

AGM 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to all of you, both those here in person and those tuning in online, of which we have quite a number. For the benefit of those online, if you have any questions or comments you can raise your hand and Barbara will let you in at the appropriate time.

My name is **Sean Treanor** from the *Department of Social Protection* and it my honour to present my report as Chairperson of the Committee of Management.

There have been a number of staffing changes in the Society since last year. Karen has now completed her first year as Director, with Declan enjoying retired life! In November of 2022, the Secretary and “*real boss*” of the Society, **Carmel Doyle** also retired after 19 years of service to the PSFS. There were a number of challenging months as we readjusted but we are pleased to introduce 2 new staff members – Linda Sherry who is an EO from DSP and is a new Cases Officer helping to deal with the case load – and Frances Mclvor who is a CO from Revenue and has now taken up the role as Secretary. We are very pleased and grateful to have them on board.

Our steady pair of hands and Development officer, Barbara Dillion, is still with us and we hope the Dept. of Communications, Climate Change etc. will approve a further extension of her secondment for a further year till September 2024.

With regard to the Committee of Management, Irene Lee and Kevin Grimes have stepped back from the Committee and we would like to thank them for all of their time, commitment and contribution to the management of the Society.

Kevin Farrell has stepped back from his role as Committee Secretary, and we acknowledge and thank him for all of his work. He has been replaced by Carmel Doyle, who we are grateful for taking up the position.

Brian Duffy has also indicated that after 20 years of stalwart service, he will be stepping down from the Supervisory Committee. We would like to thank Brian sincerely for the commitment and effort he gave to his role and would like to wish him well.

We are very pleased to have a number of new members who are now interested in joining the Committee of Management and will come to that in our election later in the agenda.

So, to the facts and figures for the year 2022.

GRANT AID 2022

Later on, our treasurer, John Meagher, will take you through the Accounts for 2022. So, I will only concentrate on some of the headline figures for 2022.

A total of €935,000 (approx) was granted by way of grant or loan in 2022 in 879 cases.

The amount of assistance increased by 14% from 2021's total of €800,000 (approx.), while the number of cases was approximately the same from 2021.

Of the €935,000 total, just under €578,000 was by way of non-repayable grant up 10% on 2021.

€357,000 was by means of interest-free loans, increase of 21% over 2021.

Overall figures have moved significantly ahead of 2021 figures. While the number of applications are not significantly different, the monetary amount has increased more dramatically. The average amount per grant/loan also steadily increasing.

I have little doubt that with the impact of inflation increases and general cost of living increases, that our services will be sought in more numbers by our members in the coming months.

MEMBERSHIP 2022

New member figures have made a significant jump from Jan-Dec 22 (and increase of +24%) compared to same time last year. However, contributions have dropped by -4.4% with actual contributions €539,436 for 2022 down from €563,648 in 2021. This is indicative of the loss of a significant number of members contributions through retirement (although the person continues to be a member with or without subscription as per the Society rules). Basically, more members retired from the Society and did not continue their contribution than the number that joined.

It is an issue for the future that Peoplepoint no longer give retiring staff the option to select the deductions they wish to continue on their retirement forms. So, if a retired member wishes to remain on, they have to contact the Society and complete a mandate for the PMG. Although some members do make the efforts to do this, the majority do not go to these lengths to continue their subscriptions.

PROMOTION OF THE SOCIETY

As a result of the pandemic moving a lot of work online, the majority of all our promotional presentations were done online in 2022 with a few exceptions. Overall, this has seen a significant increase in attendance as had been the case with 'in-person' presentations which are professionally delivered by Barbara. We had a very successful attendance at a Customs 'open day' for new recruits in Dublin Port, where we held a stand for the day. We would certainly like to do more of these as it assists in immediate membership uptake.

One of the significant pieces of work done in 2022 was the redevelopment of a new website which just went live in April 23. The website and rebranding is a new launchpad for the Society to promote its work and we hope to have an official launch of this in September 23.

We have also shot a number of new promotional videos and have already had agreement from Revenue and DSP to upload the final version on their internal staff websites. We hope to do this across all Departments in the coming months.

We also hope to reintroduce what used to be the Society's newsletter but now in an online format that we would issue to member on a bi-annual basis and hope to restart this in the next few months.

Exclusive Member Benefits

One of the new selling points of the Society, is the suite of new exclusive member benefits which are being offered by Lyons Financial Services (who are in attendance and welcome here today). While we have offered the Specified Illness Cover through Lyons for many years, our members can also now avail of a whole new range of benefits such as Income Continuance, discounts on various

insurances, a complete mortgage service as well as other relevant services. We hope that this will be an attractive option for new members to join.

WORK PRACTICES

Online

Close to 90% of the Society's work is now done online including payments, membership and grant applications and meetings. We still of course offer paper application forms and payments by cheque and we are only too happy to continue to provide this service. While we do most of the caseworking over the phone and by email, we also still visit people when it is appropriate to do so.

We also now hold Cases Committee meetings on a fortnightly basis in a combined in person/online format. This is to create a more expedient process with a reduced wait time for case decisions, although we still deal with urgent/emergency cases via email when necessary. So far it has worked for our Cases Committee members, although their commitment and dedication can not be underestimated and which are hugely appreciate of.

IT

We have also invested considerably in our IT equipment this year and are indebted to the Revenue IT department who have been of great assistance to us. We now have new hardware & software which has significantly enhanced our ability to work online and remotely. Revenue very kindly sponsored an IT consultant from Ernest & Young to upgrade our database and develop business processes which will now handle the main work processes and ensure it has capacity to develop into a paperless office in the future...although this will take a number of years to fully happen.

MANY THANKS TO ...

There are many people who help to make the work of the Society run smoothly...

1. Cases Committee

The Cases Committee give so much commitment and dedication to help us process our applications and keep the work on track and we owe a massive debt of gratitude to them. We had a few changes to the Committee in 2022 as we said farewell to Joan Connolly who gave many years of her time to the Committee and for which we are very grateful for. We also saw 3 new Committee members join in 2022 and are very grateful to have Joe Keane, Angela McDonnell and David Cleary now part of the team. Frances McGahon and John Meagher continued throughout 2022 with their ongoing commitment and dedication to helping our members in need over many years. Everyone on the Cases Committee give their assistance with such empathy, experience and understanding and, I know that all the staff in HQ are extremely appreciative of their contribution.

We would like to also say a huge thank you to Frances McGahon, who has just stepped down last week from the Cases Committee after 46 years of her time, decision making and objectivity in the cases process. It is impossible to put into words how grateful the Society is for your time, and we wish you well in all you do.

2. Trustee and Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee also perform an importance function in the running of the Society, and we are very grateful to Michael Stapleton, Brian Duffy, and our Trustee, John McKeon who make up

the Supervisory Committee. With Brian now stepping down from this role, we will hold an election of his position when we come to that on the agenda.

I also wish to acknowledge our other Trustee, Mr Niall Cody, Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, who along with John McKeon have given their full support to the Society, particularly over the last year in the midst of our staff changes.

3. Committee of Management

I also wish to thank my colleagues on the full Committee of Management.

We are delighted to have some members put their names forward for the Committee this year and I would encourage more working staff to join the Committee in order to represent your colleagues on the ground. It is not a huge commitment timewise but may prove valuable to making your colleagues aware that there is financial help and advice available to them within the civil service.

4. Employee Assistance Service

As ever, we value our relationship with the Employee Assistance Service and in doing so, ensure that the confidential ethos of both the EAS and the Society are honoured. The Employee Assistance officers continually look out for our members and also promote the Society on our behalf at every opportunity. And we are very glad to have representation from the EAS on the Committee of Management.

I would also like to acknowledge the sad passing of our EAO colleague Ann Duffy who was such great assistance over the years. Our condolences and thoughts to her family.

5. Credit Unions

I would like to thank Adie Walsh in CANA Credit Union and Paul Ryan in the PSCU for their ongoing support and to their respective staff who work with us for the common good of easing financial concerns for our members.

6. Lyons Financial Services

I would like to thank Roisin and her colleagues in Lyons Financial who have worked closely with the Society over the last year to create the member Benefits most appropriate for PSFS members but have also provided support and advice to the Society staff on an ongoing basis of which we are very grateful.

HQ Staff

And many thanks are due of course to our staff in HQ, Karen, Barbara, Linda and Frances for handling the day-to-day calls on the Society and looking after our members in their times of need.

Go raibh mile maith agat

Sean Treanor

Chairperson

Public Service Friendly Society