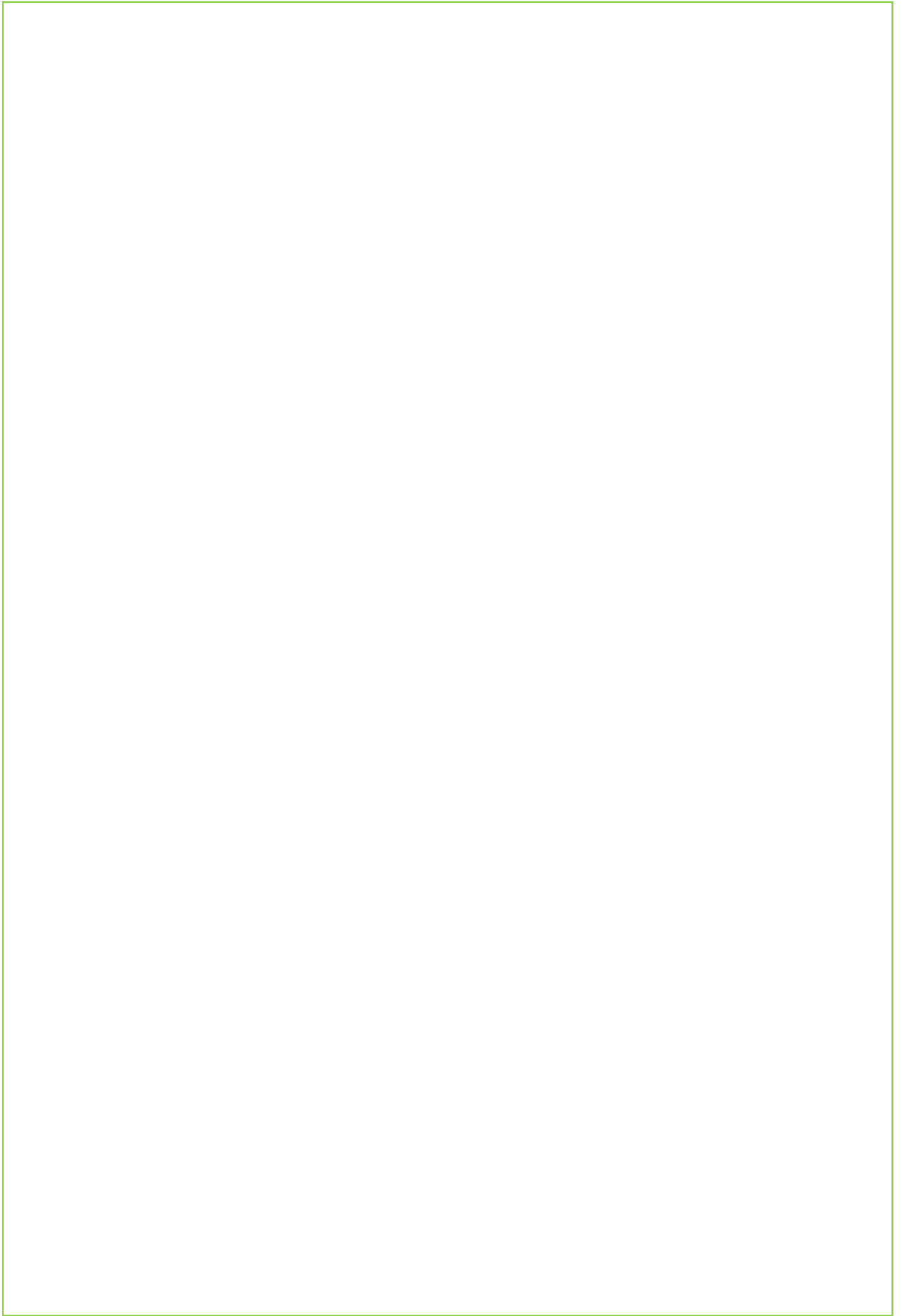




ANNUAL REPORT

IRISH COUNTRYWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

**REPORT OF
THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
TO THE ICA AGM 2017**





Irish Countrywomen's Association
Bantracht na Tuaithe

CONTENTS

National Executive Board

Regional Presidents

National Advisory Committee

Introduction : National President - Marie O'Toole

Secretary's Overview : National Secretary - Shirley Power

Financial Overview : National Treasurer - Mary G MacNamara

NAC : Cathaoirleach of the NAC - Susan Potts





SECTION: 1	Guilds and Membership
SECTION: 2	Publications, Communication, Member Benefits & Social Media
SECTION: 3	National Committee's Reports
SECTION: 4	Training and Leadership Development
SECTION: 5	Advocacy and Campaigns
SECTION: 6	Involvement with External National Bodies
SECTION: 7	Regulation & Governance
SECTION: 8	Conferences and Events
SECTION: 9	An Grianán Report - Niamh Donegan, Manager
SECTION: 10	National Competition Results

National Committees

The following are the details of the Officers, Regional Presidents, National Executive Board members and National Advisory Committee, elected at the 2015 AGM and in the second year of their three year term from 2015~2018.

ICA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:

NATIONAL OFFICERS:

National President	National Secretary	National Treasurer	Cathaoirleach NAC
			
Marie O'Toole	Shirley Power	Mary G. MacNamara	Susan Potts

REGIONAL PRESIDENTS:

South and East	Esther Cahill
South and East	Dee Devereux
Border Midlands and West	Barbara Meer
Border Midlands and West	Helen Rutter

<u>NATIONAL P.R.O.:</u>	Anne Devitt
--------------------------------	-------------

FEDERATION PRESIDENTS SERVING ON THE NEB:

Joanne Allen	Mary Carthy	Deirdre Connery
Anne Devitt	Margot Hennessy	Chris Kelly
Anna Rose McCormack	Liz O'Leary	Alice Rowley

The responsibilities of the NEB are set out in the section 59 of the ICA constitution. The National Executive Board met on 8 occasions between April 2016 and March 2017.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

National President	Marie O'Toole
National Secretary	Shirley Power
National Treasurer	Mary G. MacNamara
Cathaoirleach NAC	Susan Potts

FEDERATION PRESIDENTS:

Carlow: Margot Hennessy	Cavan: Anna Rose McCormack	Clare: Joanne Allen
Cork: Deirdre Hickey	Donegal: Maureen Milligan	Dublin: Mary Melia
Galway: Sharon Kelly	Kerry: Liz O'Leary	Kildare: Mildred Keyes
Kilkenny: Maria Landy	Laois: Anne Cass	Leitrim: Chris Kelly
Limerick: Mary Moloney	Longford: Mary Carthy	Louth: Susan Potts
Mayo: Alice Rowley	Meath: Olive Carolan	Monaghan: Lorna Soden
Offaly: Maura Allen	Roscommon: Monica Beegan	Sligo: Kay Cunnane
Tipperary North: Ann Clarke	Tipperary South: Anne Devitt	Waterford: Noeline Power
Westmeath: Gill Stanley	Wexford: Deirdre Connery	Wicklow: Madge Kenny

The responsibilities of the NAC are set out in Section 72 of the ICA constitution. Since the last report to the AGM the National Advisory Committee (NAC) has met on 2 occasions.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Marie O'Toole – National President	Mary G. MacNamara – National Treasurer/Chair of Finance
Shirley Power – National Secretary	Susan Potts – Cathaoirleach NAC

PROCEDURES COMMITTEE:

Mairéad O'Carroll – Cork Federation – **Cathaoirleach**
Mary O'Reilly – Mayo Federation – **Secretary**
Bridgid Keane – Waterford Federation
Mary O'Gorman – Kildare Federation

NATIONAL COMMITTEES:

The National Executive Board formed these committees in 2015/16 in order to support and aid the development of the Association for the benefit of all members. The focus of these committees is to help move ICA into the future with confidence. The committees in place are:

Competitions Committee: Wexford Federation administer and organise The National Competitions.

Handcraft Committee: Chaired by Josephine Helly with committee members Elsie Moxham, Pat O'Looney & Margaret Clince. National President Marie O'Toole has joined this committee for 2017.

Development & Promotion of An Grianán Committee: Chaired by Joanne Allen with committee members Esther Cahill, Anne Devitt and Liz O'Leary.

Social and Community Welfare Committee: Chaired by Helen Rutter with committee members Anna Rose McCormack and Mary Carthy.

Membership/Recruitment Committee: Chaired by Dee Devereux with committee member Alice Rowley.

These committees are now up and functional and we would like to thank all who has supported and encouraged them in their endeavours. We hope that the work of these committees will continue to be beneficial in lobbying and progressing issues on a National platform that are both relevant and important to our broader membership base. *(See Section 3 for Individual Committee Reports)*

The ICA Year in Figures - 2016/17



National President's Foreword - Marie O'Toole

Dear Members,

I am delighted to introduce our second annual report for the Association. I aim to give you a comprehensive overview of the work of the President and Board over the last year. Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Officers, Board Members, Federation Presidents and various Committees for their commitment to the Association. As a team we have settled into our respective roles and have been hard at work on your behalf. Also to the staff, both in Central Office and at An Grianán, I thank you most sincerely for all your hard work.



2016-2017 was a very important year for our Association as the celebrations of the Centenary of the 1916 Rising continued throughout the year and it was a mark of the high esteem in which our Association is held that we were invited to so many prestigious events. It was gratifying to have been invited to so many wonderful events organised by Guilds and Federations throughout the country, it made me very proud to be there as your National President.

We have worked on a wide variety of issues, from women's health to issues facing rural Ireland, The Brown Bread Baking Competition, Knitting & Stitching Show, National Ploughing Championships and many more.

As a member of the Associated Countrywomen of the World (ACWW) the ICA has a voice on an international platform for Women. I am a member of the Communications and Marketing Committee and as such have represented the ICA at numerous meetings, workshops and conferences over the past number of years. The most interesting of these was the Triennial (World) Conference held last August at the University of Warwick where members from over 30 countries participated. The next one, The European Area Conference will be held in Romania in September next and hopefully we will have a good representation of ICA members present to join with our sister organisations.

I hope you are enjoying our magazine and from the feedback you obviously are doing just that. Working with Ashville Media to produce these magazines is very rewarding and it gives us a chance to focus on different Federations as well as some of the skills and learning that is to the fore of our Association. We are always delighted to receive feedback from you about the magazine and your suggestions too. Please do not hesitate to contact Central Office in this regard.

I was delighted to represent the ICA on a recent Oireachtas Special Committee, together with one of our Regional Presidents, Helen Rutter and our PRO, Anne Devitt. The topic was 'Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Ireland'. Together with other organisations we have been advising the Government on many of the problems, as well as solutions, for our rural communities. In January of this year the Government announced its Rural Action Plan and committed a substantial amount of funding for programmes designed to rejuvenate local villages, promote employment and job creation, retain vital services including GP clinics, rural post offices and improving employment opportunities for young people in rural areas, with an emphasis on increasing apprenticeships and training schemes. We will be keeping a close eye to ensure that all of these issues are addressed and that they fulfil their promises. It has been a long campaign to keep rural Ireland to the forefront for funding allocation.

We are pleased to be working with Chef Adrian who joined us at the Brown Bread Baking Competition at the Ploughing Championships 2016 and who has participated in a variety of demonstrations at An Grianán and has proved immensely popular.

The National Ploughing Championships and Knitting & Stitching Show were just two of the very successful events we had a presence at this year. Congratulations to President of Offaly Federation, Maura Allen and her Committee for their successful hosting and also to Mrs Anna May McHugh for her invaluable support to ICA at the Ploughing Championships each year. Thanks also to the Handcraft Committee for their organising of our stand and demonstrations provided at Knitting & Stitching Show in the RDS in October.

Some new projects that engaged us this year included the crochet and knitting of soft prosthetics for patients who have had mastectomies and lumpectomies. With a very catchy name of 'Knitted Knockers', we are providing soft, comfortable prosthetics for these cancer survivors. For more information about the charity please visit <https://www.knittedknockers.org> and if you would like to get involved please contact Central Office. A lot of our members were also involved in knitting squares for the unfortunate people in Syria and many more projects, too numerous to mention.

Have you visited Northern Ireland recently? The ICA is delighted to be working with Northern Ireland Tourist Board again this year. Some lucky members from North County Dublin, Meath, Louth and Monaghan were invited to the 'Great Days Out Fair' which took place around mid-February. They visited Slieve Donard Resort and Spa in Newcastle, County Down and enjoyed lunch and a familiarisation trip to some of the many tourist attractions in the area. We are not forgetting our own beautiful countryside and promote it at every opportunity, especially when abroad.

We are delighted that Manor Farm has continued their sponsorship of Culinary Events around the Country. The last one, before Christmas, was held in Cavan and was hugely successful with in excess of 400 people in attendance. Details of 2017 events have not yet been finalised.

As a board we are always working to increase our collaboration with other organisations and this year we began to work with the Men's Sheds Organisation. We will keep you updated on our progress working together at various events in the future.

Our new computer system will be soon on stream and this will be hugely beneficial to both Central Office and An Grianán. A huge debt of gratitude is due to Delgany Guild for allowing us to use money from the 'Delgany Fund' for this worthwhile and necessary project.

A sincere thank you to all the Guilds and Federations who invited me to share in your celebrations and events throughout the year and for the warm welcome I received from you the members.

Finally, on a personal note, my own Guild in Portmarnock, North County Dublin has welcomed 12 new members since the AGM last year. It has been a great injection of new ideas and new blood. I urge you all to welcome our new members and give them many reasons to come back to meetings and to share their skills and ideas with all of us.

Marie O'Toole National President

Secretary's Overview - National Secretary, Shirley Power

Fellow Members,



It is hard to believe that another year has flown by so quickly. It has been a very busy year with our membership goals becoming more and more important. It is difficult times for ICA as we face the challenge of trying to re-affirm our position as a National Organisation. Our Association continues to attract interest in membership but in reality is not achieving growth in membership. I feel that our leadership in community involvement is hugely underestimated and in this regard, we have made great progress in obtaining appointments to National Boards and Forums where we can reflect the views of our members and endeavour to make 'our voice' heard nationally.

I have recently joined the Teagasc National Education & Training Forum. The Managing Director conveyed a huge welcome to ICA in our capacity within the Forum and has expressed his welcome at our involvement as the leading women's organisation of our country. Teagasc feel that in these times of progressive change, consideration of women choosing farming as a career is hugely prevalent and that this choice for women should be engaged and encouraged. Another topic on the agenda for Teagasc is 'Life-long Learning' and as an organisation who has continually promoted this as part of our ethos, I would hope that we can bring great relevance and experience from our involvement in this area to the fore within the confines of this committee.

As Project lead in the implementation of our new IT systems in both Central Office and An Grianán, a considerable amount of time has been put in to ensuring that both you the members and our staff as system users are catered for appropriately. Both systems are in the final stages and very nearing completion. I hope that their implementation will bring huge improvements in the way we maintain our membership database and most especially in the ensuring accurate and timely reservation/booking records for An Grianán. The right outcomes will result in a huge gain on the Information and Communications Technology front for ICA. Central Office computer equipment has been upgraded to ensure that the systems will be able to utilise the broadband speeds available to the office, thus ensuring more effective time frames for staff, making life on the internet an awful lot less frustrating. A new project is also underway to upgrade and develop further our website www.ica.ie. This will take some time to complete but we hope...will be worth waiting for! It is very important that we get the look and feel for the website right and that the information storage points are correctly positioned within their pages and easily accessible. The developer is currently working on the design of the website and initial interaction with the developer has been very positive.

Support measures for Central Office are essential going forward and this is an area of the business that I would like to focus my attention on in the coming months. Our general office policies and procedures are not adequate to requirements and need much work done to ensure that they are brought up to an acceptable standard. In this regard, I would hope to introduce both SPP (Standard Personnel Procedures) and SAP (Standard Administrative Procedures) across the board, thus ensuring that organisation will have adequate policy and procedure in place going forward. I hope that these measures will bring us closer to being in a position where we can adopt the Governance Code as part of good business practice.

Compliance with the 'Charities Regulatory Authority' is completely up to date to year end 1st December, 2015. We will shortly be required to submit the 2016 year end data. Compliance in this area is instrumental in ensuring we maintain our charity status.

On a lighter note, this year saw me break way outside my comfort zone in my recent participation in the ICA Home & Living magazine.....I'm still not sure how they managed to convince me.....but they did!. Both Jane Canning from Dublin Federation and I headed off to Clontarf Castle on the 3rd November last for a photo shoot of M&S Clothes. We arrived at the castle not knowing what the day would hold in store but the ladies from Ashville Media had everything planned out to a 'T' and we both had a great day. This is part of what ICA is all about and demonstrates just how wonderful an organisation ICA is, to be afforded such an opportunity to participate in events for such a great magazine that comes free of charge to all our members. Your ideas and articles are always welcome in preparing and planning future issues so please do get in touch if you have something wonderful or unusual to submit for inclusion.

Great credit is due to you all for the continued fundraising you are involved in within your Guilds and Federations for the many charities close to your hearts. It would be great if details of fundraising events could be sent in to Central Office so that a central record can be kept for information purposes and for to help is in promoting the Association for its work in this area when opportunity arises at National events and meetings with outside organisations.

It has been my pleasure to continue to meet with many of you at occasions and celebrations across the country during the last year. I would like to commend the great work that members and Guilds are involved in across the Federations - enriching the many communities and neighbourhoods that ICA is a vital part of and especially in their participation in the 1916 commemoration events that spanned our isle during this wonderful commemorative year of our country's history.

I would like to thank my fellow officers, the NEB, the NAC, the National Committees and the staff of both Central Office and An Grianán for their support, expertise and tireless work on behalf of our Association throughout the year. Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

I would also like to convey a warm welcome on board to the new Manager at An Grianán, Niamh Donegan. Niamh hit the ground running back in August 2016 when she joined the team there and both her interaction with members and her staff is proving very positive. Niamh has engaged the job with great hopes and aspirations for our wonderful facility and has made some fantastic progress in such a small period of time. Well done to all the staff at An Grianán and thanks for your ongoing support during what was a difficult year for the facility. We wish Ann Flanagan good health, every happiness and a very happy retirement and we thank her for her commitment and dedication to her work during her 32 years of service to An Grianán.

This Annual Report details the work we have done as a board and I hope it demonstrates the dedication of the Board members in the work they have carried out. We continue to develop and build the strategies of ICA but we can only achieve our organisational goals with the help of you, the members. Continued positive and progressive interaction with you the members of our Association is vital, and through working together we can all ensure that our organisation realises its full potential in the years ahead.

It is my hope as we move into another ICA year, that we do so in a constructive manner and take a serious look at our organisation and where we are going in the future. Times are challenging but I know we will all face the changing future together with determination.

Finally, to you the members, thank you for your encouragement and co-operation at all times and please do get in touch with me if I can be of any help or assistance to you at any time.

Shirley Power, National Secretary

Financial Overview - National Treasurer, Mary G. Mac Namara

Audit 2016:

The audited accounts for the year ending December 2016 are included with this report. The Audit comments should be read in conjunction with the Audited Accounts.



Central Office:

The audit highlighted that the Central Office accounts, which includes funds from Fees/Grants/Sponsorship/Sales of Goods, showed a surplus of €229,476.

An Grianán:

The audit highlighted an overall deficit of €85,503 for the year. The Coffee shop closed in October 2016 but has now been leased out again so this will generate additional rental income for 2017.

The Garden Centre remains closed but the Board are currently in negotiations with an external investor with the possibility of a new start-up project in the Garden Centre in 2017.

Members and Non-members attended a large variety of different types of classes in An Grianán during 2016, with crafts still accounting for 50% of all the classes attended.

There were improvements made to the back of the bar in the outside area which will prove beneficial as we approach the summer season. The area outside the sewing room, art rooms and demo kitchen had to be dug up due to a water leak and so we took the opportunity to replace this area with a wonderful new paved patio area. This is now complete and makes a great difference to this area.

The tennis club continues to be leased out to Termonfeckin Tennis Club.

Support:

The support from members, Guilds and Federations for the upgrading of the bedrooms continued during 2016 and it is greatly appreciated.

Sponsorship:

In 2016 we received sponsorship from Aldi, Gem Pack Foods Ltd and Manor Farm Irish Chickens.

Books:

We also continue to receive some royalties from the previous four books.

Grant Aid:

The grant aid which we received during the year was €9,000 from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and €20,900 from SOLAS.

Financial Reporting and Compliance:

There is comprehensive reporting and close monitoring in place. The Finance Committee meet each month in advance of the Board meeting and report to the monthly National Executive Board meeting. Each item of the business is looked at and remedial action taken where necessary. Close monitoring and budgets are in place for both Central Office and An Grianán. An Income & Expenditure account is provided each month for An Grianán and quarterly for Central Office, with variances highlighted.

We are compliant in our VAT and Tax returns.

We have a property register in place with the details listed of the ICA properties.

Financial Priorities and Challenges:

To ensure that items in the Budget can meet the costs for the year.

To endeavour to grow business in An Grianán now that constant improvements are being put in place, and get more ICA members to attend.

To meet monthly targets and if not to take remedial action.

To arrest the fall off in ICA membership.

Accountancy and Audit Services:

ICA went to tender for audit and accountancy services in 2014 and identified a preferred supplier. The appointment of G. Dunne & Company Chartered Accountant as auditor to the ICA for 2016 was put forward and ratified at the 2016 AGM. G. Dunne & Company are now known as CDM Accountants.

Mary G MacNamara, National Treasurer.

NAC - Cathaoirleach of the NAC, Susan Potts

Fellow Members,

The 14th May 2016 seems so long ago and with an extensive ICA calendar of events, it has been a very busy year for me.

As Chair of the NAC I have attended events in An Grianán. At the Garden Party, dipping my toe into the fashion world by doing MC at the “Fashion Show”. I also attended the Regional finals of the “Aldi Brown Bread Competition” and the “Pitch and Putt Final”. As with my fellow Officers and some members of the executive Board I manned phones in An Grianán after the sudden retirement of Ann Flanagan. There was nobody more relieved when Niamh Donegan was appointed in the manager role and it is great to see the “Beautiful Lady” that is An Grianán begin to shine once again.

I have attended all National Officer, National Finance Committee, National Executive Board and all National Advisory Committee meetings and am proud to have represented ICA at the Ploughing Championships and Knit & Stitch Show and I will endeavour to wear my ICA heart on my sleeve going forward.

Attending the Federation Officer training I found the format of the workshop particularly fruitful, sharing ideas and solving problems. I, along with the Regional Presidents and Federation Presidents was delighted to get feedback at the most recent NAC meeting in January and hope this is a system we will continue to do going forward.

One of the most interesting aspects of the past year has been representing our National President, Marie O’Toole and the ICA at various events. These included the “All Island Brexit Dialogue” Royal



Hospital Kilmainham, the 1st Plenary Session hosted by Enda Kenny and Charlie Flanagan on 2nd November, 2016 with follow up workshops in Dundalk and the 2nd Plenary Session on 17th February, 2017 in Dublin Castle. I'm in the process of writing a report on this. I'm not quite sure if this dialogue poses more questions than answers! And like you all have concerns for Ireland at the moment.

Another event I recently attended bears huge relevance for us...."Age Action" launched their report "Towards a Fair State Pension for Women Pensioners" on February 9th. This opened my eyes to the plight of so many women. I was pleased to have spoken to the floor and informed them that through Regional President, Helen Rutter and National Treasurer, Mary G MacNamara, the ICA had put the disparity of Women's State Pensions in the ICA's Pre-Budget Submission meetings. Asking the panel how we can best use our 9,128 strong ICA membership to drive a campaign for parity in State pensions, they suggested we put in out to the media and in particular social media. Let women's stories be told. And, of course, lobby Politicians. <https://www.ageaction.ie/news/2017/02/08/more-35000-pensioners-lose-out-government-pension-cut>. Have a look at this link and see the report.

It's good to have some balance as they say and after the seriousness of the "Brexit Sessions" I attended the Macra Na Féirme Leadership Awards in Dublin on 7th February, 2017 and was lucky enough to be seated with the family of one of the recipients.

Running parallel to these activities I joined the newly formed "Louth Women's Forum" and encouraged Louth ICA Federation members to do the same. This forum represents all the women's groups in Co. Louth and is an invaluable source of information. I joined this as ICA Louth Federation President and Chair of the NAC to further our profile and liaise with other women's groups. It has been a very worthwhile endeavour. I had formed earlier in the year with two other Federation members, Carol Grogan and Brenda Leary a steering committee to apply for the "Intreg Peace IV" grant, this is a grant for border counties. We put together a very ambitious application involving schemes of the ICA working with schools: women's groups (both sides of the border), the WI and An Grianán. Although unsuccessful in receiving any funding this time it has prepared us for future applications. As a direct result of my involvement I was nominated by Louth Women's Forum to become a part of Louth Co. Councils Peace IV Partnership dealing with "Intreg Peace IV". This position will continue until 2020.

I continue to champion An Grianán and Louth Federation was lucky enough to raise €3,000 for our local charity with our walk in the grounds and afternoon tea in the house on what turned out to be the wettest windiest wildest September day ever! 130 of us shook the rafters this December at our Federation Christmas Party and we have booked our summer outing there for June 17th.

This year has been a huge learning curve for me personally, listening to other groups sharing ideas and opening dialogue, it has been a real asset and I find I enjoy this aspect greatly.....but my hope through all this is..... that the ICA will be the main beneficiary.

Finally, I would like to thank my Fellow Officers and ICA Members for your support and friendship this past year.

Susan Potts, Chair of the NAC

Section 1 - Guilds and Membership

The Association's total membership as of 1st March, 2017 is 9,128 members. The association continues to attract an interest in membership although realising the interest into actual membership is proving difficult in some Federations.

We sincerely welcome all our new members, both Guilds and individuals to ICA. The National Executive Board are delighted to confirm that eight new Guilds were opened from when the NEB report was last issued to date. We wish all the new members in these Guilds every success and lots of happy times together.

Shercock Guild	Cavan Federation
Tobar na mBan Guild	Donegal Federation
Kinvara Guild	Galway Federation
Tory Hill Guild	Kilkenny Federation
Kilcloon Guild	Meath Federation
Kilbride Guild	Roscommon Federation
Inch Island	Donegal Federation
Leitrim Village	Leitrim Federation

On a sad note, the Association has closed ten Guilds from several Federations across the country. We thank these Guilds for their input during their membership of ICA and hope that the members who have transferred to other Guilds will settle quickly and be very happy with their re-location decision.

Skibbereen Guild	Cork Federation
Cummer Guild	Galway Federation
Graiguenamanagh Guild	Kilkenny Federation
Knockaroo Guild	Laois Federation
Raheen Guild	Laois Federation
Breffni Guild	Leitrim Federation
Clara Guild	Offaly Federation
Newcastle Guild	South Tipperary Federation
Loughnavalley Guild	Westmeath Federation
Rathdrum Guild	Wicklow Federation

Membership Enquiries received by Central Office May 2016 – March 2017:

The Irish Countrywomen's Association receives many enquiries for membership and these in turn are referred to the Federation Liaison Officer in each county, who follow up and welcome women to Guilds. Since our last AGM to 31st December, 2016, **270** women made enquiries to join the ICA.

Section 2 - Publications, Communication, Member Benefits & Social Media

The two major events we attended were;

- The National Ploughing Championships which took place in Sreggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly from 20th–22nd September, 2016.
- The Knitting & Stitching Show held in the RDS in Dublin from the 20th - 23rd October, 2016.

MAILING:

We constantly receive positive feedback on the Monthly Mailing to Guilds. For members with internet access, the mailing can be viewed on the ICA website in the Member's Area. The mailing is also sent in browser format, by email, to those members who have provided an e-mail address to Central Office. If you would like to receive the mailing in this format please contact Central Office with your e-mail address.



ICA HOME & LIVING MAGAZINE:



Two further editions of the ICA magazine were launched in 2016. Distribution of the magazine is directly via the Federation Presidents in an effort to ensure that every member receives their copy. The magazine continues to have a very good mix of interesting features, tasty recipes, members articles, crafts and fun competitions. Ashville Media produce this wonderful magazine on behalf of the National Executive Board. 2017 will see another two issues published.



MEMBER BENEFITS PROGRAMME:

The benefits of ICA membership continue to significantly outweigh the cost of the annual membership fee. We continuously strive to review and improve the existing members benefits while at the same time endeavour to add new benefits. The ICA is keen to partner with and support Irish businesses, organisations and service providers. With the "ICA Member Benefit Programme" our members receive "Exclusive Discounts" from a range of Irish businesses.

The involvement with the programme among Irish companies and Businesses continues to prove very popular and there are now just over 135 benefits on offer to ICA members. The programme is constantly being improved and updated and members should check the mailing and website regularly for the announcements of new companies which have joined the programme.

If members would like to suggest companies to join the Member Benefit Programme they may send their suggestions to Central Office for follow up.

WEBSITE:

The Association's website should make searching and accessing information easier and more accessible for the user. Throughout the year, there has been negative feedback from members about the difficulties they were encompassing in trying to access documents and information right across the website and that the website does not engage with the user.

Each Federation has its own Federation Page and it is wonderful to see the pages that are being regularly updated. However, some Federations report that entering and maintaining data is not an easy process when trying to update their pages with current information and thus are not being maintained accordingly.

Taking on board the views of our members and website users, the National Executive Board have engaged a project that will see our website completely re-designed. We look forward to the re-launch of our ICA Website in the coming quarter which will make navigation and exploration of the website much easier and more manageable for both the visitor and user alike.

FACEBOOK:

The ICA Facebook page continues to be popular among members with more and more members joining the page. The ICA Guilds Nationwide page is also proving popular with lots of Guilds using the page to promote and acknowledge the great work of members across the country. To become a friend of the ICA Facebook page please log on to www.facebook.com/irishcountrywomensassociation



TWITTER:

ICA has been on twitter since April 2011. As of February 2017, we have 989 followers on Twitter. The office look after the ICA tweets and to date have written (tweeted) 402 tweets. Twitter is used by the ICA to highlight events and activities, to view a press release, sign a petition or to vote.



Section 3 - Committee Reports

NATIONAL CONTEST COMMITTEE:

Ladies, the results of last year's competitions are on the back of this report for your perusal. It was a busy year for us all and we were delighted with the amount of members who took part in the various competitions. It was a steep learning curve for us, the Contest Committee. We hope this year's competitions will be as successful. So get on your thinking caps and I'm sure you will find at least one competition that you might enter as an individual, a Guild or a Federation.

The two extra competitions this year are:

1. Eleanora Gibbon Cup for Drama: I.C.A. has got Talent (20 minutes - empty stage to empty stage), to be held in Camross Hall, Camross, Co. Wexford on Sunday, 23rd April, 2017.
2. Betty Manning Trophy for Guild Year Book, (from May 2016 to April 2017)

So Ladies, whether you are sitting snug by the fire or throwing off those winter blues, get cracking and send your entries to us. We are looking forward to receiving your beautiful work and enjoying the craic with you for 2017.

Is mise,

Deirdre Connery, Chairperson, National Contest Committee.

NATIONAL HANDCRAFT COMMITTEE:

Craft Taster Classes, these classes are held one day a month in Central Office. The cost of the class is €10, sometimes there is an additional charge for kits. These classes are designed as taster classes, it is hoped that they will encourage members to further their knowledge and avail of the courses in An Grianán. These classes are also important both socially and for sharing the knowledge and encouraging new skills. These are some of the topics covered: Japanese Paper Craft, Zip Brooch, Christmas Decoration Wreath, Cross Stitch, Covered Box, Easter Craft, Crazy Patchwork, Covered Box advanced, Selection of crochet flowers, Witch & Angel decorations, Christmas Theme Table decoration and Penguin in a Pot.

We continue to attend many events nationally, displaying and demonstrating many of our heritage crafts. We have attended the National Ploughing and agricultural shows such as Limerick and Ballyshannon. We attended two major 1916 commemoration events, one in Dublin on Easter Monday where we were based in St. Stephen's Green promoting traditional crafts such as Lumra and in Merrion Square, where our focus was on children's workshops. We also attend the Athenry Commemoration.

The Knitting & Stitching Show: This year the theme of our stand was Mountmellick Embroidery, the display was the work of Sandra Counahan and her Waterford group. There were also craft demonstrations at our stand. This is a very high profile event for the ICA and we receive many membership enquiries. The Mountmellick display created a huge interest.

We are in negotiations with the Royal School of Embroidery re a return this year possibly in July. April sees our last three weeks of Clones Lace classes in Central Office.

During the forthcoming Handcraft week in An Grianán the Teacher Memorial Handcraft Trophy for Handcraft teachers will be awarded as will the Breda McDonald Handcraft Trophy – Hobby section for beginners. In submitting these tests you compete against nobody only yourself. Handcraft Week 2017 is fully booked. We look forward to some Craft award Tests during this week and one is hopeful of a Demonstrators test also.

We are now accepting bookings for Handcraft Week 2018, please contact An Grianán with your deposit of €100 to book and when the list of work shops is complete you will receive it. All tutors have the list and if and when they get back it will be posted to you and it is up to you to fill in your choices and return ASAP.

Josephine Helly, Chairperson, Handcraft Committee

DEVELOPMENT & PROMOTION OF AN GRIANÁN COMMITTEE:

Due to the changes in management and the organisation of an Grianán. The amount of progress that has been made to date is not as much as we would have liked. We have drawn up and implemented Social Media Guidelines for An Grianán and this policy is now being actively used.

Now that Niamh Donegan, Manager of an Grianán has settled into her new position we intend to meet with her regularly and agree on a strategy and marketing initiative for An Grianán.

Some ideas are to leverage the federations to promote an Grianán to groups within their communities, online calendar of events, assist in the implementation of the new reservation system, a policy for bookings with terms and conditions.

Joanne Allen, Chairperson

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE:

Chair of the Social & Community Welfare Committee, Helen Rutter attended the Department of Social Welfare Pre-Budget Submission Forum where she put forward the need to re-instate Children's Allowances to those who become 18 years old while still in full time education.

Helen also attended the Oireachtas Committee on Rural Affairs (with our National President, Marie O'Toole & PRO, Anne Devitt) where we put forward the importance of maintaining services in rural

areas to keep the country alive and vibrant.

We are monitoring the position on waste and bin charges and the threat to change the price of diesel relative to petrol, as another potential threat to rural Ireland.

At the moment we are preparing questions for TD's to put forward on the subject of Garda Vetting and its current use. We feel it needs to be amended to carry over from one service to another, perhaps with a Garda Vetting Card.

Hopefully we will see some success in 2017!

Helen Rutter, Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP/RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE:

The membership recruitment committee hope that you liked the new poster they designed allowing Guilds and Federation to have a unified layout for advertising meetings in your local areas.

We are putting forward a National Recruitment day in the Autumn of this year and we hope that all Federation's will take part in promoting recruitment to our great organisation, run by women for women's well-being. We would like to take this opportunity to compliment our hard working county Liaison Officers for their trojan work at county level in locating suitable guilds to suit new members who make enquiries to join ICA.

We also hope to promote a National 'Friendship Night' for all Guild meetings nationwide. This would involve members "bringing a friend along", bearing in mind that all new prospective members are allowed 2 visits as a guest before joining formally. We will issue details of a date, once agreed, and then if all guilds could advertise the promotion in their parish notes beforehand, it will hopefully be a very successful initiative countrywide.

We continue to promote ICA at every opportunity through leaving recruitment leaflets in Supermarkets, Libraries, Doctor's waiting rooms etc. We also suggest that members pass on our magazines and include on them a contact number from your county so that prospective new members will be able to get in touch.

We suggest that Federations may like to purchase a cheap phone for Liaison Officers and call it 'Anita' (after our founder Anita Lett), thus eliminating any worries of using personal contact numbers.

We are currently working on putting together a 'Welcome pack' for new members, with a range of information that will inform and promote ICA's history and ongoing advocacy work for prospective.

We know the best way to encourage new members is by word of mouth. We need to share the feeling of being part of ICA and the fun and friendships we have enjoyed and so we have to encourage more ladies to come along and join ICA toady and enjoy what we have. Loneliness is far away when you join the ICA. We also need to let new Guilds know that part of the membership fee covers them for public liability insurance, a requirement needed when renting meeting venues.

ICA entitles a member to vote on ICA matters and every member has a voice. We in ICA are proud of our democratically run organization, long may it continue.

Dee Devereux, Chairperson, Membership/Recruitment Committee

Section 4 - Training & Leadership Development

Training is a core objective of the ICA to support excellence in the Association.

Federation Teachtaí training took place on 31st October & 1st November, 2016 at An Grianán. The role of the Teachtaí is promote and support the use of An Grianán within the Federations. Our new Manager, Niamh Donegan conducted the training for the Teachtaí, outlining the new procedures and forms that she would like Teachtaí to follow in the hope that the booking in process for Federation Trips would be more streamlined and properly documented. She outlined her hopes for a new booking in system for An Grianán and envisaged that this would assist greatly in improving the accuracy of booking details going forward. Teachtaí were briefed on the requirement of content for the An Grianán brochure for 2017 and the importance of selling their county week to the members of their respective Federations.

President Training was conducted by Caroline McCamley during the same two days and almost every Federation was represented. We hope that the training inspired them and gave them all a clear indication of their role as Federation President in carrying out the duties of their Federation. Follow up discussion after the training took place as part of the January 2017 National Advisory meeting, where the Presidents broke into groups defined by their regions to analyse and review the training. It is hoped that this ongoing participation will continue through the Regional Presidents in an effort to ensure that the current needs and requests of Federation Presidents are being addressed.

The Training programme for Federation Secretaries took place on 4th & 5th November, 2016 in An Grianán, conducted by Caroline McCamley and Shirley Power. Federation Secretaries covered a number of areas including the importance of knowing the Constitution, how to write a correct agenda, how to relay correspondence to members, timelines and motions, keeping note of important dates and closing dates for events, working with other officers and the committee and the importance of keeping an accurate account of all meetings. Secretaries were also given training on how to register in the Member's Area of the website and how to navigate the ICA website within the members section.

Federation Treasurers Training also took place on the same dates as the secretary training and was conducted by Caroline McCamley and Mary G. MacNamara. The main aim of this training was to give Federation Treasurers an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Treasurer, the duties, and guidelines to follow. They learned about keeping proper up to date records, do's and don'ts, preparing an Income and Expenditure account and Balance Sheet, and the importance of filling in the property register each year and forwarding it to Central Office.

We hope that all the training provided will be of assistance to Teachtaí, Federation Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers. The aim of the training is to reaffirm officers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within both their Federations and ICA generally.

It is now hoped that following this intensive training, Federation Officers will in turn replicate the training at Federation level so that Guilds and Federations can work on implementing a common standard practise that will benefit all.

Section 5 - Advocacy & Campaigns

CALICO DOLLS FOR TEMPLE STREET HOSPITAL and OUR LADY'S HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, CRUMLIN:

The Play Therapists in both Temple Street Hospital for Sick Children and Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin have been overcome by the response of ICA members in their efforts in making calico dolls for use with their young patients. They encourage and allow the children to colour in and make the dolls unique to themselves including their illness/condition. This allows them to express their feelings of being in hospital. The Hospital Play Specialists aim to prepare children for invasive procedures. These procedures can be mirrored on their doll, empowering them to know step by step what will happen – and they can become the nurse/doctor.



We thank you for the huge response to the call for Calico dolls. There have been almost 4,000 thousand dolls made and donated to both Temple Street and Crumlin since the inception of this project which is testament to members who have given of their time and effort. The board are delighted with the positive response to this campaign as are the Hospitals involved.



‘BLANKETS FOR SYRIA’:

Many Federations around the country have been busy knitting Jumpers and Blankets for those less off and vulnerable children in Syria. A simple idea of knitting one square to form part of a bigger blanket touched the hearts of those ‘not so avid’ knitters but who knew that a little effort from everyone could make such a huge difference and so it sparked a wave of generosity across our country. The concept was simple; the outcome was spectacular.

This is yet another prime example of the continuous generosity of our members in supporting those in need. Well Done!



JACKET OFF YOUR BACK ‘SHOE THE CHILDREN’ APPEAL & BLANKETS FOR ROMANIAN POOR PEOPLE:

ICA are proud to have been in a position to partner with ‘Jacket Off Your Back yet again this past year for the ‘Shoe the Children’ campaign and the ‘Blankets for Romanian Poor People’ campaign. These proved to be a very successful ICA merger with an active charity working for the betterment of the homeless and disadvantaged both at home and abroad. Pairs and pairs of children's shoes were collected by Kevin from Central Office and over 100 blankets were knitted. I hope the photograph from the campaign team says it all. They warmly thank and most appreciate the support of ICA in its initiatives.



PEARLS OF WISDOM CAMPAIGN:

European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week took place from 22nd to 28th January, 2017. This week long campaign promotes the importance of screening and preventing cervical cancer. This is the fifth year that the board has supported the campaign and have encouraged all women from the ages of 25 – 60 to avail of free screening. The Pearl of Wisdom emblem pin and print material was made available to all Board and NAC Members at the January 2017 meetings in Central Office. For more information see; <http://www.pearlofwisdom.eu/home/>



MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLNESS:

The mental health & mental well-being of our members is of paramount importance and it is imperative that we continue to work towards eradicating the stigma associated with mental illness and ensure that those who need help are treated with dignity and respect and can access the help needed. The ICA joined forces again this year with 'See Change' in promoting the green ribbon campaign which kicks off on May 1st. Federations are encouraged to continuously raise awareness about positive mental health and where possible hold awareness raising events and mental health wellness workshops. It is important that we all look out for each other.



COFACE:

COFACE Families Europe is a network of associations representing the interests of all families at National or Regional level as well as focusing on families in vulnerable situations. COFACE's mission is to contribute to better policy making at EU level to make a positive change in the lives of millions of families living in Europe. The ICA is the only Irish member of COFACE (Families Europe). The three main campaigns of the organisation are currently 'Toys & Diversity' (making or breaking stereotypes), Cyberbullying' (European Awareness campaign which includes Internet Safety' and 'Work-Life Balance' (Campaign for reconciling work and family life in Europe). The organisation has many policies and projects and details of all of these are available on the website www.coface-eu.org/



This year saw a lot of change within the group with the appointment of a new Director, Liz Gosme, the introduction of a new website and also the introduction of a new logo. ICA has been represented at two of the three AC Meetings this year in addition to the training and strategic discussion on Nutrimerdias, a tool to raise awareness on the impact of advertising on the food choices of children and adults.



As part of our work in the area of work-life balance, the Association approached all 11 of our Irish MEP's on January 18th to ask their support in staying firm and continuing to honour their work-life balance pledges in the European Pillar of Social rights and not to allow non-legislative directive be introduced. Of our 11 MEP's, the reply was overwhelmingly disappointing.

Only two MEP's replied to acknowledge our call and pledge their support. The vote fell in our favour and the non-legislative proposals were denied on this occasion. Our National Secretary, Shirley Power continues to represent our Association on the Administrative Council of COFACE.

FORAS EIREANN:

Forás Éireann is a permanent conference of voluntary organisations which have come together for the purposes of consultation and joint action to assist and promote social, cultural and economic developments in Ireland. ICA is represented on the Forás Éireann Council by Marion Lyon. Marion has presented three reports to the NEB, one following their AGM on 7th May, 2016, one in September 2016 and one in February 2017. The Charlotte F. Shaw Trust, which is administered by Forás Éireann provides funds for 'the bringing of masterpieces of Fine Art within the reach of Irish People.' Funding is provided in many categories across the Art, Music and Literature disciplines. See foraseireann.com for further details.



GO FOR LIFE:

Go For Life is a National Programme for sport and physical activity for older people. The aim of go for Life is to involve greater numbers of older adults in all aspects of sport and physical activity. It is run by Age & Opportunity in partnership with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Local Sports Partnerships. Many Guilds and Federations, through the National Grant Scheme, receive funding for the promotion and providing of activities locally and this has proved very beneficial across the board, with some members also participating in the PAL's training to further progress their involvement with the Go for Life initiative. Members have been hugely engaging with the scheme this year with lots of photo's from both Guild and Federation activities sent in to be regularly included in our monthly mailing. So keep up the involvement and remember - if you don't use it, you lose it!



ACWW:

The ICA is affiliated to the Associated Countrywomen of the World. ACWW is an association of women-led societies and groups working collectively for the shared vision of an improved quality of life for women and communities worldwide. With 420 member societies in 73 countries, ACWW gives voice to over 9 million rural and non-rural women. ACWW believes that through cooperation and understanding we can empower our members to create opportunities for women to exercise more power, make better decisions and change their own lives for the better.



The ICA became affiliated to ACWW in 1933, was represented at the International Conference in Stockholm and was a Founder Friend of the ACWW in 1934. The ICA hosted the ACWW World Conferences of 1965 and 1986 and the European Area Conference in 2011. ICA members can be individual members of ACWW in addition to our National Affiliation. Members travel regularly to the European Area Conferences and International Conferences. National President, Marie O'Toole attended the 2016 Triennial Conference at the University of Warwick, England from 17th-23rd August, 2016 and will attend the European Area Conference in Romania from 4th-8th September, 2017.

VOLUNTEER WORK IN MISSIONVALE BY BOARD MEMBER, JOANNE ALLEN:

Located on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, **Missionvale is a township of an estimated 30,000 people.** Missionvale has been ravaged by disease, unemployment and malnutrition. The HIV/ Aids virus is affecting 70% of its population, including children. Almost 75% of the adult population of Missionvale is unemployed. I travelled to volunteer with a group of 43 other people from County Clare in January of this year to Missionvale Care Centre in the heart of this Township.

It was founded by Sister Ethel Normoyle, who originally comes from Lisycassey, Co Clare. This experience was a most humbling, emotional and rewarding one. I met warm, courageous and strong women, who always display, despite their circumstances an optimistic outlook on their lives. From working in the Nutrition centre giving bread and soup mix each day, helping in the school, teaching Irish dancing, gardening, painting to having some fun with the children, it was a busy week. One of the interesting features in the centre is a Craft unit, where many of the women work on a variety of handcraft projects including curtains, placemats, hand bags, aprons, pillows, jewellery and much more. As the women are taught the basics of sewing and become more adept at these skills they have an increased chance of becoming employed by businesses throughout the Port Elizabeth area. Once the crafters have been in the program for a while and have obtained the necessary skills, they are encouraged to look for work outside the Care Centre. I would love to help grow and support the Craft unit to enable these women to become self sufficient.

Education is another important factor for the children of the community. Unfortunately, due to cost, the majority of children will not go to Secondary school. It costs approx. €28 a year to send a child to school for the academic year. I hope over the next year to work with the centre to arrange sponsorship for some children to enable them to receive an education and give them a brighter, stronger future.

I have definitely left a part of my heart with Sr. Ethel and the staff of Missionvale Care Centre after my visit. I feel obligated to help these women that toil to make a difference in their community with virtually no resources. It's important for us all to realise how very fortunate we are and to know that we can help in any small way. Joanne Allen, Clare Federation President.

Section 6 - Involvement with External National Bodies

The presence of ICA members on National Boards & Forums for the purpose of representing and bringing forward the views of our members had lapsed in recent times. In the past year, the National Executive Board have endeavoured to make progress in this area and to date have, in addition to the National Women's Council and Forás Éireann, secured the appointment of the following members to National Boards & Forums in an effort to regain our presence on a National level. In this regard, we welcome the views and suggestions of members in the broad aspects of these areas so that we can be fully prepared in our presence on these Boards and knowing that we are truly representative of the real views and opinions of our Association.

Saving Rural Ireland - *Marie O'Toole*

National Rural Water Services - *Alice Rowley*

National Broadband Taskforce - *Mary G. MacNamara*

Aontas - *Mary G. MacNamara*

Teagasc Education & Training Forum - *Shirley Power*

Roscommon Leader Partnership ('Digital Skills for Citizens') - *Monica Beegan*

Section 7 - Regulatory & Governance

CHARITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY (CRA):

The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) is Ireland's National Statutory Regulatory Agency for Charitable Organisations. It is an independent statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Justice & Equality.

Under section 52 of the Charities Act, we are required to send an Annual Activity Report which includes a copy of our Annual Accounts, no later than ten months after the end of our financial year end. The Irish Countrywomen's Association online registration was completed in early 2015 and to date the Annual Activity Report and the Annual Accounts for both 2014 and 2015 have been submitted and acknowledged by the CRA. The CRA were considering the possibility of additional requirements for Guilds and Federation as part of compliance but due to the huge demand for staffing to oversee compliance, these plans have been put on hold until Mid-2017. The National Executive Board will continue to work with the CRA to ensure that the ICA maintains continuous overall compliance.



**Charities
Regulatory
Authority**
**An tÚdarás
Rialála
Carthanas**

GOVERNANCE CODE:

The Governance Code is a **Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland.**



Governance refers to how an organisation is run, directed and controlled. Good governance means an organisation will design and put in place policies and procedures that will make sure the organisation runs effectively. All Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations have a responsibility to provide and follow a code of good practice when it comes to how their organisations are run.

To date, the current Board are unable to display a complete confidence & trust in all of our current work practices in an effort to be able to demonstrate a high standard of governance for our members. We continue to evaluate these inadequacies and endorse the opportunities to update our procedures to reflect good practice in the assurance that we will, in time, meet the adequate standards required under the code. A review of the Association's Strategic Plan will take place in 2017 as part of this project.

Section 8 - Conferences & Events

Last years National AGM saw record numbers in attendance at the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone. The venue was excellent and very accessible from all public transport networks. The Treasurer, Secretary and Treasurer gave their reports and Q&A followed. The Association were delighted to have in attendance at our AGM, our Accountant and Auditor, Glen Dunne, our Solicitor, John Reid and Elizabeth Warden of WI (representing WINI). The afternoon speakers included Jamie O'Touma of Gael Linn and Chef Adrain Martin promoting the All-Ireland-Cook-Off-Competition.



The **Annual Garden Party** took place on Friday 8th July and hosted the largest attendance ever. The day as always, lent itself to the success of the party. The sun shone brightly and all attendees were treated to a wonderful afternoon of Line Dancing on the front lawn with many members joining in. This was followed by yet another very successful fashion show. With the show well on the road, strawberries and cream were served on the lawn before the party moved indoors for a wonderful night of entertainment. This years Garden Party will take place on Friday, 7th July and is booking out fast so to get your ticket for the event, contact An Grianán on (041) 9822119.



We would like to say many thanks to both members and Federations for continuing to designate **An Grianán** as your chosen ICA Charity. The fruits of your efforts and the response from Federations in fundraising is certainly now being realised in the renovation work and changes that are taking place there. We hope that these improvements will realise new business for An Grianán and in turn help the facility achieve its full potential as a college of excellence and in keeping alive and fostering its love of traditional, heritage and modern arts and crafts.

An important event in the ICA calendar is the **National Ploughing Championships**. In 2016, the championships were held in Scraggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly from Tuesday, 20th to Thursday, 22nd September. The ICA marquee displayed one of the most successful craft displays ever and huge credit must be given to Maura Allen and her team for this. The marquee was a hive of activity with a strong programme of events across the three day event. With the ALDI 'Brown Bread' Competition finals taking place at the event, it draws members in great numbers to support and encourage the finalists. Congratulations to the 2016 Winner, Phyllis McGovern from Waterford Federation.



The **2016 Winter Conference** took place in the Castlecourt Hotel in Westport on Saturday, 19th November, 2016. Mayo Federation Committee hosted a Civic Reception on the previous evening which was warmly received by all who attended it. The business meeting on Saturday proved very successful and was well attended. The warm welcome and fantastic display of hospitality displayed Alice Rowley, Mayo Federation President and her Committee and Federation was highly praised by all present. The conference itself generated great discussion amongst the participants, although heated at times! This opportunity within the agenda of our conferences gives members the opportunity to engage with the officers and the wider membership in both discussion and the expression of their opinions and ideas.



Manor Farm Chicken Cookery Demonstrations and Nutrition Talks took place in Cahir, South Tipperary; Ballincollig, Cork; Adare, Co. Limerick and Cavan in 2016. During the course of an entertaining evening Manor Farm's team of Shay O'Connor, Marie Doyle and Brendan Nolan demonstrates some really interesting ways to cook and present Manor Farm chicken and the impart some very useful advice about preparing and cooking delicious chicken meals.

These promotional nights continue to be a great success around the country and will continue into 2017 in new locations which are promoted through the monthly mailing.

Keep an eye out for a demo near you soon!



The Twisted Thread **Knitting and Stitching** show took place in the RDS, Dublin from Thursday, 20th to Sunday, 23rd October, 2016. This was the second year where it was decided to set a theme for the display stand and once again, this proved very well and certainly looked very co-ordinated. The ICA craft teachers demonstrated a variety of crafts including chicken scratching, crochet, Carrickmacross lace, hairpin crochet, Blackwork embroidery, knitting and Jewellery. In this way the ICA continues its promotion in the retention of heritage crafts in Ireland.



Section 9 - An Grianán - Niamh Donegan, Manager

Since joining An Grianan on 27th August last year it has been my ambition to use my experience in the hospitality sector to enhance the stay of our members and guests during their visit to An Grianan.



There is no doubt that over the past few months there have been a few difficulties, a major leak requiring extensive works in the courtyard, dated systems and below par wi-fi, but we are taking it one day at a time to build on what we believe is the foundation of a truly wonderful building that deserves to be brought back to its position as the jewel in the ICA crown. The leaks have been fixed, and fibre has at last come to Termonfeckin so our wifi is greatly improved.

We are looking forward to having a new computer system installed for our reservations, whereby each reservation will receive an email or letter of confirmation so each booking is referenced for guests, this will help Teachtaí and guests booking direct with us. The system is still in the development stage but we are hoping that by the end of first quarter 2017, or early second quarter to be up and running.

We have many exciting courses this year, as always, at An Grianan and I hope that each participant continues to learn and enjoy the courses on offer. Some of the courses on offer include Encaustic Art, Chicken Scratching, Calico Gardens and Digital Photography, Historical Homes and Time For Yourself too! We are always open to new suggestions and feedback is always gratefully received.

This year the Annual Garden Party will be on 7th July, those who have attended previously will know what a fantastic day it is to showcase Crafts, flowers, needlework, art work and assorted Gifts, not to mention the fashion show, great food and entertainment. Tickets are €55 (limited accommodation available at €45 per person B&B).

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to welcoming you to An Grianan during 2017.

Niamh Donegan,
Manager,
An Grianán



Section 10 - National Competition Results 2016

TABLE QUIZ 2016

- 1st Place: Waterford Federation
Minaun Guild
2nd Place: Longford Federation
Newtowncashel Guild
3rd Place: Wicklow Federation
Ashford Guild

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2016

- 1st Place: Maeve Edwards, Delgany Guild,
Wicklow Federation
2nd Place: Patricia O'Doherty, Magheraclone Guild,
Monaghan Federation
3rd Place: Maureen O'Brien, Moneystown Guild,
Wicklow Federation

GAEL LINN - SCÉAL COMÓRADH 2016

- 1st Place: Breda Cahill, Bree Guild
Wexford Federation
2nd Place: Áine Morrissey, Ballyclough Guild,
Cork Federation
3rd Place: Kathleen Leahy, Mainistir na Féile Guild,
Limerick Federation

INTER FEDERATION CUP FOR CRAFTS 2016 (Apron, Gingham Embroidery/Chicken Scratch)

- 1st Place: Marguerite Cleary, Blackrock Guild,
Dublin Federation
2nd Place: Rosemary Conneely, Renmore Guild,
Galway Federation
3rd Place: Ann Whelan, Ballyconnell Guild,
Carlow Federation

INTER-FEDERATION CUP FOR ART 2016 (Photography in Colour)

- 1st Place: Mary Gibbons, Templemore Guild,
North Tipperary Federation
2nd Place: Suzanna Braswell, Wicklow Town,
Wicklow Federation
3rd Place: Eilish McDonald, Horseleap/Streamstown,
Westmeath Federation

(Photography in Black and White)

- 1st Place: Janet Edgely, Tallaght Guild,
Dublin Federation
2nd Place: Sylvia Ward, Clogh Guild,
Kilkenny Federation

OVERALL WINNER : Mary Gibbons

BAUMANN CUP FOR ART 2016 - PAINTING: A BOWL OF FRUIT—ACRYLICS

- 1st Place: Deborah Geraghty, Caherdavin Guild,
Limerick Federation
2nd Place: Diana Dungan, Horace Plunkett Guild,
Meath Federation
3rd Place: Sue Stevenson, Templeberry Guild,
North Tipperary Federation

GEMPACK COMPETITION 2016

SIMNEL CAKE

- 1st Place: Vivienne Rigley, Arles Guild,
Laois Federation
2nd Place: Joeen Prior, Rockcorry Guild,
Monaghan Federation
3rd Place: Bridie Colleran, Moor Guild,
Roscommon Federation

ICA TROPHY FOR REPORTING 2016

WINNER: Mary Plunkett, Ballingearry Guild,
South Tipperary Federation

BREDA McDONALD TROPHY FOR HOBBY

WINNER: Vera Canavan, Ballyconnell Guild,
Carlow Federation

MURIEL GAHAN ROSEBOWL 2016

WOOL CROCHET - SHAWL / STOLE OR PRAM COVER

- 1st Place: Anne Elliott, Rockcorry Guild,
Monaghan Federation
2nd Place: Olive Park, Muff Guild,
Donegal Federation
3rd Place: Mary Lucas, Tallaght Guild,
Dublin Federation

MEMORIAL HANDCRAFT TROPHY 2016

MOUNTMELICK EMBROIDERY, 12" x 12"

WINNER: Mary Kenny, Ballyconnell Guild,
Carlow Federation

PITCH AND PUTT 2016

- 1st Place: **Meath** Federation
2nd Place: **Dublin** Federation
3rd Place: **Kildare** Federation

BAUMANN SHIELD FOR MUSIC 2016

- 1st Place: Kiltale Guild, *Meath Federation*
2nd Place: Ballinora Guild, *Cork Federation*
3rd Place: Ashford Guild, *Wicklow Federation*

ELEANORA GIBBON

SHIELD FOR MUSIC As Gaeilge 2016

- 1st Place: Tallaght Guild, *Dublin Federation*
2nd Place: Kiltale Guild, *Meath Federation*

CONTEST COMMITTEE AWARD 2016

FOUR HEN EGG COSIES, ANY MEDIUM

- 1st Place: Margaret Horne, Ashford Guild,
Wicklow Federation
2nd Place: Marguerite Cleary, Blackrock Guild,
Dublin Federation
3rd Place: Kristina Riauke, Portlaoise Guild,
Laois Federation

