The Honourable

The Irish Society



Chief Executive

Information Pack

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Introduction

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Chief Executive of The Honourable The Irish Society. For more than 400 years the Society has had a unique relationship with the North West and north coast of Northern Ireland. Today, we are building confidently on that history, using our resources, relationships and influence to help create lasting, generational change for the people and communities we serve.

The Society is an endowed charity, property and fishery owner, grant-maker and longstanding supporter of education and community life. Since 2018 alone, we have distributed more than £2.4 million through grants and community rents. Our ambition now extends beyond the activities we fund or the numbers who participate in them. We want to understand and increase the lasting difference our work makes to people, places and communities.

Our strategic focus is on **people, place and heritage**, with particular emphasis on early years, waterways, culture and heritage, and with reconciliation running through everything we do. We recognise that Northern Ireland's peace remains unfinished business and that meaningful progress requires trust, partnership and sustained effort. Our independence and our roots in both Northern Ireland and the City of London give the Society a distinctive opportunity. We want to be a trusted and neutral convenor, bringing together communities, public bodies, education, business and civic society across traditional boundaries and connecting people with ideas, relationships and opportunities that can help deliver positive change.

We are therefore looking for an exceptional Chief Executive who can combine **strategic ambition with practical delivery**. The successful candidate will work closely with our Trustees and partners to turn ambition into outcomes, while ensuring the excellent stewardship of our assets, finances, fisheries and grant-making, and the successful delivery of our day-to-day activities and capital projects.

This is an opportunity to lead a distinctive organisation at an important point in its long history, respecting what has gone before while helping to shape what comes next. We are looking for someone with the judgement, curiosity, drive and ability to build relationships that will help the Society maximise its contribution to this part of Northern Ireland for generations to come. Initial enquiries can be fielded by our recruitment partners at Engage. If our challenge excites you, we very much look forward to receiving your application.

Vincent Keaveny CBE
Governor

Dawn Wright
Deputy Governor

Who we are

The Honourable The Irish Society is one of the UK's oldest charitable bodies rooted in the North West and north coast of Northern Ireland for over 400 years. We own that history with confidence and use it as a foundation for lasting, generational change.

We are also a connector — strengthening relationships and opportunities between this region and the City of London through long-standing links and partnerships.

We focus on practical public benefit: enabling community-led work, supporting collaboration and managing assets — including property and fisheries — with a long-term stewardship mindset.



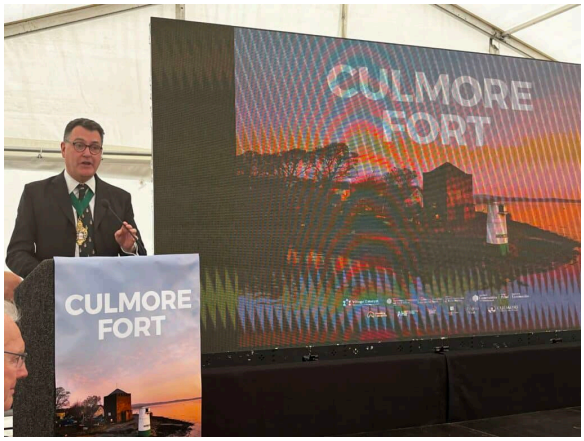
Decisions about what we do are taken through a combination of trustee oversight, committee structures and local input.

This approach balances strategic direction with local knowledge and helps ensure resources are used responsibly in line with charitable purpose and community need.

Our history

Our history extends back over four centuries and is closely connected to the development of the North West of Northern Ireland.

Today, we focus on our role as a modern charitable organisation — using our resources, relationships and responsibilities to support communities and contribute to shared futures.



The Honourable The Irish Society is a body incorporated by Royal Charter that dates back to 1613 and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission in England and Wales.

What we do

We work alongside communities, local organisations, partners and institutions to support shared goals.

Our role is to connect people and resources around shared purpose — helping to create the conditions where communities can shape their own future. Our links with the City of London strengthen this work by supporting relationships, partnerships and opportunities that benefit communities across the region.

We believe communities understand their own needs best. This includes grant funding, as well as wider work to share knowledge and support community-led activity. By combining investment with partnership and long-term support, we help create the conditions for meaningful, lasting outcomes. We do not deliver services directly. Instead, we invest in people and organisations, support partnerships and help create the conditions for long-term progress.



Our work is expressed through strategic goals, grants and stewardship of shared assets, with decisions guided by public benefit and responsibility for place.

Early Years

Growing Together is a programme designed to strengthen access to high-quality early years provision within communities across the North West and north Coast.

We focus on the earliest stages of life, recognising that early childhood support is one of the most effective ways to improve long-term outcomes for children, families and communities.

This programme invests in community-based early years provision, helping to build stronger foundations for the future.

Reconciliation

The Honourable The Irish Society is non-political and non-religious which is what allows it to work across boundaries, bring people together and support the conditions in which stronger relationships, honest dialogue and shared understanding can grow.

For the Society, reconciliation is not a separate programme area. It is a lens that shapes how we invest, convene

and support communities across our work. In practical terms, this can include supporting shared spaces, community-led projects, cultural and heritage activity, environmental stewardship, intergenerational participation and the quiet relationship-building work that often sits behind lasting change.



Culture and Heritage

We support community-led cultural and heritage activity that encourages participation, creativity and shared use of place. This includes supporting the use and animation of cultural and heritage assets; enabling participation in creative and cultural activity; supporting inclusive access to shared spaces and experiences; and connecting people and organisations to strengthen collaboration. This work is shaped by local priorities and delivered in partnership with communities and organisations across the region.

We provide grant funding to support cultural, heritage and community-led activity across the North West and north coast. Our funding supports participation, shared experience and activity that connects people and place.

Waterways and Stewardship

As well as being the custodian of the River Bann, the Society supports a network of community-based angling clubs across the Bann and Foyle systems through leasing of our fishing rights and ensuring public access to angling by communities. We also act as a responsible fishery manager for the fisheries we are directly responsible for.

We are committed to working with environmental partners and the angling community to address the urgent challenges facing our waterways, including declining fish numbers, pollution and the impact of algal blooming from Lough Neagh.

Our role is to support and enable the work of others — bringing together communities, organisations and partners to strengthen collaboration and shared action, including angling communities who play an active role in caring for waterways.



This includes providing grant funding to support local activity, as well as working with partners to connect knowledge, build relationships and support coordinated responses to environmental challenges.

Strategy

We take a long-term approach to our work, recognising that progress often requires patience, consistency and sustained commitment.

Our work is shaped by clear strategic direction and delivered through ongoing partnerships, learning and adaptation over time.

This allows us to respond to changing needs while maintaining a consistent focus on improving outcomes for communities and shared places.

We are non-political and non-religious – which is precisely what makes us trusted.



Our Values

- We are collaborative
- We take a long view
- We support diversity and inclusion
- We believe in mutual respect
- We work towards a more equitable society

Respect, inclusivity, integrity and a genuine commitment to positive change and reconciliation.

Strategic Framework

The Honourable The Irish Society's Strategic Framework builds on four centuries of commitment to the North West and north coast. It responds to poverty, educational underachievement, division and environmental pressures by placing communities, reconciliation and partnership at its centre.

Our Achievements

Since 2018, the Society has distributed over £2.4 million through grants and community rents, supporting education, bursaries, environmental action, recreation and culture. It has returned historic property to community use, supported angling clubs, promoted regional growth deals and assisted schools during the pandemic.

Our Vision and Mission

The vision is for peaceful communities, flourishing waterways and stronger connections between the North West and London. The mission is to empower communities through philanthropy, preservation and partnership, with reconciliation supporting fairer relationships and better outcomes.

Our Values

The Society will collaborate, take a long view, support diversity, uphold mutual respect and work towards greater equity.

Strengthen Access to Early Years Provision

Investment will improve children's cognitive, social and emotional development, promote inclusion, reduce disadvantage and generate lasting benefits.

Improving our Waterways

The Society will address pollution, algal blooms, habitat damage and declining fish stocks, while supporting angling clubs as environmental custodians and community resources.

Promoting Culture and Heritage

Culture and heritage will preserve identity, celebrate diversity, strengthen belonging, bridge divisions and generate social and economic benefits.

Growing Our Impact

The Society will grow income, maximise its property portfolio, improve digital infrastructure, widen engagement and strengthen North West-London connections.

Making It Happen

Delivery will combine focused grant-making, commercial and property development, stakeholder convening, partnership, advocacy and an outcomes framework measuring charitable impact.

Reading online? Click here for the full **Strategic Framework**

Financials

Below is a snapshot of our latest published annual income and expenditure report *for the 11 months* to 31 March 2025. If you are reading online, you can click on the links below to access the last three years' annual accounts for more detailed information.

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	31,480	63,010	94,490	92,000
Other trading activities	4	268,097	-	268,097	314,980
Investments	5	239,401	-	239,401	265,614
Other income	6	9,428	-	9,428	11,509
Total income		548,406	63,010	611,416	684,103
Expenditure on:					
Managing funds	7	7,268	-	7,268	3,618
Charitable activities	8	620,294	54,197	674,491	788,636
Total expenditure		627,562	54,197	681,759	792,254
Net gains/(losses) on investments	15	2,060,677	-	2,060,677	375,334
Net income		1,981,521	8,813	1,990,334	267,183
Other recognised gains and losses:					
Revaluation of tangible and intangible fixed assets		513,569	-	513,569	-
Net movement in funds	9	2,495,090	8,813	2,503,903	267,183
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances at 1 May 2024		12,331,312	1,400	12,332,712	12,065,529
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		14,826,402	10,213	14,836,615	12,332,712

Annual Report March 2025

Annual Report April 2024

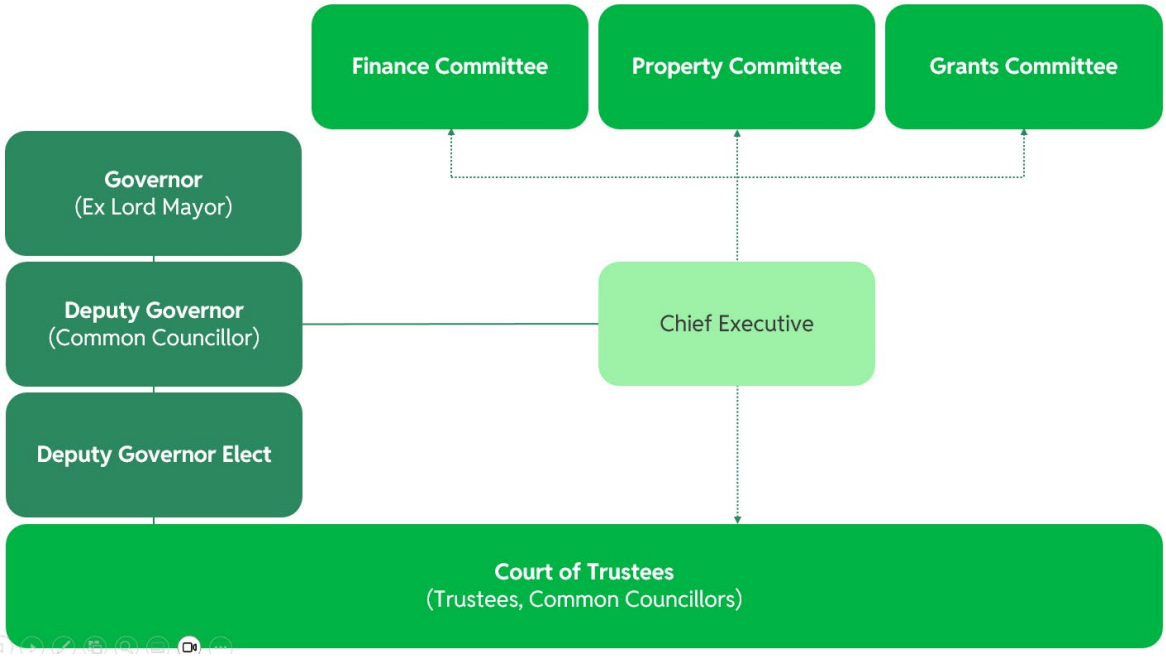
Annual Report April 2023

How we are organised

The Society is governed by a Court of Trustees, supported by committees and advisory structures. Trustees are drawn from the City of London Corporation and provide oversight, accountability and strategic direction.

The Society also works with a Grants Committee comprising representatives from local authorities in the North West, ensuring decision-making reflects local context and community priorities.

The Chief Executive is directly line managed by the Deputy Governor.



Meet the Trustees



Vincent Keaveny CBE
Governor

Alderman Alex Barr
Trustee

Anne Corbet
Trustee

Ceri Wilkins
Trustee

Charles Lord
Trustee

David Sales
Trustee

Dawn Frampton
Trustee



Dawn Wright
Deputy Governor

Hugh Selma
Trustee

James St John Davis
Trustee

Matthew Bell
Trustee

John Foley
Trustee

Philip Woodhouse
Trustee

Alderman Robert Howard
Trustee



Photo by K. Mitch Hodge on Unsplash

Job Description

Post	Chief Executive
Accountable to	Court of Trustees
Reporting to	Governor and Deputy Governor
Responsible for	Assistant Secretary, Assistant to the Secretary, Ghillie and Water Bailiff, and any employees, contractors or delivery partners engaged by the Society
Location	Primarily based in Northern Ireland, with regular travel throughout the Society's area of benefit and to its London office
Hours	37.5 hours per week
Salary/ Pension	c£65,000 negotiable dependent on experience Employer pension contribution of 21% conditional on 9.9% employee contribution
Annual leave	25 days annual leave plus statutory holidays

Purpose of the role

The Chief Executive will provide strategic and operational leadership to the Society, working with the Court of Trustees to translate its mission, resources and distinctive relationships into lasting benefits for people, communities and places.

The postholder will ensure that the Society uses its financial and property assets, waterways, heritage, grant-making, partnerships and links with the City of London in an integrated and purposeful way. Success will increasingly be demonstrated through positive societal and community outcomes, alongside effective delivery of the Society's established activities and responsibilities.

The Chief Executive also fulfils the Society's Secretary function, undertaking the governance and administrative responsibilities associated with that office.

Leadership, Strategy and Governance

- Act as Secretary and principal adviser to the Trustees, ensuring compliance with the Royal Charter, governing documents and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Work with Trustees to develop and implement the Society's strategy, translating long-term ambitions into clear plans, priorities, budgets and measurable outcomes.
- Lead the Society's staff and resources, ensuring effective operational delivery while continually improving how the organisation works.
- Develop proportionate approaches to assessing the outcomes and longer-term impact of the Society's work, moving beyond activity and participation measures alone.
- Use evidence, community insight and evaluation to inform priorities, investment and continuous improvement.
- Report to the Court on strategic progress, operational performance, finances, impact and risk.

Community Leadership and Partnerships

- Act as the Society's principal executive representative in Ireland in support of the Governor and Deputy Governor, building trusted relationships across communities and sectors and across traditional and online media.
- Coordinate official visits by the Governor, Deputy Governor and Trustees to deepen relationships and understanding of local priorities.
- Position the Society as a politically neutral and inclusive convenor, bringing together communities, government, education, business, charities and other partners around shared opportunities and challenges.
- Ensure that reconciliation, equality, inclusion and community participation inform the Society's work and relationships.
- Develop the Society's distinctive connections with the City of London, including Livery Companies and other institutional and philanthropic partners, to create opportunities for communities.
- Represent the Society on relevant boards, partnerships and forums and act as its principal spokesperson.

Programmes and Grant-Making

- Lead programmes and grant-making aligned with the Society's strategy and identified cross-community needs and opportunities.
- Ensure resources are directed towards activities capable of achieving meaningful outcomes, considering community benefit, inclusion, additionality, value for money and sustainability.
- Balance support for grassroots community activity with opportunities for larger or longer-term strategic investment.
- Build constructive relationships with grant recipients and partners, encouraging collaboration, learning and organisational resilience.
- Review the effectiveness of programmes and grants and use evidence of their impact to shape future priorities.

Financial and Risk Management

- Ensure effective stewardship of the Society's finances, investments, property and other resources, supported by robust P&L budgeting, forecasting and financial reporting.
- Work with investment managers and professional advisers to safeguard and develop the Society's asset base in support of its long-term mission.
- Maintain effective internal controls and an integrated approach to strategic, operational, financial, reputational, health and safety, safeguarding and project risk.
- Protect the Society's independence, political neutrality, reputation and long-term sustainability.

People, Operations and Communications

- Lead and develop the Society's employees, contractors and advisers, establishing clear responsibilities and standards and an inclusive, accountable working culture.
- Ensure effective arrangements for employment, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, information management and business continuity.
- Continue to modernise the Society's systems and processes, making appropriate use of technology to improve efficiency, governance and impact reporting.
- Communicate the Society's purpose, activities and impact effectively through its website, media, digital channels and stakeholder relationships.

Property, Heritage and Capital Projects

- Provide strategic oversight of the Society's commercial, community and heritage property interests, working with professional advisers to protect and develop the estate.
- Ensure property assets generate sustainable income while contributing, where appropriate, to the Society's wider charitable purposes.
- Develop sound business cases for capital investment, development, restoration, acquisition or disposal.
- Lead capital projects through effective governance, procurement, financial control and risk management, considering community benefit, heritage and environmental sustainability.

Waterways and Fisheries

- Lead the strategic and operational management of the Society's fisheries, waterways and other sporting rights, including licensing and relationships with angling clubs.
- Liaise with government, local authorities, environmental bodies, landowners and community partners to protect the Society's interests and promote responsible stewardship.
- Explore opportunities for the Society's waterways to contribute to environmental improvement, recreation, community wellbeing, heritage and local identity.

Person Specification

The Society is looking to appoint a credible and well-organised individual, capable of working with active and engaged Trustees and a wide range of stakeholders across Northern Ireland's diverse communities. We welcome all candidates, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability (for which reasonable adjustments will be made), age, marital status, dependants, or sexual orientation.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Senior leadership experience within the charity, community, public, private or social enterprise sectors.
- Strong experience-based understanding of Northern Ireland's social, political, cultural and community context, with commitment to cross-community working and partnership across organisations and sectors.
- Experience of developing strategy and translating it into practical plans, budgets, measurable outcomes and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Evidence of delivering positive social, community, environmental, economic or place-based outcomes, with an understanding of impact measurement.
- Effective management of staff, resources, projects and competing priorities, including organisational improvement, modernisation and change.
- Experience of working successfully with a board, trustees or equivalent governing body, with strong financial, governance and organisational risk management experience.
- Resident in Northern Ireland, or willing to relocate within reasonable travelling distance of Coleraine; willing to travel throughout Northern Ireland and regularly to London; and holder of a full driving licence, subject to reasonable adjustments.
- Postholders cannot have any political appointments at the point of contract signature.

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE

- Experience of grant-making in support of community development, early years or reconciliation.
- Experience in fundraising or partnership investment.
- Experience of managing or leading on property, heritage or capital projects. Experience of the management of fisheries, waterways or environmental stewardship.

ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES

- Appreciation of effective stewardship and the responsibilities associated with managing financial, property, heritage and environmental assets
- Ability to think strategically while maintaining a strong grasp of operational delivery.
- Ability to translate ambition into clear priorities, programmes and measures of success.
- Exercise of sound judgement in complex, sensitive or politically contested environments.
- Ability to build trust and credibility across diverse communities, institutions and levels of seniority.
- Ability to convene people with differing perspectives and enable constructive collaboration.
- Ability to communicate with authority, diplomacy and warmth, verbally and in writing.
- Effective people leadership skills, promoting accountability, initiative and improvement.
- Track record of integrity, independence, resilience and commitment to public benefit.
- Respect of the Society's history while bringing ambition, curiosity and fresh thinking to its future.
- Evidential commitment to reconciliation, equality, inclusion, political impartiality and responsible stewardship.



How to apply

Please forward a **CV, maximum three A4 sides**, together with a completed **Supplementary Questions form** available from, ensuring you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with from the recruitment timetable. You will also be asked to submit a separate **equality form** (see below).

The deadline is **Noon on Tuesday 1 December 2026**. Applications should be made by email to: **apply@engageexec.co.uk**

Contact Patrick Minne on 07792 509003 if you have any queries about the role or the application process.

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure
Along with the CV and Form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form in a separate document. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Disability
In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act a person is disabled if they have, or have had, "a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

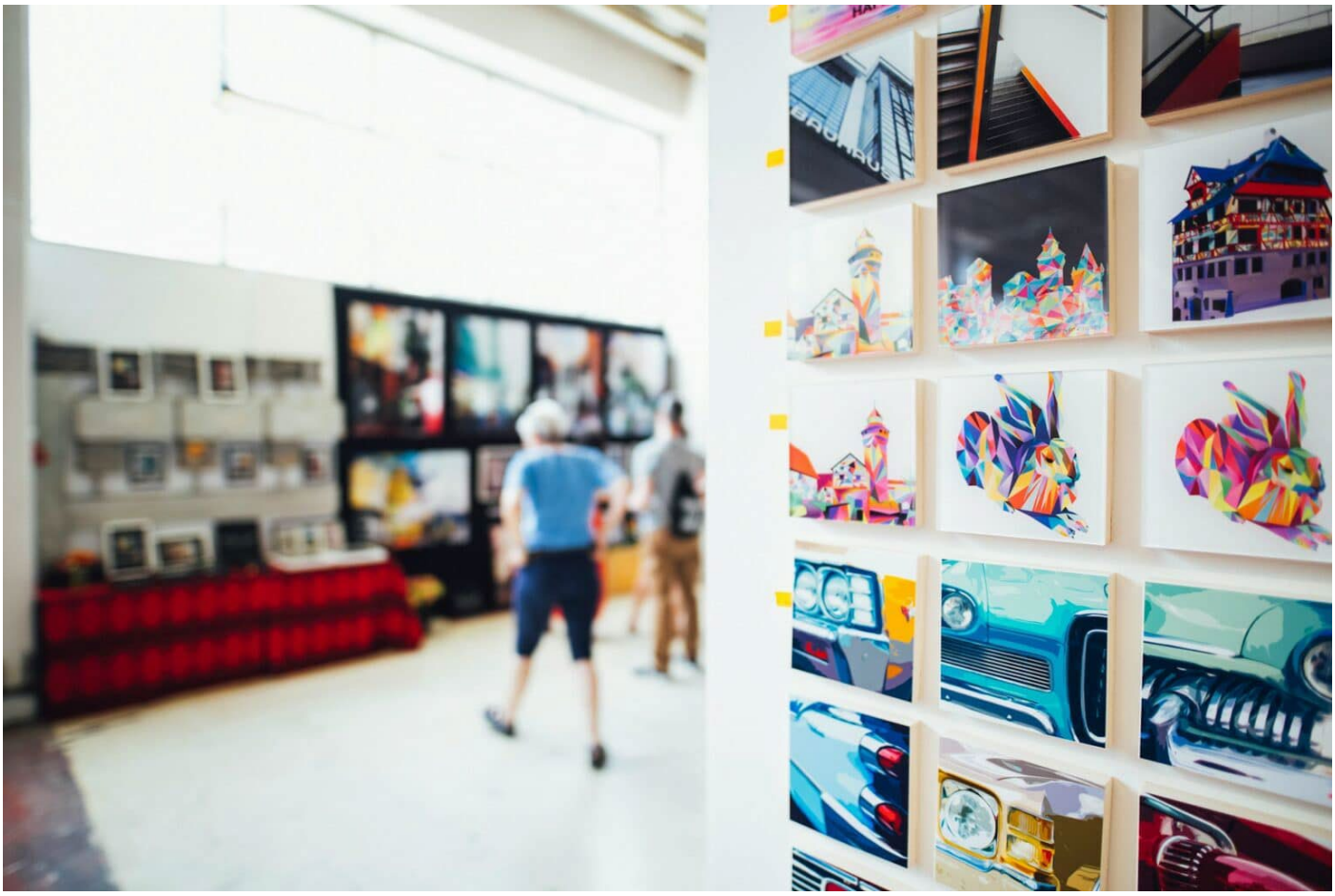
If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact Patrick Minne so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

Equal Opportunities
The Honourable The Irish Society is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

By submitting an application for this position, you are consenting for your personal information to be processed and used for the duration of this recruitment campaign.

Timeline

CV, Supplementary Questions and Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions forms to be submitted	Noon, Tuesday 1 December 2026
First Interviews	Friday 4 and/or Monday 7 December 2026
Second Interviews (may include a seen or unseen task)	Thursday 17 December 2026
Optional Final Interviews	Tuesday 5 January 2027



The Honourable
The Irish Society

Please address any enquiries relating to the advertised position to The Honourable The Irish Society's recruitment partners:

Patrick Minne

ENGAGE
EXECUTIVE TALENT

Tel: 07792 509003
Email: patrick@co3.org.uk

www.engageexec.co.uk

Enquiries *unrelated* to this recruitment can be addressed to:

The Honourable The Irish Society

Cutts House
54 Castleroe Road
Coleraine
BT51 3RL

Tel: 028 70344796
Email: office@irishsociety.co.uk

Incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered Charity No. 1150776