New project to unveil the heritage of Belfast City



Belfast City Cemetery Belfast City Council

A new project to open up the hidden heritage of Belfast City Cemetery is to get underway with the help of a £1.68million National Lottery grant.

Restoring, promoting and sharing

The award was made to Belfast City Council to raise awareness of its rich heritage and reconnect people to it as a useable green space. The funding will be used to restore its important historic features; install new signage to tell the fascinating story of the cemetery and the role played by the people buried there in the development of the city, and deliver a dedicated programme of live events, tours and workshops to attract more visitors.

Native shrubs and trees will be planted to improve the biodiversity of the area and create a welcoming green space for relaxation and enjoyment, and a new visitor and education space will be developed to provide a hub for exhibitions and events.

Green space for people to use and enjoy

Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: “Belfast City Cemetery is a place of immense heritage value. It was the city’s first municipal cemetery, it is the final resting place of many influential figures from the city’s past and it is one of the largest green spaces in west Belfast.

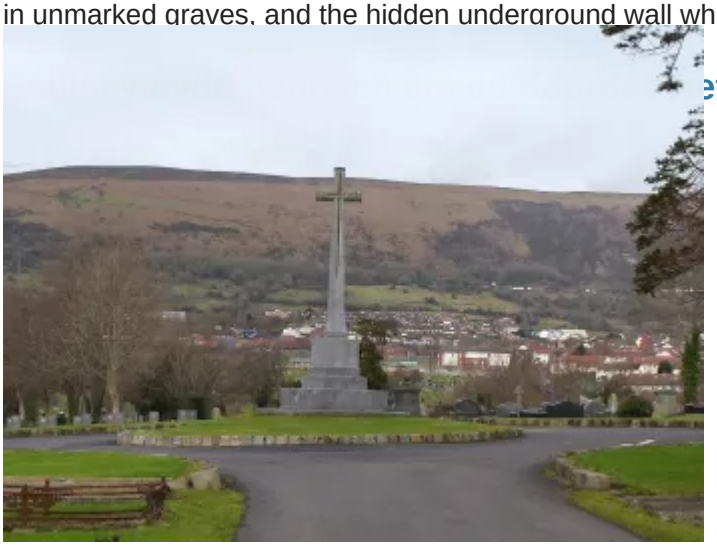
[quote=Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland]"Thanks to National Lottery players this grant will support vital restorations right across this extraordinary cemetery."[/quote]

“We often think of cemeteries as places for the dead, but our parks and cemeteries provide vital connections to our history, our community and our natural heritage and are also very much for the living. Thanks to National Lottery players this grant will support vital restorations right across this extraordinary cemetery; saving monuments at risk and maximising its potential as a green space for people to visit, use and enjoy.”

Hidden heritage

Belfast City Cemetery was opened in 1869 and contains a wealth of historic features, monuments and memorials in the Greek and Roman styles that were fashionable during the Victorian era. The graves and tombs of many prominent Industrial figures and pioneers of education and social justice can be found there.

It also has areas of lesser-known but significant heritage that remain unmarked. These include the Jewish cemetery with its separate walls and entrances which dates from 1871; the Poor Ground where around 63,000 people are buried in unmarked graves, and the hidden underground wall which was designed to separate Catholic and Protestant graves.



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City Cemetery Cross, Belfast

Uncovering the hidden heritage of Belfast City Cemetery





Historic gravestones at Clifton Street Cemetery, Belfast

Revealing the heritage of Belfast's Clifton Street Cemetery