



## ANNUAL REPORT

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT TO THE ICA AGM 2018

# Annual Report

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## WHO WE ARE

The following are the details of the Officers, Regional Presidents, National Executive Board Members and the National Advisory Committee, elected at the 2015 AGM in the final year of their three year term 2015-2018.

### NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:

**National President** Marie O'Toole  
**National Secretary** Shirley Power  
**National Treasurer** Mary MacNamara  
**Chair NAC** Susan Potts

**Regional President BM&W**  
Barbara Meer & Helen Rutter  
**Regional President S&E**  
Esther Cahill & Dee Devereux

### FEDERATION PRESIDENTS ON NEB

Margot Hennessy  
Anna Rose McCormack  
Joanne Allen  
Liz O'Leary  
Chris Kelly

Mary Carthy  
Alice Rowley  
Anne Devitt  
Deirdre Connery

### 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	Nellie Dillon Forde
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

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Marie O'Toole - National President  
Mary MacNamara - National Treasurer & Chair  
Shirley Power – National Secretary  
Susan Potts – Chair NAC  
Esther Cahill – Regional President S&E  
Dee Devereux - Regional President S&E  
Helen Rutter – Regional President BMW

### PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

Mairéad O'Carroll – Chair, Cork Federation  
Bridgid Keane – Waterford Federation  
Angela O'Byrne – Dublin Federation  
Anne O'Connell – Tipperary South Federation

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S FORWARD – Marie O'Toole

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Dear Members,

I cannot believe that this is my final annual report as National President; my three years have simply gone past in the blink of an eye. My thanks to my fellow Officers, Board Members and Federation Presidents (NAC) for their hard work and commitment on behalf of our Association.

2017-2018 has been a very busy year, however, our newest member of staff, Grainne Ferris, Operations Manager, has hit the ground running. We owe Grainne a huge debt of gratitude for all the work she has done in making our Association a more efficient one. Thankfully Grainne is au fait with the regularity and governance issues facing the charity and voluntary sector, which the ICA must be compliant with. Thanks to our wonderful staff at Central Office, Anna, Colette and Yvonne, who do such fantastic work by engaging with you the members.

They are always willing to adapt and move with the changing needs of the Association and I am very grateful to them for their diligence and hard work.

The National Brown Bread Competition was another great event last year with entries from all over the country. The Regional Finals at An Grianán created a wonderful atmosphere. Our sincere thanks to our sponsors, ALDI and Mrs. Anna May McHugh and her team from the NPA. The finals at the National Ploughing Championships had standing room only and the worthy winner was Mary Conway from Sligo Federation. Our marquee at the Ploughing was a hive of activity again this year and congratulations to Maura Allen, President of Offaly Federation and her Committee for all their hard work.

We are also now continuing our alliance with Manor Farm and the last demonstration we had in Mountmellick, County Laois was a wonderful success, in spite of the bad weather. We will have more of these events in the Spring.

As a committee member of ACWW, I was delighted to attend the European Area Conference in Transylvania, Romania with two other ICA delegates. I would highly recommend a visit this beautiful country. I was also invited to speak about the ICA at the National Biodiversity Forum in Drogheda in June 2017. It was a privilege to meet their Guest of Honour, Prince Albert of Monaco.

I have attended the annual Embrace Farm Service every year since I came into office and it saddens me to see the list of people killed and injured in farm accidents growing every year. Could I plead with all of you who have family involved in farming to urge them to be extra vigilant and not to take any chances.

We were delighted to be invited to be part of the Transport for Ireland Committee, Chaired by Minister Shane Ross. We also collaborated with Age Action, NWCi and several other organisations to bring to the fore the anomaly in the state pension debacle dating back to 2012.

An Grianán is doing well and thanks to Manager, Niamh Donegan for implementing many necessary improvements both inside and outside the house. The Garden Centre has now re-opened, as has the Coffee Shop.

I would like to remind our members that the ICA operates a counselling service. Nurture provides this service and it is available to members nationwide.

Thank you to all the Federations and Guilds who have invited me to significant anniversaries and events during my term as National President. I very much enjoyed meeting our members at these highly successful social occasions. To you the members, I wish you continued success and thank you most sincerely for your wonderful support during my term of office. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all the candidates running in the forthcoming National Elections every success.

*Marie O'Toole*  
*National President*

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S OVERVIEW – Shirley Power

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Dear Fellow Members,

2017 has been yet another busy year in ICA. On the administrative side of the business, lots of new policies have been implemented which will support our business structure and assist in implementation of best practice standards as we move forward. We are very close to being in a position where we can adopt the Governance Code which will be a huge milestone for the Association once complete. Compliance with the Charities Regulatory Authority is completely up to date. Compliance in this area is instrumental in ensuring we maintain our charitable status.

It has been my pleasure to continue to meet with many of you at events across the country throughout the year. I would like to commend the great work and fundraising initiatives that members and Guilds are involved in across the Federations - enriching the many communities that the ICA is a vital part of. I hope that in 2018, the centenary year of women achieving their vote within the state, many of you will participate in events associated with these celebrations with great pride.

I have represented our Association on the Administrative Council of COFACE at all general assembly and administrative council meetings. There is a huge opportunity for ICA to enhance our partnership with COFACE by engaging more and developing further the level of commitment we offer as a representative group and so I encourage all members to keep up to date with the COFACE website and newsletters. 2017 was a very successful year for COFACE with the #IwantWorkLifeBalance and #WhoCares campaigns being their main focus projects. COFACE Families Europe has been pushing the EU for years now to recognise the social, economic and demographic needs of our societies to meet the pressing challenge of work-life balance as families struggle to cope with their multiple responsibilities and so the #IwantWorkLifeBalance campaign was launched to shore up citizen support for the EU Directive as a first channel to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and make a real difference. The #WhoCares campaign focused on a stocktaking study of the challenges and needs of family carers in Europe. The results were launched at a breakfast meeting in Brussels in October and the event was co-hosted by MEP Olga Sehnalova and our Irish MEP Marian Harkin. This launch brought together high-level policy makers from the European Commission and member states, representatives of NGO's and family carers with lived



experience. It was a hugely successful event. 2018 will be a landmark year for COFACE Families Europe as they celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on May 15<sup>th</sup>, the International Day of Families. With some ups and downs, COFACE has built a reputation as a European network working in the areas of social and consumer affairs during this time. We congratulate the Management & Staff of COFACE on the great work that they do and wish them well in their 60<sup>th</sup> celebratory year.

As a Board, we can only achieve our strategic 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 a new ICA term of office in 2018, that we do so in a confident and positive manner. I hope that the fundamentals of the good work achieved in the last three years will be further developed for the betterment of our Association overall. Times are challenging but we need to face the changing future together with determination.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Officers, the NEB, the NAC, the National Committees and the Management & Staff of both Central Office and An Grianán for their support, expertise and tireless work on behalf of our Association throughout the last three years. Also many thanks to all of you, the Members, for your encouragement and co-operation throughout my term of office as National Secretary. It is hard to believe that the time has passed so quickly, suffice to say 'Time flies when you're having fun'.

*Le gach dea-mhéin, Shirley Power, National Secretary*

## NATIONAL TREASURER'S OVERVIEW – Mary G MacNamara

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### **Audit 2017:**

The audited accounts for the year ending December 2017 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 showed a surplus of €155,324k, which includes funds from Fees/Grants/Sponsorship/Sales of Goods.

### **An Grianán:**

The audit highlighted an improvement this year with a surplus of €19,295k for the year. This reflects a great improvement on 2016 and we thank Niamh Donegan and all the staff at An Grianán for all their hard work in helping to bring this about.

The addition of the lift in the Kellogg Hall and the mobility WC next to the bar will prove to be a welcome addition to the facility for persons with access difficulties. The Gate Lodge Café re-opened in February under the Jaffa brand, Jaffa on the Grían and has helped to generate additional rental income for 2017, as has the Garden Centre and the rental of space in the Horticultural College to Nurture.

There is some great landscaping being uncovered from the original model gardens and we hope that in time, when these are fully restored, they will be a great asset for all visitors to An Grianán.

The tennis club continues to be leased out to Termonfeckin Tennis Club and we have extended their lease agreement so that they will be in a better position to apply for funding to extend their facilities to take in a third tennis court. Should this initiative come to fruition, it will give the club the opportunity to host National Tennis events which we hope will bring additional accommodation bookings for An Grianán.

An increased number of Members in addition to non-members attended a large variety of different types of classes in An Grianán during 2017, with crafts still accounting for a large number of all the classes attended. An increase in conferencing also helping to maintain steady business.

We also had to very successful "Go for Life Day" on 1st September 2017 and as a result of this, Age and Opportunity is very interested in expanding the relationship with us and have devised a Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) package to suit our members. It is hoped that this course will be run at least once a year.

### **Sponsorship:**

In 2017 our sponsors were Aldi, Gem Pack Foods Ltd and Manor Farm Irish Chickens.

### **Books:**

We continue to receive some royalties from the four ICA books published and limited numbers of these books are now left in stock.

### **Grant Aid:**

The grant aid which we received during the year was €34,083 in total. There was €9,000 from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine; €20,900 from SOLAS Training & Employment Authority and €4,183 Release of Capital Grant funding.

### **Financial Reporting and Compliance:**

The Finance Committee meet in advance of each Board meeting, and report to the National Executive Board. 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.

### **Financial Priorities and Challenges:**

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

To endeavour to continue 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 maintain buoyancy in ICA membership levels and where possible increase membership.

**Accountancy and Audit Services:**

CDM Accountants were appointed as the ICA audit and accountancy services provider for 2017. The appointment of CDM Accountants as auditor to the ICA for 2017 was put forward to the membership and ratified at the 2017 AGM. I would like to thank the staff at both An Grianán and Central Office especially Anna Sinnott for all the help during the year.

*Mary G MacNamara, National Treasurer*

### *Timeline – Significant Dates for Irish Women*

<b>1864</b>	Contagious Diseases Act – enforced female examinations
<b>1880s</b>	Women's Land Leagues were established throughout Ireland
<b>1885</b>	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland admits female students for the first time
<b>1898</b>	Women granted right to vote and stand for election in Rural District Councils
<b>1908</b>	Irish Women's Franchise League established
<b>1910</b>	Irish Countrywomen's Association established
<b>1911</b>	Ulster Women's Unionist Council established
<b>1914</b>	Cumann na mBan established
<b>1918</b>	Women over 30 granted right to vote in General Elections
<b>1919</b>	Countess Markievicz elected first female MP at Westminster 1918 and Minister for Labour in the first Dáil Éireann 1919
<b>1921</b>	Dehra Chichester and Julia McMordie elected first female MPs in NI Parliament
<b>1923</b>	First female accepted as a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy
<b>1932</b>	Marriage Bar introduced in the Republic of Ireland
<b>1957</b>	Marriage Bar repealed for primary school teachers
<b>1973</b>	Marriage Bar repealed for civil servants and National Women's Council established
<b>1977</b>	Employment Equality Act introduced
<b>1981</b>	Law of Criminal Conversation repealed
<b>1990</b>	Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female president, elected,

## CATHAOIRLEACH OF NAC OVERVIEW – Susan Potts

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Since May 2017 on behalf of the NAC I have attended all National Officer, National Finance and National Executive Board meetings.

Representing the ICA, I was delighted to take part in the forum that has resulted in the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022. This is a culture-based programme designed to promote individual, community and national wellbeing and there regular updates are on social media.

For a second year, I worked with Shaws, Drogheda and we organised the Fashion Show and Pop-Up shop at the Annual Garden Party in An Grianán. I must say I surprised myself in liking this as much as I did.



In early September, I was delighted to assist Mary G MacNamara and Mary Harkin CEO, Go for Life in An Grianán with the Go for Life Taster Day. This was a great success. I also attended the announcement of the National Grant Scheme for Sport & Physical Activity for Older People in early December and it was wonderful to see again the Go for Life grants received by hundreds of Guilds Nationwide.

While attending the Ploughing Championships, which is such a wonderful vehicle to drive all that is ICA, I realised what a mammoth amount of work is required by the Host Federation. Likewise, the hard work put in by Federations for Conferences and AGMs; this must be lauded.

I have continued to be the ICA representative in the All Island Brexit Dialogue Plenary Sessions which are ongoing; a recent report was included in the October mailing. To tie in with this, I have attended the Citizens Dialogue on the Future of Europe. These sessions are hosted by the Department Of The Taoiseach with speakers Leo Varadkar, Simon Coveney and Helen McEntee. The format of these sessions is super. Firstly, they are streamed live and parties wishing to voice an opinion are invited to do so through twitter, the messages are displayed on a screen and the speakers answer. This means there is no grandstanding or hogging the mike. I was very happy to have an ICA tweet up when An Taoiseach was speaking. The next session is April 4th and the twitter hashtag is: #futureofeurope - please also use @irelandica & @emireland in all tweets. The skills I have acquired at these workshop type forums have been put to good use, incorporating them at NAC meetings. This has proved both helpful and enlightening. It also forms part of ICA strategic planning.

The 121 Digital programme is up and running and looking for ICA participants. They run free digital skills courses in over 70 centers nationwide. It is important that our members take up these places.

Our initiative #icayarnbomballireland2018 was enthusiastically embraced by the Federations and our yarnbombing was rolled out to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> to great applause. This unified action by so many of our Federations in celebrating women and highlighting our Association is a wonderful opportunity to relay the message, "What can the ICA do for You?"

*Susan Potts*  
*Chair of the NAC*

## SECTION 1 – NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The National Executive Board formed a number of committees in 2015/2016 for the purpose of supporting and aiding the development of the Association for the benefit of its members. The focus of these committees is to help move ICA into the future with confidence. These committees are now well up and running and we would like to thank all who have 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 the National platform; issues that are both relevant and important to our membership base.

### National Competitions Committee

Wexford Federation administer and organise The National Competitions.

National Competitions Committee: Chair Deirdre Connery.

Committee Members: Breda Banville, Dee Devereux, Mary Nolan.

Ladies, 2017 was a very successful year on the competitions front with an increase in entries in most competitions. On behalf of the committee I wish to thank all members that took time out of their busy lives to enter our varied selection of competitions. I wish to thank Gempack for coming on board once again and sponsoring our Cherry Cake competition and they are with us again in 2018. Thanks to the wonderful staff in Central office, Grainne, Anna, Colette and Yvonne who were ever

ready to answer our queries and provided whatever help we required during the year. Thanks to Niamh and her amazing team in An Grianán on the tremendous help and guidance given to us when organising both competition weekends.

We wish you, our wonderful members' good health and happiness during 2018.

Is mise,

Breda Banville, National Contests Secretary

### Promotion & Development of An Grianán Committee

Development & Promotion of An Grianán Committee: Chair Joanne Allen.

Committee Members: Esther Cahill, Anne Devitt and Liz O'Leary.

What a busy year in An Grianán! Our manager Niamh Donegan has moved forward with many new implementations and cost saving procedures. Our chair Joanne has addressed the AGM 2016 and the Winter Conference 2017 with the An Grianán report due to the unavailability of Niamh.

Last year the committee analysed the 2017 brochure and worked on a project to revamp and update the An Grianán brochure for 2018. We thank Joanne Allen and Realprint in Ennis, Co Clare for a bright, fresh and new look brochure.

Some ideas for the future include a new website with online course availability, kit prices clearly advertised, any requirements regarding equipment people need to bring with them, photo shoot of An Grianán including rooms, courses and staff. We also hope to include profiles of individuals who have attended past courses, with a view to determining the skill levels required by participants in order that they get the most from a particular course as a lot of newer members feel the skill level required is beyond them.

We take this opportunity to thank Niamh and all the staff who look after us so well on our visits to An Grianán. We continue to urge all members to spread the word of this wonderful and charming manor house. An Grianán makes learning a delightful experience in a relaxed atmosphere and deserves to be promoted.

Kind regards, Joanne Allen, President Clare ICA.

On behalf of Promotion & Development Committee of An Grianán.

## National Handcraft Committee

Handcraft Committee: Chair: Josephine Helly.

Committee Members: Elsie Moxham, Pat O'Looney, Margaret Clince & Marie O'Toole.

The Handcraft Committee held another very successful week in An Grianàn during April 2017 when approximately 83 attended. A meeting was held to discuss the issues which had been raised at a council meeting and the response was as follows: The perception that this week is a closed shop was refuted in that, of the 83 people attending less than 20 were teachers.

The handcraft week was regarded as a forum for encouraging traditional craft workers to attain a standard of excellence in their chosen craft. The number of tradition craft teachers is reducing, ICA has always been a promoter of these crafts and the Handcraft week is the ideal forum for encouraging people to become qualified teachers. The week is the ideal place to learn new crafts and meet with people of similar interest.

Over the course of the week there were 21 workshops and the committee is grateful to the teachers who, although they paid for their week, were willing to prepare for and teach the workshops, some people taught more than one class.

During the week there were proficiency awards; evening programmes included demonstrations and table quiz. Two Competitions were judged the "Teachers Memorial" and "Breda McDonald" Trophies.

Craft taster classes were held in Central Office every month. Teachers of these classes receive no payment other than the reimbursement for craft packs and any revenue from the classes was donated to An Grianàn. Numbers attending these classes was approximately 25 each day.

There were two x six week classes in Clones Lace held in Central Office. The average number attending each was ten.

The Royal School of Needle work attended Central Office for two days in March teaching Gold Work

and plans are already being made for a further class in 2018.

Committee members judged craft entries at various shows and exhibitions around the country.

The craft section of the ICA stand at the Knitting and Stitching show was prepared by the committee. It was generally agreed that a single theme for the stand was more effective than a conglomeration of crafts and last November the chosen craft was Lumra, a very traditional craft. It also gave an opportunity to recognise the work of ICA teacher Reiltín Mc Kenna who recently published a book on the craft. Thanks are due to the teachers, who twice a day, gave demonstrations of various crafts on the stand and due to the high level of interest in the Lumra display there was a demonstration of the craft every day. The committee would like to acknowledge the assistance from Central Office.

The current committee has now completed its three year term and following the appointment of new National Officers the next handcraft committee will be formed. The committee sent a request to National Executive that Handcraft teachers/ current committee should have the right to nominate at least two teachers to serve on all future Handcraft committees.

A meeting of teachers to discuss the future of Handcraft week was postponed due to adverse weather conditions.

We would like to thank National President Marie O'Toole, the teachers and craft workers who have been so supportive during the last three years.

*Josephine Helly*

*"Creativity is intelligence having fun" Albert Einstein*

# Irish Countrywomen's Association at the Heart of the Community

## Membership Committee

Membership/Recruitment Committee; Chair, Dee Devereux. Committee Member: Alice Rowley.

We have continued promoting recruitment with ideas for friendship and information events also distributing recruitment leaflets.

As this is our last report we thought we would like to pay tribute to you all, our ICA members, who go out on dark nights to open Parish halls for meetings, putting on the heating, lighting the fire, bringing the tea and milk, checking if Mrs. So and So is ok, providing a welcome, keeping ICA alive. We know you also volunteer precious time assisting your communities when needed. You also raise huge amounts for local and national charities, you don't shout about it, "Deeds not words" is our motto. So well done to all.

We all have enjoyed the fun and friendship being in ICA brings, and we know ICA is a force for good. We are proud to be part of ICA, run by women for women's wellbeing. Let's continue inviting ladies to share the enjoyment we have being part of ICA.

*Regards, Dee and Alice Rowley*

## Social & Community Welfare Committee

Social and Community Welfare Committee: Chair, Helen Rutter  
Committee Members: Anna Rose McCormack and Mary Carthy.

Helen attended the Department of Social Welfare Budget Submissions Day 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, and to continue the expansion of the programme of state funded pre-school child care provision.

We have been lobbying on the issue of inequality in pensions for women, (which has been taken up by the National Board) with some success, but there is more to be done. We continue to talk to the Minister when the opportunity arises.

We have had some response to our letters regarding Garda Vetting, to try to establish a more reasoned way of undertaking vetting, so that individuals do not have to be vetted separately for a variety of agencies. We would endeavor to establish the principle that one vetting should cover all, perhaps with a Garda Vetting Card. We shall continue with this campaign.

The issue of Garda Vetting is effecting the Association in other ways – we hope to look at the establishment of Associate Membership that could allow people to be associated with us without being full members.

The National Draw is going to provide a range of scholarships to encourage different members to go to An Grianán. It will be drawn at the AGM.

## SECTION 2 – ICA OPERATIONS MANAGER – Grainne Ferris

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Since I commenced employment with the ICA on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017, I have been managing Central Office by organising all office operations and procedures. On joining the organisation, I identified significant policy gaps, most of which have now been rectified.

Regarding the Central Office property itself, a structural foundation problem has been identified by 2HQ Consulting Engineers. Further investigations are now necessary and we are currently negotiating the scope of this investigation with 2HQ and Crawford & Co., Loss Adjusters. The ICA Insurers will not comment on liability until these further investigations are carried out.

A key function of my role is the implementation of the ICA's Strategic Plan for the period 2018 – 2021 which is at draft stage, the final plan is yet to be agreed by the Board. Once the Strategic Plan is in place, the organisation's direction will be clearly defined, with long-range and short-term goals. This is the management tool that I require to be in place in order to get on with the day-to-day decision making and problem solving to ensure that the ICA's vision will be achieved.

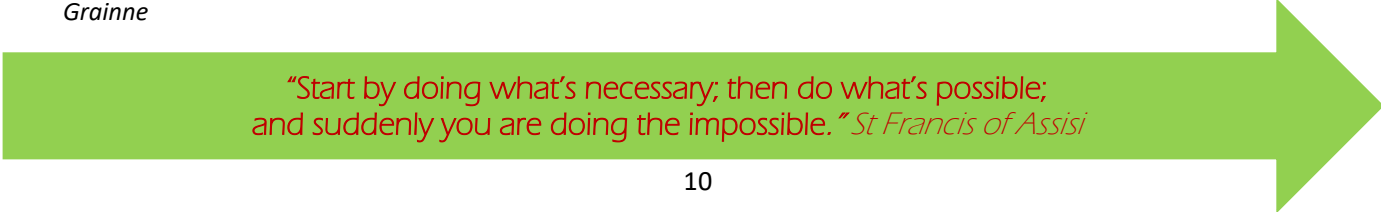
Regarding membership, there continues to be a sharp decline which needs to be halted as a matter of urgency (see statistics on Appendix 1, Pg. 15). Despite the great efforts of the Membership Committee, new membership enquiries that we receive in Central Office and pass on to Federations are not translating into active members. Let me give you an example, in the period June 2017 to February 2018, of the 191 membership enquiries that Central Office passed to the relevant Federations, only 8 became fully paid-up members. To tackle this problem, a Marketing sub-committee was formed in January 2018. It gave the go ahead to have O'Connor & Kelly conduct a Marketing Communications Audit which has been completed. The Marketing sub-committee is currently reviewing the recommendations outlined in O'Connor & Kelly's Report. I will let you have an update when I am in a position to do so.

On the advocacy and campaigning front, we have had a great success in effectively forcing the Government to address some of the inequalities created by the 2012 changes to the State Pension. I would like to thank all those ICA members who provided major support by signing the Petition, participating in the *"Call your TD Day"* and coming out to protest outside the Dáil in January. Although we welcome Minister Regina Doherty's introduction of HomeCare Credits which will benefit many members, this change will do nothing for others who continue to be penalised. We believe that reversing the 2012 cuts is the most effective way to address the situation. So, with the support of our members, the campaign will continue.

On the problem of Rural Isolation in Ireland, Minister Shane Ross, TD, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport established a Stakeholder Forum in the Autumn of 2017 and the ICA were invited to participate. I represented our National President, Marie O'Toole, on a number of occasions. The Minister invited all stakeholders to make a submission on how best to solve the problems associated with Rural Isolation. We suggested that the Local Link services in rural Ireland be expanded to deliver more public transport services to all communities, to include new night services which would help with the issue of rural isolation. The ICA also recommended that consideration be given to a 'demand responsive' rural transport service which would be complimentary to conventional, scheduled passenger transport serving dispersed mobility needs, low demand hours and areas of low population. The Minister will soon be convening a third meeting of stakeholders. In addition, a new Loneliness Taskforce was recently established by ALONE and the ICA has made a submission to its Chair, Senator Keith Swanick.

Thank you all for your ongoing support.

Grainne



*"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible;  
and suddenly you are doing the impossible." St Francis of Assisi*

## SECTION 3 – AN GRIANÁN – Niamh Donegan

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Firstly I would like to thank you all for your wonderful support during 2017, I have been humbled by the wonderful people who came through our door at An Grianán and who appreciated the changes we have made to this beautiful place.

An Grianán is on the up; we have had a fantastic year and the numbers speak for themselves. The financial year ending 31/12/2017 saw An Grianán achieving a net profit of c.€20,000 compared to the year ending 31/12/2016 where the results showed a net loss of c.- €80,000. We couldn't have done it without you.

With the support of Marie O'Toole, National President and our Board, we have been able to install a new disabled access WC here at An Grianán. We have also installed a new hydraulic lift that can accommodate a single wheelchair or person with mobility issues, making access to the Kellogg Hall and Bar attainable. This has also helped us get more outside Conferences and Events.

Our Board had also approved the installation of 4 New PCs at An Grianán. These were installed by SmartIT who also look after our IT requirements ensuring we are able to run the new programmes and to update our online security etc.

The accounts function which was previously looked after by Central Office has now been handed over to An Grianán, with the assistance of personnel from Central Office, full training has been completed.

As every year, we have many exciting courses available, some of the new courses include our "For the Bees" weekend with Philip McCabe, President of Apimondia, the international organisation of Beekeepers. This weekend will include workshops, cookery demos, honey tastings, to mention a few. On the craft side we have Stump Work, Goldwork, Felt Needlework, Free Motion Quilting. Other new courses are Success in Life with Edel Loftus, Fiona McCabe with a Bring Your Own Makeup Course, What to Wear and When!

This year our Annual Garden Party at the end of June, will not only be a one day event, this year you can make a weekend of it. We will have our usual Party Day but next day we will head to Belfast for the day where you can shop or visit the wonderful Titanic Experience before returning to An Grianán for dinner and entertainment. We will wave you off after a cooked breakfast on Sunday. Day ticket prices are still only €55 per person, or if making a weekend of it, it's €155. Places are booking up!

"The best day I have had in ages." Helen Mc Cloughrey

"Just a fab place to go. Great friendly staff. Wonderful food. Great choice of courses. Walk to beach in the mornings, out of this world, had it to ourselves! Have been here many times and will be back." Margaret Stephens

Was there this weekend with a group of ladies from Kilkenny. Lovely place. Great walks to beach and golf club. Wonderful staff. Food very tasty .and evening entertainment. What more would you want".. Anne Keating

## SECTION 4 – INVOLVEMENT - 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 is continuing. We are represented in the following Boards and Forums: Forás Éireann, Roscommon Leader Partnership ('Digital Skills for Citizens'), Teagasc Education & Training Forum, National Women's Council of Ireland, Saving Rural Ireland, National Rural Water Services, National Broadband Taskforce and Aontas.

### Forás Éireann

Forás Éireann is a conference of voluntary national organisations, established in 1949, whose members are involved in various types of community voluntary action which contribute to the creation of a vibrant and caring community in Ireland. Its main object, according to its constitution, was the assisting and promoting social, cultural and economic development in Ireland.

Forás Éireann provides modest funding from the income generated from the dividends of the Shaw Trust\* to grant applicators under the following areas: Art Appreciation, Music Recitals, Music Appreciation Lectures, Music Festivals, Literature Appreciation Lectures to include Poetry Readings  
Social Arts to include Public Speaking.

#### Current Issues

Uncertainty about regularity and amount of funding arising from the working methods of the Charitable Commissioners has become a matter of concern Council members\*. ICA has been an active member of the Council; I have worked to arrange meetings with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs. Council anticipates monies from the Culture Schemes Unit which will help to cover administration costs. During the period May 2016 – April 2017 ICA Guilds benefited by €2,200, figures for the 2017 -2018 will be available in May 2018.

Marion Lyon

#### *\*Charlotte Frances Shaw Trust*

*Charlotte Frances Townsend was born in County Cork in 1857 where her father was a landlord. From her experience visiting her father's tenants she recognised their many natural qualities which only required some form of development or enhancement. She married George Bernard Shaw while she lived in London. As he had no need of her estate, she determined that it should be used in part to help in the social and cultural development of the people of Ireland.*

*In her Will, she set up a trust which has two twin aims:*

*The first is that of "bringing the masterpieces of fine art within the reach of the people of all classes". The masterpieces are defined as being works of the highest class in orchestral and classical music, painting, sculpture, fine painting and literature.*

*The second is to encourage Personal Development skills such as elocution, deportment and the arts of personal contact.*

#### *\*Membership*

*Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS)*

*Conradh na Gaeilge*

*Friends of Classical Music*

*Irish Countrywomen's Association*

*Irish National Teachers' Association*

*Irish Farmers Association*

*Royal Irish Academy of Music*

*The People's College*

## Roscommon Leader Partnership

### Agri Digital Skills Training for Farmers and Farm Families

This is a Pilot Project initiated by Roscommon LEADER Partnership in conjunction with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, IFA, ICA, Teagasc, ICOS, ICSA, Macra na Feirme, Active Retirement Ireland, The Irish Farmers Journal and Gary Greene Accounting and Taxation Services.

The overarching objective of the scheme is to equip inexperienced IT/internet users with the confidence and practical skills to assist their farming businesses reap the benefits of the digital world.

Currently there is no other provider delivering this type of training for farm families. Training will be tailored around the abilities of participants.

The following is a brief summary of the programme.

#### Session 1:

- Delivery of IT training for farmers
- Introduction to email account including set-up
- Files and Folders
- Browse the web, i.e. using sites like donedeal, mart report, feed costs, agri sites
- Getting the best out of your phone - smart phones
- How to email attachments/photos
- Using internet banking – viewing accounts/balance, conducting transactions, shopping online (credit cards, paypal), security and staying safe online

#### Session 2:

- Introduction to Agfood.ie Website
- Animal Identification and Movements
- Herd Profile
- Compliance
- Online Movement Notification
- Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)
- Single Farm Payment (SFP)

- Payment details on past and present schemes
- Details on Greening Requirements
- Nitrates information

#### Session 3:

- One to One Meeting. Each participant will receive one-to-one mentoring if necessary to address any difficulties they may encounter.



This scheme will be rolled out nationally. For information or advice please contact Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Unit 12, Tower B, Roscommon West Business Park, Golf Links Road, Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon, [www.rosleaderpartnership.ie](http://www.rosleaderpartnership.ie)  
P: 090 6630252 E: [reception@ridc.ie](mailto:reception@ridc.ie)

*Monica Beegan*

## Teagasc Education & Training Forum

The Teagasc Education & Training Forum is chaired by Prof Seamus Smyth and currently has a total of 15 participating members from a broad spectrum of backgrounds;

- Irish Countrywomen's Association
- Teagasc Authority
- Private Agricultural Colleges
- Host Farmers Association
- Irish Farm Managers Association
- Macra na Feirme
- Irish Farmers Association
- University College Dublin
- Waterford Institute Technology
- Quality & Qualifications Ireland

The key function of the Forum is to provide advice, guidance and feedback to Teagasc on the direction, development and delivery of its programmes in terms of their objectives, focus and industry impact. The Forum is one of the longest established stakeholder consultative groups in Teagasc and is held in high regard by Teagasc management for its active and constructive contribution to the Teagasc Education programme over the years. The current term of forum has an active agenda in the rollout of the Teagasc Education Strategic Vision recommendations and this vision will be developed with a long term aim incorporating core recommendations in working towards 2050. It hopes to bring a coherent approach to promoting careers in farming and related sectors.

Teagasc offer a wide range of programmes with varied participation levels and modes of delivery in collaboration with other education institutions and practical learning hosts. It continually strives to improve its educational pathways by incorporating continuous professional development and up skilling within its educational structure. 2017 saw the appointment of a 'Learner Representative' to the Forum which incorporates the direct involvement of the learning students with the Forum thus giving timely constructive feedback and scope for immediate improvement actions.

It is great for ICA to be invited to participate in such educational forums as it both gives us an opportunity to bring to the table our own experiences in the educational sector and also offers us an opportunity to learn from the progressive successes of other institutions also. ICA's involvement on this Forum is held in high regard.

*Shirley Power*

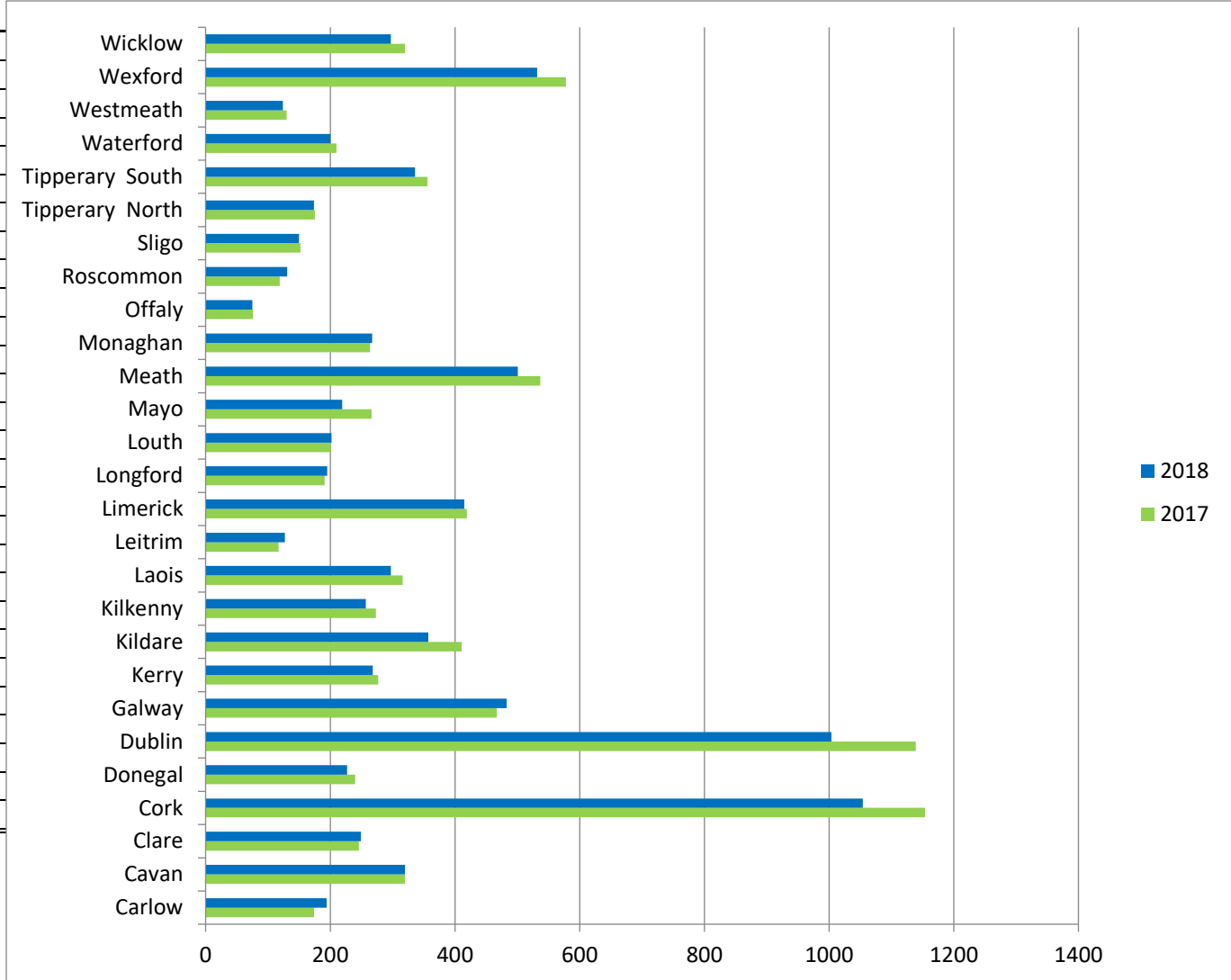
## Appendix 1 – Guilds and Membership

Federations	28/02/2017	28/02/2018
Carlow	174	194
Cavan	320	320
Clare	246	249
Cork	1154	1054
Donegal	240	227
Dublin	1139	1004
Galway	467	483
Kerry	277	268
Kildare	411	357
Kilkenny	273	257
Laois	316	297
Leitrim	117	127
Limerick	419	415
Longford	191	195
Louth	201	202
Mayo	266	219
Meath	537	501
Monaghan	264	267
Offaly	76	75
Roscommon	119	131
Sligo	152	150
Tipperary North	175	174
Tipperary South	356	336
Waterford	210	200
Westmeath	130	124
Wexford	578	532
Wicklow	320	297
Total	9128	8655

*These figures relate to periods:*

*01/03/2016 – 28/02/2017*

*01/03/2017 – 28/02/2018*



## Regional Membership Distribution



■ NE  
■ NW  
■ SE

Region	Total No.	%
NE	2613	30.19%
NW	1337	15.45%
SE	2009	23.21%
SW	2696	31.15%
Grand Total	8655	

### Guilds

There are 491 ICA Guilds.

#### 4 New Guilds were opened:

Carlow	Rathanna – 24 members
Galway	Ballygar – 11 members
Monaghan	Monaghan Town – 11 members
Roscommon	Roscommon Town – 15 members

#### 11 Guilds closed:

Carlow	Ardattin
Cork	Cobh, Freemount, Riverstown/Glanmire
Dublin	Clondalkin
Kildare	Athgarvan, Killeel, Nás na Riogh
Laois	Rosenallis
Waterford	Knockboy
Wexford	Marshallstown

<b>Total Membership</b>	8,655	-5%
<b>Smallest Federation</b>	Offaly	75
<b>Biggest Increase - %</b>	Carlow	11%
<b>Biggest Decrease - %</b>	Mayo	-18%
<b>Biggest Increase - New Members</b>	Carlow	20
<b>Biggest Decrease- New Members</b>	Dublin	-135
<b>Growth In</b>	Carlow	11%
	Roscommon	10%
	Leitrim	9%
	Galway	3%
	Longford	2%
	Clare	1%
	Monaghan	1%
<b>Reduction In</b>	Mayo	-18%
	Kildare	-13%
	Dublin	-12%
	Cork	-9%
	Wexford	-8%
	Wicklow	-8%
	Meath	-7%
	Laois	-6%
	Kilkenny	-6%
	Tipperary South	-6%
	Donegal	-5%
	Waterford	-5%
	Westmeath	-5%
	Kerry	-3%
	Offaly	-1%
	Sligo	-1%
	Limerick	-1%
	Tipperary North	-1%
<b>No Change</b>	Cavan	
<b>No Change</b>	Louth	

## Appendix 2 - National Competitions Results 2017

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### **Gempack Baking: Cherry Cake.**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Vivienne Rigley, Arles Guild, Laois
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary Kelly, Camross Guild, Wexford
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Anne Downey, Clareen Guild, Offaly

### **Creative Writing**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marie Smyth, Dollymount Guild, Dublin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary Manley, Donard Guild, Wicklow
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Susanna Braswell, Wicklow Town Guild, Wicklow.

### **ICA Trophy for Reporting**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marian Donnelly, Camross Guild, Wexford
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary Devereux, Cushinstown Guild, Wexford

### **Interfederation Cup for Art**

(Photography in Colour)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Stephanie McDonald, Ashford Guild, Wicklow
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Breda Buckley, Goleen Guild, Cork
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Truda Houston, Sligo Town Guild, Sligo and Marie Smyth, Dollymount Guild, Dublin

(Photography in Black and White)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Susanna Braswell, Wicklow Town Guild, Wicklow Federation. (Overall winner of Cup.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Susanna Braswell, Wicklow Town Guild, Wicklow

### **Baumann Cup for Art**

Painting: 'Through my window' – Oils

- 1<sup>st</sup> Anne Edwards, Ballyconnell Guild, Carlow
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Paula O'Reilly, Moynalty Guild, Meath
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mary Timmons, Ballyconnell Guild, Carlow

### **Table Quiz**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Suncroft Guild, Kildare
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Spa/Fenit Guild, Kerry
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kilcloon Guild, Meath

**Patsy Lawlor Cup for Set Dancing---** Full Set  
Dunderry Guild, Meath

### **Baumann Shield for Music**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ashford Guild, Wicklow
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kiltale Guild, Meath
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tallaght Guild, Dublin

### **Eleanora Gibbon Shield for Music**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kiltale Guild, Meath
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ballybrack Guild, Dublin

### **Eleanora Gibbon Cup for Drama**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ashford Guild, Wicklow
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Adamstown Guild, Wexford
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Violet Hill Guild, Roscommon

### **Gael Linn**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kathleen Leahy, Mainistir na Feile Guild, Limerick
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hilda Roche, Ashford Guild, Wicklow

**Interfederation Cup for Crafts –**Machined Applique  
Table Runner

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marguerite Cleary, Blackrock Guild, Dublin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Eleanor Carleton, Clones Guild, Monaghan
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Carol McKay, Drumboylan Guild, Roscommon

**Muriel Gahan Rosebowl—**Handknitted Adult  
Poncho/Cape/Wrap

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kate Graham, Blackrock Guild, Dublin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> May Cheevers, Longford Town Guild, Longford
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ethal Patterson, Raphoe Guild, Donegal

**Contest Committee Award- -** Four Christmas Tree  
Decorations

- 1<sup>st</sup> Carol Lynch, Muff Guild, Donegal
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Helen Carolan, Dun Laoghaire Guild, Dublin
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Pauline Murray, Edenderry Guild, Offaly

### **Guild Year Book for Betty Manning Trophy**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ballingeary Guild, South Tipperary
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Bonniclonlon Guild, Mayo
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ballyconnell Guild, Carlow

**Breda McDonald Trophy /**Hobby section for  
beginners

- 1<sup>st</sup> Margaret Mason, Knockraha Guild, Cork
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary O'Gorman, Maynooth Guild, Kildare
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Nancy Ryan, Nenagh Guild, North Tipperary

**Memorial Handcraft Trophy--** Smocking

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mary Bierney, Minaun Guild, Waterford

### **Pitch and Putt**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meath
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Dublin
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Carlow



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