

The Directors' (Annual) Report for DSWAI, 2020.

1. Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland

2. A Company Limited by Guarantee

3. Contact Addresses

Company Secretary Accountants Online, 71 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin D02 P593

A DSWAI Director Kenneth Curran, Templemore Road, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipp

4. The Company Objects

The Preservation, Education and Exhibition of the distinctive art, craft and science of Dry Stone Building as part of the culture and heritage of Ireland.

5. The Directors of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Ireland, 2020.

Kenneth Curran
Michael Fearnhead
Ronan Crehan
John Lyness (Research & Minutes Secretary)
Karl Kennedy (Treasurer)

6. Report of Company Activities, 2020.

The Directors' Annual Report, 2020, is presented below. The prescribed financial reports are given in accompanying documents.

2020 has seen further expansion in the area of developing governance and policy of the DSWAI in the satisfaction of the company Objects of the Preservation, Education and Exhibition of the distinctive Dry Stone Walling craft and heritage of Ireland.

All our activities are organised and supervised by volunteers who are Members and Directors of the DSWAI. A considerable amount of voluntary time and effort, freely given, by our Members and Directors provides our Calendar of Events, our website and our interactions with other organisations in Ireland and beyond.

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In the near future, it is hoped that full Irish charitable status will be obtained following a programmed pathway of development by the DSWAI in preparation for charitable registration.

The following sections of the Report give more details and information on DSWAI activities and achievements in 2019.

7. Governance - Board Meetings, 2020.

1.	25/01/20	Limerick	JL, KC, KK, & MF	Minutes available = YES
2.	05/03/20	Athlone	JL, KC, KK, MF & RC	Minutes available = YES
3.	21/04/20	Online app	JL, KC, KK, MF & RC	Minutes available = YES
4.	10/05/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
5.	24/05/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
6.	07/06/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
7.	25/06/20	Online app	JL, KC & MF (last 10 mins)	INQUORATE
8.	09/07/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
9.	22/07/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
10.	07/08/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
11.	23/08/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available - YES
12.	03/09/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
13.	17/09/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
14.	08/10/20	Online app	KC & MF	INQUORATE
15.	22/10/20	Online app	JL & RC	INQUORATE
16.	07/11/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES
17.	19/11/20	Online app	ALL PRESENT	Minutes available = YES

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In 2020 17 Board Meetings were held. 15 of the 17 were online due to the pandemic restrictions. Two were inquorate

The AGM is to be held on the 5th December, via online conferencing application GoToMeet.

During the year there were also several other informal video conferencing meetings of the Directors to discuss ongoing and evolving circumstances with regard to the global pandemic and DSWAI public activities, to develop communications with the membership and arrange and advance research topics, to progress the Strategic Management Plan 2020-2023 and to further the application to the Regulator for charitable status.

8. Membership and Communications

The current Membership Subscription to the DSWAI is **€25 Euros** per year. In 2020 the number of Subscription Members was 124 (17/11/2020)

The principal means of communication with subscription members are:

- DSWAI forum
- Email shots
- Newsletter (quarterly)
- Social Media channels (Facebook & Instagram)
- DSWAI Website and News section

The website gives the Calendar of DSWAI Events including the Summer DSWAI Festivals.

It also gives contact and membership details and email addresses for the DSWAI.

Technical and regional information on Irish Dry Stone Walling is provided on the website using photographs, book lists and addresses of sister organisations.

DSWAI merchandise is available for purchase online.

The company constitution, code of conduct for members, conflict of interest policy, mission statement and SMP 2020-2023 are all available to download from the website and forum

In addition to the website Directors also answer enquiries from members and the public via DSWAI and personal email, phone and text and normally at workshop events or follow up enquiries.

9. Public Benefit

Classed by Object = Education, Exhibition, Governance, Membership, Preservation & Promotion

Education- RESEARCH

The area of research has been advanced significantly in 2020 by DSWAI Director John Lyness. John has been investigating a whole host of areas, publishing articles in the newsletter and for the board of management. John also provided a model miniature dry stone wall crash test for the miniature walling festival. A report from John on two of current research topics is given in the appendix below.

Education -WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

During the year all workshops were suspended, including those for the farming wall skills development, those at events and those for members and others. As such, the opportunity to learn the basic techniques of dry stone walling in a hands-on way was not possible for DSWAI to advance in 2020.

The Spring/Summer (and eventually the rescheduled Autumn/Winter series of) NOTS Farm Wall Workshops were rolled over into 2021. The workshops supported by DSWAI at the stone festivals were cancelled. A proposed collaboration with the SPAB in Kilsheelin, Tipperary was rolled over to Spring 2021.

The cancellation of our group outdoor activities during 2020 was a source of much disappointment to the DSWAI management and subscription members alike. It is one of the main ways that DSWAI promotes the craft and supports its continuance. It was also a source of fundraising through sales of merchandise and fees.

The Board did take the time to engage in a review of how workshops are run and ways that they could be adapted to cope with the environment of the global pandemic. For safety and quality reasons face to face workshops are currently 'on-hold'. The DSWAI board is confident that when public activities resume the time spent developing teaching content, protocols and models will see the teaching and demonstrating delivered by DSWAI members improve to become even better and more relevant for the members and the public.

Workshop participants work in small groups supervised and instructed by experienced dry stone wallers. At the outset, participants are checked for the appropriate PPE and a "toolbox talk" is given to each group. This will continue to be assessed on an ongoing basis and a menu of workshop and training models will evolve as DSWAI engages with more groups and categories of learners, locally and internationally.

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There is a demand for training in dry stone walling by farmers who wish to maintain walls or further develop their skills.

Farm wall workshops are planned for locations in ALL four provinces in 2021.

DSWAI member and tutor Fergus Packman was involved in a great initiative in Connemara during summer 2020. In collaboration with the Forum Connemara Ability Project, Fergus has delivered one-on-one tuition to two young people from the Moylough and Oughterard areas in the basics of dry stone walling. The DSWAI were delighted to be able to support Fergus and Ability Connemara in this initiative by supplying certificates and gift packs to the students on completion of Fergus's course and raising awareness of the project locally through radio interviews and social media. Subsequent to the 5 day training program (designed by Fergus Packman), the students have moved on to work experience and other projects with the use of mortar. DSWAI board of management are very excited about this project and the initiative taken by Fergus and Forum Connemara and are very happy to offer any ongoing support and input to future training initiatives in the area.

Education/Exhibition/Promotion – COLLABORATION with THE SPAB

For the past number of years SPAB Ireland has sought to bring together academic, professional and craft groups who have interests in the conservation of heritage structures and the integrity of the appropriate materials and crafts into a Building Heritage Network. A group of representatives from various organisations including DSWAI met earlier in the year and shared news, plans and ideas about their organisation in the hope of supporting and co-ordinating their activities more. It has been agreed to continue to meet on an annual basis and to aim together to support each other's' attempts at the furtherance of the promotion of the traditional crafts in an informal but collaborative way as a network. DSWAI are fully supportive of this initiative and congratulate the SPAB management committee on this initiative. We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate on the postponed Annual SPAB Working Party 2020, hopefully Spring 2021.

Education/Promotion/Preservation/Exhibition - EVENTS

Due to the impossibility of holding public, close contact events in 2020 the DSWAI team have tried to find new ways to promote and preserve the craft.

One was the delivery of a 'miniature dry stone walling and drawing festival' as a part of the Feile na gCloch ONLINE 2020. Over a week in September DSWAI released video and stills content as well as instructional information for the event. Reaction was very positive and engagement and participation associated with the initiative gave rise to a lot of visual content which helped to promote and educate about the craft, and the beauty of dry stone.

Participation was by DSWAI subscription members, the public and artists from Ireland and many other places internationally. As far as Austria, Australia, Canada, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and USA. Participants were rewarded for their contributions with prizes for the types,

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quality and aesthetic appeal of their miniature walls and their art. DSWAI management were very pleased with the outcome and result of this project and the goodwill generated by it.

The Board of management are particularly thankful to DSWAI Media Manager Sunny Wieler, whose voluntary work on this event was exemplary.

In addition to staging an online miniature dry stone walling and drawing festival, DSWAI also held a sketching event for national drawing day. This event also met with much positive response and contributions. Entries were posted in a collage via DSWAI social media and website.

Governance -SMP 2020-2023

Subsequent to the launch of the DSWAI SMP 2020-2023 at the AGM 2019, the management have begun to initiate many of the actions, under the area and/ or aim designated to it. The six main aims of Governance, Education, Membership, Promotion, Preservation and Exhibition have lead to eleven key actions, which are underway and progress is being made in many.

The SMP will be reviewed regularly and any new actions will be added, or existing ones amended as they unfold. It is available in pdf format to download from the about section of the DSWAI website.

Governance- CHARITABLE STATUS

An application to be considered for charitable status is currently with the Charities Regulator. DSWAI have been appointed a case officer.

Membership- BURSARY

The concept of a bursary for those wishing to travel abroad to improve their skills in relation to dry stone walling or carry out research in the area has been advanced in 2020 after a proposal to develop one in 2019. Originally, it was hoped to announce and launch the bursary in Summer 2020 but this was revised and eventually rolled over to 2021 given the global pandemic travel restrictions. This will allow more time for design of eligibility and selection criteria and sourcing of funding/sponsorship.

Membership – NEWSLETTER

In 2020 four editions of the newsletter were produced. Contributions from members were well received and the quality of the articles was high. The series of interviews by DSWAI member Jim Fahy with stonemasons and those of the 'stone community' in Ireland and abroad continue to be transcribed from audio by member volunteer Sinead Fagan. Sinead has spent many hours converting Jims's valuable records of people's lives connected to stone into text format and so reinforcing the preservation of that archive. Sinead has also been supporting newsletter

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editor Sunny Wieler in proofreading and reviewing them prior to publication. A new format and cycle for the newsletter and a number of other DSWAI publications are planned for 2021.

Preservation - INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

During 2019 the promotion and recognition of the distinctive importance of Dry Stone Walling to the Irish landscape was greatly assisted by its acceptance as an Intangible Item of Irish Heritage by The Department of Culture, Heritage and The Gaeltacht and its addition to Ireland's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As part of the DSWAI SMP 2020-2023, a task arising from the area of Preservation is to further the inclusion of Ireland's dry stone heritage to UNESCO and the inscription already accepted and adopted from 8 European countries (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Switzerland). During 2021/2022 DSWAI plan to submit an application to UNESCO to join the 8 countries already listed. This will involve the collaboration, approval and guidance from representatives from the countries listed (particularly the lead country Greece) the DoCH&G and support from the members and related groups and individuals in Ireland and internationally.

This recognition goes beyond the physical wall construction and embraces the union of the people, the culture, the working year, the environment, pastoral agriculture and the sustainable use of a local resource that has created this landscape with these distinctive features in Ireland over centuries.

As part of Heritage Week 2020 (and to promote the ICH of Dry Stone Building in Ireland) DSWAI made a short film about the Forum Connemara Ability training featuring Fergus Packman and his students. It was released for heritage week and featured on the Heritage Council website. This initiative was funded by the Department of Heritage, Culture & The Gaeltacht.

As part of celebrating the ICH of dry stone in Ireland and in the hope of connecting more with those around Europe and the world who work to promote the ICH of dry stone DSWAI are planning a conference to be held in Ireland in 2021. This project is in the early stages of planning but so far proposals and the concept has met with much positivity and support from various agencies and authorities locally and nationally.

Preservation/Education - ERASMUS II 2020-2022

As a member of the ERASMUS II 2020-2022 Project in association with REMPART, the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland had planned to send a group of young people between 18 and 35 to France to volunteer on a historic site in the summer of 2020. This has been postponed until Spring 2021. Instead a DSWAI Board member has been attending online meetings and discussions around the 2021 workshops. The possibility of hosting of volunteer

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conservation events in Ireland and inviting international volunteers through the REMPART network. The online meetings have been focused on the concept of developing a collective '*label*' to which organisations could subscribe. This will represent a guarantee of certain criteria or standards around the holding and running of volunteer camps.

Promotion -MERCHANDISE

DSWAI merchandise has grown with the addition of a new postcard series, Dry Stone Structures of Ireland and the addition of a 1000 piece jigsaw and printed tote bags. These new items formed part of the prize packs for the online miniature walling and sketching festival and also can be purchased as a part of membership gift packs. Many thanks again to DSWAI volunteer Sunny Wieler for his work on the designs for these and for managing the online shop.

10. Going Forward

During 2020, some of the Directors have sought to improve the communication at board level and between others involved in the management of the association. Some significant progress has been made in this vital area, which has highlighted even more the need for significantly more focus on communication and engagement internally. Board meeting have moved online but increased to more frequent and regular schedule that has seen directors meet on an almost fortnightly basis since March.

Ken Curran, Director, drew up an Action Plan for future DSWAI activity areas. By matching the activity areas to task groups, it has been possible to propose a task group structure. The Action Plan document was circulated for comment and following some refinement was presented at the AGM as the Strategic Management Plan for 2020-2023.

John Lyness will continue the area of very valuable research he has undertaken to date.

It is hoped that the enactment of the SMP in the forthcoming years will enable and encourage more inclusive participation by Members and facilitate more efficient and effective engagement with the Objects of the DSWAI.

Many things are planned for 2021, including the establishment of more working groups the addition of more volunteers and administrators to the DSWAI team, more publications, collaborations a return to workshops and training and a growth in the value to the public that DSWAI is as a resource for the Education, Promotion and Preservation of the Art, Craft & Science of Dry Stone Building to the people of Ireland and internationally.

APPENDIX

A SHORT NOTE ON DSWAI RESEARCH IN 2020

John Lyness DSWAI

During this year the Board of Directors thought that it would be prudent to undertake research on some topics, two of which are described below.

1. Development of training and competence certification

The maintenance of the craft of Dry Stone Walling in Ireland relies on the training and recruitment of new craftspeople. The move to the cities over the past century has depleted the traditional methods of handing on craft skills. Also, a “blended work” profile makes income flow less precarious for Dry Stone Wallers.

Looking towards the best practice for training and certification I first looked at North America, Australia, England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The principle training and certification model used is that of the UK Dry Stone Walling Association, with one separate craft organisation as an exception in the USA.

The DSWA provides a block training and certification scheme which is not only provided by the DSWA regions but is franchised, under supervision, to several commercial and charitable educational providers such as LANTRA.

Looking over the DSWA craft training, assessment and competence certification it is possible that the DSWAI can make use of some core DSWA craft courses and develop their own DSWAI strategy for particular Irish craft requirements, such as distinctive walling styles, Irish H&S requirements, Irish conservation requirements etc

However, the market for craft training courses in Ireland is smaller than that in the UK and North America, so that the frequency of offering training courses enabling competence certification would be less. I have done some preliminary work on auditing the demand for courses in the North and I hope to continue to do the same in the South next year so that annual cohorts eligible for training at different levels can be estimated. Other craft training models exist in Europe and I hope to complete a similar survey of the provision of craft training and competence assessment in Europe next year.

2. Possible new areas of Dry Stone work

At present there is a consistent level of interest in Dry Stone Workshops delivered by experienced DSWAI craft Members. However today DS Wallers are also asked to work in

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landscaping, heritage conservation, agricultural maintenance and many have accompanying skills in stone carving, horticultural management etc.

One potential area of work that I have identified is in Natural Catchment Management for flood mitigation.

Natural Catchment Management seeks to delay and spread out, over time, flood flows and flood peaks so that the flood water levels are lowered. This is achieved by using instream “control structures” to delay flood run off and by “storing” flood water for slow release. I believe that most of these “control structures” can comprise Dry Stone Walls constructed by experienced Wallers. In upland areas, where gradients are steep, instream DS Walls can be constructed as “leaky bunds” to enable the storage and delay of rain storm runoff. In the flatter downstream areas, low DS Walls can be constructed in riverside fields to form “storage ponds” which slowly release flood flows thus reducing maximum flood flow water levels.

DSWAI Annual Report – Finance –

Treasurer- Karl Kennedy

I have based this report on figures used to form our annual returns. Our financial year runs from April 1st to March 31st. Our latest accounts for year ending 31st March 2020 have been examined and signed off by our accountant, Thomas Greavy and Co.

They will show a total income for the year of €10,017, this is made up from membership subscriptions, farm wall workshops, merchandise sales, insurance/admin fees and small donations.

Our expenditure for the year amounted to €8,755, this includes insurance fees, accountancy fees, workshop expenses, secretarial expenses and other general expenses such as equipment, website, printing etc.

In the past year we have changed the date for renewal of membership subscriptions to March 31st, this will greatly help in reducing the amount of time spent on membership administration.

Our SMP 2020-2023 has 6 main aims, which all require a financial plan to evolve them. We will be looking at each of these aims closely to find ways to generate funds to help achieve our aims within the time frame of our plan.

Some examples are given below:

- 1) We have plans to expand the network of NOTS workshops to more areas of the country. They are also set to become more profitable as tutor numbers are now fixed at 1 tutor to 5/6 trainees maximum. Also, directors will only receive civil service rates for expenses, so reducing running costs.
- 2) We are looking at funding schemes to develop a DSWAI magazine/journal, which will be published twice a year. The magazine will hopefully be a source of income in itself once it has established a circulation.
- 3) A bursary award is being developed and ways to fund it via sponsors and/or other means are being investigated.
- 4) We are expanding our range of DSWAI branded merchandise to increase fundraising opportunities from them.
- 5) As part of the push to further the inclusion of Ireland's dry stone heritage into the UNESCO ICH listing the board and ICH representatives for DSWAI are looking at funding assistance for

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documenting our ICH and holding an international conference to celebrate the ICH of Dry Stone in Ireland inviting representatives from all 8 European countries already represented, ie. Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland.

6) DSWAI management will continue to seek out ways to finance opportunities for members to demonstrate the craft in a public context.

7) Increasing the membership and expanding the categories of membership and the benefits of these will increase DSWAI income and so help support the continuance of the work we do to promote the art, craft and science of dry stone construction.

8) The current board are exploring way to source finance to fund research into areas of dry stone building in both traditional and contemporary contexts.

On the expenditure side we are looking at ways to reduce our costs. One area we are looking closely at is our annual accountancy fees, this is an annual cost of approx.. €1,600 which is a considerable sum taking into account our relatively small turnover. We are hoping that, if and when our charity status is recognized, we will be able to gain some advice as to how we can reduce some of our larger expenses, accountancy, insurance and administration costs.

This year 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year for everybody in the country. We in the Association, along with every other organisation in the country, have had to cancel or postpone pretty much all of our activities. We are really hopeful that from the beginning of 2021 we can resume our workshops and demonstrations. There is a great enthusiasm for ancient crafts in the country and we, in the Association, are continuing to forge links in Ireland and beyond.

I have attached a copy of our latest annual returns for your attention.

Karl Kennedy

Treasurer DSWAI

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DSWAI ACCOUNTS 2020



The Dry Stone Wall
Association 2020 Ac

This Annual Report of The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland has been reviewed and agreed upon by all members of the board of directors as an accurate record of the activities administrative and financial during the year 2020

The Board of Directors of DSWAI are:

John Lyness, Karl Kennedy, Kenneth Curran, Michael Fearnhead and Ronan Crehan

Signed  (Director DSWAI)

Signed _____ (Company Secretary DSWAI)

Date 19/11/2020