

MEMBERSHIP EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

By submitting this Expression of Interest, you agree to:

- abide by the terms of reference for the Belfast Stories - Stories Panel (attached to this form)

Contact name			
Position / Occupation			
Address			
Telephone		Mobile	
Email			
Website / social media (if applicable)			

Please refer to the terms of reference attached to this form for further information.

For consideration to be part of the Belfast Stories Panel please answer the following questions: (please provide your response within 300 words per question)

1. Please indicate which of the following best describes your area of experience.

- ☐ Heritage Practice
- ☐ Community Development
- ☐ Culture and Arts
- ☐ Governance and ethics
- ☐ History including oral history
- ☐ Archives
- ☐ Peace and reconciliation
- ☐ Design including immersive storytelling
- ☐ Other

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2. Please describe your relevant experience and expertise. <i>(please refer to the terms of reference for further details on the range of skills we are seeking and the role of the panel.)</i>	
3. Please provide a supporting statement that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How will your expertise, passion and knowledge contribute to the Stories Panel and support the vision for Belfast Stories?- What do you hope to get out of being part of the Stories Panel?	
4. Please indicate whether you work on a freelance basis or within a company or organisation.	
5. Does your company or organisation receive funding from Belfast City Council? <i>(please provide details)</i>	
Date:	
Signature:	
DEADLINE: Thursday 15 January 2026, 4.00 pm PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: BelfastStories@BelfastCity.gov.uk Belfast Stories, Place and Economy Department, Belfast City Council, 9-21 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8DJ. TELEPHONE: 02890 320202 Ext 6018	

Belfast Stories Panel

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

In 2025, Belfast City Council reached a series of significant milestones in the development of Belfast Stories including the submission of the outline business case to secure funding from the Belfast Region City Deal development of an agreed architectural and experience concept design.

Interpretive Planning

Underpinning this work is an Interpretive Masterplan. This masterplan provides an overview of the interpretive thinking that will support the development of Belfast Stories as a successful visitor attraction, creative hub and public space. At the heart of this ambitious project is a love for Belfast, its people and their stories. It outlines considerations and recommendations for developing the best ways to gather stories, welcome visitors and share authentic connections.

		
Public Space	Visitor Attraction	Creative Hub
I am welcome. I am relevant. I am heard.	I am curious. I am listening. I am engaged.	I am passionate. I am inspired. I am supported.
<i>HOW</i> People will gather and share stories. People will express their needs and see the space adapt and change to support them.	<i>HOW</i> People will be intrigued to visit and engaged when they do. People will want to tell others about their experience.	<i>HOW</i> People will be supported in creation. People will be able to join a community of creatives and collaborators.
We are living our stories.	We are sharing our stories.	We are telling our stories.

Engagement

Since the beginnings of this project, ongoing engagement with communities and stakeholders has been identified as integral to success. We've already carried out two public consultations on the project, with a third taking place from November 2025 to January 2026 as part of the planning process.

Belfast Stories' first public consultation took place between August and November 2022. We asked the public and stakeholders what they thought about our early plans before any design work started. Feedback was used to shape the brief for the appointment of design teams. By 2024, we wanted to hear views on early concept designs, therefore, a second public consultation took place from November 2024 to March 2025. What we heard was overwhelmingly positive with an understanding of the potential for Belfast Stories to deliver real and lasting impact. However, with this also came risks and challenges especially in relation to how we proposed to gather, preserve and present stories.

Stories Development

A number of foundation pieces of work have already been completed or are ongoing to develop, support and challenge our approach to stories. In parallel to design work undertaken, there has been an active Stories Development work strand in place, and this has produced the following outputs:

- Story Collection Framework (2021): sets out the initial guiding principles, ethics, and a proposed thematic framework for story collection.
- Stories Audit: the audit is a live database that initially mapped over 100 existing story collections relating to Belfast.
- Stories Pilot: a community based pilot to test the process for collecting stories was completed in 2024.
- Draft Ethical Framework (2025): Developed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates this supports the concept design and responds to feedback from ongoing engagement and consultation.

Ethical Framework

Compared to the first public consultation, when stories were to be curated by theme, the concept design presented during the second publication was well received. The interpretive framework proposed the framing of stories with the everyday constructs of time and space and in response to this approach, there appears to be fewer concerns that it will present a partisan, binary or narrow perspective of Belfast.

Nevertheless, we understand that residual concerns could be a barrier to equitable story gathering and curation. Belfast Stories is committed to addressing these concerns through establishing an Ethical Framework to guide the approach, activities and behaviours of the project and ensure long-term, ongoing and relational story processes.

The Ethical Framework is a step on the path of Belfast Stories becoming Belfast Stories. *Who are we? What do people need us to do? What are our values and principles? What do we need to do to make these things happen?*

The Ethical Framework asks what it means to apply the project's values in practice, with particular reference to the Story Cycle and Stories Engine: the two concepts that govern the who / what / how of the stories themselves. The Framework starts to establish structured approaches to addressing real issues and to help guide decision-making as the project moves forward.

The Framework is, by its nature, an evolving document that will continue to adapt and respond. A copy of the document is included as an appendix to these terms of reference.

In 2026, Belfast Stories will launch specific programmes to support the gathering, preservation and telling of stories in the city. This is in advance of the appointment of the Interpretive and Experience Design team who will develop the concept design through to detailed and technical design up to the opening of Belfast Stories in 2030. The purpose of these strands is not to extract stories from the city, communities or people but to create opportunities for stories to be discovered, retold or imagined and for skills to be developed, retained and supported. It is also vital that over the next five to six years of development, strategic plans and investment choices by Government, education, heritage and tourism stakeholders and Belfast City Council are aligned to support and develop the city's stories ecosystem. The hope is that the impact we collectively seek to deliver, can be transformed by the unique opportunity presented by Belfast Stories.

Context

The Belfast Stories project is commencing the next stage of design development, and as it moves forward through subsequent stages, Belfast City Council wishes to convene a Stories Panel (SP) to provide oversight, advice and challenge in relation to the stories development processes (Stories Cycle) and proposed initiatives (Stories Engine).

Role and Remit

The Stories Panel is a time-limited task and finish group to be established in 2026 and to conclude when the building stage of the project is realised in 2030.

It exists to provide advice and guidance to the Belfast Stories project team, to support the successful realisation of Belfast Stories.

The Stories Panel will:

- Receive, review and comment upon reports and proposals as required especially in relation to all aspects of the Stories Cycle and application of the Ethical Framework.
- Advise and provide feedback on the development of curatorial policies, guidelines and related models of practice as they develop during subsequent stages of project development.
- Feedback on the relationship between stories, content development, interpretation and design and integration with the other elements of the project such as programme, operations, audience development, creative learning etc.
- Research and provide advice on current and future trends and models of practice in relation to culture, heritage, community engagement and sustainable tourism.
- Share relevant data and reports to assist in the delivery of the project.
- Serve on selection committees and other panels as and when required.
- Engage with and feedback on the views of the sectors represented.
- Be an ambassador and champion for Belfast Stories.
- Be a critical friend to the Belfast Stories Project Team.
- Ensure authenticity, integrity and expertise are always at the core of what is being proposed.
- Work within relevant sub-groups as required. These groups will explore and comment on specific aspects of the project on behalf of Belfast Stories.

The Stories Panel is a voluntary advisory group and has no legal constitution or executive responsibility for the project. Its advice is given freely to Belfast City Council and the Stories Panel cannot be held accountable for the consequences of the advice it gives.

You do not need knowledge on the Belfast Stories Project to apply, an induction will be provided to all members appointed to the Stories Panel.

Membership

- Following appointment of the Panel, a chair will be selected from the membership.
- The Belfast Stories Project Team will report into the group and provide secretariat support.
- Anyone wishing to join the group must complete a short Expression of Interest form, setting out how they believe they will contribute to the project.

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- Membership will be chosen to provide the group with the required skills and representation from across the priority sectors including the diverse communities of the city.
- Belfast Stories project team wishes to encourage applications from people from all backgrounds.
- Freelance members who do not have a salaried position within an organisation will be illegible to receive an honorarium for their participation at meetings.
- The majority of members are expected to be based in Belfast or demonstrate a strong connection to the city. However, applications are welcomed from people outside Belfast and Northern Ireland who have a relevant contribution to make. Reasonable travel expenses can be claimed to enable in-person attendance at 50% of meetings.

Recommendations for membership will be made based on the Expressions of Interest process by a selection panel which includes two officers from Belfast City Council and a minimum of one external representative.

There will be a maximum of 20 members of the Stories Panel.

Membership is open to all individuals committed to the vision and aims of the project and who bring relevant and valuable expertise and experience.

We particularly seek expertise and knowledge in the following areas:

- Heritage Practice
- Community Development
- Culture and Arts
- Governance and ethics
- History including oral history
- Archives
- Peace and reconciliation
- Design including immersive storytelling

Members are expected to play an active part in the work of the group by attending meetings, contributing to discussions, provide industry research findings and taking responsibility for activities and projects which fulfil the aims of the group where they have the appropriate skills and experience.

Members who do not fulfil this requirement may have their membership terminated. The Panel may take this action if:

- A member fails to attend three successive meetings without giving apologies
- A member fails to attend at least three meetings in any 12-month period
- A member does not contribute actively to the work of the Panel over the course of a year.

Membership and membership criteria will be reviewed in March of each year where individuals are offered the opportunity to step down and new members will have the opportunity to be appointed via the EOI process. Individuals whose membership has been terminated may be eligible to re-apply.

Members will be expected to uphold the principles of the Ethical Framework for Belfast Stories:

Working transparently

Working transparently is about making the process visible. It acknowledges that there are different ways of doing things and, therefore, choices to be made. It is about being honest about those choices and the reasons they were taken—and about actively eliciting comment and critique. It's about embedding a culture of accountability: a willingness to confront problems and talk about them.

Working reciprocally

Working reciprocally is fundamentally about trust. It is about working in good faith, about prioritising generosity and porosity. It's about valuing each story and the integrity of each storyteller and resisting any idea of sanitising or tidying up stories. It acknowledges that the story gathering process is a two-way relationship that can only work in an environment of trust. It seeks out ways to share resources, learnings and ideas and is known for welcoming and supporting initiatives generated by others. It emphasises the notion of the cycle, as opposed to a finite, fixed journey, so that every output becomes the beginning of something new.

Working carefully

A traditional collections-based organisation (library, museum, archive) will have a collections care policy. Working carefully is to prioritise care for humans. It is about weaving sustainability and sustainable practices into the Stories Engine, mindful that being careful is also about caring for future generations.

Working responsively

Working responsively means meeting people where they are and listening to what they need. It's about having a range of flexible formats and ways of working—and acknowledging that there's always room for new ideas and processes and that many of these will and should come from outside the organisation. It's about a commitment to learning, change and renewal, encouraging people to consider that what's right for now, or was right then, might not be right in the future. It's about the idea that Belfast Stories will always be unfinished.

Meetings

- The Panel will meet on a quarterly basis.
- The first meeting is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 24 March 2026**. This initiation meeting is extended to include a presentation of the concept designs and project update from the Project Team.
- Subsequent meetings will be 1.5/2 hrs duration and future dates will be set at this first meeting.
- In person meetings are preferred however online attendance will be facilitated where possible.
- Panel meetings will be planned to align with key review points or milestones for Belfast Stories. Some additional meetings may be required to meet key programme deadlines.

The Panel will also be responsible for organising at least 1 Belfast Stories Open Forum per year (with support and budget from PMO) to ensure wider representation, collaboration and engagement across the sectors that intersect with any aspect of the Stories Cycle. The Panel will use the forum to update, inform, include and seek the views of the wider sector(s) on Belfast Stories developments and action plans.

The Panel is an advisory group and not a decision-making group and will aim to reach consensus in the advice it offers to Belfast City Council and the Belfast Stories project team. However, the diversity of opinions will be represented in relation to documenting recommended actions or advice provided.

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Observers from relevant bodies, such as Belfast City Council, Visit Belfast, British Film Institute, Irish Film Institute, National Lottery Heritage Fund, BBC, RTE and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland may be invited to attend and contribute at meetings when required.

Conflict of Interest

Perceived or actual conflicts of interest will be recorded at each meeting.

Members with connection to any organisation, subject to discussion by the group, will be welcome to contribute to any discussion but will not take part in any recommendation made by the group. Contribution to any discussions by members declaring a conflict will be clearly recorded in the minutes.

Members may be asked to excuse themselves from certain discussion items if the chair deems their conflict of interest to be material. This is especially important regarding organisations which may seek to provide services to Belfast Stories or to be resident in Belfast Stories.

For the avoidance of doubt all procurement or negotiation of contracts, by Belfast City Council or Belfast Stories with any of the organisations or members of the Stories Panel, will take place separately to the activity of the Panel.

Advice will be taken on a case-by-case basis to ensure that any future procurement processes are not in any way compromised or put at risk by Panel membership. Where required, members involved in any procurement process will be required to resign from the Panel.

Privacy notice

What we do with your information

Belfast City Council is the data controller, under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and collects your personal data so we can send email updates about Belfast Stories news, events and opportunities and manage your email communications from Belfast Stories Project Management Office.

We are processing your personal data as you have provided your consent to process your expression of interest to join the Belfast Stories Panel.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing the Belfast Stories Project Management Office at belfaststories@belfastcity.gov.uk or by calling 028 9032 0202 extension 6618. You can also unsubscribe by updating your preferences at the bottom of the emails you get.

Sharing your information with others

We may share your data internally between council departments and staff, who provide and support the delivery of this service.

We won't share your personal data with any other organisation without your consent unless the law says so or we need to.

International transfers

We don't transfer your personal data outside the United Kingdom.

How long we hold your information for

We keep your personal data in a safe and secure manner, until you unsubscribe or withdraw your consent, complying with data protection legislation and in line with our Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Your rights

When we process your personal data based on consent, the UK GDPR provides you with the following rights related to processing your personal data:

- The right of access – you can ask to access and get a copy of your personal data and other supplementary information. Sometimes there are exemptions, so we may not be able to give you everything we process.
- The right to rectification – you can ask us to correct or complete any personal data that is wrong or missing.
- The right to erasure – you can ask us to delete or destroy personal data. This is also called the ‘right to be forgotten’. This doesn’t always apply but does in certain situations.
- The right to restrict processing – you can ask to limit or stop using your personal data. This doesn’t always apply but does in certain situations.
- The right to data portability – where possible, this allows you to reuse and transfer your personal data from one IT system to another for your personal use, from one data controller to another without changing how you use it. This only works to information you gave us and only in certain cases.
- Rights in relation to automated decision-making and profiling – sometimes, a computer makes decisions about an individual without a person being involved. You have the right, in certain circumstances, to say no to decisions being made like this, which affect you. You can also ask us to explain how these automated decisions work and what this means to you.

More information

If you have any queries about how we process your personal data or want us to stop using your information, please email Belfast Stories Project Management Office at belfaststories@belfastcity.gov.uk call 028 9032 0202 extension 6618 or write to:

Belfast Stories
Belfast City Council
9-21 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8DJ

If you want to contact our Data Protection Officer or have questions about this privacy notice, please email dataprotection@belfastcity.gov.uk or write to:

Belfast City Council,
City Hall Belfast,
BT1 5GS

View our privacy statement for information on how we process personal data.

If you are not happy with how we are handling your personal data, please contact us first to make a complaint.

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If you are still not satisfied with our response, you can lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Call 0303 123 1113
Email casework@ico.org.uk