



Directors' Report

As presented to the members in the complete
audited accounts for 2015

Directors	Doug Munro Mary Cannon Vincent Keenan John Evoy Leonard Lloyd Sharon Kennedy (Resigned 13 May 2015) Mary Cunningham Maura McMahon (appointed 13 May 2015) Austin O'Sullivan Paul O'Sullivan (re-appointed 13 May 2015) Carol Conway Sheena Horgan Dermot McCarthy
Secretary	Austin O'Sullivan
Company number	302282
Registered office	The Wheel 48 Fleet Street Dublin 2
Auditors	Byrne Curtin Kelly Certified Public Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm Suite 4 & 5 Bridgewater Business Centre Conyngham Road Islandbridge Dublin 8, D08 T9NH
CRA Number	20040963
Charity Tax Number	13288
Chief Executive Officer	Deirdre Garvey

Introduction

This report provides a summary of The Wheel's structure, governance and activities for the year ended 31 December 2015.

The directors present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015:

Principal activities and review of the business:

The principal activity of the company is to act as a support and representative body connecting community, voluntary and charitable organisations across Ireland. The organisation provides information, training, advice and other supports to members and others across the whole community, voluntary and charity sector and also represents them on cross cutting sector-development issues to Government and other key decision-makers.

Results:

In 2015, The Wheel had an income of €1,680,179 and spent €1,778,901 on services for its members and supporting their needs and those of the sector.

The major elements of expenditure in 2015 were on staffing costs related to: member- services, advocacy, training and information provision and research; and secondly, on the implementation of the National Training Fund co-funded 'Sector Skill' programme of training and supports and on the Eircodes Community Outreach one-off project.

The full results for the year are set out in Appendix B of this document.

Achievements and Performance in 2015 against Strategic Objectives:

The year 2015 represented a very significant year in the implementation of The Wheel's strategic plan, Being the Change. It brought us into the 'home straight' of the current strategy as it was the last full year of the plan's implementation. The achievements and performance against each of the eight strategic objectives is provided in Appendix C of this document.

Directors:

The first page of this document lists all Directors of The Wheel from Jan 1st 2015.

Their record of attendance at board meetings and board subgroup meetings is found in the Supplementary Information.

Important events since the year-end

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year-end.

Auditors

The auditors, Byrne Curtain Kelly have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 383(2) of the Companies Act, 2014.

Accounting records:

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities, under section 281 to section 285 of the Companies Act 2014 to keep adequate accounting records for the company.

In order to secure compliance with the requirements of the Act, the finance function has been adequately resourced by means of a Finance Officer working to a member of the management team, and supported by the services of an external accounting service for provision of management accounts, payroll and other related functions.

The accounting records of the company are kept at the registered office and principle place of business at 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.

Structure, Governance and Management of The Wheel:

The Wheel is constituted as a company limited by guarantee without a share capital as set out under parts 1 – 15 of the Companies Act 2014. Its purpose and objects are set out in its Memorandum of Association and how it conducts its business is set out in its Articles of Association. Both of these documents are posted on The Wheel's website and are publicly available from the Companies Registration Office website www.cro.ie and also the Charities Regulatory Authority website (www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie).

The Wheel is fully compliant with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations (since 2014) and during 2015 registered as fully compliant with the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

The Wheel is governed by a board of directors with a maximum number of 12 people. Of these, a maximum of eight people are elected from amongst the company's fee-paying membership and a further four are appointed by the board members. Every board member's terms of office is three years.

Every year at the AGM (usually in May) approximately one third of the board members elected from the membership rotate off and are replaced by new Directors, nominated and elected from the company's membership. The process for nominations and voting is laid out in the 'Election Rules' document which is posted on The Wheel's website and made available to all members and a summary is provided in the Supplementary Report. People may put themselves forward for nomination and election having served their term of office.

During 2015 the nominations and election process resulted in two people being elected from amongst the membership: one was a first-time board member and the second was a sitting board member who ran successfully for re-election.

Four of the places on the board are appointed by decision of the board. None of these seats became vacant during 2015. All co-opted places on the board come with a term of office of three years – which may be renewed by decision of the board. All co-opted board members must also become members of the company before they take up their board position.

Board subgroups

The Wheel has five standing board subgroups: Finance & Audit; Policy; Staff & Employment; Member Services; and Governance. In addition, it has a ‘remuneration subgroup’ which is comprised of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board plus the Chairs of the Finance & Audit and Staff & Employment subgroups respectively. All subgroups are advisory in nature to the board and all have written terms of reference.

Resulting from a decision that was made and implemented in 2014, a total of 15 people from amongst the company’s membership, but who are not board members, serve on the various subgroups of the board. These subgroup structures and processes have proven to offer very valuable insights and knowledge to the deliberations of the board. A review of this way of running the board subgroups was conducted in November 2015 and both board members and subgroup members participated.

Policies and procedures for the induction and training of board members

All new Board members receive a ‘Board Induction Folder’ when they become a board member. This contains all the information and documentation that a board member requires including: a Board Handbook, the Board-member Code of Conduct, the governing documents for The Wheel, the strategic plan, board minutes from the previous 12 months, CEO reports from previous 12 months, organisational budget and other relevant documentation. Board members also get complete information on how The Wheel demonstrates its full compliance with the Governance Code.

The CEO schedules a 2-hour Induction Meeting with each new board member in the first month to six weeks on the board, at which a sub-set of information customised for each new member is reviewed – all of which is included in the Induction Folder which they will be expected to have read in advance. In 2014 this process was followed for all new board members.

A similar process is conducted for the induction of non board member members of subgroup.

Organisational structure and how decisions are made:

The Wheel has a staff team based in an office in Dublin, and headed by a Chief Executive Officer who reports directly to the board through the Chairperson. A management team of three people reported to the Chief Executive in 2015, and all other staff report to members of the management team.

As per the 'schedule of matters reserved for the board', decisions reserved for the board to make include:

- The Company's strategic plans and annual operating budgets;
- Projects outside the scope of the strategic plan;
- Business acquisitions and disposals;
- Litigation;
- Appointment/Removal of Subgroup Chairs and Members;
- Appointment/Removal of Chief Executive Officer;
- Appointment/ Removal of Auditors;
- Approval of Borrowing/Finance Facilities;
- Approval of Contracts with term exceeding one year or financial liability on The Wheel exceeding €60k;
- Annual Review of Risk and Internal Control;
- Approval of new staff positions; and
- Approval of changes to membership categories or rates.

Although the board of directors is ultimately responsible for The Wheel and for the above list, certain duties and responsibilities are delegated from the Board of Directors to the Chief Executive Officer and through her to the staff team. This includes; implementation of the strategic plan; leading and managing The Wheel's staff members, programmes, projects, finances, pricing and all other administrative aspects so that The Wheel's ongoing mission, vision, and strategies are fulfilled within the context of The Wheel's values as approved by the Board of Directors and membership. The CEO is also responsible for preparing materials for Board consideration and for preparing materials for any future strategic planning process.

From time to time, The Wheel agrees to cooperate formally with other organisations on specific projects or in specific work areas. These agreements are often determined by a 'Memorandum of Understanding' or form of written agreement which may be approved by the board of directors. Since 2013 The Wheel's board have asked the CEO to produce a complete list of all formal and informal collaborative partnerships. This is updated annually and is placed on our website in addition to being circulated to all members once a year.

A 'Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Loyalty' policy is in place and observed by the board and is used at every board meeting and subgroup meeting as a matter of course.

Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations

The Wheel has fulfilled the recommended guideline actions for compliance for a Type C organisation as defined by the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations (www.governancecode.ie). The formal board decision giving effect to this was made in June 2014 and the one-page fully-compliant document was signed. This is now down-loadable from our website. The Wheel is listed on www.governancecode.ie as one of the fully compliant organisations.

A full review of The Wheel's ongoing compliance with the Governance code was conducted in August 2015 and some small corrective / additional actions were identified and implemented. The board of directors formally approved this review at its meeting in September 2015.

Internal Controls:

The Wheel conducts an annual Risk Review process that is assessed in detail by the 'Finance and Audit subgroup' with senior management and ultimately reviewed and signed off by the board of directors. This process involves identification of the major risks that The Wheel is exposed to, an assessment of their impact and likelihood of happening and a risk mitigation action(s) for each. The full Risk Review that was conducted by the Finance and Audit subgroup in April 2015 was reviewed, updated and adopted by the full board in April June 2015.

The quarterly CEO report to the board contains a section on risk analysis updating the board regarding the status. This is reviewed at every board meeting.

Objectives and Activities

The Wheel's governing documents set out that its overall aim is to support and assist the needs of groups and organisations which work for the disadvantaged and/or vulnerable in Ireland.

The Wheel's members adopted a strategy called 'Being the Change' in July 2012 which defines the organisation's vision and mission as follows:

Our vision is of an Ireland where there is a shared idea of, and commitment to realising, a fair and just society; and where the role and contribution of the community and voluntary sector in achieving this is valued and understood.

Our mission is to increase the community and voluntary sector's capacity and capability to play its part in achieving a fair and just society in Ireland. We do this by:

- Representing the shared interests of community and voluntary organisations
- Supporting these organisations to do their work
- Promoting the importance of active citizenship as vital in making Ireland a better place to live.

In the plan, eight strategic objectives are highlighted across four thematic areas and we achieve these objectives through the following core programme areas:

- **Advocacy Programme:** we advocate on cross-sector issues, enabling the diverse interests in the sector to negotiate with key stakeholders on issues of common interest.
- **Networking Programme:** we facilitate the building of networks of people with common interests, and create opportunities for networking across traditional boundaries. We also maintain an up-to-date directory of organisations within the sector.
- **Training and Development Programme:** we make training available to organisations and individuals in the sector and promote the highest standards of operational excellence.

- **Information Services Programme:** we provide information tailored to needs of people working in community, voluntary and charitable organisations.

We also implement the 'Sector Skills' programme, co-funded by the National Training Fund under the Department of Education and Skills. This includes a wide range of training and professional development opportunities as well as a grant-making programme that is run every three years, called the 'Training Links' programme. This latter is used by the successful networks of 10 or more non-profit organisations to fund training programmes in their specific areas of work.

In the latter part of 2015 the board directed that the 'Being the Change' strategy be reviewed, in line with its 4-year time span to 2016. The plan is to recommend a revised/enhanced strategy to the membership in 2016 to direct the organisation's work for the period from 2016 – 2021.

Transparency and public accountability

The Board believes that The Wheel, and all charities should be fully accountable to the general public, providing detailed information on where its funds come from and on what they are spent. We have provided substantial information in the Directors' report for many years and since 2012 report our accounts in accordance with SORP, the international Statement of Recommended Practice for charities. We also publish our accounts on our website www.wheel.ie, under the About Us section.

We have a dedicated 'transparency' section on our website which is two-clicks away from the home page in the 'about us' section. Any person who now visits the site can see the information that they most usually want i.e. How much money do we bring in and from where? How much money do we spend and on what? How much do our senior staff earn? This information has been available for over a decade on our website, but primarily through down loading and reading our Audited Accounts. The 'transparency section' brings the main information the public might want to know into a simple, easy-to-read location. We would welcome any suggestions on improving the user-friendliness and public access to information.

Formal Approval

The complete Directors report, including all appendices to this document was approved by the board of Directors at its board meeting on April 27th 2016

APPENDIX A

Election Process for new board members

The Wheel's board comprises of eight members who are elected by The Wheel's membership and four people co-opted by the board.

In relation to the eight elected positions, every year at the AGM (usually in May) approximately one third of the board members which are elected from the membership rotate off and are replaced by new Directors, nominated and elected from the company's membership.

The process for nominations and voting is laid out in the 'Election Rules' document which is linked to our Articles of Association, posted on The Wheel's website and made available to all members.

In summary, the process involves all of the company's membership being eligible to nominate onto or be proposed for the Board of Directors and notices to this effect are sent out two months before the AGM. The Governance Subgroup of the board performs the role of a Nominations Committee and assesses all the nominations received by the closing date against the published eligibility criteria. If there are more eligible nominations than places available on the board that need filling that year, then there will be an election by postal ballot to choose the winners and these people will be appointed officially at the AGM. If the number of eligible nominations is the same or fewer than the number of places available on the board to be filled, then all of the eligible nominees will be deemed elected at the AGM. The term of office for Directors is three years and people may put themselves forward for nomination and election after their term is up.

A full election process was conducted in 2015 and two of the eight places that are filled through the membership were replaced by new board members elected by the membership in a postal ballot. (Note one of the two was a board member who was re-elected for a further term of office).

APPENDIX B

Achievements and Performance in 2015:

The year 2015 represented a very significant year in the implementation of The Wheel's strategic plan, 'Being the Change'. It brought us into the 'home straight' of the current strategy as it was the last full year of the plan's implementation. The achievements and performance against each of the eight strategic objectives is provided in Appendix C in this document.

Financial Performance Against Targets:

The core income from all sources into The Wheel's income and Expenditure account over 2015 was €1,680,179 against expenditure of €1,778,901 over the same period, thus leading to an operational deficit of €98,722 in 2015 as compared with an operational surplus of €49,174 for 2014.

In relation to financial performance against budget and targets, the following should be noted:

- The original business target was for a deficit budget of -€40k 2015 and this was overshoot and – excluding pre-payment of grants for programmes in 2016, an 'operational balanced budget' for the year was achieved. The primary reason for this 'overshoot' was the high success rate of project / grant applications during 2015. These are for one-off pieces of work and are unpredictable, therefore, although extremely welcome and impactful, are not a reliable base for year-on-year planning.
- The resultant deficit of €98,722 in the financial statements is a direct result of the transition to FRS102 which has caused the treatment of income from membership fees to change from recognising the income up front when it arrives, to a system of only recognising the over the 12 month that the membership fee provides member benefits for.

Income Diversification

In 2015 we consolidated the growth in our non-statutory income generation and further developed its incremental growth. We also undertook two feasibility exercise in relation to the possibility of growing our income from: 1) a potentially new 'consultancy' offering that might possibly be set up as a new company; and 2) EU funding sources.

The board in late 2014 approved two new staff roles to augment the staff team's ability to offer more services to members – services which would ultimately pay for the investment made. This development was implemented in 2015 and the success in 2015 financially proved the model.

The board notes that securing income the way The Wheel does it, i.e. through large volumes of 'small price items', is an expensive way to secure funds, although ultimately more reliable than over-dependence on statutory funding or large grants because it tends to be repeatable income. Thus in diversifying our income we have also grown the cost base of The Wheel (in terms of salaries) in order to build capacity – which in turn secures additional income from services provided. To guide developments in this area, in November 2014 the board approved high-level principles which underpinned our continued generation of funds from our activities in 2015 and into the future and these are:

1. The membership of The Wheel gives the organisation its mandate, as well as unrestricted core funding. This implies that additional focus on substantially growing the membership over the next three years should be a primary focus.
2. Core, sustainable funding for The Wheel's day-to-day operations needs to be generated both from the membership and the day-to-day repeatable services and supports we offer (i.e. the things we do to earn funds).
3. There are core professional services of quality that the membership of The Wheel will require over the next few years. Often these are purchased from the private sector. The Wheel should be developing a competency/offering in selected key areas where it has a competence, so as to be able to offer them to members as a choice should they so wish.
4. The Wheel should ultimately position itself to cease being reliant on funding from 'general fundraising' as essential funding for its core operations and within three years, this income line should not appear in the core annual budget.
5. The Wheel should capitalise on its standing in the sector and view it as a core competence which can be leveraged for the gain of our members, whilst also contributing to our financial sustainability. This should be used as a framework to develop opportunities in the income generation space that might not be within our current sphere.

Principal Funding Sources:

In 2015, the principle funding sources for The Wheel's core operations were as described in the following tables. Note that a detailed breakdown of major funding lines is provided in the supplementary information supplied at the end of this document, broken down as per SORP headlines. The table following provides a narrative description and explanation as to the primary / large amounts/sources.

Statutory Income:

Source	Amount	Remarks
Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	€93,844	This was from the 'Scheme to Support National Organisations', a stream of funding which has suffered a cumulative 33% cut over the last 7 years. This scheme distributes funds allocated by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government and is administered by Pobal. It is a 24-month scheme that ends in June 2016. The scheme part-funds the salaries of the CEO, the Membership Officer and the Finance Officer.
	€73,476	This was from the 'Social Partnership' grant scheme, a stream of funding which has suffered a 33% cut over the last 7 years.

		It part-funds the salary and associated costs for the senior role of the Director of Advocacy, as well as some of the direct member-engagement costs associated with this work.
Department of Education and Skills / National Training Fund	€375,000	<p>This funding represents 80% of the total costs of the 'Sector Skills' programme of training and supports for people working in community and voluntary organisations. The 'Sector Skills' programme has three dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Training Links network grant programme which part-funded training in 23 networks of 10 or more organisations in 2015. • The Leadership Programme which in 2015 was primarily delivered through the two accredited leadership programmes run in partnership with two separate education institutions. • The Learningpoint web-based information services about training in the voluntary sector and which is located at www.wheel/training

Non Statutory Income:

Membership Fees	€89,612	Income from membership fees which contribute to the costs of providing the member benefits.
Income from charitable activities	€256,354	Income from a range of charitable activities: training courses; customised training; information and advice publications; Fundingpoint subscriptions; and cost-sharing affinity programmes.
Donations, sponsorships and grant fundraising	€356,354	Includes various donations / sponsorships for programmes and events, including the Better Together campaign, annual conference sponsorship and specific training / support events. This also includes project-related funding from statutory or EU institutions.
Eircodes / Capita	€435,436	The Wheel received a grant from Eircodes/Capita to cover the costs of a 'Community Outreach' programme to vulnerable/hard to reach populations. It took place around the formal launch of Eircodes in mid 2015.

The Wheel holds funds on behalf of The Advocacy Initiative Legacy. Operations were officially wound down in July 2014 but the website is still maintained and there are plans in place to hold one final

event. The Wheel has agreed to manage the remaining funds and activity by contracting for maintenance of the website for 3 years and delivering a one off event. This work will be completed in 2016.

Reserves Policy and Level:

The Board of The Wheel has set a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that The Wheel's organisation's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
- A proportion of reserves be maintained in a readily realisable form.

This takes into account:

- Risks associated with income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
- Planned activity level and potential opportunities
- The organisation's contractual commitments
- The cost associated with potentially having to make staff redundant in an emergency situation

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's annual planning, budget and forecast cycle. The level of reserves is kept under constant review through ongoing financial reporting and production of annual audited accounts.

At the end of 2014, the unrestricted funds were at the level of €303,395 and in the light of this knowledge, the board proceeded to approve an operations budget for 2015 that allowed for an investment of €40,000 of this into the costs associated with new services / value-add for members. The plan being to make the investment in areas of work that will ultimately recover this cost through increased income from member-services. Ultimately, the use of the reserves in this one-off way was not required in 2015 as a cash balanced budget was achieved due to success at grant applications for one-off projects. However, the underlying need for the investment may be needed in 2016.

Investments:

Part of the reserves are lodged with a Deposit line Account with ICS, which is part of the Bank of Ireland Group. The balance at end of 2015 was €103,667 (2014: €103,650).

In May 2013 a donation was received in the guise of an investment in KBI Venture Capital Fund. This was treated as an in kind income and the value at transfer of ownership amounted to €59,129. In November 2014, due to regulatory changes associated with the fund, The Wheel was offered the opportunity to cash in the value of the investment. The board decided to do that and consequently, a cash-payment to the value of €54,962 was received by The Wheel in November/December 2014.

Pension:

The Company has a contributory pension scheme to which all employees are entitled to be members. It is with New Ireland and is a defined contribution plan. The Directors are satisfied that the trusteeship

arrangements for the scheme meet all legal requirements and recommendations and have engaged 'General Investment Trust Ltd' to act as Trustees for the pension scheme. A review meeting with the independent financial advisor to The Wheel in this regard was conducted by senior management in mid June 2015. The results of this review were circulated to all board members and noted at the September board meeting. There were no additional/new actions required.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties:

In common with all organisations set up on a non-profit / charitable basis, the company has uncertain income streams coupled with the increasing wage/supplies costs that face all companies in Ireland. The directors are satisfied that the risks facing the organisation have been identified and managed through the annual 'Risk Assessment Review' described in more detail earlier in this report.

Health and Safety:

The directors are satisfied that the Health and Safety statement was reviewed during 2015 and that all staff members are aware and understand it and are provided with appropriate training. The most recently changed Health & Safety statement was approved by the board in September 2014.

Plans for Future Periods:

The 'Being The Change' strategy document will shape the plans and direction for The Wheel until mid 2016 against our eight strategic objectives. A high level summary of the objectives for 2016 can be read in the Supplementary Information. All members of staff have goals which are aligned with these top level goals for the organisation. In late 2015 a new strategy planning process was commenced which will lead to a revised / restatement of the strategy during 2016. It is envisaged that the new statement of strategy will be ratified by the membership at and EGM in Autumn 2016.

Payment of Creditors

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial transactions) regulations 2012. It is the company's policy to agree payment terms with all suppliers and to adhere to those payment terms.

Companies Act 2014

The Companies Act 2014 commenced on 1 June 2015 and on that date the company was converted to a company limited by guarantee under Parts 1 – 15 of that Act.

Impact of FRS102

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015 have been prepared in accordance with FRS102 and any transitional arrangements have been provided for.

APPENDIX C

Achievements and Performance in 2015 Against Strategic Objectives:

The achievements and performance against each of the eight strategic objectives is provided below.

1. Build an understanding of the importance of participating in community life and in public decision-making.

The Wheel's major policy initiative in this area in 2015 was hosting *The People's Conversation* and publishing the resulting *Citizens Rising* report in October. Full details can be seen at 3.3 below.

2. Maximise public participation in the development of shared ideas of what a fair and just society is in Ireland.

The Better Together 2015 campaign came to a conclusion with our annual awards ceremony in Dublin Castle on 9th December. The event was attended by c.300 people representing community and voluntary organisations from across Ireland. A video of the highlights can be [viewed here](#).

All the campaign targets were exceeded and the metrics and feedback suggest that the campaign was our most successful to date:

- Video Competition: number of videos entered by charities: 198
- Public participation: individual votes counted: 181,057
- Website: unique page-views: 450,884
- Roadshow: number of participating charities: 104.

Elsewhere, we continued our participation in the work of the *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Campaign*, making a joint submission with partners in the initiative (Amnesty, Focus Ireland, FLAC etc.) to the political parties in relation to encouraging them to include commitments to support ESC Rights in their manifestos for General Election 2016. We participated in joint working group with Dochas, Social Justice Ireland, SVP and others to promote significance of the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* in the Irish context. We continued participating in *PeopleTalk* – the initiative to model *Citizens Juries* as a mechanism to engage people in shaping public services. We also continued our involvement in supporting *Claiming our Future*.

Media / PR:

Media coverage of The Wheel's work continued to grow during 2015 (with 46 individual instances of media coverage of The Wheel and our work in the national and local media in quarter 4 alone). Media coverage included a *package about our joint pre-Budget press conference* on RTE Radio 1 Drive Time, Newstalk, Today FM and in the Irish Times and Evening Herald. The 2015 *Better Together Campaign* also attracted a substantial interest from the local media, with mentions in 34 articles and 8 radio interviews.

3. Maximise the effectiveness of the community and voluntary sector's voice so that the sector's importance is recognised by the state, the political system and other sectors.

Three policy priorities for The Wheel's advocacy work were identified for 2015:

1. Increasing the credibility of the community and voluntary sector and restoring public trust and confidence
2. Ensuring the community and voluntary sector's role is valued and adequately funded
3. Progressing active citizenship agenda and inclusive local government / local development reform and alignment

Priority 1 - Increasing the credibility of CV Sector and restoring public trust and confidence.

Media interest in governance and fundraising practice in charities continued into early 2015 following the *Positive Action* revelations, and the sense of there being a crisis in the sector continued, albeit at a much reduced level. The Wheel engaged in **extensive media work** over the course of 2015 to change this negative narrative and ensure that the key facts were put forward relating to good governance practice in the sector. The latest indications in late 2015 were that public trust and confidence is slowly returning to more normal levels.

A positive outcome from the crisis remains **the upsurge in interest in all-things-good-governance** amongst members of The Wheel. The Charity Regulator was also firmly established over the course of 2015 and is contributing to greater confidence in the sector. Similarly, the introduction of **lobbying regulation** passed off without a hitch for most charities, and The Wheel engaged in extensive communications to advise members of their responsibilities in this regard.

Priority 2 - Ensuring the community and voluntary sector's role in delivering public services is valued and adequately funded.

The big issue here in 2015 was ensuring that moves to tie statutory funding to the achievement of outcomes through "commissioning" approaches to funding (moving away from annual block-grants) don't damage the value-add of the community and voluntary approach to organising services.

The **big development in 2015** under this priority was the production of a joint publication by The Wheel, Clann Credo and the Community Foundation for Ireland called ***Let's Commission for Communities***. The report clearly identified the financial and non-financial value of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland and made the case for:

- Commissioning to take place within a **societal value** framework that appreciates the financial and non-financial "added-value" that the community and voluntary approach brings to services;
- A coherent funding models necessary to support the community and voluntary approach; and
- The need to create an enabling ecosystem for community and voluntary organisations to thrive.

The Wheel accepted an invitation to join the **Tusla Commissioning Working Group** in 2015 which is leading the process of aligning Tusla's strategy with its approach to funding, a process which it understands as "commissioning".

The Wheel also fed into the formal consultation process organised by the **Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)** to guide the development of **Principles on Commissioning** which is expected to direct departments when commissioning work. We met with key DPER officials responsible for drafting the policy over the course of 2015.

Priority 3 - Progressing active citizenship agenda and inclusive local government / local development reform and alignment.

The Wheel's major policy initiative in this area in 2015 was hosting **The People's Conversation** and publishing the resulting **Citizens Rising** report in October. **The People's Conversation** aimed to produce a new vision for citizenship for 21st century Ireland, and the process went from strength to strength over 2015, receiving the official support of President Michael D. Higgins who delivered the annual lecture at The Wheel's conference on the theme of citizenship, and praised the People's Conversation and its importance. **15 conversation groups participated leading to over 30 conversation meetings.**

We also worked to encourage members to register with and participate in their local **Public Participation Networks** and we continued our work with **the Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Task Force** to ensure that the new local government architecture supports social enterprise / voluntary organisations at the level of the Local Employment Offices etc. Extensive work in late 2015 went into communicating our policy asks to the political parties in advance of **General Election 2016** and into planning The Wheel's campaign to engage members in promoting our policy asks "for a thriving community and voluntary sector" to their local candidates - to be rolled out first week February 2016.

4. Foster excellent leadership within the sector.

The Wheel continued to build further upon the success of our myriad leadership programmes, workshops and forums. From confidential networking groups for non-profit CEO's to Leadership Breakfast Briefings and online webinars, The Wheel held **12 non-accredited leadership training events** in 2015 **attended by 386 people** (representing 346 organisations).

Sector demand saw our **Leadership for Equality accredited training programme** being run three times across the year. With **34 leaders** taking part (from 32 different non-profit organisations), The Wheel has now **graduated more than 160 leaders** from this Level 8 programme.

Another major innovation in the area of non-profit leadership was The Wheel's collaboration with the Law Society of Ireland to deliver the **Certificate in Charity Law** programme, with **51 attendees** in total (over the course of two programmes).

5. Promote quality and excellence in the community and voluntary sector to deliver better outcomes for people.

Our **Ready for Regulation** 2-day training programme grew in reputation and reach throughout 2015, providing attendees with a thorough grounding and understanding of: governance and public benefit trusteeship; succeeding with the Governance Code; The Lobbying Act 2015; The Charities Act 2009; the SORP standing of financial reporting; risk management; outcomes-based working etc. We delivered eight **Ready for Regulation** events across Ireland in 2015, attended by 281 people.

Our Governance Code Support Pack (made available to 230+ new members over the course of the year) continued to serve as an important resource for new and existing members. The Wheel also continued to deliver its own standalone governance-themed events across the regions, as well as collaborating in the delivery of **12 Governance Code** workshops with Pobal.

In total, The Wheel ran **166 training and special events attended by 5,151 people (representing 4,391 non-profit organisations from across the country)**, in addition to **40 Tailored Training on-site training sessions**.

e-Communications / Newsletters:

- **NewsWheel:** The Wheel's flagship member communication bullet - **distribution of 68,812 in 2015**.
- **Fundingpoint Newsletter:** Ireland's most widely read monthly fundraising newsletter - **2015 distribution figure was 50,589**.
- **Sector Connector:** The Wheel's weekly e-bulletin provides to the sector – sent to **120,000+ readers in 2015**.
- **Employer Resources Newsletter:** news and updates for non-profit employers - **circulation for 2015: 18,100**.

Websites / online services:

- **Wheel.ie information hub:** **298,492 unique visitors and 1,051,254 page-views** over the course of 2015.
- **Employerresources.ie:** **13,560 unique visitors and 30,477 page-views** in 2015.
- **Europeforcitizens.ie:** **3,793 unique visitors and 8,435 page-views** by the end of the year.
- **Bettertogether.ie:** **164,273 unique visitors and 462,760 page-views** in 2015.

Social Media Presence:

The Wheel's official **Twitter account had 6,870 followers** (5% growth in Q4), while our **Facebook page had 3,056 fans** (3% growth). Our reach on **LinkedIn is also growing with 1,304** (8% growth in Q4) followers. The social media channels are updated daily and continuously monitored.

Print Publications:

Be The Change: *the* magazine for the Irish community and voluntary sector. Distribution in 2015 was **8,200 hard copies**.

ResourcePoint Handbook: a quality colour-publication, featuring numerous articles on how to cut costs and make bottom-line savings for members of The Wheel. **Distribution in 2015: c. 9,000**.

Good Practice Guides: in 2015 we distributed a total of **1,562 of our Good Practice Guides free** to members of The Wheel, including 1,290 copies of our new *Financing Your Future* guide. An additional 278 Good Practice Guides were sold to non-members.

6. Maximise collaborative working in the sector.

As referenced above, The Wheel worked closely with Pobal, as well as Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups and Boardmatch Ireland, to deliver **12 full-to-capacity Governance Code-related training events across Ireland**.

The Wheel worked in close collaboration with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) in 2015. This collaboration included The Wheel holding a special information and feedback session in March 2015, in which our members were invited to engage directly with and provide their input on the then current CRA registration process. The Wheel also proactively assisted the CRA in promoting its series of information events across Ireland in the latter part of 2015.

In 2015 The Wheel was appointed by the Department of the Taoiseach as the National Contact Point for the Europe for Citizens Programme (2014 – 2020). This initiative saw the appointment of a dedicated Information Officer for the programme, and the establishment of a new website (www.europeforcitizens.ie) and a public launch in July (attended by more than 60 people). The Wheel, in collaboration with Access Europe, ran **9 information sessions** for non-profits interested in applying to Europe for Citizens during this period.

Other collaborations by The Wheel are detailed in our Collaboration Matrix, which is available to view here: www.wheel.ie/collaboration.

7. Ensure that The Wheel has the systems, structures, processes, procedures and resources to deliver on our strategic objectives.

Financial

Other parts of this Directors Report deal in detail with the financial activity on the income-generation side of things as well as on the expenditure numbers. Of particular note are the following new initiatives that were undertaken in 2015 as part of the on-going income diversification work:

- We commissioned a report from consultant Hugh Quigley about the potential of various EU programmes for our members, for the voluntary sector and for The Wheel. The results were posted on our website in autumn 2015.
- We expanded our training offering to facilitate a growing demand from members for training and that offerings grew during the year.
- We commissioned a feasibility study about the potential of establishing a consultancy offering for the sector, up to and including a new organisation separate to The Wheel. The findings of that analysis were reviewed at the end of 2015 and no new entity will be established – although several new offerings will be developed and offered to members during 2016.
- We were successful in broadening our funding information service (Fundingpoint) to include a dedicated programme of information and practical supports for organisations and consortia seeking funding under the ‘Europe for Citizens’ programme.

We were very pleased to bring 3 new suppliers on board with our award-winning ResourcePoint service during 2015, taking the total number of service providers to a dozen. This means our members have unrivalled access to some of the most cost-effective and high quality purchase options available in our sector.

We were pleased to secure the support and backing of Ulster Bank for a further 12 month period in 2015, providing The Wheel with various supports, including the use of Ulster Bank's premises for the delivery of The Wheel's Leadership Breakfast events, as well as for The Wheel's Members' Leadership Network.

IT/Systems

We commenced a full 'client relationship management' (CRM) database upgrade in 2015. A significant data-cleanse exercise was completed as part of the process and by the end of the year the new 'skeleton' CRM was at testing phase with several thousand records transferred for testing purposes. It is planned to go live with the new system in quarter one 2016.

People

2015 saw us welcome four new members to the team:

- A Business Development Officer, who joined us in April on a one-year contract to develop and grow the ResourcePoint cost-savings group procurement service for members.
- A Training and Information Officer, who also joined us in April, This person joins the core team for providing training, information, advice and support services to members and other sector organisations.
- A Europe for Citizens Information Officer, who joined us in August and who was recruited after we secured the contract from the Dept. Taoiseach to be the National Contact Point for the programmes.
- A new half-time Administration Officer role had also been approved by the board at the end of 2014 and this was recruited for in January, and unfortunately again in July when the new person was recruited back to the organisation she had left in a more senior role.

Developments were negatively impacted by the departure of the Senior Business Development Executive in July. The role remains vacant and is planned to be filled – at a more senior level – during 2016. Our Finance Administration Office gave several months of notice that she would be leaving in November after eight years to return to live in Spain.

These developments, coupled with the increased pressure of increased compliance and growing membership caused an organisational 'rethink' in terms of roles and structure of the team. In September the board approved the CEO's request for a budget to complete a HR Review. The board convened a special meeting in December to consider the ensuing report from the HR Review and the analysis of it, which had been undertaken by the Staff & Employment subgroup. All recommendations were accepted and they will be implemented in 2016.

Governance

June 2015 marked the one-year anniversary of when The Wheel's board had signed off on full-compliance with the Governance Code. That anniversary triggered a review of our continued compliance. This was considered in detail by the Governance subgroup, and subsequently the full Board in September.

The annual governance-review-session at the board's 'away day' November meeting focused on reviewing the relatively new sub-group structure. During 2014 a total of **16 people from 34 expressions of interest** received were appointed by the Chairperson to the various five subgroups of the board. After over a year of being in place it was opportune to invite all subgroup members to the review session at the November meeting. Both board members and all subgroup members completed online questionnaires in advance and the facilitated session examined how the new model might be strengthened so as to benefit the volunteer subgroup members and the organisation further. It was a very productive session and some actions were identified to further develop the model. There was full

agreement that The Wheel's board has benefited significant from the enhancement of the subgroups in this way.

8. Ensure The Wheel involves, adds value, and is responsive to our members.

The Wheel has experienced a steady increase in membership over the past couple of years, with 2015 being our strongest single year of growth yet. In total, our membership numbers went **from 1,013 at the start of the year to 1,232** by year's end (representing close to a 20% increase in numbers).

This strengthened membership base empowered The Wheel to deliver more services, discounts and special events in 2015. A sample of these enhanced membership benefits include:

The delivery of **38 members-only free information and training events** across Ireland, **attended by 1,286 of our members** (representing 1,126 organisations).

The Wheel's Helpdesk services engaged with **over 350 individual queries** during 2015 (along with hundreds more casual contacts / queries).

Our annual member survey in April indicated a widespread satisfaction with The Wheel, in terms of service, value for money and performance, as indicated through the following numbers:

- 93.46% of members said they were satisfied / very satisfied / extremely satisfied with The Wheel's overall performance
- 93.85% of members agreed that member of The Wheel is value for money.