

“AONTAS as an organisation is in a strong position to contribute to the rebuilding and reshaping of both a sustainable economy and a caring society.”



**Annual Report &
Financial Statements
2014**



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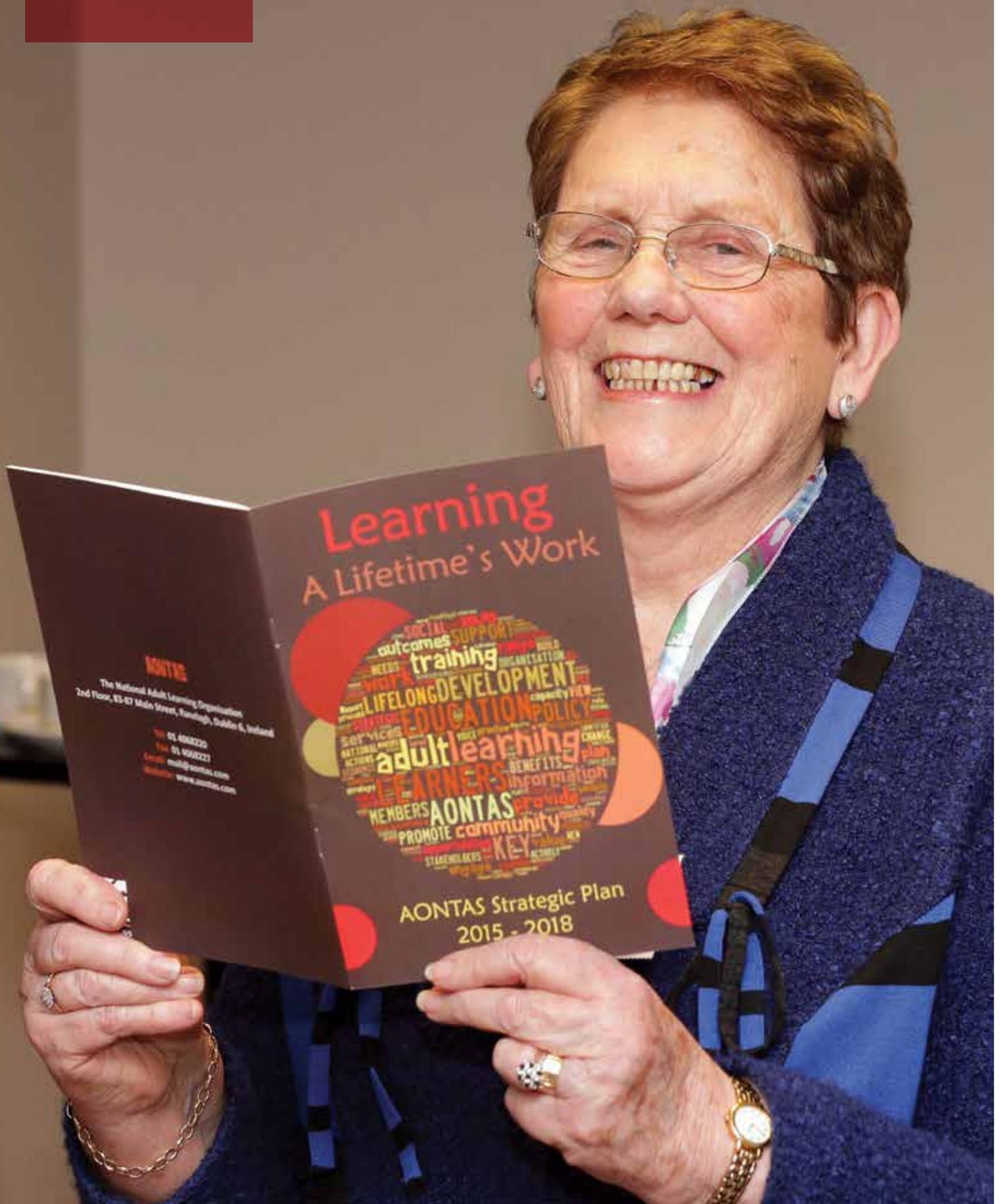
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Section 1



Foreword

Liz Waters
President, AONTAS

The changes which have been taking place in the adult and community education sector since 2012 have been challenging and complex, culminating in the launch of the first Further Education and Training strategy in May 2014. AONTAS has played an extremely active role in contributing to the development of the strategy as well as critiquing it as it developed. As President of AONTAS and an active practitioner in the field of community education I am heartened to see within the strategy the recognition of the adult learner as the key focus of the service, and also the recognition of community education as playing a crucial role in providing opportunities for adults who need varying levels of support and encouragement to return to adult education and training. In the context of the current strong emphasis on the skills for work agenda it is extremely important that adult and community education's contribution to reshaping the social, economic and cultural identity of this country as we struggle to rebuild not just the economy but also a country worth living in for all our people, is recognised and supported.

During the year long consultation in which we engaged in 2014 as we developed our current strategic plan, *Learning, A Lifetime's Work*, it was clear that the passion for learning that facilitates a wide range of benefits and opportunities for individuals, their families and communities has not diminished. The discussions, debates and analyses that led to the goals and priorities contained within our plan were wide ranging, challenging, imaginative, and ultimately informed our mission, understanding and belief in the work that we will engage in over the next four years. I look forward to leading that work in partnership with the Executive Committee of AONTAS and the staff team. I would like to acknowledge the work and dedication of both the Committee and the team in 2014. In particular I would like to acknowledge the commitment and contribution made by three members of the staff team who left AONTAS in 2014 to pursue different career paths. They are Niamh Farren, Communications Officer,



Dympna Larkin, Membership Services Officer and Eleonora Peruffo, Resources Officer. I and the Executive Committee would like to wish them success in their future careers.

A key development for AONTAS in 2014 was our designation by SOLAS as the lead agency, in partnership with other stakeholders, charged with the responsibility of establishing a National Adult Learners Forum. We regard this as a strong recognition of our commitment to the adult learner and of the groundwork we have already engaged in over the years in ensuring the learner voice is heard and reflected within policies and strategies across a range of services. We look forward to engaging with learners, providers and policy makers to ensure that learner feedback informs the development of an excellent service for adults.

As we approach a new phase of development in the adult and community education sector I believe that AONTAS as an organisation is in a strong position to contribute to the rebuilding and reshaping of both a sustainable economy and a caring society. While our members have a strong and passionate belief in the power of learning there are significant challenges facing them as they seek to integrate education and training to provide a seamless quality service for adults into the future. AONTAS is committed to supporting them and will continue, as we have committed to in our strategic plan, to be a strong advocate for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promote the value and benefits of lifelong learning.



**Stephanie Roche of
Project FUTSAL**

*Nationwide STAR
Award Winner 2014*

AONTAS Staff

Berni Brady
— Director

Jacinta Cuthbert
— Head of Organisational Development

Niamh O'Reilly
— Head of Membership Services

Niamh Farren
— Communications Officer

Liz Gaynor
— Membership Services Officer

Kathryn Laing
— Festival Administration Officer

Katie O'Rourke
— Learner Supports Officer

Brid Greenan
— Project Co-Ordinator EAAL

Eleonora Perruffo
— Resources Officer

Mairead Tynan
— Reception/Administrator

Executive Committee

Elizabeth Waters *President*
— An Cosán

Liam Kilbride *Vice President*
— Individual member

Lorraine Cunningham *Secretary*
— Blaney Blades

Colm Kilgallon *Treasurer*
— All Hallows College

Mary Hilda Cavanagh
— ETBI

Brendan Curtis
— Men's Shed Wexford

Mary Farrell
— Longford and Westmeath ETB

Tara Farrell
— Longford Women's Link

Crona Gallagher
— Adult Education Officers Association

Lorraine Hennessey
— Irish National Organisation for
the Unemployed

Michael Kenny
— Maynooth University

Jim Prior
— Limerick CEN, Limerick ETB

Alice Bennett
— Individual member

The Mission of AONTAS is to advocate for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promote the value and benefits of lifelong learning.



Overview

Berni Brady

Director, AONTAS

Looking back on 2014 there is a sense of a renewed period of preparation as we transitioned from the old to the new.

Introduction

Looking back on 2014 there is a sense of a renewed period of preparation as we transitioned from the old to the new. The launch of the Further Education and Training strategy by Ministers Quinn and Cannon on May 12th 2014 was a defining moment for the adult and community education sector and put the stamp on the restructuring and design of Further Education and Training services for adults in the Republic of Ireland. It also secured recognition and resources for Further Education and Training as a key part of the government's policy agenda and for the Further Education and Training Sector as a key pillar of the education system as a whole. AONTAS welcomed the new strategy and in particular its emphasis on the adult learner, a first for Ireland and a potential model of best practice across Europe. AONTAS made a strong contribution to the development of the strategy through its submissions, representations during the consultation process and its assistance with the learner consultation on behalf of SOLAS. Berni Brady, Director of AONTAS is a member of the SOLAS Board with a special remit for the voice of the adult learner. During the year she contributed actively to the work of the Board and to other subgroups charged with the development of parts of the FET strategy.

AONTAS Strategic Plan

Because of the changes taking place in the external environment AONTAS delayed its own consultations for its new strategic plan. Once the FET strategy was launched AONTAS began its consultation on the development of our current strategic plan, *Learning: A Lifetime's Work*, which was adopted by the membership at our Autumn general meeting

and launched by Damien English, the Minister of State at the Departments of Education and Skills, and Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The consultation process which is described in some detail in the body of the report was wide and thorough, and produced much debate on the purpose of adult learning. AONTAS is extremely conscious of the importance of this discourse and we reaffirmed our commitment to the broader lifelong learning agenda and to all adult learners whether they are active members of the labour force or not. One of the key outcomes of the FET strategy for AONTAS is its designation as a lead organisation in the development and establishment of a national Adult Learners Forum on behalf of SOLAS. We see this as a major and successful outcome of our advocacy work on behalf of the adult learner, and the development of the learner voice. Towards the end of the year we began the work of stakeholder engagement in preparation for the development of the Forum.

European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)

Another important development for AONTAS during 2014 was the invitation by the Department of Education and Skills to take over the role of national Co-ordinator for the promotion of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). The project is funded by the EU Lifelong Learning programme and co-funded by SOLAS. AONTAS had already been involved with two other partners, ETBI and NALA in the delivery of promotional activities co-ordinated by the Further Education and Skills during 2013. The role of AONTAS was to manage an information website, onestepup.ie, a Freephone Helpline and an interactive online calendar of information events. This work enhanced the ongoing work of the AONTAS Information Referral Service which continues to provide up to date information to current and potential adult learners. Other parts of the campaign included the training of learner ambassadors by NALA and promotion of adult learning activities at a local level by ETBI. In its new role as National Co-ordinator AONTAS successfully applied for funding to develop the promotional project further from October 2014 until October 2015. Again the key partners are ETBI and NALA. AONTAS chairs an Advisory Group to the project which includes representatives from DES, SOLAS,

ETBI, AEOA, INOU, NALA and Leargas. A more detailed description of the project is included in the body of the report.

Advocacy Work

Having made great strides in our advocacy work in relation to establishing the voice of the learner at the centre of the FET strategy AONTAS turned its attention to other issues which still present challenges for its members, particularly for community education providers. Recognition and valuing of the important work they do, not only in attracting back to learning people who have been distanced from education and training and the labour market but also in addressing broader social inclusion and civil society issues, is a high priority for AONTAS. Through supporting the AONTAS Community Education Network AONTAS has focussed on strengthening the capacity of the groups to become strong advocates for their own work. AONTAS provided advocacy training for community based groups in Dublin, Limerick and Cork and produced a toolkit to assist them in this work. During the year a major issue emerged in relation to QQI proposed policy on fees and re-engagement for legacy providers. AONTAS has worked with the CEN to explore the issues and to propose solutions for a way forward. This work involved a political campaign which resulted in a meeting with the Department of Education and Skills and engagement with the QQI to seek a way forward. This work is ongoing and the goal of AONTAS's work in this regard is the publication by the QQI of clear guidelines on re-engagement for legacy providers in the community education sector. AONTAS will also continue to pursue the fees issue. In February, AONTAS was invited to give a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection about the potential of community education and vocational education. This was in recognition of the distinct role of community education as a key pillar within the education system. AONTAS will continue to be an advocate for community education as the FET strategy develops and contribute towards policy and other developments as appropriate.

Promoting Adult Learning

Promotion of the value and benefits of adult learning is a key activity of AONTAS and our communications strategy is designed to use a variety of ways to get the message across to a range of audiences. AONTAS uses its website, e-bulletin, publications and social media to promote the work of its members and to give a voice to the adult learner. AONTAS staff also participate in events and information fairs throughout the country. In 2014 we participated in 26 events and disseminated 10,230 information booklets. We also work throughout the year with national and local media and at particular times of the year contribute to features and supplements on adult learning. The promotional highlight of the year is the National Adult Learners Festival which in 2014 took place from the 24th February – 1st March 2014. Over 450 events were organised by members throughout the country with a view to raising awareness about learning opportunities and celebrating the range and variety of work taking place in the sector. The 2014 AONTAS STAR Awards took place on Monday 24th February in Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. The ceremony marked the start of the eighth Adult Learners Festival. Nearly 300 people attended, representing thirty eight organisations shortlisted for the awards. The projects represented a wide range of adult learning activities including areas such as disability, mental health, older people and the unemployed. The five awards were presented by Paul O'Toole, CEO of SOLAS.

As well as promoting adult learning at home AONTAS has a high level of participation at European level. For many years we have been active members of the European Association for Education for Adults (EAEA) and AONTAS supports Niamh O'Reilly, Head of Membership Services in her role as a member of the EAEA Board. For the past ten years AONTAS has also been an active partner in the Grundtvig -funded INFONET project which provides a web-based information service for adult educators in Europe. Berni Brady is the Irish correspondent, contributing four articles per year to the website and attending the Annual Milestone conference which in 2014

In 2014 we participated in 26 events and disseminated 10,230 information booklets.

took place in Prague. In June Berni Brady was invited by NVL, The Nordic Adult Learning Network to present at a conference in Iceland on Lifelong Learning Policy and Practice and in November she was invited by the Open University to present as part of a four nation panel on Perspectives on Lifelong Learning in Stormont.

Staff Changes

During 2014 AONTAS experienced a number of changes in the staff team with two people taking up new positions in other organisations and one member of the team opting to leave AONTAS after a year's leave of absence. We would like to thank Niamh Farren, former Communications Officer, Eleonora Peruffo, former Resources Officer and Dympna Larkin, former Membership Services Officer for their commitment and work in AONTAS and we wish them well in their future careers. AONTAS began a process of recruitment in December 2014 which will be completed in early 2015.



Conclusion

In this short overview I have summarised the key activities of 2014 which are described in more detail in the body of the report. AONTAS also engages in a wider range of activities on a day to day basis and further detail on the full range of activities can be accessed through the AONTAS website. Our Executive Committee met six times during the year and under the Presidency of Liz Waters has produced a handbook of good governance practice for the Board. The Committee continues to bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the work of AONTAS and provides strong support for the Director and her team. As an organisation we acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS for our work and we look forward to continuing to contribute our experience and expertise to the growth, development and success of the sector over the coming years.

The Committee continues to bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the work of AONTAS and provides strong support for the Director and her team.

Section 2



AONTAS Membership Services

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 513 members. The breakdown of membership comprises 249 Organisational members, 264 Individual members, and 2 Associate members. The change in membership numbers of the previous year is due, in part, to the amalgamations of VECs to ETBs in addition to the normal lapsing of unpaid members.

A more detailed overview of the AONTAS membership is illustrated in the table and pie chart below:

| Category | Members |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Small organisation | 146 |
| Medium organisation | 50 |
| Large organisation | 53 |
| Individual (regular fee) | 120 |
| Individual (reduced fee) | 142 |
| Associate | 2 |
| Total | 513 |

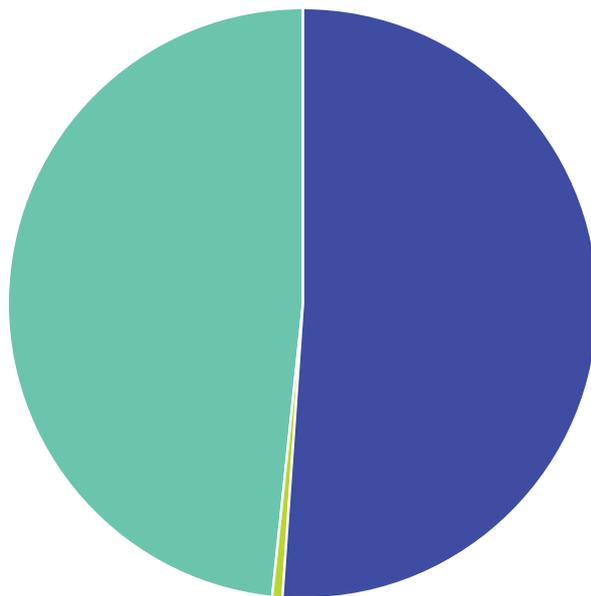
Membership Recruitment Strategy

During 2014 AONTAS embarked on a strategic process of membership recruitment, to strengthen its connection with ETB members and to increase membership among community education provider organisations. To inform the new recruitment strategy a detailed membership analysis report was developed to guide the expansion of membership during the new Strategic Plan. Consultative meetings were conducted with the AONTAS Executive Committee as part of an assessment of AONTAS membership services. New AONTAS members were recruited through the following processes:

- Through support from the AONTAS Executive Committee
- Word of mouth promotion by CEN members
- AONTAS participation at fairs and events
- Recruitment campaign during and after the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival
- Year long strategy of engagement with community education organisations

Taking a more targeted approach to recruitment, AONTAS seeks to recruit new members who will actively engage with AONTAS and benefit from our range of services. In 2014, 96 new members joined AONTAS representing 18% of the current total membership. These included 21 organisations and 75 individual members. A detailed overview of the newly recruited members is outlined in the table below. There is a steady growth in membership; 18 more members joined compared to those recruited in 2013.

| Category | New Members 2014 |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Small organisation | 12 |
| Medium organisation | 6 |
| Large organisation | 3 |
| Individual (regular fee) | 15 |
| Individual (reduced fee) | 60 |
| Total | 96 |



Membership Meetings

The AONTAS Annual General Meeting took place on May 14th in Dublin with over ninety members attending. The meeting had two objectives: to focus on the then recently published SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019); and to consult with members regarding the development of the AONTAS Strategic Plan in light of the changing context. Fiona Hartley, Executive Director of SOLAS provided an overview of the new FET Strategy followed by an open plenary discussion. Participants engaged in discussion groups which formed part of the year long extensive strategic planning process. Elections for the Executive Committee took place, the results of which are as follows:

OFFICER BOARD

Elizabeth Waters *President*

— An Cosán

Liam Kilbride *Vice President*

— Individual member

Colm Kilgallon *Hon. Treasurer*

— All Hallows College

Lorraine Cunningham *Hon. Secretary*

— Blaney Blades

ORDINARY MEMBERS

Lorraine Hennessy

— Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE)

Mary Farrell

— Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB)

Tara Farrell

— Longford Women's Link

James Prior

— Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)

Alice Bennett

— Individual Member

Autumn Membership Meeting

Over ninety members of AONTAS attended the General Meeting on November 19th in Dublin. The AONTAS Strategic Plan, Learning: A Lifetime's Work (2015-2018) was launched by Damien English, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Berni Brady, AONTAS Director, gave an overview of the Strategic Plan and highlighted the focus of AONTAS in relation to engaging the learner voice. Following this Susanne Kyle, Limerick Community Education Network and Aine Lyne, LCETB provided an overview of a case study example of the Limerick Learner Forum. Michael Moriarty, General Secretary of ETBI provided a broad overview of the sectoral reform which is happening and the importance and value of learner engagement within ETBs. Participants were invited to discuss the prospective project which AONTAS will undertake to develop an effective, meaningful National Adult Learner Forum.

Supporting the AONTAS Community Education Network

The AONTAS Community Education Network, which was established in 2007 as a platform for independent community education groups who are members of AONTAS seeks to increase the visibility, raise the voice of, and promote the value of community education. Currently the AONTAS Community Education Network comprises over 100 independently managed groups in the community and voluntary sector who offer community education programmes in a variety of settings.

During 2014, the CEN was co-ordinated by Niamh O'Reilly and administrative support was provided by Liz Gaynor. The work of the network was guided by a voluntary steering group comprising Suzanne Kyle, LCEN, Avril Bailey, An Cosan, Pauline McGaley, Warrenmount CED and Marian Donegan, Access 2000. The CEN focused its work on advocacy during 2014, primarily on the proposed QQI policy changes that effect community education FETAC legacy providers i.e. CEN members who were registered FETAC providers.

CEN key activities

- As part of the Adult Learners Festival, in February, CEN providers participated in the AONTAS Lobby for Learning Day. The event was launched by Minister Ciaran Cannon and provided a space to learn about the changes in the new FET landscape, and to engage in advocacy training in order to ensure a strong, united voice for community education at local and national level.
- The CEN convened on three occasions throughout the year: to feed into the AONTAS Strategic Plan Consultation process: to decide on emerging issues in relation to QQI; and to explore how to prepare for QQI re-engagement.
- As a member of the QQI Consultative Forum, AONTAS participated in national meetings of the Forum during April and October.
- CEN members were supported to engage in advocacy in the run up to the Local and European elections through a specifically developed Toolkit, which is available on the AONTAS website.
- Ongoing support was provided for AONTAS CEN members with policy queries.
- AONTAS made two funding applications to support the development of an e-learning regional training programme for the CEN.

CEN Advocacy Work: focus on QQI reengagement policy

In response to the needs of AONTAS Community Education Network members we embarked on a year long piece of work to ensure that community education learners can continue to engage in QQI accredited community education programmes. Following the establishment of the Quality and Qualifications Authority (QQI) a series of policy changes are in the process of development, most notably a new, once-off, process for existing FETAC legacy providers who will be required to re-engage with QQI. In preparation for the changes AONTAS, with the direction and support of the CEN, engaged in the following activities:

- In order to ensure the most effective process for re-engagement of community education legacy providers AONTAS made a number of written submissions to QQI on four White Papers published during the year. AONTAS also developed a summary information note for CEN members to encourage their participation in the consultation process.
- AONTAS met with QQI representatives in March to discuss issues facing the community education sector and reengagement, namely proposed fees.
- In response to CEN members' concern about the proposed fee of €5000 for QQI reengagement, an advocacy campaign was initiated and position paper on QQI fees was developed for use as an advocacy tool for CEN members.
- CEN members were supported with advocacy materials to lobby their local TDs and Senators on the QQI re-engagement issue during June.
- In June, AONTAS submitted a number of parliamentary questions to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection and the Minister for Education and Skills, resulting in numerous debates on the issue.

AONTAS embarked on a year long piece of work to ensure that community education learners can continue to engage in QQI accredited community education programmes.



- In July, through the collective effort of the CEN, political interest and momentum for the no fees for re-engagement campaign was building, highlighted at Leaders Questions in the Oireachtas when questions about fees for community education legacy provider re-engagement were posed based on the lobbying activities of CEN members in Dublin 8 and Dublin 1.
- With the change in Minister for Education and Skills, parliamentary questions and letters from TDs flooded into the new Minister, Jan O’Sullivan’s office, resulting in the Minister writing to AONTAS in September to open a discussion between the officials in her Department, QQI and AONTAS to tackle this issue.
- In order to support the effective re-engagement of community education legacy providers, AONTAS researched and developed a paper entitled ‘Scenarios for Re-engagement of Community Education Legacy Providers’. The paper was used in discussions with the Department of Education and Skills in October, and with the Department and QQI in December.
- The ‘Scenarios’ paper was distributed to the CEN to support their preparation for re-engagement and Niamh O’Reilly facilitated a session with the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) in December.
- In addition to the fees issue, the CEN articulated its need for information and clarity from the QQI on guidelines regarding re-engagement directly or through a consortium.

Developing the AONTAS Strategic Plan — *Learning: A Lifetime's Work*

Having delayed the strategic planning process to take account of the development of the FET Strategy AONTAS engaged in a year long, wide-ranging consultation process in order to develop the AONTAS Strategic Plan 'Learning: A Lifetime's Work' (2015-2018). As a tool for consultation the Strategic Plan Consultation Discussion Document formed the basis of the consultative process and was distributed to AONTAS members and key stakeholders. A summary overview of the consultation process is outlined below:

Preparation and planning (January/ February/March)

- Analysis of the impact of the AONTAS Strategic Plan 2011-2013
- Analysis of the adult and community education policy landscape
- Staff planning meetings
- Development of Strategic Plan Scoping Document
- Development of Strategic Plan Consultation process

First phase of consultation process (April/May)

- Executive Committee consultation meeting
- Redrafted Strategic Plan Scoping Document to a Consultation Discussion Document
- Dissemination of the Discussion Document to the AONTAS membership
- Online Consultation opened and responses collated
- Annual General Meeting consultative workshops
- Analysis from AGM workshops

Second phase of consultation process (June/July/August/September)

- Staff meeting and review day of consultation work
- Stakeholder consultation
- Executive Committee consultation

Consolidation (October/November)

- Strategic Plan drafted
- AONTAS Executive Committee agreement of Strategic Plan
- Launch of Strategic Plan at General Meeting

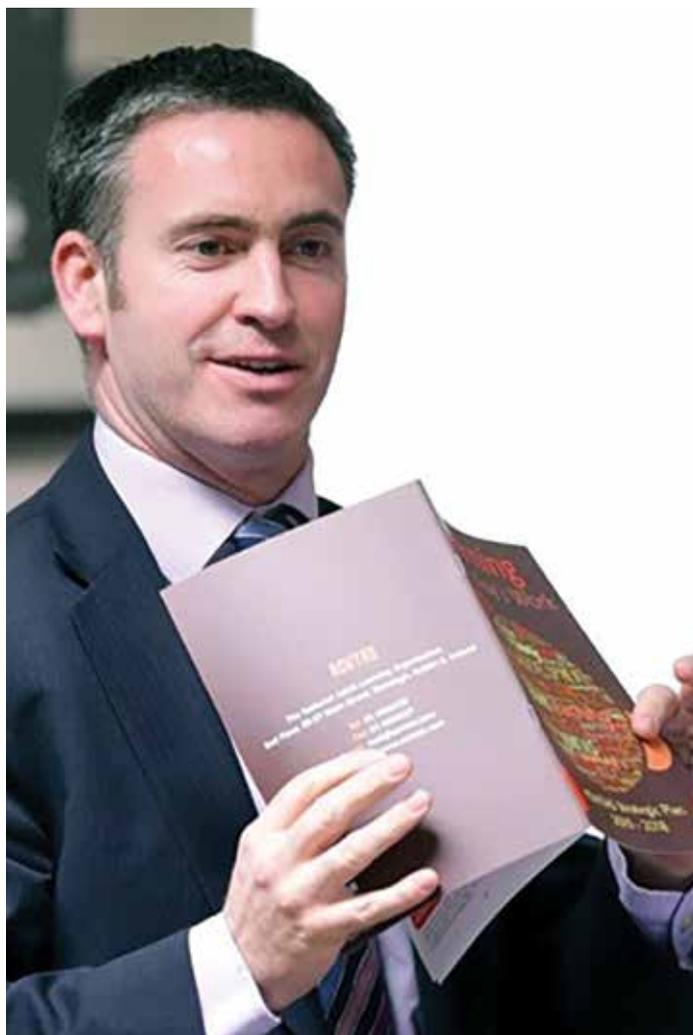
Engaging with key stakeholders proved invaluable for informing the Strategic Plan and as a means of building relationships with agencies involved in lifelong learning policy.

Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging with key stakeholders proved invaluable for informing the Strategic Plan and as a means of building relationships with agencies involved in lifelong learning policy. The following key stakeholders were consulted through either a one-to-one interview, a focus group or by way of a telephone interview:

- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN)
- Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC)
- The Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)
- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- The Adult Education Officers Association (AEOA)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Pobal
- Leargas
- The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (National Access Office)
- A Third Level Education Institute
- National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
- Further Education and Training Section of the Department of Education and Skills

As evidenced in the final content of the Strategic Plan, AONTAS actively listened and responded to its members, creating a meaningful plan which represents the views of our membership while at the same time providing a strong strategic direction for the organisation over the next four years.



Supporting Adult Learners

The Learner Supports Officer role was introduced in September 2012 with the aim of developing and building on the work engaged in by AONTAS in bringing the learner voice to the core of our activities during the course of our strategic Plan, Value, Voice, Visibility (2011-2013). We have established, developed and maintained a wide range of partnerships and networks to reach learners and communicate their voice and views. We have supported and facilitated learners to voice their issues and concerns at national and local events such as the SOLAS learner consultation and the Lobby for Learning Days. Through feedback from various learner discussions at AONTAS events we have developed a clear learner strategy which allows learners to engage with AONTAS through many different platforms depending on their readiness. We have worked hard to ensure that the learner support work feeds into and supports the policy, promotion and membership strategy of AONTAS. Our key strategic goals in our new strategic plan, Learning: A Lifetime's Work are designed to underpin and promote our learner support strategy. So far our work over the past number of years has achieved a number of successful outcomes as follows:

SOLAS Learner Consultation – January 2014

In January 2014 AONTAS was asked to assist in organising the SOLAS learner consultation. Learners from various FET programmes were brought together for round table discussions and outlined what key priorities and actions they thought should be incorporated into the FET Strategy and how they would like to see this done. AONTAS sourced a number of learners from the community education sector and facilitated three of the five groups of learners. Their feedback was used to inform the FET strategy.

AONTAS have supported and facilitated learners to voice their issues and concerns at national and local events such as the SOLAS learner consultation and the Lobby for Learning Days.

National Adult Learner Forum 2016

In 2014 AONTAS was tasked by SOLAS as the lead agency, in collaboration with key stakeholders to establish a National Adult Learner Forum to collect feedback from learners on the effectiveness of Further Education and Training provision. The first National Forum will take place in February 2016. AONTAS has drafted an implementation plan and is currently engaging with both SOLAS and other stakeholders.

AONTAS Membership Meetings

Adult Learners were included in a learner workshop at our Annual General Meeting in May discussing their priorities for the AONTAS Strategic Plan. At our General Meeting in November learners were included in workshops discussing the various methods and activities of learner engagement in the FET Sector.

ETB Learner Representatives – June 2014

In June 2014 AONTAS and NALA were invited by the Minister of Education and Skills to act as nominating bodies for members of the new ETBs. AONTAS was required to nominate persons for consideration and appointment to each of the sixteen ETBs and where possible to nominate local learners including those from community education. After a rigorous process and consultation with our Executive Committee we put forward two nominees, one man and one woman, for 15 of the 16 ETB Boards. AONTAS secured 12 successful nominations in total (Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB, Galway and Roscommon ETB, Kerry ETB, Kildare and Wicklow ETB, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Limerick and Clare ETB, Louth & Meath ETB, Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB, Tipperary ETB and Waterford and Wexford ETB). AONTAS will work with NALA and the ETBs to explore ways to support the learner representatives to be effective Board members.

QQI Learner Representative

AONTAS continues to support Ms Una Buckley as the learner representative on the QQI Board.



SOLAS Board

In Autumn 2013 Berni Brady, Director of AONTAS was appointed by the Minister of Education and skills to the Board of SOLAS. She has a special remit to represent the voice of adult learners.

Learner Stories

Throughout the year learner testimonials were sourced from a wide range of learners to highlight the value of returning to education and training and to inspire others to do the same.

Adult Learners Festival

The Adult Learners Festival and the Star Awards were used as opportunities to celebrate and promote the value of learning through learner case studies from Star Awards projects, learner competitions and a learner bus tour around Dublin City.

Social Media

Social media, Explore magazine and the AONTAS website were used to promote our learner work through campaigns, blogs and learner testimonials allowing us to engage with a wide group of learners and to promote the value of adult learning.

Promoting Adult Learning

During 2014 AONTAS continued to develop its promotion and advocacy work. The Adult Learners Festival was an important aspect of our promotional work, but new projects such as the European Agenda on Adult Learning provided additional promotional opportunities. Data collection through the website www.onestepup.ie and the Freephone Helpline gave us additional insights into the trends and challenges facing adult learners, which we used to inform our engagement with media. A number of opportunities also emerged for advocacy work during the year. These included the development of the new FET Strategy, the local and European elections and the development of new policies in the area of qualifications and quality assurance.

Communications Strategy

The work of AONTAS is based on the belief that every adult has a right to quality learning throughout his/her life and that the value and myriad benefits of learning should be widely promoted. The AONTAS communications strategy is designed to use a variety of ways to get those messages across to a range of audiences. AONTAS uses its website, e-bulletin, publications and social media to promote the work of its members and to give a voice to the adult learner. Throughout the year AONTAS issued a number of press releases. These included:

- 12 press releases to local media, highlighting shortlisted STAR Awards projects
- 9 national press releases, promoting the Adult Learners Festival, STAR Award winners and other relevant policy issues
- 21 press releases to local media, inviting applications for the STAR Awards 2015.

Data collection through the website www.onestepup.ie and the Freephone Helpline gave us additional insights into the trends and challenges facing adult learners.

AONTAS also held two photo opportunities, one for the launch of the Adult Learners Festival and the other featuring Project FUTSAL (winners of the Nationwide STAR Awards) at the FAI Offices in Abbotstown.

The time period of August – September was also a busy time for AONTAS. We provided information about adult learning opportunities, case studies, trends and statistics to the Irish Independent, the Daily Mail and the Sunday Business Post. The Irish Times adult education supplement included a number of articles and photos provided by AONTAS.

AONTAS Online

AONTAS manages three websites:

- www.aontas.com
- www.adultlearnersfestival.com
- www.onestepup.ie

All three websites are publicised through a Google Grant which allows AONTAS to avail of free Google Adwords.

AONTAS e-bulletin

The AONTAS e-bulletin is sent weekly to more than 1000 people including the AONTAS membership, providers and practitioners in the field of adult and community education as well as a range of other stakeholders. The bulletin contains membership updates, events and programmes, policy updates and international news and contacts.

Social Media

During 2014 AONTAS continued to develop its use of social media to engage audiences about our work and adult learning in general. Our Twitter following now reaches almost 3,000, while our following on Facebook increased to almost 1,500. AONTAS ran two, targeted social media campaigns during the year which promoted OneStepUp.ie as well as a range of events and open days hosted by ETBs and community education organisations.





The Adult Learners Festival

The eighth Adult Learners Festival took place from the 24th February – 1st March 2014 using a particular theme for each day as follows:

Celebrate Learning

— Monday, 24th February

Green Learning

— Tuesday, 25th February

Learning Communities

— Wednesday, 26th February

Learning for Work

— Thursday, 27th February

Lobby for Learning

— Friday, 28th February

Family Learning Day

— Saturday, 1st March

STAR Awards Ceremony

The 2014 AONTAS STAR Awards which marked the start of the Festival took place on Monday 24th February in the Doubletree Hotel, Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. Nearly three hundred people attended the ceremony, representing thirty eight organisations shortlisted for the awards. The projects represented a wide range of adult learning activities including areas such as disability, mental health, older people and the unemployed. Seventy one nominations were received from five regions: Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster and Nationwide. Thirty eight projects were then shortlisted by the five judging panels. For the third year running, the judging panels travelled around the country to meet with these projects face to face and to choose their five winning projects. The five awards were presented by Paul O'Toole, CEO, SOLAS, who also gave the keynote address. The five outstanding adult learning initiatives who won were:

- **Connaught** Blue Teapot Theatre and Performing Arts Centre
- **Munster** Ballyduff Community of Excellence in Promoting Mental Health Awareness and Well-being

- **Ulster** Man Matters
- **Leinster** Making a Difference Everywhere (MADE)
- **Nationwide** Project FUTSAL

Entertainment was provided by the Killorglin Men's Shed Choir.

Lobby for Learning Day

To mark Lobby for Learning Day AONTAS ran a training session in advocacy skills for community education organisations. Minister Ciaran Cannon along with Suzanne Kyle from the LCEN gave inputs to those who attended. Part of the training involved practical demonstrations in different aspects of advocacy, from using the media, to dealing with politicians and developing campaign messages/slogans. As an outcome of the training, AONTAS produced an advocacy toolkit, which was disseminated to members of the CEN in advance of the local and European Elections 2014. The session was also an opportunity to share a model of practice in the Clare/Limerick area, where community education organisations came together to develop a shared approach to engaging with their ETB.

Festival Events

Events for 2014 rose from 415 to 450. The events were held by a range of providers including libraries, ETBs, adult education providers, community groups, museums, galleries and private businesses. Levels of collaboration have remained high with 60% of organisations working together to promote and celebrate adult learning in 2014. New organisations such as B&Q provided a whole range of free DIY events to local groups while cultural institutions such as Marsh's Library and the Print Museum offered free tours to learners. There was also an international aspect to the week with a visit from Dr. Debora Nelli from Western Washington University who facilitated workshops in Warrenmount and the National Library of Ireland. Her aim is to return in 2015 with students from her course to create an

Levels of collaboration have remained high with 60% of organisations working together in 2014.

international learning exchange. The Festival website provides details of 43 local contacts throughout Ireland who have organised events for the Festival in the past. These contacts are willing to share their event organiser experience with other interested parties.

‘Love to Learn’ Bus

In 2014 as part of ‘Family Learning Day’ AONTAS provided learners and their families with the opportunity to go on the ‘Love to Learn’ Bus and discover learning in unexpected places. Learners got the chance to visit Marsh’s Library, The National Print Museum and Dublinia.

Adult Learners Festival Website

AONTAS has a separate Adult Learners Festival website which is linked to the homepage: www.adultlearnersfestival.com. This is updated daily during the lead up to the festival and then monthly throughout the year. The website received over 25,000 pageviews during the festival period. On the ALF website the majority of people visited the “Festival in your area” section. The second most visited section was the STAR awards while the “resources” page was the third. The top referrers to the website are aontas.com, activelink.ie and whatsnew.citizensinformation.ie.

E-Bulletins

Festival e-bulletins were sent out once a month during the months March 2013 to October 2013 to our mailing database of over 3,500. From October until the beginning of March 2014 they were sent out weekly.

Social Media Activity

AONTAS used an integrated social media campaign which covered Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Pinterest. AONTAS uses social media to share content, promote the festival and to strengthen alliances and partnerships with other organisations.

YOUTUBE

AONTAS compiled a short STAR Awards video to provide a snapshot of what happened during the ceremony by profiling some of the award winners and what winning the award meant to them. This was shared across all social media channels.

FACEBOOK

Facebook views rose significantly until 2014 when the statistics become incomparable due to Facebook privileging paid posts. This means that our organic reach has fallen. Using Facebook now means a change in strategy such as using posts with pictures and paid advertising. The learners’ competition was viewed 492 times and the picture of the Festival launch with Ger Brennan was viewed 471 times. In October 2014 we took the decision to merge the Adult Learners Festival Facebook page and the AONTAS Facebook page. All information is now shared through the AONTAS Facebook page.

TWITTER

Our Twitter following increased to over 2,500 and the Adult Learners Festival had its own hashtag #adultlearnersfest for the festival.

PINTEREST

For ALF 2014 AONTAS held a photography competition to help document all the events that took place throughout the week. People attending events and the organisers of events were asked to take photos of events happening in their area and send it back to us by email, Facebook or Twitter. We then pinned it to our AONTAS Festival Events around the Country Pinterest board and promoted the link through Facebook and Twitter.

Advertising

2014 saw a shift in the way AONTAS promotes the festival by instead concentrating on advertising in culture and event magazines. In print media AONTAS took out six advertisements in the national newspapers: two in the Irish Independent, one in the Irish Times and three in the Metro Herald. Hikes in visits to the website in 2014 can be directly correlated with the inclusion of print advertisements. For example two advertisements were included in Day and Night and the Ticket on Friday 21st February. On that day there was a peak of 1,769 pageviews on the site.





For radio AONTAS produced three 30-second advertisements. The advertisements were played on three national radio stations, twelve local stations and twenty two community stations for one week.

Google ads

AONTAS used a google grant initiative to run some online ads to advertise events happening around the country. 457 visitors were attracted by the ads and the ads were viewed 52,118 times.

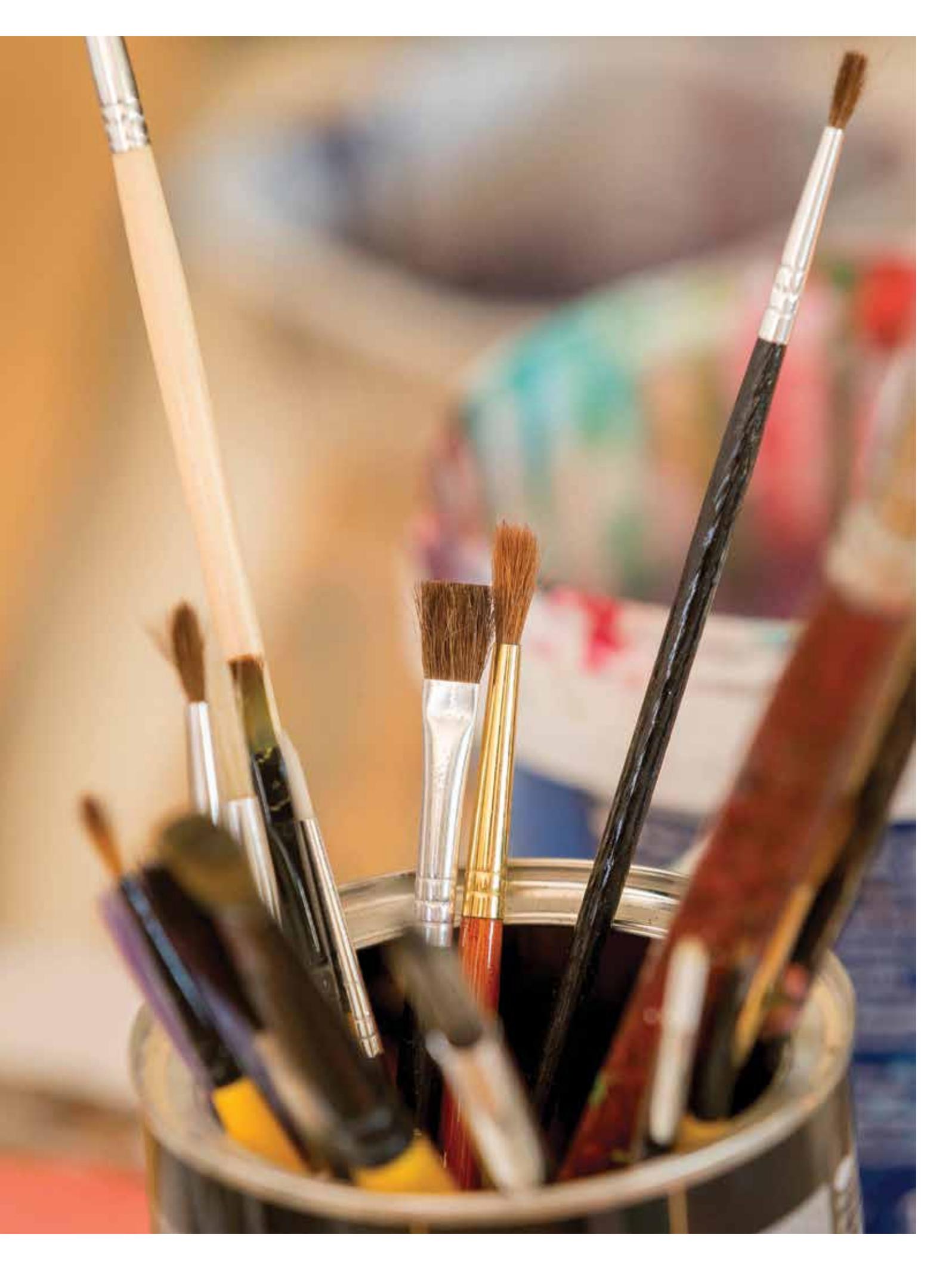
Media Coverage

The festival gained widespread media coverage. The launch was covered by the Sunday Independent, the Mail on Sunday and the Herald. There was coverage of the STAR Award winners in the Irish Examiner, on the Ian Dempsey Breakfast Show and on RTE's Drivetime radio programme. There was also extensive media coverage of the festival on local and community radio in the form of fourteen interviews, event notices and reporters being sent to events on both local

and community radio and local newspapers across 21 counties. The event organiser evaluation showed that nearly 40% of all events gained media coverage. There were 200 festival related articles in the local press. The local newspapers featured information on events, advertisements and articles on STAR Award winners. There were four articles in the national press which highlighted the festival.

Internet Coverage

The AONTAS Adult Learners Festival was featured widely on the internet. The free Dublin event guide included information about events and the website. Information about the festival was included on websites such as Activelink, The Wheel and Qualifax.ie. Events were also listed on cultural websites such as CultureFox, Discover Ireland, Entertainment.ie and Festivals.ie.



AONTAS Publications

All AONTAS publications are available on the AONTAS website and the Publications and Links section is the most frequently visited section of the website after the Information section. The section includes reports, submissions, research as well as links to other relevant publications and sites.

Explore Magazine

During the year, two editions of the AONTAS magazine were produced. Both issues focused on policy changes in the external environment, and the Adult Learners Festival. 1,000 copies of Explore are printed and distributed to AONTAS member organisations, libraries, NGOs and policy makers.

Adult Learner Journal

The Adult Learner is the Irish journal of adult and community education founded in the mid 1980s. It is published annually and aims primarily to serve the needs of the adult education community in Ireland by providing a forum for critical reflection on the practices of teaching and learning. The journal aims to continue to make knowledge, research and writing accessible to the widest possible audience and emphasises the implications of critique for practice. The journal has a long established practice of giving priority to subject matter that addresses disadvantage, social exclusion, equality, workplace learning and the study of the teacher/student relationship. Community education, literacy, citizenship and access issues are also of importance in the journal. The journal welcomes papers which are relevant to those working across the broad

field of Adult and Community Education and which make a contribution to debates both in Ireland and internationally. The Editorial Board is made up of a collaborative partnership between University College, Cork, University College, Dublin, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Maynooth, The University of Strathclyde, Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board and Tipperary Education and Training Board. The Board also includes two members of AONTAS staff, Berni Brady, Director who chairs the Board and Mairéad Tynan who provides administrative and secretarial support. The journal has limited availability in hard copy but can be viewed or downloaded from the AONTAS website, where further details on how individuals can make contributions are made available each year. Last year the journal was viewed 1033 times and 420 hard copies were distributed.

Publications and Links is the most frequently visited page of the AONTAS website after the Information section.



AONTAS built on the outcomes of advocacy work from 2013 by focusing on the development of the Further Education and Training Strategy, the local and European elections and the subsequent formation of the new Education and Training Boards.

Local and European Elections

Planning work for the local and European elections started in January, when AONTAS delivered an advocacy skills workshop to community education providers in Clare and Limerick Education and Training Board. The workshop included inputs on advocacy skills, the Education and Training Boards legislation, and practical sessions for participants. This training was adapted and delivered to members of the Community Education Network in Dublin at the Lobby for Learning day which closed the Adult Learners Festival in 2014. Ciaran Cannon, then Minister for Training and Skills addressed the group.

In advance of the local and European elections, AONTAS developed a toolkit for use by community education practitioners. The toolkit complemented the content of the training and included information about the ETB legislation, tips on advocacy and the wider implications of a reform agenda within the Department of Environment and Local Government. The toolkit is available online.

Engaging with elected representatives

Building relationships with elected representatives is an important part of AONTAS advocacy work. This includes both the senior Minister and the Minister of State within the Department of Education and Skills. In February, AONTAS was invited to give a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection about the potential of community education and vocational education. This was in recognition of the distinct role of community education as a key pillar within the education system.

A cabinet reshuffle in July 2014 resulted in the departure of Ruairi Quinn and Ciaran Cannon from the Department of Education and Skills. Jan O'Sullivan TD was appointed as Minister for Education and Skills and Damien English TD as Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation. In October 2014 AONTAS met with Minister English. The Minister was invited to launch the new Strategic Plan 'Learning: a Lifetime's Work' at the AONTAS General Meeting in November.

Stakeholder engagement

Along with elected representatives, AONTAS maintains strong relationships with stakeholders across the Further Education and Training sector. AONTAS engaged in a range of stakeholder meetings during the development of the strategic plan as outlined earlier and we also participated on the Steering Committee for the European Agenda on Adult Learning, which was chaired by the Department of Education and Skills, and included representation from ETBI, NALA, Leargas and the NCGE.

In April 2014, AONTAS joined the National Executive Committee of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INO). AONTAS developed a strong relationship with the INOU as a result and strengthened our knowledge of the challenges facing people who are experiencing unemployment.

AONTAS is also represented on the Advisory Group for the National Access Office for Higher Education. In 2014 the main focus of work for the Advisory Group was the development of a new National Access Plan. AONTAS produced an extensive submission to the HEA which highlighted the particular challenges experienced by adults accessing higher education. As a result, AONTAS was asked to participate in a roundtable session hosted by the HEA to explore how the links between the community education sector and higher education could be strengthened.







www.onestepup.ie

← → Homepage

Menu

ONE STEP UP

1 800 303 669

Freephone Helpline 9.30am - 5pm

Find your education 5

Information Referral Service 2014

The AONTAS Information Referral Service continues to support adults wishing to return to learning and was enhanced in 2014 by the development of the onestepup website and helpline supported by the EU Lifelong Learning programme. The service receives calls, emails and website visits from prospective and current learners seeking information on courses, entitlements, funding and other supports as well as government labour activation measures. This work is supported by our information booklet, 'What Next' which was reviewed and updated in 2014. 10,230 copies of the booklet were disseminated in 2014. The information booklet is also available on the AONTAS website and is a popular choice for website visitors. Many more people now seek information online and are then more likely to follow up with a telephone call if they need further assistance.

Telephone contact

There has been a 50% increase in the number of people contacting the AONTAS Information Referral Service in 2014 showing the greater need for clear information for adults who wish to explore their training and education options. In 2014 AONTAS received 538 direct information requests compared to 335 in 2013. Our analysis of these requests yielded the following information:

- 14% of calls have come through the freephone helpline and 11% heard about us directly through the Onestepup website
- 40% were looking for specific courses, the most frequently requested as follows:
 - Computers/IT
 - Healthcare
 - Health & Fitness
 - Languages (this includes English)
- 18% are looking to return to education
- 15% of queries are regarding social welfare or funding issues
- 15% wanted to do their Leaving Certificate
- Information requests consisted of 56% female and 44% male

- Information requests were high in January and August, phone calls peaked in September with over 76 queries
- The top reasons why adults are returning to education are in order to gain employment, to gain new skills and to improve income
- Dublin, Cork, Galway, Meath and Wicklow were the top 5 counties from which information calls were received in 2014
- 37% of people contacting the service reported the Leaving Certificate or equivalent as their level of education to date, 35% of people contacting the service had a third level qualification, 16% had the Junior Certificate or equivalent and 11% of people had no formal qualification
- The two biggest obstacles reported in returning to education were lack of information and lack of support
- 69% of people reported living in an urban area and 31% lived in a rural area (This is a change on last year when the bigger percentage was from rural areas)
- In 2014, 17% of people contacting the service were long term unemployed, 19% of people contacting the service are employed in full time work, 12% in part time work and 3% were in employment programmes, 5% of people were unemployed for less than one year
- In 2014, 33% of people contacting the service were looking for full time education options, 59% for part time and 3% for distance learning options

Website Support: One Step Up Project

During 2013 AONTAS was invited by the Department of Education and Skills to participate in an EU Campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation in adult learning. The campaign which is funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme supports a website www.onestepup.ie, a Freephone Helpline 1800 303 669 and online calendar of events.

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Hello my name is Veronica
Hailey known as Bonny
to friends.

I have started to do
Art class 3 years ago
I really enjoy it
Through the help of our
Tutor Jordana.

She has brought out
talent in me I did
know I had.

I find it very relax
to sit and watch
something and take shape

I have used oil paints
watercolours, Pastels and
various ways to bring

out different designs
I like to draw
a subject first. our



The overall objective of the project is to increase participation in adult learning, in particular targeting adults with basic skills. A number of activities involving three partners, AONTAS, ETBI and NALA were developed to support these objectives. A Steering Group chaired by the Department of Education and Skills and including representatives of stakeholders from across the adult learning sector was established to oversee the work.

Project Activities

The project activity developed and implemented by AONTAS involved the development of a microsite www.onestepup.ie to act as a portal and bring together various sources of information under a single online campaign. This site was also developed to assist current and potential adult learners to find out about, and follow up on appropriate learning opportunities. The site includes an online calendar of information events as well as video testimonials from adult learners along with frequently asked questions about adult learning. A simple online tool was developed to help adults access the services they needed in their local area. Four questions were developed and users were asked to complete them in order to identify the contacts and resources most appropriate to their needs. A Freephone helpline was also established, to deal with queries from people who had difficulty navigating the website. The Freephone number was promoted through the website www.onestepup.ie

Online Calendar

A database of events providing information on learning opportunities for adults was established and providers were contacted to include details about their events. Visitors to the website were offered an option for reminders about local learning events through email or text message. The calendar section of OneStepUp.ie was launched the week before the Adult Learners Festival. Dublin GAA Star, Ger Brennan, was invited to a photocall to help launch the calendar. The launch photos appeared in *The Herald*.

Promotion

Promotion of both the Helpline and the online calendar was supported through the development of the website www.onestepup.ie which provided a campaign brand and ‘one stop shop’ for campaign activities. A logo and design identity for the website was developed.

Promotional actions included:

- *National radio advertising campaign* – The website was promoted through a radio ad which ran on three national radio stations.
- *Press Release* – A press release was issued to launch the online calendar.
- *Stakeholder engagement* – Relevant organisations were informed about the site and encouraged to host a link on their own websites. Information was disseminated via a range of e-bulletins. Services included within the site were engaged over the course of the project and encouraged to disseminate information directly to the target groups.
- *Presentations* – A presentation was made to the AONTAS General Meeting, with almost 100 people attending. Presentations were also made to delegations visiting Ireland from Croatia and Finland as part of their EAAL work.
- *Information flyer* – A simple flyer was developed in-house to promote the campaign name, website and Freephone number. 10,000 copies of the flyer were produced and disseminated to adults attending local education and training exhibitions.

The overall objective of the AONTAS Information Referral Service is to increase participation in adult learning, in particular targeting adults with basic skills.



— *Online advertising* – As a charity, AONTAS availed of a Google Grant which helped to establish and promote the website and enhanced existing resources. A Google mentor helped optimise the site. The website was also advertised on the popular Boards.ie website during August 2014. 738 events were promoted through the calendar on the website.

— *Social Media* – The website was promoted through two separate social media campaigns, one in April 2014 to raise awareness about the site, the second campaign was developed in August 2014 specifically to promote the online calendar of events

— *Fairs and Information Events* – AONTAS staff attended a number of fairs and information events throughout the year to

promote the Information Referral Service as follows:

- Donegal Adult Learners Festival, January
- Central Library, Dublin, February
- EURES Fair, Blanchardstown, February
- Cavan/Monaghan Adult Learners Fair, February
- Info Stand, Women’s Breakfast, Marlay Park, March
- Ballymun Youth Guarantee Fair, March
- EURES Fair, Limerick, April
- Wicklow Adult Education Fair, April
- DSP Fair, Finglas, April
- EURES Fair, Waterford, May
- DSP Fair Ashbourne, June
- DSP Training and Education Fair, Swords, August

- DSP Training and Education Fair, Tallaght, August
- Cork Adult Ed Fair, September
- Whichcourse, September
- Ballymun Whitehall Fair, September
- Ploughing Championships, September
- DSP Fair Finglas, October
- DSP Fair Swords, September
- Irish Men's Sheds Conference, October
- Ballyfermot Partnership Fair, November
- Meath Partnership Fair, November
- Dublin Inner City Fair, November
- Ahead Better Options Fair, November
- Interaction and engagement with people contacting the Freephone Helpline Referral Service, including a snapshot follow on survey to capture their progress from the Referral Service. A reporting model for phone queries was developed using the AONTAS CRM system
- An initial analysis of traffic to the website and Freephone queries was completed in May 2014, to highlight key trends and patterns. This was disseminated to policy makers and to the media.

Project outcomes

Evaluation of the campaign website, online calendar and referral service was informed by the following perspectives:

- Feedback from the stakeholders, through the project steering committee
- Feedback from adult education providers, captured during regular updates of their contact details on the website
- General data analytics on the use of the website including capturing user engagement using the online tool. Some elements of the site were redesigned in April 2014 based on analytics and in order to make it more user-friendly

Referrals

The project helped create greater levels of awareness about adult learning. During the course of this project almost 7,000 people were referred (both online and over the phone) to services, support and information that they needed to take up education and training.

- There were 6,048 completed user profiles on the website. A user profile is the information gathered from a user's interaction with the site – i.e. answers to all four questions fully completed
- 41% of completed profiles were looking for information about courses. 25% were looking for information about guidance/advice
- 51% were aged between 35-65 years old
- 15% described themselves as unemployed, 32% described themselves as long term unemployed. 34% were employed
- 46% of those who were long term unemployed were looking for information about courses
- 16% of those who were employed were looking for information about basic skills

Engagement with OneStepUp.ie

- 10,751 website users, with 39,948 page views
- 6,048 completed user profiles captured through the campaign

During the course of this project almost 7,000 people were referred (both online and over the phone) to services, support and information that they needed to take up education and training.

Social Media Campaign

Information about the service and online calendar were disseminated through the AONTAS Facebook page. Campaigns ran over two month long periods. The following indicators describe engagement with the service/ calendar.

Phase One: (April 2014)

Campaign objective: Increase visibility of the service through social media.

- The Facebook page registered 102 new likes.
- Reach was expanded, where one single post reached 78,480 people.
- One learner story generated 911 clicks.
- When compared to the month before the campaign, the number of sessions increased from 909 to 2,057.

Phase Two: (August 2014)

Campaign objective: Promote the online calendar through targeted posting of information about 43 learning events in different geographic areas.

- 62% of traffic to the website came via social media.
- Paid reach for the campaign meant that posts were seen 1.1 million times.
- Reach was expanded – from 16% before the campaign to 37% during the campaign.
- The number of page ‘likes’ increased by 214
- Traffic to the site doubled from the previous campaign – with 4,993 sessions recorded in comparison to 2,057 recorded in Phase 1.

The project helped build better relationships with stakeholders:

- 33 stakeholders or supporting organisations were included
- 16 stakeholder organisations included links to www.onestepup.ie on their website
- The project helped inform a better understanding of the challenges facing adult learners

Plans for the Future

AONTAS continues to maintain and update the OneStepUp website. The website is marketed through access to a charity advertising grant from Google. Data from the project is gathered on a quarterly basis and disseminated to policy makers and the media.

In 2014 AONTAS was invited by the Department of Education and Skills to take over the role of National Co-ordinator for the European Agenda on Adult Learning in Ireland. In April 2014 an application was submitted for further activities to promote the EU Agenda and in September 2014 the proposal was approved for funding.

This application builds on developments in the 2012–2014 project. Key activities include:

- The use of the PIAAC research to enhance service delivery from a number of policy perspectives
- Maintenance of the referral service and enhancement of web functionality on the website, through additional features
- Supporting ETBs to organise a series of local awareness raising events focussing on adult learners.

Representation at home and abroad

As well as our ongoing engagement with stakeholders, AONTAS staff and Executive Committee members represent AONTAS and the voice of adult learning at home and abroad at conferences, seminars, focus groups and other relevant events. In 2014 AONTAS represented the interests of adult and community education and learners on:

- Board of SOLAS
- PLSS Steering Group, SOLAS
- SIAC
- Advisory Group on Access to Higher Education
- EAAL Steering Group
- National Executive Committee INOU
- European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA)
- INFONET, Grundtvig European Information Network
- Governing Authority, University of Limerick
- Adult Learner Journal Editorial Board

EAEA and representation at a European Level

Niamh O'Reilly has represented AONTAS and its members on the Board of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) since she was elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2013. In her capacity as Board member she supported the development of the EAEA membership by facilitating a workshop at the

EAEA General Assembly in June (Brussels), and contributing to policy influence at Board meetings in Berlin, Estonia, Greece and Paris. EAEA supported the Irish adult and community education sector by making policy representations/submissions on TTIP, ERASMUS + and the EU2020 Strategy. More information is available online at www.eaea.org

ERASMUS+

AONTAS was successful in applying for a number of ERASMUS+ learning mobilities under Key Action 1. These will support exchange of information and expertise across Europe.

In order to improve AONTAS knowledge of European adult education policy development and influence, Niamh O'Reilly participated in an ERASMUS+ funded job shadowing mobility with the EAEA Secretary General, Gina Ebner, in Tallin.

AONTAS hosted an ERASMUS+ KA1 learning mobility with a staff member of the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres, Birgit Langeder. Birgit participated at the AONTAS General Meeting and engaged in a number of knowledge exchange meetings with AONTAS staff and members.

In December 2014 Brid Greenan took part in the EAEA Younger Staff training in Adult Education in Brussels. The aim of the training was to create awareness of European developments in adult education and lifelong learning, to understand advocacy work at European level, to exchange information and knowledge about each other's organisations and adult education backgrounds, to learn about EAEA and other key civil society organisations.

Education in a Digital Era

In her capacity as AONTAS President, Elizabeth Waters participated in the high level European Commission funded conference: *Education in a Digital Era* during November in Brussels. As the recent winner of the Social Entrepreneurs Impact Award, Elizabeth shared her experience of e learning in a community education setting.

AONTAS staff and Executive Committee members represent the voice of adult learning at home and abroad at conferences, seminars and focus groups.





INFONET

AONTAS continued its involvement in INFONET, a Grundtvig-funded project which provides a web-based database of reports, news, articles and interviews related to adult education across Europe. It has a network of approximately 40 correspondents across Europe who contribute content for the site. Berni Brady acts as the Irish correspondent. She attended the milestone conference which took place in Prague in 2014. Details of the project can be accessed at www.infonet-ae.eu

Perspectives on Lifelong Learning: Stormont Castle

In November Berni Brady was invited to present as part of a panel to Members of the Stormont Assembly on perspectives on Lifelong Learning. Other members of the panel included experts from England, Scotland and Wales. The event was organised by the Open University.

Nordic Conference Iceland

In June 2014 Berni Brady was invited by the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) to present at its conference, *Nordic Bridges for Lifelong Learning* in Iceland. The title of the presentation was *Bridging the gap between policy and practice: An Irish Perspective*. Attendance at the conference included study visits to adult learning centres and an interview for the NVL newsletter.



Section 3

Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2014

Company Information

Directors

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
— *President*

Mr. Liam Kilbride
— *Vice-President*

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham
— *Hon. Secretary*

Mr. Colm Kilgallon
— *Treasurer*

Mr. Brendan Curtis

Ms. Marie Gorman
(term completed May 2014)

Ms. Mary Farrell

Ms Tara Farrell

Mr. Noel Fitzgerald
(term completed May 2014)

Ms. Crona Gallagher

Ms. Lorraine Hennessy

Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh

Mr. Michael Kenny

Mr. James Prior

Ms. Maire Ui Eanaigh
(resigned Sept 2014)

Ms. Alice Emma Bennett
(elected May 2014)

Secretary

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham

Auditors

Anne Brady McQuillans DFK
Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors
Iveagh Court
Harcourt Road
Dublin 2

Business Address

83–87 Main Street
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Solicitors

P.J. Walsh & Company Solicitors
12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street
Dublin 2

Registered Office

83–87 Main Street
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Directors' Report for the year ended 31st December 2014

The directors present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2014.

Principal Activities, Business Review and Future Developments

The principal activity of the company is to ensure that every adult in Ireland has access to appropriate and affordable learning opportunities throughout their lives, thus enabling them to contribute to and participate in the economic, social and cultural development of Irish society.

The company is limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

The directors expect that the present level of activity will be sustained for the foreseeable future.

Results

The surplus/(deficit) for the year after providing for depreciation and taxation amounted to €95,490 (2013 - €(50,488)).

Going Concern

The company is dependent on income provided from government funders, membership and donations. As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic restraints. The directors have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the directors consider it

appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Executive Committee constitutes the Board of Directors of the company under the terms of Article 28 of the Articles of Association of the company:

Ms. Elizabeth Waters
— *President*

Mr. Liam Kilbride
— *Vice-President*

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham
— *Hon. Secretary*

Mr. Colm Kilgallon
— *Treasurer*

Mr. Brendan Curtis

Ms. Crona Gallagher

Mr. James Prior

Ms. Lorraine Hennessy

Ms. Maire Ui Eanaigh
(Resigned Sept 2014)

Ms. Mary Farrell

Ms. Mary Hilda Cavanagh

Mr. Michael Kenny

Ms. Alice Emma Bennett

Ms. Tara Farrell

There were no changes in members between 31st December 2014 and the date of signing the financial statements.

Books of Account

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 202, Companies Act, 1990, regarding proper books of account are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The books of account of the company are maintained at the business address.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The directors have assessed the risks and have taken measures to manage these risks in AONTAS as follows:

MARKET RISK

In common with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic conditions. The directors are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

FRAUD RISK

This risk is mitigated by maintaining segregation of duties for receipt of funds and the payment of creditors. The directors have put processes and controls in place to ensure that detailed checking is carried out at all stages to ensure the accuracy and validity of all transactions.

Payment of Creditors

The company acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the EC (Late Payment) Regulation 2002. It is the company's policy to agree payment terms with all suppliers and to adhere to those payment terms.

Research and Development

The company did not engage in any research and development activity during the year.

Auditors

The auditors, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK, have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 160(2) of the Companies Act, 1963.

Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986

The reporting requirements of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986 relating to Financial Statements do not apply as AONTAS is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

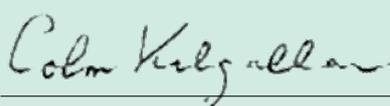
Events after the Balance Sheet date

There have been no circumstances or events subsequent to the year end, which require adjustment to or disclosure in the financial statements or in the notes thereto.

On behalf of the Board



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer

Date:

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities for the year ended 31st December 2014

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish Law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements giving a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and the surplus or deficit of the company for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Irish Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and Irish law).

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

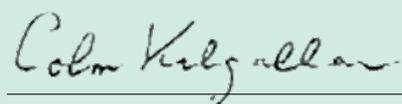
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper books of account that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2013. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer

Date:

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31st December 2014 which comprises the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 193 of the Companies Act 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practice Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors including 'APB Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Small Entities (Revised)', in the circumstances set out in Note 16 to the financial statements.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the directors; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31st December 2014 and of its net incoming resources and cashflows for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013.

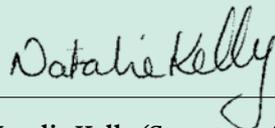
Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 1963 to 2013

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purpose of our audit.
- In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company
- The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account
- In our opinion the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Acts 1963 to 2013 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosure of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.

Section 40(1) of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1983 does not apply as the company is limited by guarantee.



Natalie Kelly (Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of

Anne Brady McQuillans DFK

Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors

Iveagh Court

Harcourt Road

Dublin 2

Date:

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2014

| | | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|-------|----------------|----------------|
| | Notes | € | € |
| INCOME | | | |
| Restricted and unrestricted funds | 3 | 1,054,831 | 991,176 |
| RESOURCES EXPENDED | | | |
| Administration | | | |
| Salary costs | | 212,883 | 184,135 |
| Pension scheme | | 46,529 | 27,301 |
| Staff training and expenses | | 4,129 | 10,853 |
| Sundry staff costs | | 3,306 | 3,795 |
| Postage and courier services | | 12,152 | 17,744 |
| Stationery | | 5,867 | 7,328 |
| Telephone | | 6,263 | 5,867 |
| Travel and subsistence | | 3,294 | 4,214 |
| Executive and general committee expenses | | 8,465 | 7,490 |
| Legal fees | | 67 | 2,550 |
| Audit and accountancy fees | | 6,860 | 6,851 |
| Bank interest and charges | | 630 | 725 |
| Representation and affiliation | | 10,593 | 20,188 |
| Miscellaneous | | 197 | 353 |
| Rent of venues and equipment | | 1,867 | 1,105 |
| Research and projects apportionments | | (48,688) | (36,999) |
| | | 274,414 | 263,500 |

| | | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Notes | € | € |
| Premises | | | |
| Light and heat | | 3,593 | 3,761 |
| Rent and rates | | 52,515 | 60,760 |
| Repairs and maintenance | | 15,627 | 16,951 |
| Leasing charges | | 5,046 | 4,785 |
| Insurance | | 6,617 | 6,515 |
| Cleaning | | 3,258 | 3,318 |
| Depreciation of computers and office equipment | | 5,396 | 5,397 |
| | | 92,052 | 101,487 |
| Development | | | |
| Salary costs | | 328,965 | 340,867 |
| Pension scheme | | 26,270 | 48,534 |
| Accommodation and subsistence | | 6,247 | 5,308 |
| Printing and publications | | 29,529 | 34,118 |
| Conferences / seminars / membership meetings | | 8,678 | 16,692 |
| Public relations strategy | | 197 | 3,438 |
| Adult Learners Festival | | 96,937 | 118,916 |
| Information resources | | 1,216 | 4,481 |
| Organisational development | | - | 3,293 |
| Recruitment | | 130 | 180 |
| Childcare | | - | 50 |
| | | 498,169 | 575,877 |
| Research and Projects | | | |
| Research | | 8,905 | 10,444 |
| EALL - One Step Up | | 70,060 | 52,341 |
| Vita Project | | - | 34,537 |
| EAAL (Phase 2) | | 13,211 | - |
| Leargas - Erasmus | | 2,530 | - |
| Wheel Training Links | | - | 3,478 |
| | | 94,706 | 100,800 |

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2014

| | | Restricted Funds | Unrestricted Funds | Total | Total |
|---|-------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | | 2014 | 2014 | 2014 | 2013 |
| | Notes | | € | | € |
| Incoming Resources | | | | | |
| Incoming resources from restricted activities | 3 | 98,433 | - | 98,433 | 84,123 |
| Incoming resources from unrestricted activities | 3 | - | 956,398 | 956,398 | 907,049 |
| Total Incoming Resources | | 98,433 | 956,398 | 1,054,831 | 991,172 |
| Resources Expended | | | | | |
| Total resources expended | | (98,433) | (860,908) | (959,341) | (1,041,664) |
| Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | | - | 95,490 | 95,490 | (50,492) |
| Interest receivable and similar income | | - | - | - | 4 |
| Net Surplus resources for year | | - | 95,490 | 95,490 | (50,488) |

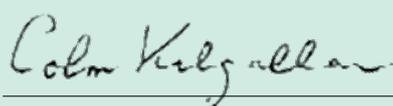
The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 55–61 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2014

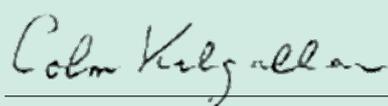
| | Notes | 2014 | | 2013 | |
|---|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | € | € | € | € |
| Fixed Assets | | | | | |
| Tangible Assets | 8 | | 10,945 | | 16,341 |
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | 9 | 30,281 | | 15,609 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 257,433 | | 90,451 | |
| | | 287,714 | | 106,060 | |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year | 10 | (138,382) | | (53,748) | |
| Net Current Assets | | | 149,332 | | 52,312 |
| Total Assets Less Current Liabilities | | | 160,277 | | 68,653 |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year | 11 | | (15,628) | | (19,494) |
| Net Assets | | | 144,649 | | 49,159 |
| Funds | | | | | |
| Unrestricted Funds | 12 & 15 | | 144,649 | | 49,159 |
| Total Funds | | | 144,649 | | 49,159 |

The notes on pages 55–61 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st December 2014

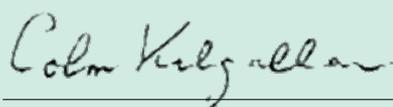
| | | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|-------|----------------|---------------|
| | Notes | € | € |
| Reconciliation of surplus/(deficit) to net cash inflow from operating activities | | | |
| Net incoming/(outgoing) (before interest) | | 95,490 | (50,492) |
| Depreciation | | 5,396 | 5,397 |
| (Increase) / decrease in debtors | | (14,672) | 7,713 |
| Increase in creditors | | 84,634 | 44,583 |
| Government grant released | | (3,866) | (4,640) |
| Net cash inflow from operating activities | | 166,982 | 2,561 |
| Cash Flow Statement | | | |
| Net cash inflow from operating activities | | 166,982 | 2,561 |
| Returns on investments and servicing of finance | 13 | - | 4 |
| Capital expenditure | 13 | - | (4,379) |
| Increase/(Decrease) in cash in the year | | 166,982 | (1,814) |
| Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds (Note 14) | | | |
| Increase/(Decrease) in cash in the year | | 166,982 | (1,814) |
| Net funds at 1st January 2014 | 14 | 90,451 | 92,265 |
| Net Funds at 31st December 2014 | | 257,433 | 90,451 |

The notes on pages 55–61 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2014

1 Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

1.1 Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and with reference to the recommendations of the revised Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued by the Charity Commissioners in 2005.

1.2 Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are initially recorded at historic cost.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less residual value, of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Fixtures, Fittings and equipment | — | 20% Straight Line |
| Computer equipment | — | 20% Straight Line |
| Office equipment | — | 20% Straight Line |

1.3 Leasing Commitments

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

1.4 Income Resources

Grant income receivable from the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS and grant income receivable from TUI, Teagasc, VITA, ASTI, Leargas - Erasmus and sponsorship income are treated as being restricted as the incomes are applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

Voluntary income including donations, gifts and legacies and grants from the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS that provide core funding or are of general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

1.5 Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements and performance related grants are recognised as goods or services are supplied. Other grant payments are recognised when a constructive obligation arises that result in the payment being unavoidable.

- Costs of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.
- Charitable activities include expenditure associated with the educational programmes include both the direct costs and support costs relating to this activity.

1.6 Pensions

AONTAS operates a defined contribution scheme and pension benefits are funded over the employees' period of service by way of contributions from the company and employees. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

1.7 Designated Reserves

The directors have resolved to build up a designated reserve amounting to three months expenditure. Where such funds are no longer required for the intended purpose, they will be released to the General Reserve.

2 Going Concern

The company is dependent on income provided from government funders, membership and donations. As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic restraints. The directors have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

| 3 Sources of Income | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Restricted Funds | | |
| Department of Education & Skills Grants | 3,866 | 4,640 |
| Department of Education & Skills/EALL - One Step Up | 61,163 | 52,341 |
| Department of Education & Skills/EAAL Phase 2 | 13,211 | - |
| Vita Project | 12,335 | 13,875 |
| Teagasc Festival Sponsorship | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| TUI Festival Sponsorship | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| ASTI Festival Sponsorship | 500 | 500 |
| ETBI Festival Sponsorship | - | 1,600 |
| The Wheel Training Links Grant | - | 4,000 |
| Leargas - Erasmus | 2,530 | - |
| Brussels Festival Sponsorship | - | 2,200 |
| Infonet Expenses Reimbursed | - | 1,428 |
| Vita Expenses | - | 1,539 |
| Travel Expenses Reimbursed | 2,828 | - |
| | 98,433 | 84,123 |
| Unrestricted Funds | | |
| Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS: Grant in Aid (Core Funding) | 933,900 | 885,000 |
| Members' subscriptions | 21,966 | 21,938 |
| Bank interest received | - | 4 |
| Miscellaneous | 532 | 111 |
| | 956,398 | 907,053 |
| Total Income | 1,054,831 | 991,176 |

| 4 Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources for the year | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources for the year is stated after charging: | | |
| Depreciation of tangible assets | 5,396 | 5,397 |
| Operating lease rentals | | |
| — Office equipment | 5,046 | 4,785 |
| Auditors' remuneration | 6,860 | 6,851 |
| 5 Employees | | |
| Number of employees | | |
| The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were: | 10 | 11 |
| Employment costs | | |
| Wages and salaries | 541,848 | 525,002 |
| Other pension costs | 72,799 | 75,835 |
| | 614,647 | 600,837 |

6 Pension Costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are made by both the employee and the employer. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by AONTAS to the fund and amount to €72,799 (2013: €75,835).

7 Taxation

No charge to current or deferred taxation arises as the company has been granted exemption by the Revenue authorities in Ireland.

| 8 Tangible Assets | Computer Equipment | Office Equipment | Fixtures, fittings and Equipment | Totals |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| | € | € | € | € |
| Cost | | | | |
| At 1st January 2014 | 66,449 | 11,713 | 50,026 | 128,188 |
| Additions | - | - | - | - |
| At 31st December 2014 | 66,449 | 11,713 | 50,026 | 128,188 |
| Depreciation | | | | |
| At 1st January 2014 | 50,587 | 11,640 | 49,620 | 111,847 |
| Charge for the year | 5,222 | 73 | 101 | 5,396 |
| At 31st December 2014 | 55,809 | 11,713 | 49,721 | 117,243 |
| Net book value | | | | |
| At 31st December 2014 | 10,640 | - | 305 | 10,945 |
| At 31st December 2013 | 15,862 | 73 | 406 | 16,341 |
| 9 Debtors | | | 2014 | 2013 |
| | | | € | € |
| Other debtors | | | 23,869 | 5,673 |
| Other taxes and social security costs | | | 517 | 1,308 |
| Prepayments | | | 5,895 | 8,628 |
| | | | 30,281 | 15,609 |
| Included in other debtors is the following: | | | | |
| Membership fees | | | 7,115 | 4,193 |
| Wages and Salaries | | | - | 1,480 |
| Balance due from EALL project | | | 16,754 | - |
| | | | 23,869 | 5,673 |
| Included in other taxes and social security costs above are the following: | | | | |
| PAYE/PRSI | | | 517 | 1,308 |
| 10 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year | | | | |
| Trade creditors | | | 3,360 | 1,839 |
| Deferred income | | | 119,039 | 44,409 |
| Accruals | | | 15,983 | 7,500 |
| | | | 138,382 | 53,748 |

Included in deferred income is restricted funding received from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in relation to project EAAL (Phase 2). Also recorded here is funding received from Leargas Erasmus. The total funding received for these projects were not fully expended in 2014 and are therefore deferred to 2015. This amounts to €67,939 (2013: 44,409).

During the year AONTAS applied for additional funding from Solas. An additional €100,000 was received on 19th December 2014. €51,100 was deferred to 2015 to be utilised for general purposes.

| 11 Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Government Grants | € | € |
| At 31 December 2013 | 19,494 | - |
| Increase in year | - | 24,134 |
| Released in year | (3,866) | (4,640) |
| At 31 December 2014 | 15,628 | 19,494 |

| 12 Reconciliation of Movements in Funds | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Fund balance at beginning of year | 49,159 | 99,647 |
| Net movement in funds | 95,490 | (50,488) |
| Fund balance at end of year | 144,649 | 49,159 |

| 13 Gross Cash Flows | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| Returns on investments and servicing of finance | | |
| Interest received | - | 4 |
| Capital expenditure | | |
| Payments to acquire tangible assets | - | (4,379) |
| Receipt of grant | - | 24,134 |
| | - | 19,755 |

| 14 Analysis of Changes in Net Funds | Opening balance | Cash flows | Closing balance |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | € | € | € |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 90,451 | 166,982 | 257,433 |
| Net Funds | 90,451 | 166,982 | 257,433 |

| 15 Reserves | Balance at beginning of year | Incoming Resources | Resources expended | Transfer to designated reserve | Balance at end of year |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| | € | € | € | € | € |
| Specific Funds: | | | | | |
| Restricted grants | - | 98,433 | (98,433) | - | - |
| Unrestricted grants | 49,159 | 956,398 | (860,908) | (20,000) | 124,649 |
| Designated reserve | - | - | - | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| | 49,159 | 1,054,831 | 959,341 | - | 144,649 |

At the year end the directors resolved to transfer €20,000 to a designated reserve. They have resolved to build up a reserve to cover the costs of any unexpected events which may arise.

16 Non-Audit Services Provided by Auditors

In common with many other businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit the financial statements.

17 Status

The liability of the members is limited.

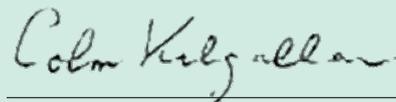
Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members or within one year thereafter for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding €6.35.

18 Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon
Hon. Treasurer







