



European Heritage Open Days Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th September 2019

GUIDANCE NOTES

What are European Heritage Open Days?

European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) is a Europe wide event, held annually to promote interest in historic and modern buildings by the public. A wide variety of buildings and monuments are opened every year, including private houses, churches, scheduled monuments and halls. EHOD gives everyone with an interest the chance to visit these buildings and historic sites in an enjoyable, safe and organised manner.

EHOD is not just about buildings, but also about what goes on inside them. We would encourage owners to put on tours, displays of art or craft, film screening, performance, poetry reading and the like. Others may wish to provide Living History presentations or some other activities. Once again in 2019 we may have some cultural events looking for a home – if you would like to host an event please let us know in the registration form.

What happens on European Heritage Open Days?

All participants open their doors, and give a talk or tour free of charge on one or both of the designated days, to allow members of the public access to buildings of interest. Please remember:

1. You do not have to open all of your building, just those parts that you are comfortable allowing the public access to.
2. Rather than opening continuously for a long period, you may choose to arrange a number of shorter opening times or specific tour times (see - How many people will visit my building? on page 6).
3. If you want to, you could open for just one day, allowing you to visit other properties on the second day.
4. It is important to have some information about the building provided for visitors. This can be in the form of a guided tour, a brief talk or a leaflet, explaining the items of interest or a display of plans or photographs of the property.
5. To attract diverse interest in their property, many of our openers host or are happy to let others use their building to host a cultural or heritage event. If you would be happy to do this, please indicate so on your registration form.

Why should I open my building?

Buildings and event organisers will have many different reasons for taking part. Do you want to 'reach out' to the local community? Publicise a project? Increase membership of your



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organisation? Do you want to celebrate a special anniversary or fulfil a condition of grant? Perhaps you think it is the right thing to do because you own a great building and think the public should have access to it.

If you open your building the wider public will be made aware of the special nature of Northern Ireland's built heritage. Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest are a very special resource. We believe that by raising awareness of our built heritage through EHOD we can help ensure its protection for the enjoyment of future generations.

Whatever your reasons, it is good to think about them from the start, so you can plan around them. For example, is there information about joining your organisation? Do you want to put on an exhibition? Owners of public buildings may wish to display information about the work they do.

Who else is opening their buildings in Northern Ireland?

Private owners, voluntary organisations, Churches, Education and Library Boards, Local Authorities, Health Trusts, Government Departments will all be opening their buildings. DfC will again be opening a range of our historic monuments and hope to have Living History characters at some of the sites.

How do I find out about my building?

Your local library or historical society may have information.

If your property is listed, the list description will give some interesting information: contact the National Monuments and Buildings Record NI, tel: 02890569701 or by e-mail to mbr-enquiries@communities-ni.gov.uk, or find out more online at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/listed-buildings>

If your building is historic, information is often available about the architect who may have designed it. A good source is the Dictionary of Irish Architects - www.dia.ie

The Public Records Office NI also has a wide variety of information about local history and buildings: www.proni.gov.uk

Other useful sources:

Planning Architecture Design Database Ireland

www.paddi.net/

NI Stone database

www.stonedatabase.com/

Ulster History Circle (Blue Plaques)

<https://ulsterhistorycircle.org.uk/>

Ulster Architectural Heritage Society

<https://www.uahs.org.uk/>

Can anyone organise an event for EHOD?

Yes, any organisation, individual, business, or community group can organise an event for European Heritage Days weekend.



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What kind of events are suitable to organise?

All sorts of events can be organised. The length and breadth of the heritage spectrum is covered with events arranged covering all areas of interest such as Archaeology, Archives, Coastal & Marine, Folklore (Music/Dance/Storytelling/Poetry), Forests & Woodlands, Genealogy, Geology, Historic Buildings, Gardens & Parks, Industrial Heritage, Inland Waterways, Rivers, Lakes & Wetlands, Landscapes, Living History (Re-enactments/Displays), Local History, Military, Museums, Galleries and Historic Collections, Traditional Skills, Transport, Walled Towns, Wildlife and Family events.

Activities can range from walks, talks, tours, storytelling, exhibitions, historical re-enactments, craft demonstrations, workshops to outdoor activities.

EHOD Theme for 2019:

As outlined in our letter to openers for EHOD 2019, we invite you to explore the EHOD 2019 theme: **“Art and Entertainment”**.

This sub-theme presents the opportunity to explore the tangible and intangible elements of heritage of arts and entertainment and learn about their history and architecture. Some examples -visual arts such as cinema, circus, fairs, dances, games, reading, music, radio, television, theatre, tourism and sport. Learn about the history of costumes, instruments, objects from the past.

We simply ask that the focus of any event has at its core heritage and the historic environment and access is free.

Tips for what makes a successful event

A successful event will be fun and interesting for the visitor, enjoyable for the organiser and safe for everyone. It should also satisfy your original reason for taking part. Ultimately, the biggest factor in the success of your event will be your planning. There are several things you can do to give your building or event the best chance at attracting visitors.

Organise an event

There is a clear link between organisers who plan events at their building and good visitor figures. Rather than simply having stewards, why not have them lead tours or organise a quiz? Could you link up with another local heritage, arts or voluntary group to put on activities or have an exhibition? Would a local school like to contribute in some way? By running an event of some kind e.g. a talk or tour you automatically qualify to be a ‘Star in Europe’ which means having your event listed on the Council of Europe website.



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Do something different

If you have opened your doors for several years or run the same event, chances are visitor numbers will dwindle. This is because local people will have visited before and are looking for something new to go to. Think about what you could do differently and make sure we know so the New Event is listed in publicity material.

We would also encourage property owners to think about evening opening times, so that visitors can enjoy a special evening out with family and friends.

If you don't ask, you don't get

You might think that to organise a special event, you need lots of cash. In fact, sometimes just asking is all you need. For example, is there a local artist or architect who you could approach to give a talk? Would a craftsperson be willing to come along and show their work?

Cooperate and coordinate

Find out where else is opening in your area and cooperate with them. Make sure visitors to your building know about the others in the area and likewise, ask nearby venues to tell their visitors about you. Are there leaflets you can distribute to encourage visitors to come along? Could stewards from one of the other venues give you hand if you're overwhelmed by visitors?

Refreshments

Sometimes owners provide refreshments at a small charge, or sell plants, books or home produce, with the funds raised going to a good cause. This is acceptable and will add to the enjoyment of visitors, but there must be no charge for access to any part of your property or the event you run and visitors should not feel pressurised to contribute.

Timing is everything

If you are offering tours, make sure you know how long it will take to complete a 'circuit'. Have a trial run and factor in time to answer questions. If you say your walk or tour takes 30 minutes, make sure it really does so that visitors can plan their day and aren't trying to break away from the group early.



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How will people know my building is open?

We will produce a brochure providing opening details for properties and events. These brochures will be available in branch libraries, tourist information centres and other outlets across Northern Ireland from mid-August. People will also be directed to our website for further details of individual openers. As usual, your entry details will be accessible to the public on the Tourism NI and the Council of Europe websites (see page 1 for details) and our new EHOD WebApp.

DFC support openers through marketing activities such as online promotion including social media, through extensive Public Relations activity, blogs and partner websites. DFC staff also help to further enhance and develop the EHOD weekend by liaising with all interested stakeholders, providing a single point of contact for the public and issuing eNewsletters to openers who wish to receive them.

Sell your site

There will be press releases that are usually picked up by both local and national papers. Participants are encouraged to also use local newspapers and radio shows to advertise their property/event. DFC can provide advice on how to do this (please note that DFC staff will centrally co-ordinate all news releases with the media).

Our Facebook and Twitter sites proved to be a highly successful means of publicising EHOD events last year, and we will be highlighting properties and events using themed weeks from mid-June 2018. **We strongly encourage you to send us short posts, images and even video clips that will help entice visitors to your property over EHOD. Use the hashtag #ehodni on Social Media and Tag us in your content- @ehodni**

Make sure that the information you pass on to us actually reflects what is happening on the day. A dry, technical description of a building is not likely to attract many visitors. Think about highlighting some interesting details about the building or area and talk about the great activities taking place.

Generate your own publicity

Think about doing your own publicity. Don't just rely on the website or brochure. Does your group or organisation have a newsletter or an email list? Are there other organisations that could help spread the word? Would local shops or attractions put up a poster for you?

We will e-mail you an EHOD branded template for you to insert a photo and information into. This can be used to promote the location and opening times of your event in your local shop, post office or library or can be made into an explanatory leaflet about your building for issue to visitors over the weekend. We have a small number of EHOD flags, if you would like one for the weekend please let us know and we will try to accommodate you.



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PRACTICAL TIPS

What precautions should I take?

Measures should be taken to protect your property. Lock away items of value and anything easily portable. We would recommend that visitors are accompanied at all times. Encouragingly, no thefts have occurred to date during EHOD.

What about Insurance?

Participants in EHOD 2019 will be included in an insurance policy and cover will be provided for Employers and Public liability. Details will be provided when this year's policy is in place, closer to the event. N.B. It is important to inform your own insurance company of your participation.

Health and Safety

No-one wants to be responsible for an accident, whether at work or at home. There are a few simple things you can do to reduce the chance of an accident taking place and these are outlined in the Risk Assessment Guide which we provide for our openers with their 'opener's pack' later in the year.

Help!

Don't underestimate the number of people you will need to help you on the day. Think about the various roles involved and match-up the people best placed to fulfil these roles.

- Do you want someone welcoming visitors?
- Does there need to be someone outside directing cars?
- What about people to guide tours?

It is a good idea to have the phone numbers of a few people who could be called upon on the day, to help out if visitor numbers are unexpectedly high, or if one of your helpers is unable to be there. We can offer extra volunteers through our partner 'Volunteer Now' – please indicate on your registration form and we will do our best to provide volunteer assistance!

Volunteer Now - Volunteer and Training Programme

'Volunteer Now' is the lead organisation for the promotion, development and support of volunteering across Northern Ireland. Their vision is 'individuals connecting with others and their community to build a better society.' Their work enhances recognition for the contribution volunteers make and they encourage and enable people to volunteer.



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We will register the EHOD weekend on the Volunteer Now website. Anyone who subsequently registers will be put in touch with an owner who has requested volunteer assistance. **From that point on the arrangement will be directly between the owner and volunteer.**

How many people will visit my building?

The numbers range according to the size, location and type of building. Well known, high profile buildings may attract more than 1,000 visitors; others may receive less than 50. Irrespective of how many people visit, those that do are always extremely grateful for the opportunity. If you are concerned that you may receive too many visitors, it is possible have organised tours only. These would be limited to a number of people that you are comfortable with, and you can close bookings once capacities are reached. If this is your preference, please provide the telephone number or e-mail address for bookings from the public – as usual this and details of your event will be published on the Tourism NI and DFC Websites. If your property is a private residence or if you cannot facilitate bookings yourself, please contact us on 028 9082 3207 to discuss an alternative arrangement.

With these tips in mind, we would be delighted if you would like to participate in EHOD 2018 and we ask you to:

Register Online, by visiting <https://discovernorthernireland.com/loveheritage/> and click on the EHOD link.

If you are unable to complete you application online, please contact us and we will be delighted to assist you.

EHOD Team

Tel: 028 9082 3207

E-mail ehod@communities-ni.gov.uk

Web-site : <https://www.discovernorthernireland.com/ehod>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/ehodni>

Twitter : <https://twitter.com/ehodni>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/loveheritageni>

[Use Hashtag: #ehodni](#)

All registration forms must be registered by **12 April 2019** as we are aiming to run a full programme and have a tight schedule. Any entries received after this date WILL NOT be included in the Brochure, and will be Online ONLY.

We are very happy to communicate with you by letter, telephone, e-mail, or by enquiries via Facebook and Twitter. Sending us an email however, will give us time to answer your query efficiently.



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If you have any queries you can contact me Amanda Milligan or any member of the EHOD Team on 028 9082 3207, by e-mail at ehod@communities-ni.gov.uk or at the address below.

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