What is Unit18?
Unit18 is a new space on Macken Street at the Trinity East campus that Trinity College has provided for the local community to engage with the College, local businesses and other services. It is a place where together, we can develop and deliver projects and events of benefit to local residents. A space to engage, learn, and do things as neighbours, offering new education, social and cultural opportunities.

Get in touch
To enquire about using Unit18, or to let us know what you think should happen there, email Mary Colclough, mary.colclough@tcd.ie

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What will take place there?

The three key strands of Trinity’s programme at Unit18 are Employment, Education and Skills, Arts and Culture and Civic and Community. These were decided based on feedback from local residents and groups about what they would like, as well as consideration of the type of expertise Trinity can provide. We have some ideas about programmes for the space as shown in the diagram, but these are open to change based on interest and demand from residents. We welcome new ideas and we are happy to host existing community groups for their own activities.

Our artists-in-residence for 2021 are Broken Talkers, a 2-person theatre group, who will work with local residents to develop a new performance for the end of the year. They are also working with Dublin Theatre Festival on a temporary digital display to be located near the Grand Canal. The screen will display a series of texts developed in close collaboration with community participants around the topic of climate change.

Why is Trinity providing this space?

We want to build relationships with our neighbouring communities and provide a space to listen to local residents. Trinity is committed to welcoming a diverse student population and Unit18 can provide a base where people can become inspired by learning and consider further education. Even if you are not interested in formal qualifications, this will be a space where you can learn informally about a range of topics. From climate research, new technologies and local history to the type of work going on in nearby corporates, we want Unit18 to be a place where people can be inspired by local expertise, whether that is from researchers or residents.

How will it work?

We will aim to schedule the space in a fair way, ensuring Unit18 is open to a range of ages and groups in the surrounding area. It will be a neutral space, welcoming people from diverse communities. In the early stages, we will take bookings on demand. As we develop a more regular calendar, we will refine the booking system to ensure the space caters for a diversity of ages and groups.

What has happened at Unit18 to date?

Our plans to refurbish the space were delayed with the pandemic restrictions, but this will be completed by the end of Summer 2021. However, it was still possible for some groups including CBS Westland Row and St Andrew’s youth group to avail of the space. It was also where we distributed over 70 laptops through our “Tech2Community” scheme, an initiative supported by local companies to provide devices to people who needed them.

What else is happening on site?

Unit18 is located on a 5.5 acre site called Trinity East (formerly known as Trinity Technology & Enterprise Centre). Trinity plans to re-develop this site over the next number of years, to include a new research institute with a focus on climate change and provide space for industry, entrepreneurs and culture, e.g. the Lir Theatre. The new campus will be at the heart of the proposed Grand Canal Innovation District, which aims to better connect companies, researchers, the local community, culture and venture funders, driving job creation and creating a dynamic place where people want to innovate, socialise and spend time.

We are starting the first phase of development with a new Innovation Hub, called Portal, which will provide space for entrepreneurs, start-ups and innovation teams from large corporates. We are also developing a new public square with café and seating, located on what is currently a car park. This square and café will be open for all to enjoy in 2022.