



IABS DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2021

Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Directors of the Irish Architects Benevolent Society and covers the work of the Society during 2021. Despite ongoing restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Society continued its work in providing assistance to beneficiaries and raising awareness of the Society and its work. Unfortunately, however, the Society's fundraising activities were curtailed.

Directors / Administration

The company directors for 2021 were Carole Pollard (chair), William Gleeson (treasurer), Joe Kennedy (company secretary), Bryan O'Rourke, Jim Coady, Derek Dockrell, Robin Mandal, and Sean Mahon. The process of Clare Kilty and Anna Donegan becoming directors was initiated during the year. Triona Stack joined the committee in October 2021.

The work of the Society was supported by Bernadette Wall who was employed to prepare the annual accounts. All other assistance is provided on voluntary basis and in that regard, we would like to express our gratitude to the staff of the RIAI who provided support throughout the year: RIAI CEO Kathryn Meghen, Sandra O'Connell, Sonila Papa, Brona King, Karlo Benic, Olive Garde, Sharon Maguire and Finuala Hurley. Throughout 2021, all IABS meetings were conducted online.

Governance

The Society's compliance with the Charity Regulator's Code was managed by Bryan O'Rourke. The IABS Record of Compliance file for 2021 is available for inspection by the Charity Regulator if and when requested. The directors share the responsibility regarding governance while also acknowledging the work of treasurer William Gleeson and company secretary, Joe Kennedy who provide financial and administrative services to ensure the Society meets the requirements of the Charity Regulator and of the Company's Registration Office.

The Society maintains a robust GDPR policy. Our databases and communications systems operate in accordance with relevant guidance and legislation. The privacy of our beneficiaries and the confidential of the work we do remains our highest priority.

Finance

The treasurer will present a full financial report at the AGM.

The company finances weathered the Covid 19 pandemic through alternative fundraising activity such as the Art Auction which was held in November 2020 and through increased subscriptions and donations. Ongoing art sales also provided income.

The consolidated financial statements ending 31st December 2021 indicate an operating surplus for the financial year of €57,428. Grants to beneficiaries were down c.€20,000 on the previous year. The reduction in the level of grant aid is in line with 2020 indications that the Covid-19 pandemic did not have a significantly adverse financial impact on the architectural community primarily because of good Government supports in place.

Beneficiaries

The Society received no new requests for individual assistance in 2021. However, the Society reached out to the broader architectural community through the establishment and roll-out of Mental Health & Wellbeing workshops. The IABS directors were aware of the strain of isolation on many in the architectural community as a result of working from home. This led to the establishment of special IABS-funded online Mental Health & Wellbeing Workshops which were run during the first half of 2021. The Workshops were led by John Broderick of PDI, Cork. Three Workshops were run specifically for architectural students, and two for members of the RIAI. A number of architectural practices also availed of the service.

In the meantime, the Society continued to support existing beneficiaries in the usual manner, albeit many meetings had to be held online rather than in person.

Moral support for those experiencing a crisis is a fundamental part of our work. The support provided is tailored to the need of the beneficiary and can take the form of a once-off payment or can be a long-term financial support plan which is reviewed at regular intervals. Almost all of the Society's current beneficiaries are receiving long-term assistance.

Fundraising

As well as raising funds for the ongoing operation of the Society, fundraising events raise awareness of the work of the Society and have become important dates in the calendar for architects and their practices.

Throughout 2021, restrictions arising from the global Covid-19 pandemic had a considerable impact on our fundraising activities and the Society's annual income from those events. The Benevolent Breakfast, AAI/IABS Tennis Tournament and annual Art Raffle were not held in 2021. The RIAI/ IABS golf outing took place in September 2021 when there was a partial lifting of restrictions. The success of the event in terms of money raised was primarily thanks to the generous support of our main sponsors Kingspan, who have been loyal supporters for many years. We would also like to acknowledge new sponsor, John Paul Construction, and extend our gratitude to all who supported the event, particularly those practices who took tee sponsorship. The outing raised just under €10,000

The traditional Art Raffle at the RIAI Conference was not held because the majority of delegates were attending online. Nonetheless, there was excellent support for the Art Sale that was held at the IABS stand in the conference hall. The art on sale was primarily artwork that had not sold at the online Auction in 2020, along with the fine art print collection held by the Society.

The Society is grateful to the RIAI who allocated two slots in the RIAI conference programme for an IABS Appeal. This was undertaken by the Society's Chair, Carole Pollard. The appeal included

excerpts from testimonials provided by IABS beneficiaries and the response was excellent. There was an immediate increase in online donations. Most notably, however, there was a substantial increase in those ticking the IABS box on their RIAI annual charge renewals for 2022. The number of RIAI members supporting the IABS in this way rose from 17% to 23%. The Society will endeavour to continue to increase this percentage in the future.

IABS Website

Work on the IABS Website got underway during the year, led by Clare Kilty. A sub-committee comprising Clare, Sean Mahon and Jim Coady developed the brief. Three firms were approached for quotations and the contract was awarded to Evolve. The website was up and running in May 2022.

In addition to being an information platform for the work of the Society, it will become a first point of contact for potential beneficiaries. There will be a dedicated email address for those seeking assistance. In addition, the website will facilitate online payment of subscriptions and donations and will generally improve the management of our fundraising activity.

Conclusion

Sincere thanks go to all my fellow IABS directors who are unfailingly cheerful and hard-working and, most of all, kind. The IABS is very much a team effort. All directors serve entirely on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration or expenses. I would also like to thank all you who have attended the AGM both in person and online this year. We are very grateful for your ongoing support.

This AGM is significant because it marks the retirement of Bryan O'Rourke and Jim Coady as directors of the Society. Both Jim and Bryan have left an indelible mark on the IABS, imparting their wisdom and sage advice across every facet of how we operate. The way in which they engage with beneficiaries – with kindness, empathy, and good humour – has become the signature approach of the organisation. We have all witnessed Bryan and Jim go above and beyond in their efforts to ease the difficulties of others, and that inspires all of us to do the same. They are appreciated as much as they will be missed.



Carole Pollard FRIAI

Chair, Irish Architects Benevolent Society

Prepared for the AGM to be held on 13 October 2022.