

the
wheel

Stronger Charities.
Stronger Communities.

CHAIRPERSON'S
REPORT
2017

Chairperson's Report

It gives me great pleasure to report on The Wheel's activities in 2017.

The Wheel is the national association for community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland. We are a representative voice and a supportive resource that offers advice, influence and advocacy for the sector.

With over 1,300 members at the end of 2017, The Wheel is by far the largest representative body in the community, voluntary and charity sector. As an inclusive representative body, validated by the size and diversity of our membership, we give voice to our members and the wider sector. I am pleased to note that amongst our membership at 31 December 2017, 85 had an income of over €5m, 174 had an income in the range €1m - €5m, meanwhile 270 had an income of less than €25,000.

2017 marked the first year of our new four-year strategy *Stronger Charities, Stronger Communities*. The new strategy advances our Vision and Mission:

Our Vision is of a thriving community and voluntary sector at the heart of a fair and just society.

Our Mission is to strengthen the community and voluntary sector's capacity and capability to play its part in achieving a fair and just society in Ireland by:

- representing the shared interests of community and voluntary organisations,
- supporting these organisations to do their work, and
- promoting the importance of active citizenship.

We advanced our strategic objectives significantly during 2017. Highlights include:

1. Growing The Wheel's membership to over 1,300 for the first time in the organisation's history. Our work amplifies the voice of the sector, and we can only achieve our strategic objectives through a strong and engaged membership; credible and authoritative representation; and knowledgeable, professional service delivery. Our membership has grown for fourteen years running (an indisputable sign that our members value our work).
2. Collaborating with a wide range of partners to influence policy and deliver programmes and services. Key amongst these were our wide range of national and EU-funded programmes, and our various engagements with the Charities Regulator.
3. A series of productive engagements with the Department of Rural and Community Development as the officials in this new department formulated their approach to the sector. We were delighted to see the creation of a department with a focus on the community and voluntary sector.

4. A collaboration with the Carnegie (UK) Trust to develop three seminal pieces of research into various aspects of civil society. We will publish a series of reports on this research in 2018.

The Wheel's Board of Directors is very mindful of its governance responsibilities and its obligation to ensure the organisation's financial future. I am pleased to report that in 2017 we grew our income by over €100,000 to €1.527m and we reported a surplus of just under €37,000. This represents a solid start to our four-year strategic aim of adding over €100,000 to our unrestricted reserves. The organisation's finances and activities are described in detail elsewhere in this report.

Finally, this is my first and last report as Chair of the Wheel as I will be stepping down as The Wheel's Chairperson and member of the board of directors at the AGM in May 2018. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of a Board that has seen the Wheel flourish, growing our membership, launching new programmes and embracing new opportunities and I know the organisation will continue to flourish. We've done these things as a team and I am sincerely grateful to my fellow Board members both past and present for their commitment, co-operation and support over the past four years.

I want to particularly mention the staff team in the Wheel, all of whom work tirelessly and with passion to ensure they do the best possible job for the Wheel's members and the wider community, voluntary and charity sector. I must especially mention Deirdre Garvey, as CEO she 'models the way' with drive and insight to ensure the highest possible standards in everything the Wheel does. I want to thank her for her sage advice and incredible support over the past four years. Her abundant commitment to the Wheel, our members and the best interests of the sector is plain for all to see.

I would like to thank all of our members, funders, supporters, and those we collaborate with, for their support, encouragement and commitment during 2017. We couldn't have done it without you.

My many years of involvement and work as Chairperson for the past four years, has been a wonderful and very rewarding experience. I wish The Wheel well in everything it does, and I am absolutely confident that there are many able and competent people who will lead and shape the organisation's work into the future.

It's been a privilege to be the Chair of the Wheel so thank you for the opportunity to lead and learn over the past four years.

Mary Cunningham
Chairperson