Stoneman, Acting Director, Galway City Museum Catherine Wright, Archivist, Wicklow County Council Kara Ward, Heritage Officer, Monaghan County Council
15:45	Closing Remarks Fionnuala Callanan, Shared Island Unit, Department of the Taoiseach
15:50	Closing Plenary Dr Martina Moloney, Chairperson, the Heritage Council

The themes

Built heritage, placemaking and regeneration. How built heritage underpins placemaking and regeneration in local authorities, and how leadership, prioritisation and different professional roles deliver long-term public value.

Nature restoration. How local authorities move nature restoration from policy intent to delivery on the ground, drawing on evidence, planning and all-island learning.

Cultural heritage, archives and collections. How archives, collections and cultural heritage are resourced, sustained and made accessible within local authorities, now and over time.

MC for the morning programme: Bryan Dobson

One of Ireland's best-known broadcasters, Bryan Dobson presented RTÉ's flagship news programmes over 37 years, including two decades anchoring the Six One News, before retiring from the national broadcaster in 2024.

Keynote speaker: Fergal Keane

Author and journalist Fergal Keane reported for the BBC for 37 years, from Belfast during the Troubles to South Africa, Rwanda and conflicts worldwide. His award-winning books include *Wounds: A Memoir of Love and War*, winner of the Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize.

Practical information

- Parking on site is first come, first served; paid on-street public parking is available nearby.
- Tours of Monaghan County Museum and the biodiversity of the area around the Peace Campus run at lunchtime from 13:30.
- For any assistance, please visit the registration desk.
- For more on the venue see monaghanpeacecampus.com

Keep up to date: If you'd like to keep up to date with the Shared Island Heritage Networks Programme as it develops, sign up to our newsletter [HERE](#).