

2020 – 2023 Strategic Management Plan



The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Background	3
Management & Governance	6
About	7
Mission & Vision	9
The plan	
Outline of Action Plan (Our Aims)	11
Key Actions for 2020-2023	13
Conclusion	16



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this strategic plan is to give a focus and direction to the main aims and objectives of The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland for the next three years.

Within is outlined the background or baseline data for the plan. For example, the brief history of DSWAI to date and any significant points its management and governance.

From the implementation of the strategic plan clarity of purpose can be given to the public, membership and management alike which may otherwise not be present.



BACKGROUND



The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland (or DSWAI) is a membership based NGO organisation.

It was first established in 2009 out of a desire to support the continuance of the practice and techniques of building *dry stone* AND the preservation of the rich and unique dry stone built, heritage structures, in Ireland. Out of 26 European countries surveyed (*Field Boundaries of Europe*, Mueller, 2012) Ireland features top for kilometres of walls, dry stone walls and stone earthen banks. There are over 600,000km of same here; 5000 of those on the Aran Islands alone. And that is just the walls, banks and ditches. There are countless other dry stone structures across the entire island dating back to Neolithic times. The practice of building dry stone has been part of Irish culture for a very long time.

There is an immediate and essential need for the preservation of both the craft and the products of it as it is an important intangible cultural activity which forms part of Irish identity. In turn, it is essential that the activity be kept alive in the general population if our built heritage is to be maintained by ourselves.

Since its foundation DSWAI has been involved with a number of public projects, supported many community groups and village enhancement programs around the country. DSWAI members have delivered regular training to members of the public, farmers and university students. The association regularly demonstrates to the public, produces booklets and disseminates information and news on dry stone building to its members and the public.

The board is made up of the members with diverse backgrounds. Membership of DSWAI is open to the general public and members range from professional dry stone wallers and stone masons to artists, architects, farmers and engineers.

The association membership has demonstrated the craft at many events throughout the past 10 years with the aim to raise awareness of the need to support the craft and also the environmental benefits of dry stone as a building technique in the 21st century. Dry stone is more valid than it has ever been as a ‘green’ method of building.



DSWAI now has in excess of 100 members spread throughout the entire country and from abroad. Membership is growing steadily as is the momentum of the organisation. In light of this a new and evolving organisational and management structure is required to make the association both appropriate and viable into the future.

Some significant achievements of DSWAI to date have been:

- Construction of The Gathering of Stones monument (2013-2016)
- Developing links with similar organisations nationally and internationally
- Supporting the establishment and continued development of a number of stonecraft festivals throughout the country (2014-present)
- Gaining recognition of Dry Stone Building as an activity of Ireland's Intangible Cultural Heritage (2018-2019)



MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

DSWAI has been registered as a non-profit company since 2017. Management of the association is carried out by a Board of Directors (presently 8 in total) supported by non-board members. There are currently no part or fulltime staff employed by the association and all work done on behalf of management and administration is done so on a voluntary basis. Communication with membership is via mailing lists, members meetings a newsletter and at various workshops and events throughout the year.

The board meet approximately 4 times a year and an AGM is held within every 18 months period.

DSWAI is presently subscribed to the Governance Code and has developed policies and protocols in order to comply with regulatory policies as a charitable organisation.



CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
<p>Christian Helling Ken Curran Michael Fernhead Rory Dennison Michael O'Shea Rónán Crehan John Lyness Karl Kennedy</p>

MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT	
<p>Sunny Wieler Ken Curran Michael Fernhead Rory Dennison Michael O'Shea Rónán Crehan John Lyness Karl Kennedy Michael Fearnhead</p>	<p>Media Manager & Newsletter editor Director Training Events, Health & Safety Membership Officer Training Research Treasurer Training</p>

COMPANY SECRETARY	
Accountants Online	7-9 Marino Mart, Fairview, Clontarf, Dublin 2

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



The Board of Directors support fully the 2020 to 2023 Strategic Plan and are delighted to have a document that sets out clearly the main focus of our organisation for the next three years. Now that DSWAI is over 10 years old it is clearly here to stay and has become a recognised body with passionate and committed members and a voice to the public for promotion of the craft and preservation of dry stone construction in Ireland. Much great work has been done by the many members of DSWAI since 2009 and massive credit goes to *all* of the membership for each and every way DSWAI has been perpetuated and grown.

We sincerely hope that this strategic plan will form the basis from which DSWAI can continue to grow and further its mission in the decade ahead.

Fond regards,

Ken, Karl, Michael O, Michael F, John and Ronan



MISSION AND VISION

Mission

The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland seeks to promote the art, craft and science of dry stone building in Ireland.

Our mission states:

- Promote an awareness of dry stone construction in Ireland
- To enhance knowledge in a wider audience of the of the key place that these dry stone structures have in our heritage
- To run a series of lectures and workshops throughout the year
- Encourage and assist in the conservation and resurgence of the craft

Vision

Promote the craft of dry stone in Ireland

Create a sustainable, collaborative & participatory association

Develop & promote opportunities for the dry stone waller in Ireland.

Define the potential future direction of the preservation of dry stone walling in Ireland.

Provide opportunities for the public to engage with and learn about Ireland’s dry stone heritage.

ABOUT

The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland is an all-island group for the promotion of the craft of dry stone walling in Ireland. It was established in 2009 and became a CLG (The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland Ltd) in 2017. The Association is administered by a Board of Directors and has members drawn from the craft of dry stone and stone masonry, heritage, education and many other interested members of the public. In 2019 the Association will seek charitable status and sign up to the Governance Code.

The Drystone Wall Association of Ireland is a limited company (Company Reg. No. 603066).



OUR AIMS



For 2020 to 2023: Preservation, Education & Exhibition

OUR AIMS FOR 2020 to 2023

Ireland's dry stone cultural and built heritage are elements of the country's national and international identity. Dry stone structures are everywhere. Once you scratch the surface, go beyond the main thoroughfare out into the fields, up into the hills the tapestry of dry stone built objects emerges from the earth like a signature of the Culture as a whole, ancient and of their place. The material, stone, resonates strongly as an object we have physically connected with since as far as memory and wisdom can remember.

Stone has a permanence and a living quality that when it is taken by people and moved together to form structures it takes on a greater meaning for us. The oldest, greenest and most enigmatic form of

assembling stone is ‘dry stone’. Simply it and human endeavour. Nothing else. It is this simplicity and comfort we sense from having dry stone structures in our environment that enriches how we see ourselves as Irish people in the 21st century.

In adopting the overall aims: Preservation, Education & Exhibition the role of the DSWAI for the next three years will be to lead projects and collaborations that focus on preservation of our dry stone, built environment, educating people in value and practice of dry stone building and exhibition of these things. Additionally, we will aim to collaborate and work more closely and supportively with other groups and organisations whose goals and activities overlap or are similar to our own

To achieve our aims over the next three years the DSWAI will work on 6 main aims or areas to complete 11 key tasks. They are outlined in a table on the following pages.



OUR AIMS 2020-2023

AREA/AIM	TASK
<p>Governance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To complete the application for charitable status. 2. To develop and enhance the mission in line with good governance and charitable status. 3. To update and develop the Constitution in line with requirements for good governance and charitable status. 4. To review the current management structures and potentially develop committees to more efficiently manage individual strands of the company mission and enact the aims and objectives. 5. To review and develop our current financial arrangements and ensure the best system for the efficient and effective management of the Association.

AREA/AIM	TASK
Education	6. To review the potential for the organisation to develop outreach, educational and training activities to meet the demands of its diverse membership.
Membership	<p>7. To review and enhance our communication with our membership.</p> <p>8. To examine ways in which we might increase membership and develop a better understanding of our current membership.</p>
Promotion	9. To determine methods which provide the best use of voluntary time given to the promotion of the DSWAI.
Preservation	10. To further the inclusion of Ireland's dry stone heritage into the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage listing and to define new ways of promoting Irelands dry stone walling

AREA/AIM	TASK
Exhibition	11. To continue to demonstrate in a public context the craft of dry stone building at events throughout the calendar year. Allowing more members to demonstrate their skills to the general public in this context.



ONGOING EVALUATION



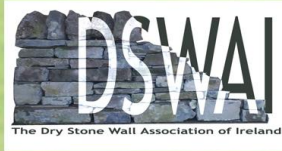
The strategic plan will be assessed regularly over the two years from 2020 to 2022 and if any alterations needed will be made to adapt to any new or emerging opportunities that may arise for the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland.

By regular evaluation and assessment, we will

- Assess progress.
- Recognise issues with planning and or progress.
- Make changes that are needed to stay effective.

Working groups will be formed to focus on each of the main tasks. The groups will devise plans to progress the tasks and monitor progress whilst adding '*key targets*' to be met in order to maintain momentum. The *key targets* will be reported on annually and disseminated for transparency. Every 3 years an external review will be done to assess the validity of the plan itself.





The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland

Promoting an awareness of the craft of dry stone building in Ireland



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