

UNITED STATES / NORTHERN IRELAND CULTURAL WORKING GROUP

Background / context

1. The Ulster-Scots (Scotch-Irish) and Irish American migrants contributed significantly to the creation and development of the United States of America (USA) and have made an immeasurable impression in key areas including government, civic society, business, and culture. In reflecting on the shared cultural heritage, there is significant potential to build on this legacy of value to Northern Ireland (NI) and the USA.

Common heritage

2. The US President Joe Biden acknowledged the common heritage that exists between the US and Ireland during a speech in Belfast in 2023 and referred to the influence of the Ulster-Scots. Joe Kennedy III, the US Special Envoy to NI also referred to the deep links between Ireland and the United States and praised the influence of the Scotch-Irish on the formative years of the United States and the contribution that Northern Ireland immigrants had made to the traditions and values of the US. A copy of their remarks is attached at Tab A.

Strengthening relationships

3. The Executive Office's (TEO) international relations work aims to enhance NI's international message and to develop mutually beneficial relationships. TEO is represented by the NI Bureau in North America and draws on its diplomatic, business, and cultural connections to promote NI interests and areas for collaboration including tourism and culture.
4. Harnessing the benefits of the unique relationship between the U.S. and NI was discussed at a meeting between President Joe Biden, First Minister Michelle O'Neill, and deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly in March 2024. The British and Irish Government Embassies also play an important role in supporting the Bureau's work.



President Biden. First Minister Michelle O'Neill, and deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly

5. The UK Government's Command Paper, *Safeguarding the Union*, February 2024, advises that it will support greater outreach and education in the United States to further strengthen understanding of the different traditions in NI. This will include specific workstreams on UlsterScots heritage in the US and exploring the potential to digitise and exhibit media and historical archives that reflect the richness and diversity of traditions.

Cultural tourism

6. The United States is the most important source market for overseas visitors to the island of Ireland after Great Britain, in terms of visitor numbers. In 2019, there were 212,000 visitors from the United States to Northern Ireland who spent £61 million and 1.67 million US visitors to the Republic of Ireland who spent €1.5 billion. Tourism Irelands "US Market - A Strategy for Growth 2018-2025", owned collectively by Tourism Ireland, TourismNI, Fáilte Ireland and industry, sets out an ambitious plan to grow visitor numbers and revenue on the island of Ireland.
7. One of Tourism Ireland's key objectives is to leverage focussed products and experiences that have the greatest appeal to visitors. People of Ulster-Scots descent is estimated to number between twenty and fifty million in the US, but through the ideas and values of the community, the Ulster-Scots/Scotch-Irish story can appeal to every American.
8. In 2016, President Barack Obama, the first American President of colour, declared that his grandparents were "Scotch-Irish mostly...hardy, small-town folks...they didn't like show-offs, they didn't admire braggarts or bullies". The opportunity exists to promote a greater understanding of the Ulster-Scots community in Northern Ireland, the diversity of cultural traditions here and our respective American connections.

PRONI and the Ulster-Scots Agency

9. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), as the National Archive for NI has an extensive collection of US related historical records and collections that tell the story of America through a NI lens and are of considerable interest to an American audience. PRONI's online resources are used extensively by audiences in North America, and it regularly facilitates tours for US visitors and historical societies to PRONI.
10. The Ulster-Scots Agency was established to promote and develop the culture, heritage, and language of the Ulster-Scots community. This includes extensive work to raise awareness around the global impact of the Ulster-Scots who have settled around the world. The UlsterScots diaspora in the US are known as the Scotch-Irish (sometimes Scots-Irish). The UlsterScots Agency has undertaken extensive work in this area, developing narratives and resources; supporting the enhancement of key heritage assets such as sites related to US Presidents; and building relationships with key stakeholders in Ulster and America.

PRONI 100

11. PRONI celebrated its centennial in 2023 "PRONI 100" which offered a unique platform to promote and raise awareness of the strong cultural and historical ties that exist with the US. One of the highlights of the programme was a partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency and the National Archives (UK) to organise a major exhibition: Ulster-Scots and the Declaration of Independence, during which an original (Dunlap Broadside) Declaration was unveiled to the public in NI for the first time.



Joe Kennedy III opened the Ulster-Scots and the Declaration of Independence exhibition at PRONI.

12. Nearly 250 years after the historic events in Philadelphia, when the document was signed by Charles Thomson from Upperlands and printed by John Dunlap from Strabane, Joe Kennedy III opened the exhibition at PRONI, showcasing the document and celebrating the role of the Ulster-Scots community in shaping the thinking and events that led to the Declaration of Independence. The initiative proved hugely successful in profiling the NI / US connections and attracting a significant number of visitors to PRONI.

Culture Arts & Heritage

13. The Department of Communities commissioned the Culture Arts & Heritage Strategy Taskforce to map out a development and investment report to reorientate how the culture, arts and heritage sectors are collectively perceived, engaged and supported across government. The Taskforce has presented its report, 'Investing in Creative Delivery,' which will help to inform the approach to the development of Culture, Arts and Heritage sectors. This will provide the context for PRONI in realising the intrinsic value of its archives from a cultural, historical and tourism perspective.



Minister Gordon Lyons MLA visits the Ulster-Scots Agency

250th Anniversary

14. On July 4, 2026, the USA will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This is a historic milestone and of major significance in the development of the United States. A nationwide programme of celebrations is being planned to celebrate the 250th Anniversary in 2026 and also to celebrate 250th anniversaries around high-profile events in the years leading up to and following 1776.
15. This included the Boston Tea Party on 16th December 1774, which was an iconic event on the road to American independence and like many such events

has a significant Ulster-Scots dimension. The Ulster -Scots Agency participated in a historic re-enactment event in December 2023 to commemorate the past and to build connections with key individuals, agencies, and cultural and historical associations to ensure that NI and the Ulster Scots traditions can maximise the cultural and tourism value of the 250th anniversary celebrations.



Ulster-Scots Agency delegation pictured with the British and Irish Consul Generals at Boston Tea Party

US / NI Working Group

16. Keen to build on the success of the Ulster-Scots and the Declaration of Independence exhibition and maximise the potential for both organisations to advance organisational objectives through the 250th anniversary opportunity, PRONI and the Ulster-Scots Agency came together with the NI Bureau to form the US/NI Working Group.
17. The group has expanded to include a range of key organisations with an interest in this area. A high-level summary of those organisations with a strategic interest is appended at Tab B. The aim was to develop and plan a programme of cultural engagement in the US with the initial focus on the 250th anniversary of American Independence in 2026.

Working Group – membership

18. The Group comprises representatives from the following organisations:

David Huddleston – PRONI (Chair)
Helen McGorman, Tourism Ireland
Ian Crozier – Ulster-Scots Agency
Richard Hill, NSMC

Richard Cushnie – NI Bureau
Peter McKittrick – US Consulate
Eimear Callaghan – TourismNI
Joe Magee – Culture Division

Alison Metcalfe – Tourism Ireland
NI Connections

Lynsey Moore – TEO
Aidan Cassidy – PRONI

Moira Loughran –
Stephen Scarth – PRONI
David Nesbitt, PRONI (Secretariat)

Objectives

19. The objectives of the Working Group are to:
- **Raise awareness** – connect and engage people in the USA in imaginative ways to inspire, educate and raise awareness of the different cultural traditions in NI so that they have a better understanding of the different traditions and have a better appreciation of the historical connections and sense of identity.
 - **Contribution** – highlight and promote the role of the Ulster-Scots who migrated from Ulster and became the Scotch-Irish; and the role they played in shaping US society, including politics, business, and culture.
 - **Anniversaries** – develop a programme of events to promote and celebrate the Ulster-Scots contribution to the creation and development of the US in the run up to the 250th celebrations.
 - **Partnerships** - foster new partnerships between cultural and historical institutions in the run up to the 250th Anniversary celebrations for example, Massachusetts Historical Society, Massachusetts Archives, the National Archives DC, and Library of Congress DC, showcasing the Ulster-Scots story and PRONI's historical and cultural collections.
 - **Promote tourism** – promote and foster awareness of NI's unique cultural and tourism offering in encouraging more people/groups from the US to visit or extend their visit to NI.
 - **Diaspora links** – identify opportunities in furthering understanding and in building new partnerships to achieve cultural, social, and economic objectives. Potential to focus on high-net-worth individuals and organisations motivated to support NI.
 - **Learning and engagement** – use cultural links to foster relationships with key universities and other academic institutions and in encouraging dialogue around historical, economic, social, and political issues.

- **Sustainability** – develop a model for continued cultural engagement beyond this initial programme.

Draft Programme

20. The Group will focus the development of a collaborative programme of tailored initiatives to promote links with the US including events at Federal, State and County level leading up to the US 250th celebrations. The attached draft programme at Tab B is based on the initial discussions to date and aims to serve as a starting point for the Working Group, The Group will consider the following issues in developing a comprehensive programme:

- Schedule of events, location, timescales, and logistics.
- Target audiences and engagement approaches.
- Roles and responsibilities of partners.
- Budget and sources of funding.
- Metrics for measuring success.
- Undertaking post-event and programme assessments.

Meeting structure and frequency

21. The Group will meet initially monthly by teleconference, subject to ongoing review. The meeting will be chaired by David Huddleston, the Director of the NI Bureau will deputise.

Secretariat

22. PRONI will provide the Secretariat for the Group and will prepare the agenda and papers for Working Group meetings. Papers will be cleared with the Chair and circulated to members 7 days prior to meeting. The meetings and actions agreed will be recorded by the Secretariat and signed off by the Group.

US/NI – POLITICAL RECOGNITION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS

TAB

A

25th ANNIVERSARY - GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT - 12 APRIL 2023

President Biden remarks at Ulster University:

" The family ties and the pride in those Ulster Scots immigrants — those — those Ulster Scots immigrants who helped found and build my country, they run very deep — very deep. Men born in Ulster were among those who signed the Declaration of Independence in the United States, pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour for freedom's cause. The man who printed the revolutionary document was John Dunlap. He hailed from County Tyrone.



President Biden with James Martin, star of the Oscar-winning An Irish Goodbye

And countless — countless others established new lives of opportunity across the Atlantic — planting farms, founding communities, starting businesses — never forgetting their connection to this island. As a matter of fact, as you walk into my office in the — in the Oval Office in the United States' capital — guess what? You know who founded and designed and built the White House? An Irishman

Passing it down, generation after generation. Your history is our history. But even more important, your future is America's future.

Declaration of Independence Exhibition

Mr Joe Kennedy III, the US Special Envoy to NI referred to the role of the Ulster-Scots in the American Declaration of Independence and spoke about the contribution that NI immigrants

had made to the traditions and values of the US. in referring to the deep links between Ireland and the United States of how around 250,000 people from Ulster sailed to America in the 18th century in search of a new life free from persecution. Praising the influence of Scotch-Irish on the formative years of the United States, he said: *“These rugged, determined men and women rose to every challenge. It’s a small island, but the contribution that your forefathers have made to the traditions and values of the United States is profound.”*



Joe Kennedy III, the US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs officially opened the exhibition

TAB B

STRATEGIC CONTEXT – PROMOTING LINKS TO US THROUGH CULTURE

- **THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE** - Under devolution legislation, international relations and relations with the EU remain the responsibility for the UK Government. However, it is recognised that the devolved administrations will have an interest in international policy making in relation to devolved powers. Under the Belfast Agreement the duties of the First Minister and deputy First Minister include co-ordinating the work of the Executive Committee and the response of the Northern Ireland administration to external relationships.
- Through the Executive Office’s international relations work, it aims to enhance NI’s international message and develop mutually beneficial relationships with targeted countries, regions and organisations to secure investment, trade, tourism, students and to exchange knowledge and expertise.

- **DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES** – A key Departmental priority is to support cultural and community confidence, participation and wellbeing through direction and support to the creative industries, museums, libraries, sport and arts, culture, and heritage sectors. It also promotes, enhances, and develops indigenous languages and their culture through collaboration with other Departments and key stakeholders. In doing so it ensures that these sectors contribute to economic prosperity, drive inclusive growth and address disadvantage.
- **PRONI** – PRONI’s statutory remit is to receive, preserve and provide access to the public record. PRONI’s remit aligns with the DfC Strategic Objective to ‘Ensure that our Heritage is recorded, protected, conserved, and promoted to increase its relevance to current and future generations’ and delivered through the activity ‘to receive, protect, conserve, promote and improve access to Northern Ireland’s culture and history.’
- **ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY** – (Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch) is an agency of the North South Language Body established under the British/Irish Agreement Act 1999 and the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999. Its statutory remit is the “promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island.” In carrying out its functions, in relation to Ulster-Scots language and cultural issues the Agency may:
 - Provide advice for both administrations, public bodies, and other groups in the private and voluntary sector.
 - Undertake research and promotional campaigns; and
 - Support projects and grant aid bodies and groups.

The Agency’s mission is to inspire and empower people and communities in Ulster to embrace their Ulster-Scots identity, build kinship with those outside Ulster who share that identity and friendship inside Ulster with those who do not.

- **NI BUREAU** – The Bureau’s role in North America is to promote NI as a confident, competitive, and outward-looking region. It achieves this by leveraging diverse political, economic, and social links to help identify potential areas for collaboration and partnership. Key areas include tourism, arts, and culture. The Bureau works closely with organisations, businesses, and institutions to showcase the many positive aspects of NI that are of interest to the North American audience. The Bureau’s influence is significant

with access to an extensive network of contacts working to support its mission reaching upwards of 15,000 people each year through various programmes and outreach initiatives.

- **NSMC** – the North South Ministerial Council works across twelve areas of policy and through the North South Bodies to develop consultation, co-operation, and action in areas of relevance to both the NI Executive and the Irish Government, and to deliver social, economic, and cultural benefits for people in both jurisdictions. The NSMC meets in sectoral format to oversee cooperation in 12 agreed policy sectors. In six of these sectors, co-operation is taken forward by means of North South Implementation Bodies and in the remaining six Areas of Co-operation by means of existing mechanisms in each jurisdiction.
- The six North South Implementation Bodies comprise the North South Language Body, Waterways Ireland, the Food Safety Promotion Board, the Trade and Business Development Body, the Special European Union Programmes Body, and the Foyle, Carlingford, and Irish Lights Commission. Co-operation is also advanced in the agreed areas of Tourism (including Tourism Ireland), Agriculture, Education, Environment, Health, and Transport.
- **TOURISM IRELAND** – US Strategy for growth 2018 to 25. The United States is the most important source market for overseas visitors to the island of Ireland after Great Britain, in terms of visitor numbers. In 2019, there were 1.67 million visitors from the United States to the Republic of Ireland who spent €1.5 billion. There were 212,000 US visitors to Northern Ireland who spent £61 million. The strategy for growth sets an ambitious agenda to grow visitor numbers and revenue on the island of Ireland and one of its key strategic objectives is to leverage niche products and experiences including Golf, Business Tourism, the Irish Diaspora, and Scots Irish.
- **DEPT OF ECONOMY / TOURISM NI** – The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan sets out the vision and mission for the growth of the tourism sector in NI over the next decade. It aims to position the region internationally as an attractive place to visit, making visitors feel welcome. The strategy also sets out a vision that seeks to establish NI as a yearround world class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage, and culture and which benefits communities, the economy, and the environment.
- **NORTHERN IRISH CONNECTIONS** - is passionate about celebrating what makes Northern Ireland such a great place to live, work, study, visit, invest

and do business. It connects the diverse strands of the Northern Irish community abroad and engage with friends from around the globe. In short, it provides a space for our diaspora to explore and contribute to the ongoing prosperity of home. Developed by Invest Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Connections provides a network for partners from all walks of life. Domestic and international, public and private, all members share the ambition to make Northern Ireland the global player it deserves to be.

ANNEX C

US - NI CULTURAL WORKING GROUP – PROGRAMME

WORKING DRAFT - UPDATED 4 SEPTEMBER 2024

2023/24

Event	Date	Details	Comments	Proposals	Location	Partners
Boston Tea Party Reenactment	Dec 16, 2023	Boston commemorated the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party culminating in a reenactment	Given the role of Ulster-Scots and Irish immigrants this presented an opportunity to take part in historic anniversary.	Ulster-Scots Agency participated and built important connections at State and local level.	Boston	Ulster-Scots Agency and NI Bureau
Eagle Wing	8 Nov 2023	Eagle Wing passenger ship left Groomsport for Boston in September 1636. Although unsuccessful, others followed. Story captured in a book, musical and play	Eagle Wing – “A Better Place” – tour in US	NI Bureau attended a preview on the 8 Nov in Philadelphia - Irish CG and the British Hon Consul involved.	Philadelphia Other cities	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency and Tourism Ireland.

Eagle Wing Tour	2024/5	Eagle Wing – “A Better Place” – tour in US		NI Bureau working with the company (Trevor Marshall) and Ulster Scots Agency in planning a series of events in 2024.	Philadelphia Other cities	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency and Tourism Ireland. PRONI
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Event	Date	Details	Comments	Proposals	Location	Partners
Eagle Wing	6 Sept	Groomsport: A view from the archives – putting the voyage of the Eagle Wing into context		Talk by Andrew Sneddon, Ulster University and Stephen Scarth, PRONI	Groomsport Presbyterian Church	PRONI / Ulster University
NARA	Mid Oct - TBC	National Archives planning for A250 (America 250) and D250 (Declaration 250).	Follow up to meeting between National Archives and PRONI in exploring potential collaboration,	Minister Lyons to visit National Archives and host potential reception / event . US to promote Ulster-Scots / Scots Irish cultural heritage in run up to US250.	Washington DC	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency and PRONI
Smithsonian	Mid Oct - TNC	Collaborative opportunities in run up US250	Follow up to engagement in Belfast	Minister Lyons to meet with senior personnel in Smithsonian to explore collaborative initiatives	Washington DC	NI Bureau PRONI Tourism Ireland

Library of Congress	Mid Oct - TBC	Opportunity for PRONI and Ulster Scots Agency to collaborate with Library of Congress on a joint event	https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2023/09/proclaiming-a-new-nation-the-librarys-copies-of-the-declaration-of-independence/	Minister Lyons to visit to explore collaboration with Library of Congress - Nancy Groce	Washington DC	NI Bureau, PRONI et al
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	15-18 Oct 2024	Moravian Church settlement in the Georgian village of Gracehill, Northern Ireland added to the UNESCO World Heritage List		Minister Lyons to visit the Moravian Church settlement in Bethlehem, a World Heritage Site that showcases Moravian architecture and town planning	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	NI Bureau. Tourism Ireland and Ulster Scots Agency
Events to promote tourism opportunities through Ulster Scot's and Irish American links and US250	2024-26	TourismNI and Tourism Ireland will identify opportunities to connect and through the Working Group are keen that tourism opportunities are factored into initiatives led by other partners.		TourismNI and Tourism Ireland have set out their general approach and opportunities in engaging in the US market – A summary is appended at Tab A.	US and NI locations to be determined	Tourism Ireland, TourismNI, NI Bureau, PRONI, Ulster Scots Agency and

Event	Date	Details	Comments	Proposals	Location	Partners
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						other partners
250th Anniversary	TBC	USA will commemorate the United States Semi quinentennial in 2026. U.S. Commission planning anniversary celebrations.	Opportunity to acknowledge the contribution NI settlers made to the traditions and values of the US and individuals who built the country – political, business, cultural influences.	NI Bureau to establish links with the US. Semi quinentennial Commission registering NI interest and opportunities for collaboration. Opportunity for Ulster Scots Agency and PRONI to connect with America250 on social media, to engage and share stories of NI's.	Virginia Boston Washington DC Social media – America 250	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency Tourism Ireland and PRONI
Declaration of Independence	TBC	The 250th Declaration of Independence of 1776 - the birth certificate of the United States.	Three of its 56 signatories. Declaration printed in Philadelphia by John Dunlap from County Tyrone	PRONI and Ulster Scots Agency to showcase aspects of the US Declaration Exhibit partnering with PRONI. Original Declaration to be sourced in US. with unique historical artefacts of interests- partnering with Historical societies in Boston et al and institutions including Nat Archives DC and Library of Congress.	Boston DC Raleigh - North Carolina?	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency, Tourism Ireland and PRONI

Annual NI Executive Showcase	TBC	NI Bureau Breakfast event	Major NI showpiece event – theme for 2025 not decided. Opportunity to proactively promote participation from the Ulster Scot’s diaspora.	Promote Ulster Scot’s exhibition with PRONI historical artefacts. Potential for a separate joint exhibition / event with NA or LOC.	Washington DC	NI Bureau/ Ulster Scots Agency Tourism Ireland and PRONI
Belfast International Tattoo	2-6 Sep 2026	Civilian Tattoo Event. Musical Unit and Colour Guard, USMC – San Diego	Commemorate 250th anniversary of Independence to highlight the close bond	For further consideration	SSE Arena, Belfast	Entertainment Events Organisation

Event	Date	Details	Comments	Proposals	Location	Partners
			between America and Ulster Scots people who had a massive influence on the setting up, political direction and life of early America			Ltd - Belfast International Tattoo - www.belfastinternationaltattoo.com
PRONI publication	2026/27	Publication of 50 American Migration stories	Selection of emigration related letters from PRONI’s collections recounting the experience of Ulster migrants to the USA.	Publication with preface by DfC Minister that can be promoted at events across the USA at Library of Congress, Universities, and cities with strong links to modern day Northern Ireland. Online version will be developed	Washington DC, Maine,	PRONI Mellon Centre for Migration Studies

PRONI – travelling exhibition	2026/27	Travelling exhibition based on 50 American Migration stories for travelling across NI and potentially USA	PRONI has a long-standing agreement with Libraries NI who tour PRONI exhibitions across the 96 libraries in NI.	Partner Mellon Centre for Migration Studies to produce content.	Various libraries and public venues across NI	PRONI Libraries NI MCMS
PRONI - exhibition	2026/27	Loan and exhibition of Declaration of Independence (DOI)	Loan of a copy of the Declaration of Independence from The National Archives (UK) to be displayed in PRONI	Partner Ulster Scots Agency for a six-month exhibition at PRONI.	PRONI	PRONI, Ulster Scots Agency
PRONI/Mellon Centre for Migration Studies	2026/27	Agreement to jointly collaborate to promote US linkages with NI.	Mellon Centre of Migration Studies at the Ulster American Folk Park was opened in 1974 as a project to mark the 200 th anniversary of USA.	Partner Mellon Centre for Migration Studies at events and activities at the Ulster American Folk Park.		PRONI MCMS National Museums
PRONI Online	2026/27	Deliver a programme of	Programme of online	Online talks would be		PRONI
Event	Date	Details	Comments	Proposals	Location	Partners
		online talks relating to migration from Ulster.	presentations that explores links to the USA.	organised for late afternoon to connect with audiences in USA.		Ulster Scots Agency Mellon Centre for Migration Studies

PRONI/Trinity College Conference	2025/26	Deliver a conference in Belfast and Dublin aimed at US students and interested parties	Conference would focus on historical records and sources relating to Irish connections with the US. Trinity College, Dublin/VRTI has a member of staff funded by US 250.	High profile conference highlighting research and collections relating to US Declaration of Independence and its impact.	PRONI Trinity College	PRONI Trinity College Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland University of Notre Dame
Hillsborough castle	TBC	Potential event around American Civil War tour		Explore options with Laura McCorry, Head of Hillsborough Castle		Hillsborough Castle US Consulate

US/NI WORKING GROUP – PROMOTING TOURISM

Tourism NI in partnership with Tourism Ireland are keen to explore the tourism potential with the Working Group and in particular the occasion of America250 presents, for driving increased value. They will continue to identify opportunities to connect and through the group and are keen that tourism opportunities are factored into conversations and initiatives led by other partners.

Tourism Ireland

The target visitor is “Culturally Curious” and therefore having a range of experiences that showcase our culture through music, literature, history and heritage is vitally important to ensure NI can stand out on an all-island proposition. Inspiring visitors through advertising forms a key element of raising awareness and it is estimated the Tourism Ireland advertising campaign

reaches c250M persons. Leveraging US250 anniversary opportunities will form a key element for the future promotion of NI Cultural links. Six key areas have been identified to tap into the North American market.

- **Diaspora Strategy** (further reach of c4.8M through Multi-channel formats, including digital, social media, print & radio), Facebook
- **Family History** (367k followers),
- **Brand Partnerships** (Irish Arts Centre),
- **Ancestral Heritage & Genealogy**, connections to Screen adaptations (Game of Thrones, Dungeons & Dragons, etc), and showcasing
- **Music events** (Belfast UNESCO City of Music Showcase in Boston and New York).

The Working Group to give consideration to the following areas to drive increased visitation numbers: Umbrella campaign approach by partners, expand messaging and broaden reach to genealogy/heritage/history consumers, new/different Tours/Exhibitions, Leveraging Presidential Homesteads, US250 special exhibitions, and developing Belfast/Nashville sister city links.

TourismNI

TourismNI will focus on building this offer with a view to then engagement in market. Experience development activities will potentially focus on:

- **Music** (opportunity to showcase different music influences that have crossed the Atlantic e.g. Bluegrass Music Festival, Belfast Trad Fest, Northern Ireland Country Music Awards (Belfast/Nashville connection – UNESCO City of Music).
- **Themed itineraries** - US presidents with NI links showcasing their ancestral homes
- **Faith based:** include Armagh Cathedrals, Moravian Church, Gracehill and National Churches Trust,
- **GI Stories:** e.g. Hartle Trail (Antrim and Derry~Londonderry), Patton Trail (Armagh and Down) and Eisenhower Trail (Fermanagh & Tyrone)

- **City & Growth Deals** investments: DNA Museum opening 2026 in Derry will feature NI/US connections – e.g. Amelia Earhart, Bud Wolfe, Georgie Hunt (GI brides); surrender of U Boat at Lisahally.
- **Ancestry:** Discuss with PRONI the genealogy opportunities around The 153rd Open at Royal Portrush 2025 (1 in 9 visitors at 2019 event came from US)