HLF projects lauded at Royal Society of Ulster

Portico Arts and Cultural building

Two HLF-supported projects have won prestigious awards in acknowledgement of their superior design and positive impact on Northern Ireland's built landscape.

The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) awards are held annually to promote excellence in the design of our built environment with the view to making Northern Ireland a better place to be.

Recently the Society named two HLF-supported projects winners in the 2016 competition - the Portico, the recently opened arts and cultural centre in Portaferry, was named winner in the Best Cultural Project category while Sion Mills Stables was joint winner of the Best Conservation of Built Heritage award.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "These awards are endorsements of the fantastic achievements and positive impacts made by both the Portico and Sion Mills Stables. We at HLF are hugely proud to have been involved in these two projects from the outset; we were confident they would deliver a range of benefits to the heritage and local communities, and thanks to money raised by National Lottery players they will continue to do so for generations to come."

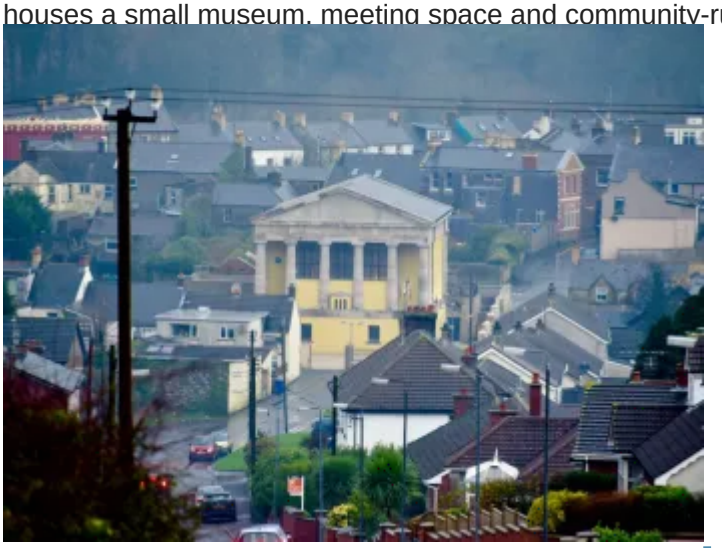
The Portico

The Grade A listed building, formerly known as Portaferry Presbyterian Church, has been part of the community since 1840. In recent times it had fallen into a state of decay and disrepair and was in danger of being lost. A group of determined residents came together to form the Friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church with the aim of saving the building and restoring it for the local community. Following a complete £1.5million restoration, the building was officially opened by HRH Prince Charles in May 2016.

Further information can be found by visiting the Portico website.

Sion Mills Stables

The Grade B+ listed Sion House and Stable Block dates from 1884 and is of high historical and architectural importance to the area. It was once on the Buildings at Risk NI Register and was the first building to be vested by the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland due to its neglect and state of disrepair. With the help of a £834,000 HLF grant the building was saved by a complete conservation-led restoration which maintained its character and integrity and now houses a small museum, meeting space and community-run tearoom.



The Portico arts and heritage centre in Ards

Celebrations to mark the opening of the Portico arts and heritage centre

Sion Stables saved with help of lottery grant