



# Queen's University Belfast Social Charter Newsletter

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Welcome to this edition of the Queen's University Belfast Social Charter Newsletter. In this volume: COVID-19 research; legacy gift supports Cancer Research; Handy Helpers brighten the Holyland; new medical curriculum launched; success at National KTP Awards; Environmental Leadership Programme goes online; Queen's academic appointed to Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel; One World Festival webinar; Queen's academic awarded Belfast Ambassador Medal and Queen's Professor receives national award.

## Queen's University research reveals more than a quarter of people felt lonely during the COVID-19 lockdown

Researchers from Queen's University Belfast have found that more than a quarter of people felt lonely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown. The results are from the COVID-19 Psychological Wellbeing Study which surveyed the psychological wellbeing of 2,000 UK adults between 23 March and 24 April 2020.

The survey found that more than a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents were classified as lonely. Although, up to 70 per cent people said that some of the time or often in the past week they had felt isolated, left out and lacking companionship.

Overall, those who were most at risk of being lonely were younger, separated or divorced, had high depression scores, greater emotion regulation difficulties, and poor-quality sleep due to the COVID-19 crisis. However, having higher levels of social support, being married/co-habiting, or living with a greater number of adults were protective factors.

***"Lockdown measures strictly limiting social contact were needed to slow the spread of the virus causing COVID-19. The UK public are worried about the impact of these measures on their mental health, and for good reason. Loneliness has a profound negative impact on physical and mental health and is a significant public health concern. Understanding the prevalence and predictors of loneliness at this time is a priority issue."***

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## Research with Impact:

### Legacy gift supporting work at The Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research

Thanks to a legacy gift from a Queen's University alumnus, seven major cancer research projects which were put on hold due to grant cuts, are able to restart.

Each year, over 9,000 people in Northern Ireland are diagnosed with cancer, a number which is growing as our population ages. The Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research (PGJCCR) at Queen's is internationally recognised for its ground-breaking research, housing over 200 staff and students all working towards a common goal of improving the lives of patients with cancer. As with everyone in society over the past six months, their lives have been completely changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key issue highlighted by the pandemic is the extent to which funding for cancer research is reliant on the charitable sector.

In April this year, a team of researchers at Queen's learned that one of their largest UK charity funders had taken the difficult decision to reduce the value of grants, resulting in an unforeseen shortfall in funding.

However, concurrently, the Queen's Foundation gratefully received a substantial legacy gift, from Arts and Theology alumnus, Mr Alexander Leckey from Belfast. The gift was unrestricted, meaning that it was the decision of the Foundation Board how the monies be used to fund the most urgent needs of the University at the time. The PGJCCR staff were supported to go back to the labs in June and July to continue their life-saving research in diagnosing and treating cancer, both locally and globally.

***"We are extremely grateful for this unrestricted legacy donation given to us during these extremely challenging times for cancer research. This legacy gift will allow our world-class researchers at The Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research to continue their important, life-saving work, and has the potential to positively impact patient care by discovering new and better ways of diagnosing and treating cancer, both locally and globally."***

Professor Chris Scott, Director (Acting) from the Patrick G. Johnston Centre for Cancer Research,  
Queen's University Belfast



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## Education with Social Purpose: Handy Helpers Brighten the Holyland

Queen's University Handy Helpers students have been dodging showers in recent weeks as they brighten up Holyland alleyways by sprucing up wooden planters, planting of spring bulbs and autumnal blooms.

Handy Helpers volunteers annually team up with local residents to help transform alleyways around the Holyland and Lower Ormeau areas. This years' efforts will no doubt go some way to transforming another gated alleyway into a beautiful green space that can be enjoyed by students and local residents alike.

Handy helpers is a unique initiative which enables you to take part in a wide range of one-off volunteering opportunities in the local community. There's no long-term commitment, so students can get involved in the activities that suit them best!



## Queen's launches new medical curriculum which will address changing needs of NI's healthcare system

The new curriculum has been crafted in response to the changes in healthcare envisioned in 'Health and Wellbeing 2026 - Delivering Together' and has been named C25 as the first intake of students to the new curriculum will graduate in 2025.

As our population is getting older, multi-morbidity and complexity are becoming more commonplace. As a result, the healthcare system in Northern Ireland is changing. The focus locally and internationally is on prevention of illness and population health, on new ways of doing things and new partnerships between primary and secondary care. For several years Queen's has been working to create a new curriculum designed to train the next generation of doctors to be leaders and effectors of this change.

***"We have worked closely with our partners to ensure that the C25 curriculum addresses the changing needs of our healthcare system and enables our doctors of the future to deliver the best, patient-centred health care for our population, which has always been at the core of Queen's medical teaching. This is a new curriculum but delivers the same vision – to create a medical graduate that is a caring and compassionate doctor, who is a critical thinker, problem solver and reflective practitioner with excellent clinical skills who values, above all else, service to patients"***

Professor Neil Kennedy, Director of the Centre for Medical Education, Queen's University Belfast



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## Breaking Boundaries to Produce New Knowledge: Queen's associate wins National KTP Awards

Emanuele Scarabino, an associate with Queen's University Belfast and IG Masonry Support, was crowned winner of the 'Engineering Excellence' category at the National Knowledge Transfer Team (KTP) Awards, hosted by the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN).

In collaboration with Dr Daniel McPolin from Queen's School of Natural and Built Environment, Emanuele secured the top prize for his bespoke mathematical model that will deliver 9,000-man hours in just 60 seconds, eliminating all human error.

This incredible accuracy pushed the project beyond any expectations set out in the original plan; the ability to predict physical behaviour with such precision has transformed product design with material savings and remarkable improvements in efficiency for the design of Masonry Support Systems.

Three other Queen's KTP Associates were winners of the Future Innovators Award for outstanding performance by a KTP Associate and the enormous positive changes they have created within their industry.

*"The KTP has been a revolutionary programme for IG Masonry Support, enabling the business to completely standardise the design process with the added luxury of achieving high accuracy at a high speed. The bespoke mathematical model designed by Emanuele Scarabino can indeed condensate thousands of men-hours of calculations in less than a minute while eliminating the risk of human error."*

Mr Paul Graham, General Manager at Ireland of IG Masonry Support

## Sustainability: Queen's University Environmental Leadership Programme goes virtual

This year, students can join online for green workshops, sustainability projects and environmental volunteering.

The Environmental Leadership Programme provides a structured environment where students can learn and develop new skills through a Degree Plus scheme and also contribute to achieving the University's low carbon vision. It provides the perfect opportunity for students interested in driving climate action within Queen's, whilst developing skills to enhance their CV!

Through the programme students will learn and develop employability skills, project management skills as well as developing their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues.

For more information click 

*The Environmental Leadership Programme is  
open for applications!*

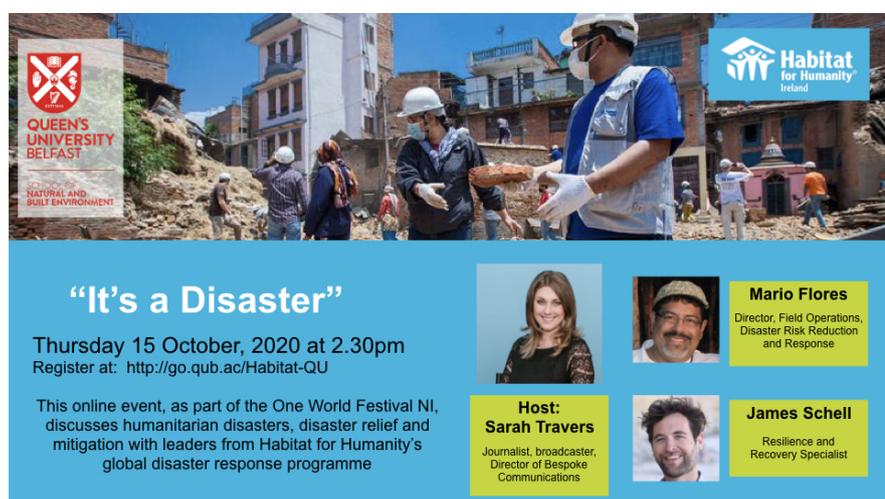
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## Civic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue: One World Festival Webinar - 'It's a Disaster'

A collaboration between Queen's University's School of Natural Built Environment and Habitat for Humanity, this event on **15 October at 2.30pm** will highlight the impact of disasters, discuss response approaches and the need for collective action in tackling disasters.

Hosted by journalist and broadcaster Sarah Travers, and taking place during the One World Festival, 'It's a Disaster' will feature Habitat for Humanity International's Mario Flores, Director, Field Operations, Disaster Risk Reduction and Response and James Schell, Resilience and Recovery Specialist, who is currently co-ordinating Habitat's response to the Beirut explosion.

To register to view this event, click on the image below.



**“It's a Disaster”**

Thursday 15 October, 2020 at 2.30pm  
Register at: <http://go.qub.ac/Habitat-QU>

This online event, as part of the One World Festival NI, discusses humanitarian disasters, disaster relief and mitigation with leaders from Habitat for Humanity's global disaster response programme

**Host:**  
**Sarah Travers**  
Journalist, broadcaster,  
Director of Bespoke  
Communications

**Mario Flores**  
Director, Field Operations,  
Disaster Risk Reduction  
and Response

**James Schell**  
Resilience and  
Recovery Specialist

## Equality and Excellence: Queen's Academic Appointed to Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel

Dr Bronagh Byrne, a lecturer in Social Policy at Queen's University Belfast, has been appointed to an expert panel advising the Department for Communities on social inclusion issues.

The Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel is one of a number of panels set up to advise the Department for Communities on social inclusion issues, following commitments set out in the New Decade New Approach document agreed by the Executive at the start of the year.

Dr Byrne is Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights and co-founder of the Disability Research Network. Her research expertise lies in the implementation of international disability rights and children's rights to national policy and practice with a particular focus on the application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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## **Recognising and Rewarding Contributions from Staff and Students: Queen's academic awarded Belfast Ambassador Medal**

Dr M. Satish Kumar, Director for Internationalisation in the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's, has been awarded a Belfast Ambassador Medal for his 'standout contribution' to the city of Belfast.

Dr Kumar received his award at the seventh annual Belfast International Homecoming which took place on 1-2 October. He was one of 10 people from other lands who now call Belfast home and have made a standout contribution to the city. Dr Kumar is an internationally recognised social scientist and is the former Director, Queens' Academy India. An expert in colonial and postcolonial studies focused on South Asia, he has taught at Queen's since 2000.



## **Queen's Professor receives national award for research impact**

A Queen's research project, the Northern Ireland Veterans Health & Wellbeing Study (NIVHWS), has been awarded the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) 'Lord Ashcroft Research Award' for innovation in the conduct of the research and potential for future impact.

Professor Cherie Armour, Director of the Stress, Trauma and Related Conditions (STARC) research lab at Queen's University, and her team started the research in early 2016. The programme comprised a series of inter-linked workstreams where researchers reviewed the support and services available to veterans residing in Northern Ireland, across both the statutory and voluntary and community sectors.

