

A nighttime photograph of a river scene. In the foreground, a stone balustrade runs along the riverbank. The water reflects the lights from the buildings and street lamps. In the background, a large, classical-style building with a prominent dome and columns is illuminated. A bridge with arches is visible on the left side of the river. The sky is dark and cloudy.

MISSION STATEMENT

**TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION ON
BEHALF OF MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT
REFERRAL BAR OF IRELAND, ENSURE THE HIGHEST
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT WITHIN THE PROFESSION AND TO
DELIVER VALUED AND QUALITY SERVICES FOR
THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS**



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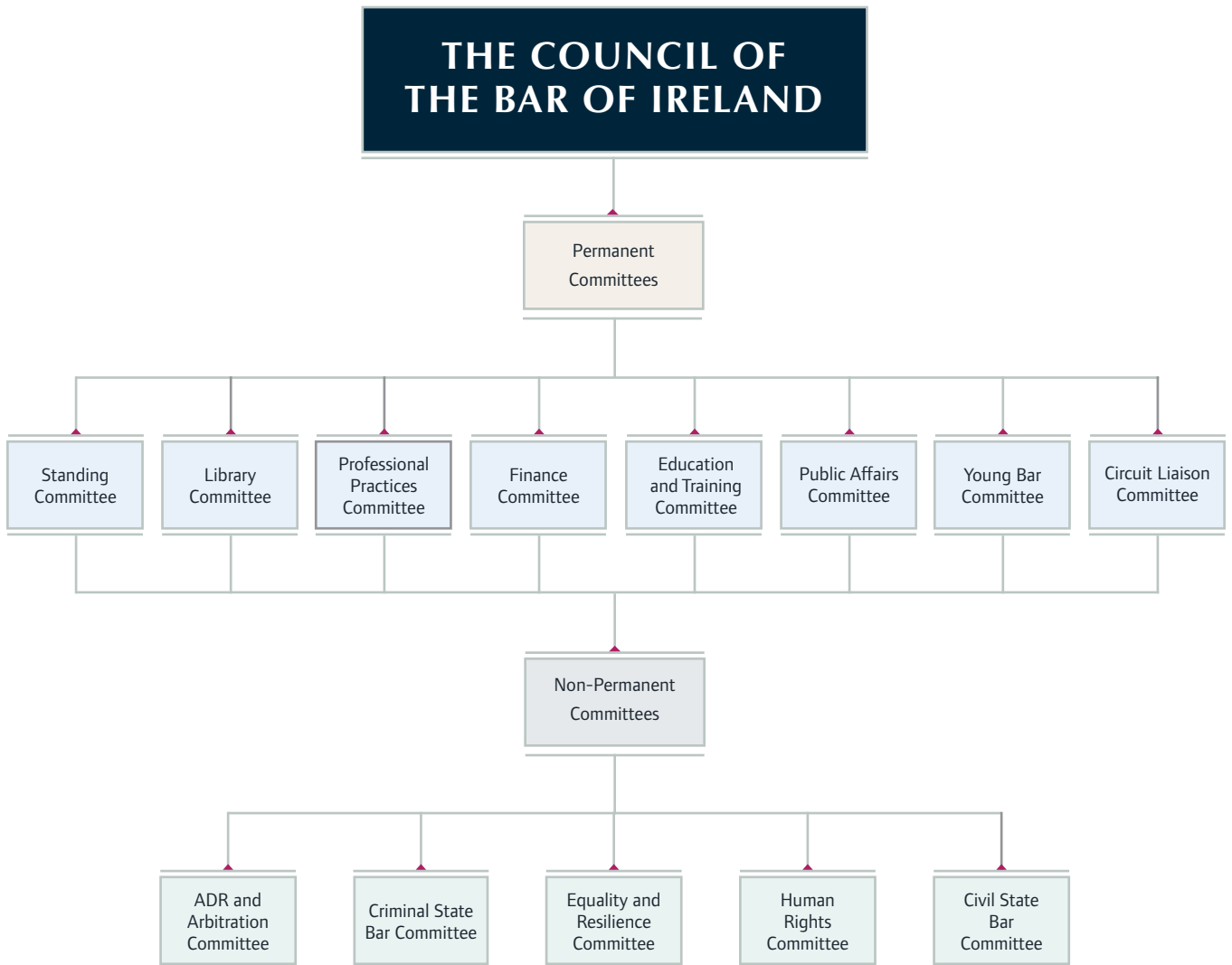
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COUNCIL AND MEMBERS

The Council of The Bar of Ireland

The Council is comprised of 25 members, elected and co-opted from the membership on an annual basis. The members of Council, along with Committee members, give their time and expertise voluntarily, contributing to the direction and policy of the Bar.



INNER BAR PANEL

ATTORNEY GENERAL



Sara Phelan SC
Chair



Cathy Smith SC
Vice-Chair¹



Seán Ó hUallacháin SC
Treasurer²



Rossa Fanning SC



Michael F Collins SC



Timothy Harley SC



Imogen McGrath SC³



Seán Guerin SC



Darren Lehane SC



Séamus Clarke SC⁴



Brendan Kirwan SC

OUTER BAR PANEL



Deirdre Browne BL



Tanya Smith BL



Aoife Farrelly BL



Cian P Kelly BL



Roderick Maguire BL



Tim O'Connor BL



Sean O'Sullivan BL



Tracy Ennis Faherty BL



Aoife O'Leary BL



Tabitha Wood BL⁵

CO-OPTees



Femi Daniyan BL



Jessica Bartak-Healy BL



Declan Harmon BL



Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL

1. Cathy Smith SC replacing Seán Ó hUallacháin SC as Vice-Chair, June 2023
2. Seán Ó hUallacháin SC replacing Roderick Maguire BL as Treasurer, May 2023
3. Imogen McGrath SC replacing Denise Brett SC, November 2023

4. Séamus Clarke SC replacing Ronan Munro SC, May 2024
5. Tabitha Wood BL replacing Catherine White BL, May 2024



Photo top left

Sara Phelan SC and Seán Guerin SC being interviewed at the CCJ on the day of Withdrawal of Services by barristers on the 3rd of October 2023.

Photo bottom left

L to R Tracy Ennis Faherty BL, Joanne O'Riordan and Sara Phelan SC at the International Women's Day dinner held in the King's Inns.



THE CHAIR'S REPORT

It has been a privilege and honour for me, as Chair, to represent The Bar of Ireland over the past two years. And as I near the end of my term of office, I thought it apposite to reflect back on the objectives I set for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, to measure their progress during my time at the helm.



Sara Phelan SC was elected Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland in July 2023 to serve a further year as Chair.

First and foremost is the “ongoing lobbying” regarding professional legal aid fees and whilst I would like to be able to report more progress at this juncture, the Council has certainly managed to keep professional legal aid fees in the spotlight. Of course legal aid encompasses both criminal and civil legal aid and whilst professional fees for criminal practitioners has been the subject of two #FairsFair campaigns, there has also been lobbying for civil legal aid, with State Agencies and in the context of the Civil Legal Aid Review Group, of which I am a member. Sadly, regarding both areas of practice, it is a case of much work done, but much more remaining, and I have no doubt but that the 2024/2025 Bar Council, and successive Councils as necessary, will continue campaigning for fair remuneration for barristers who deliver services under the legal aid schemes, an essential component of access to justice.

Another of the objectives for the year just gone was consideration of the business model under which the Law Library operates and I am absolutely delighted to see the publication of the ‘Rightsizing and Collaborative Structures Working Group Report’ in advance of the AGM in July 2024. This Report is the culmination of Trojan work by eight Council members over the last year. Looking back to my Chair’s Report for the 2022/2023 Annual Report I noted that “[t]he objective of this exercise is to future-proof the Bar for all

members, to ensure that members have the opportunity to have a viable career and to ensure that the independent referral Bar continues to flourish, given its vital role in upholding the rule of law, in the administration of justice and in ensuring equal access to justice for all our citizens” and it is my fervent hope that the iterative and incremental changes that are required to ensure that the independent referral Bar survives as a profession, and remains relevant to the society that it serves, are continued by successive Bar Councils in the years to come.

During my tenure as Chair, I also had the privilege of attending many law student events around the country. In the course of attending these events, it became very clear that The Bar of Ireland needed to do more to inform students about the value of an independent referral Bar and to encourage those students to consider a career at the Bar. These interactions informed another of my 2023/2024 objectives, being the promotion of the profession to new entrants, and I am delighted that, following on from the work undertaken by the Education and Training Committee, there will be enhanced promotional activity in this arena next year.

It would be remiss of me not to also mention the World Bar Conference 2024, which took place in May 2024, in Belfast and Dublin. A true collaboration between the Bars North and South, it was a fantastic showcase for both jurisdictions with attendees coming from as far as New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong and South Africa, in addition to those closer to home from England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. With a stellar line-up of keynote speakers and panellists, covering hot topics such as Cancel Culture, Free Speech and the Right to Offend; Rule of Law Under Fire: Existing in an Age of Conflict; Artificial Intelligence; Law in the Era of Climate Crisis; Humanity on the Move: Legal Frontiers in Migration and Human Rights and An Independent Bar and an Independent Judiciary: Perspectives from Judges in ICAB Jurisdictions, and culminating in a Gala Dinner in Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin, the Conference was a phenomenal success, as acknowledged by many attendees in person at the conference and by correspondence in the days following. And whilst the keynote speakers, panellists and attendees all played their part in contributing to this success, the dedication and organisational capabilities of the executive and staff of The Bar of Northern Ireland and The Bar of Ireland cannot go without mention and praise.

Looking to one of the themes of the World Bar Conference, Law in the Era of Climate Crisis, I am delighted to see that climate justice and sustainability is also reflected in the Council's objectives and that we have moved from "Identification of targets and appropriate reporting in respect of our organisational sustainability/environmental performance" in 2022/2023 to "Implementation of our organisational sustainability/environmental strategy in 2023/2024" and we are now well placed with our Natural Justice Campaign (www.naturaljustice.ie) to continue this work into 2024/2025 and beyond.

The work of the Chair and the Bar Council is underpinned by the many members who give of their time voluntarily to, for example, participate on committees and working groups, prepare submissions and opinions, engage with external stakeholders and appear before external committees and I wish to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who worked tirelessly on behalf of the profession to make decisions in the best interests of the Bar. Huge thanks is also due to our remarkable staff and executive team, led by our CEO, Ciara Murphy, who work hard behind the scenes to deliver on the policy decisions taken by the Council, and who maintain a first-class library and information service and promote a fantastic education and professional development offering for the benefit of all members, whilst not forgetting the support and commitment of our communications and member services, estates, finance, HR, IT, member relations, reception, regulation and the Sheds teams.

My thanks also to those Council members who have completed their terms of office this year. It is only when members participate on the Council that they realise the sheer volume of work that is undertaken to improve the working lives of members of the Law Library. But it is also a very enjoyable and fulfilling experience that helps us develop an awareness of the independent referral Bar beyond the more narrow confines of practice, and the important role that the independent referral Bar plays in upholding the rule of law, contributing to the administration of justice and ensuring equal access to justice for all and not only for those who can afford legal representation. For my part, I look forward to remaining on Council to fulfil my final year as an elected representative and to the stewardship that my successor will bring over the year ahead.

And lastly, my thanks to the individual members of the Law Library, who have supported me, and the Council, over the past two years and without whom the Council would simply not exist. The collegiality and camaraderie within the Law Library is second to none and I hope that the generosity of spirit amongst members continues to thrive and flourish in the years to come.



SARA PHELAN SC

Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland



The Irish phrase 'ní neart go cur le chéile' / 'there's no strength without unity', immediately springs to mind and I think back to the 3rd October 2023, which saw criminal practitioners on the steps of courthouses in Dublin and around the country as a mark of their frustration at the failure of successive governments to address FEMPI-era fee cuts

I have absolutely no doubt but that the 10% fee restoration announced in the budget a week later would not have occurred without such a singular show of unity and it very much goes to show what can be achieved



[and what will be achieved] when we speak with one voice. Continuing on the theme of community and togetherness, ‘if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far; go together’

However, I passionately believe that it is only by conversation and dialogue that differing views can be accommodated, ideas can be generated, consensus (for the most part) can be achieved and decisions can be taken to move forward.

And even when consensus is not achieved, finding oneself in the minority is somewhat easier to bear when one knows that one’s views have been listened to and respected.

We should be prepared to embrace change and be ready to mould it rather than allow it to mould us, so that the independent referral Bar remains at the forefront of our justice system in terms of upholding the rule of law, to ensure the protection of all members of society, but particularly those – including the vulnerable and disadvantaged – who may not find their voice without our independence and expertise.

— excerpt from Chair's message 2024



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

This annual report sets out a detailed summary of what the Council of The Bar of Ireland and its committees, together with the support of the executive staff, have done on behalf of members of the Law Library over the last year.

Membership Overview

In June 2024, membership of the Law Library was 2,097, a slight decline on the previous year at 2,104. Over the past ten years, there has been a decline of 4.3% in membership of the Law Library.

In the year to date, 76 have ceased membership. This is a reduction from the 91 members that left last year and below the average numbers leaving membership yearly, hovering in and around 90 per year. 4 re-entered membership during the year and there were 79 new entrants to membership of the Law Library in October 2023, including 7 new members from other jurisdictions. We are forecasting a similar level of new entrants in October 2024.

Representing the interests of the Profession

Arising from an unprecedented withdrawal of service by barristers practising criminal law on 3rd October 2023, a 10% restoration of fees was announced by the Minister for Justice as part of Budget 2024 last October, representing an unwinding of the 10% cut that was uniquely applied to barristers in 2011. This 10% restoration, a welcome and important first step, was in the context of barristers enduring a pay cut in real terms of more than 40% over the past twenty years, while others working in the criminal justice system have seen pay restoration implemented.

The Council also welcomed the Government commitment given, as part of Budget 2024, to a review process looking at the structure and level of fees paid to criminal barristers.

Unfortunately, despite repeated requests to commence this review since the Budget announcement of October 2023, the process failed to get underway leading to growing frustration amongst criminal law practitioners and a loss of confidence in the intention of Government to meaningfully engage in a process to review the structure and level of fees paid to criminal barristers. Our hope that Government would respond to our request to be treated fairly and reasonably, consistent with the approach taken in relation to other groups of workers and independent contractors where the State is the paymaster, has unfortunately not been realised. Following on from a General Meeting of The Bar of Ireland held on 17th June 2024, the Council of The Bar of Ireland took

a decision to recommend to our members, again, that they withdraw their services on three further dates in July 2024, an escalation of the action that occurred in October 2023.

In taking the decision to recommend the withdrawal of services in pursuit of an independent, meaningful, time-limited and binding mechanism to determine fees payable to barristers by the DPP and under the Criminal Justice (Legal Aid) Scheme, the Council expressed its regret at having to again pursue this course of action and is acutely conscious of the disruption that will inevitably occur, in particular for the victims of crime. However, the flexibility delivered by barristers, and their cooperation with reform of the criminal justice system over the past decade, as acknowledged and accepted by both the Department of Justice and the Office of the DPP as far back as 2018, have enabled a range of improvements and efficiencies to be implemented for the benefit of all stakeholders. The Bar has not been found wanting in that respect and the goodwill of our members is once again, being taken for granted, and cannot be allowed to continue.

Consideration of the future business model of the Profession

The future business model of the profession was further analysed over the course of the last year, following on from the adoption of the 2023 AGM motion:

‘That this AGM notes the HCA Report and calls upon the incoming Council to continue deliberations on the business model of the independent referral bar and to proffer options to mitigate the challenges faced by the profession’

The backdrop to this decision arose in the context of the [EY Report](#) commissioned by the Council to undertake a strategic and independent review into the future landscape for the provision of barrister services. On foot of the EY Report (July 2021), the Council established a Business Model Working Group to review the business model (termed a ‘meitheal’) proposed by EY. That working group recommended (in May 2022) that the ‘meitheal’ concept

be rejected, but the working group recognised that this did not negate the need to engage with the reasons for the concept being proposed in the first place and that there was a need to engage further with the challenges facing the profession. This then gave rise to the engagement of Hannah Carney & Associates (HCA) to facilitate a series of workshops with members from a variety of career stages and practice areas. The outcome of the member workshops was compiled into a further report which was shared with members in advance of the 2023 AGM.

The HCA Report identified seven themes and during the AGM it was noted that the Council would need time to engage with each of those themes to advance work on the challenges identified. The mechanism proposed to advance this work was agreed by the Council at its meeting in September 2023, being the establishment of two working groups to deliberate on the challenges identified:

- a. Rightsizing & Collaborative Structures Working Group, chaired by Sara Phelan SC
- b. Practice Supports Working Group, chaired by Seán Ó hUallacháin SC

The report of the Practice Supports Working Group will be implemented over the next year and the report of the Rightsizing & Collaborative Structures Working Group will be before the 2024 AGM.

Advancement of the Property Development Plan for the betterment of the Estate facilities for Members

A team of property and construction professionals were engaged by the Council in 2022/2023 to undertake a feasibility study for the Jameson Building and Distillery Building, and a refined range of options were presented to the Council at its July 2023 meeting.

Of particular concern to the Council had been the closure of the Dock restaurant in the Distillery Building. With the assistance of the Finance Committee, the estates team oversaw the refurbishment work at ‘Jorge’s at The Bar’, involving opening the entire restaurant area which was completed in March 2024. The restaurant is now open from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm each day serving hot breakfast and lunches and has been welcomed by members.

During the year, the working group assessing our property and estate requirements noted that there has been a significant change in the key drivers that shaped the feasibility study for the Jameson Building and Distillery

MEMBERSHIP

AS OF JUNE 2024,
MEMBERSHIP OF THE
LAW LIBRARY IS

2,097

THERE
WERE

79

NEW ENTRANTS
IN OCTOBER
2023.

7

OF WHOM WERE
FROM OTHER
JURISDICTIONS.

IN THE YEAR TO
DATE,

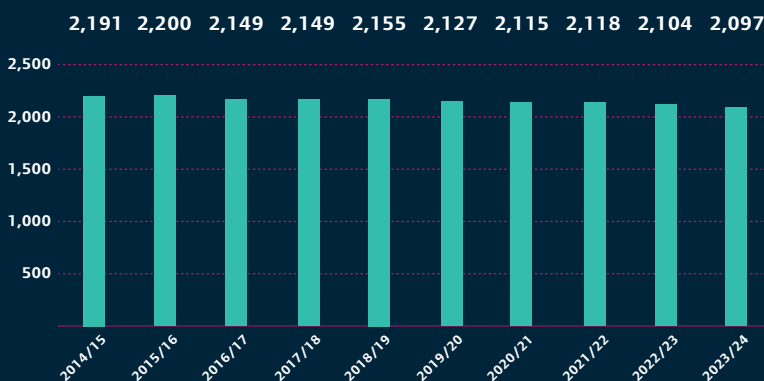
76

HAVE CEASED
MEMBERSHIP,
WITH

4

RE-ENTERING
MEMBERSHIP.

TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS AT JUNE 2024



Building that was presented to the Council in July 2023. By way of example, the availability of member seating has improved significantly for two reasons – the change in work practices of members since the pandemic and the implementation of the Desk/Seating Working Group recommendations over the last two years. This has led to much improved availability of seating for members, in particular junior members.

While there are also other significant works underway across the estate (detailed in the estates report section on [page 62](#) of this report), the Council will need to give more time to assessing the advancement of any property development for the betterment of the estate facilities for members.

Implementation of our organisational Sustainability/ Environmental Strategy

The Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee was chaired by Leesha O'Driscoll SC over the last year. The implementation of an organisational Sustainability/Environmental Strategy aims to encourage member participation and engagement in environmentally sustainable practices. The subcommittee is in the process of finalising an environmental sustainability reporting template which is based on the CCBE and other guidance. It is designed to capture all information about the Bar's activities relevant to environmental sustainability so that the Bar will be ready for any legislative requirement that is imposed in the future regarding environmental sustainability reporting.

Improving our environmental sustainability as an organisation will bring many benefits to members by enhancing the environment in which we work and reducing energy costs. We are all required to work towards the Irish government pledge to halve emissions by 2030. Full details of the work undertaken by the Environmental Sustainability subcommittee is available on [pages 64-65](#) of this report

Promotion of the Profession to New Entrants

The Education & Training Committee, under the leadership of Tim Harley SC, put forward a proposal for the consideration of the Council at its meeting in May 2024 to invest and enhance our activity in university outreach.

The Education & Training Committee noted that a significant investment and enhancement of our activity in university outreach is warranted owing to the intensification of competition for new entrants to the Irish legal professions. Law firms and large consulting firms are aggressively seeking law graduates through their internship and placement programmes, strong presence at law career fairs and other student activities such as sponsorships for moots and debates.

Without further investment in targeting top student talent, the Law Library risks losing its status as the leading source of legal expertise in Ireland, as a barrister career is seen as less desirable compared to becoming a solicitor, and against other in-house opportunities. The admissions data from King's Inns and anecdotal evidence suggest that fewer candidates are progressing directly from undergraduate law programmes. As a result, the Law Library is also attracting fewer new members from this cohort.

The Council unanimously adopted the proposal of the Education & Training Committee that will see a range of new and enhanced activities to promote a career at the independent referral Bar, complementing the activities that are also undertaken by the King's Inns.

Gratitude

My thanks to all the committed and loyal staff of The Bar of Ireland who do an outstanding job in serving the members of the Law Library to the best of their ability. Particular thanks to Nuala Byrne who has occupied the role of Director of Library & Information Services for the past 20 years. Nuala is retiring from her position at the end of this legal year and we wish her every happiness and success in all her future endeavors.

My thanks also to all members of the Council and Committees for their input and support over the year. A number of members are stepping down from the Council this year and I thank each of them for their willingness to get involved with the business of the Council and its Committees – the demands of being a Council member are often relentless and both I, and my colleagues on the executive staff, would simply not be able to fulfil our roles without the incredible input of all those who put themselves forward to serve on the Council and its Committees.

Seán Ó hUallacháin SC, currently the longest serving member of the Council is also stepping down this year. The Bar of Ireland has greatly benefited from his dedication to the Council over the last eight years and I wish to thank him sincerely, for all his work.

Finally, Sara Phelan SC completes her two-year term of office as Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland this year. Sara's commitment to the office of Chair and the barrister profession has been second to none. I wish to take this opportunity to thank her for her support and judicious stewardship and wish her every success in all her future endeavours.

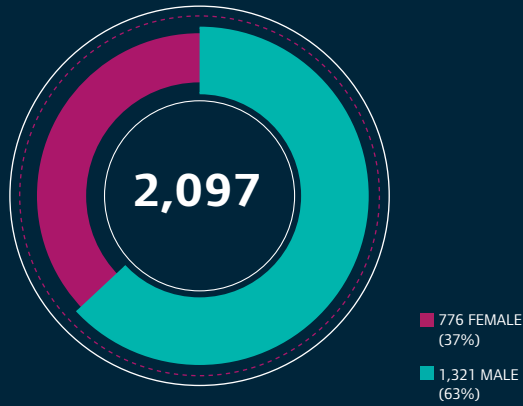
I look forward to serving you the members and the new Chair and Council in the year ahead.



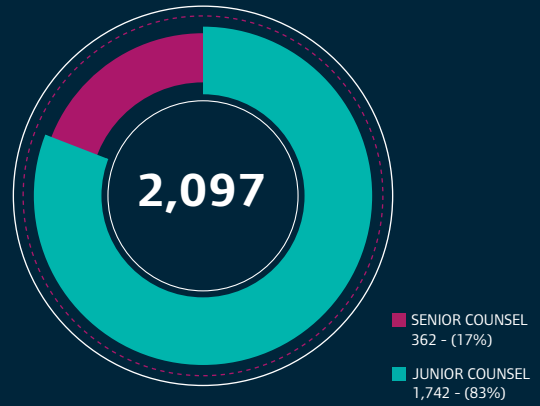
Ciara Murphy

CIARA MURPHY
Chief Executive

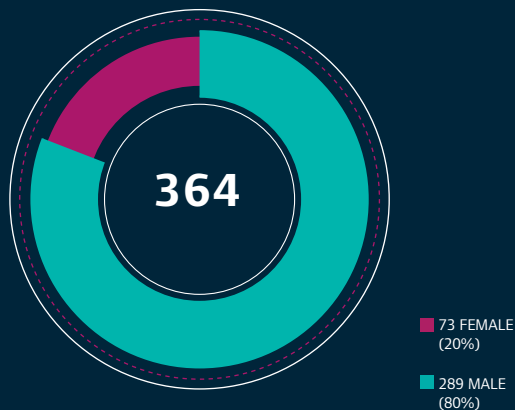
LAW LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP
AT JUNE 2024



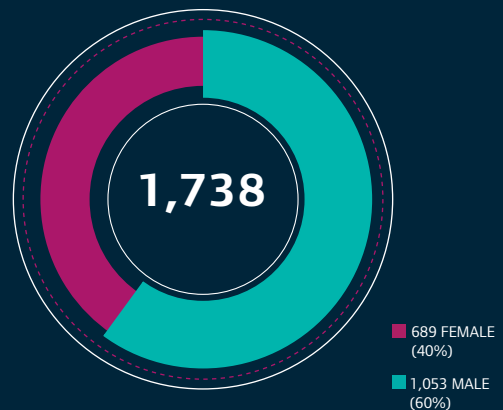
LAW LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP
AT JUNE 2024



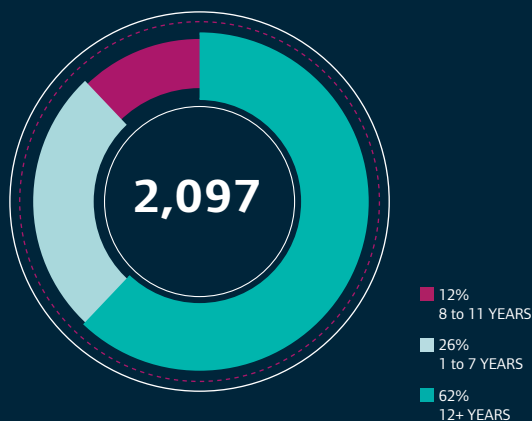
SENIOR COUNSEL
AT JUNE 2024



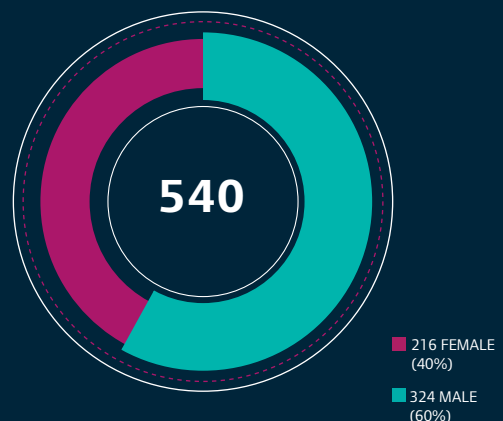
JUNIOR COUNSEL
AT JUNE 2024



LAW LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP
AT JUNE 2024



YOUNG BAR YEARS 1 TO 7
AT JUNE 2024



STANDING COMMITTEE

This Committee comprises the chairs of the permanent committees, the Chair and Vice-Chair, and the Treasurer. The business of the Standing Committee shall be to consider and, if necessary, determine all such matters within the competence of the Council as may be of an extremely urgent nature and require such determination between meetings of the Council.

CHAIR

Sara Phelan SC

Seán Ó hUallacháin SC
Darren Lehane SC
Timothy Harley SC
Roderick Maguire BL (until May 2024)
Declan Harmon BL
Sean O'Sullivan BL
Tim O'Connor BL
Michael F Collins SC

CO-OPTEEES

Seán Guerin SC
Deirdre Browne BL

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

The Library Committee deals with all matters relating to admission to the Law Library, and membership thereof, including matters relating to the acquisition and maintenance of the materials, whether in book or electronic form, necessary within the Library for the profession.

CHAIR

Michael F Collins SC¹

Darren Lehane SC
Timothy Harley SC
Tanya Smith BL
Femi Daniyan BL
Jessica Bartak-Healy BL
Tim O'Connor BL

CO-OPTEEES

William Abrahamson SC
Fergal Foley BL
Seamus Breen BL
Grainne M Clohessy SC
Declan Murphy BL
Louis Masterson BL
Wafa R Memon BL
Mary O'Toole SC
Brian Storan BL
Siobhan Clabby BL
Micheál Ó Scannail SC
Sarah Reid BL

1. replacing Denise Brett SC

FINANCE COMMITTEE

This Committee deals with all matters relating to the finances of the Council and its associate companies for the maintenance and development of the Law Library, Council properties, and IT infrastructure.

CHAIR

Seán Ó hUallacháin SC²

Darren Lehane SC
Seán Guerin SC
Declan Harmon BL
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL
Sean O'Sullivan BL
Roderick Maguire BL (until May 2023)

CO-OPTEEES

Dermot Kelly SC
Joseph O'Sullivan BL
Katherine McVeigh BL
Kieran Binchy BL
Tanya Smith BL
Deirdre Mary Kennedy BL
Jane Barron BL³
Fergal Foley BL⁴

2. replacing Roderick Maguire BL

3. replacing Ronan Monro SC

4. replacing Catherine White SC

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMITTEE

This Committee monitors all matters concerning the proper professional practice of members of the Law Library and may investigate and, if thought fit, prefer and present a complaint against any member without the necessity of having the matter referred to it by any third party.

CHAIR

Darren Lehane SC

Denise Brett SC (until October 2023)
Sean Guerin SC
Cathy Smith SC (until October 2023)
Catherine White BL (until May 2024)
Deirdre Browne BL
Tim O'Connor BL
Michael D. Hourigan BL
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL

CO-OPTEEES

Conor Maguire SC
Paul O'Higgins SC
Ronan Murphy SC
Paul McCarthy SC
Bernard Condon SC
Vincent Heneghan SC
Leesha O'Driscoll SC (until January 2024)
Lorcan Staines SC
Ronan Lupton SC
Caren Geoghegan SC (from October 2023)
Harry Brophy BL
Joseph O'Sullivan BL
Niall Nolan BL
Arran Dowling Hussey BL
Seamus Breen BL
Elizabeth Gormley BL
James Egan BL
Grainne Duggan BL
Carol Doherty BL
Brendan Savage BL
Tomás Keys BL
Amy Nix BL

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Education & Training Committee oversees training for new entrants (including master/devil relationships) and CPD for the membership at large, including ensuring that the profession's CPD requirements are met, and supports to barristers in practice are in place in light of the longer-term implications of regulation under the LSRA.

CHAIR
Timothy Harley SC

Darren Lehane SC
Brendan Kirwan SC
Seán Guerin SC
Deirdre Browne BL
Femi Daniyan BL
Aoife O'Leary BL
Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL
Declan Harmon BL

CO-OPTEES

Murray Johnson SC
Una Tighe SC
Lorna Lynch SC
Niall Buckley SC
Jane Hyland SC
Cathy Maguire SC
Eoin Martin BL
Bébhinn Murphy BL

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Public Affairs Committee assists in the promotion of members, establishes and maintains appropriate links with all regional and Specialist Bar Associations, the Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS), and Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI), and fosters relations and communications between the Council and outside bodies.

CHAIR
Sean O'Sullivan BL

Sean Ó hUallacháin SC
Darren Lehane SC
Seán Guerin SC
Michael D Hourigan BL
Aoife O'Leary BL
Tim O'Connor BL
Cian Kelly BL
Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL
Declan Harmon BL

CO-OPTEES

Killian Flood BL
Adrian O'Higgins BL
Gemma McLoughlin-Burke BL (VAS)

YOUNG BAR COMMITTEE

The Young Bar Committee provides a forum for Young Bar members, and co-ordinates initiatives directed at the needs of practitioners who practise in Years 1-7, as well as contributing to wider Bar priorities.

CHAIR
Declan Harmon BL

Darren Lehane SC
Tanya Smith BL

CO-OPTEES

Eamonn O'Donnell BL
Alexander Langan MacDonnell BL
Conor Rubuclava BL
Marguerite Kehoe BL
Ali Bracken Ziad BL
David Nugent BL
Finn Keyes BL
Niamh Murtagh Quinn BL
Jack Sreenan BL
Catherine Needham BL
Alison Walker BL
Michael Lindsay BL
Helena Kelly BL

CIRCUIT LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Circuit Liaison Committee provides a forum for practitioners to address matters that arise for members practising on Circuit, as well as maintaining close library and professional development connections.

CHAIR
Tim O'Connor BL

Tim Harley SC
Michael F Collins SC
Deirdre Browne BL
Cian Kelly BL
Jessica Bartak-Healy BL

CO-OPTEES

Timothy Morrow BL
James McConnon BL
Adrian O'Higgins BL
Katie O'Connell BL
Laura Byrne BL
Aisling Wall BL

ADR AND ARBITRATION COMMITTEE

This Committee raises awareness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) practices among practitioners and the wider public through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, a programme of education, and its inclusion in wider Bar debates.

CHAIR **Cathy Smith SC**

Seán Ó hUallacháin SC
Sean O'Sullivan BL
Declan Harmon BL
Cian P Kelly BL

CO-OPTEEES

Susan Ahern BL
Alison Walker BL
Catherine Needham BL
Cathrina Keville BL
Nessa Cahill SC
Mariana Verdes BL
Michael O'Connor SC
Arran Dowling Hussey BL
Niall Buckley SC
Ferga McGloughlin BL
Aoife Farrelly BL
Alan P. Brady BL

CIVIL STATE BAR COMMITTEE

This Committee engages with State agencies on whose behalf members are routinely briefed including the Attorney General/Chief State Solicitor's Office, the Legal Aid Board, and the State Claims Agency.

CHAIR **Deirdre Browne BL**

Cathy Smith SC
Declan Harmon BL
Femi Daniyan BL

CO-OPTEEES

David Conlan Smyth SC
Patrick O'Brien BL
Deirdre Lynch BL
Lyndsey Keogh BL
Emma Ryan BL
Rachel Meagher BL
Aisling Mulligan BL
David Leahy SC

CRIMINAL STATE BAR COMMITTEE

This Committee monitors trends and developments within the criminal Bar, liaising with key justice stakeholders on issues of concern, including the Department of Justice, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and others.

CHAIR **Seán Guerin SC**

Michael F Collins SC
Sean O'Sullivan BL
Aoife O'Leary BL
Michael D. Hourigan BL

CO-OPTEEES

Simon Donagh BL
Jane McGowan BL
Ronan O'Carroll BL
Kate Egan BL
Carl Hanahoe BL
Dara Foynes SC
Sinead Gleeson BL
Amy Heffron BL
Emer Ní Chúagáin BL
Amy Nix BL

EQUALITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

This committee oversees the development and implementation of initiatives that promote equality and diversity at the Bar, ensuring where possible that a member's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination.

CHAIR

Tracy Ennis Faherty BL

Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL
Tanya Smith BL

CO-OPTEEES

Nessa Cahill SC
Ferga McLoughlin BL
Brian Niland BL
Laura Cunningham BL
Columb Fortune BL
Lewis Mooney BL
Niall O'Neill BL
Caoimhe Ruigrok BL
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL
Aoife McNickle BL
Aoife Farrelly BL

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

This Committee works to promote justice and respect for human rights through the rule of law. It monitors human rights issues on a national and international level (including those involving endangered lawyers) and participates in a number of bodies with a particular focus on human rights issues. It also co-ordinates The Bar of Ireland's annual Human Rights Award.

CHAIR

Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL

Femi Daniyan BL

CO-OPTEEES

Sunniva McDonagh SC
Colm O'Dwyer SC
Anthony Moore SC
Michael Lynn SC
James O'Reilly SC
Joseph O'Sullivan BL
Diane Duggan BL
Colin Smith BL
Lewis Mooney BL
Emma Slattery BL
Gavin Rothwell BL
Andrew McKeown BL
Miranda Egan Langley BL
David Perry BL
Cormac J Hynes BL
Katie Prendergast BL
Joanne Williams BL
Michael Kinsley BL
Claire Bruton BL
Sean Beatty BL
Alan DP Brady BL
Marie Flynn BL

REPRESENT AND DEFEND THE INDEPENDENT REFERRAL BAR

A core role of the Council is to represent, secure and protect the interests of the independent referral Bar.

#FairIsFair Withdrawal of Services, Tuesday 3rd October 2023

On the first full day of the new legal year, members practicing in criminal law participated in a one-day withdrawal of professional services in protest at the ongoing Government inertia with respect to fee restoration. The action came after the culmination of countless attempts by the Council over several years to engage with Government in the restoration of professional fees. Members across the country stood in solidarity across 13 courthouses where criminal matters were listed to be heard, including approximately 170 members at the Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin, and Courthouses in Sligo, Castlebar, Monaghan, Dundalk, Longford, Trim, Wexford, Waterford, Nenagh, Limerick, Cork, and Naas.

The demonstration garnered regional and national attention and widespread media coverage, highlighting the unfairness and inequity in the professional fees paid to criminal barristers and the urgent need for Government to act now to preserve Rule of Law for Ireland.

A 10% restoration of fees was announced by the Minister for Justice as part of Budget 2024 following the withdrawal of services, representing an unwinding of the 10% cut that was uniquely applied to barristers in 2011. This 10% restoration, a welcome and important first step, was in the context of barristers enduring a pay cut in real terms of more than 40% over the past twenty years, while others working in the criminal justice system have seen pay restoration implemented. The Government commitment given to a review process looking at the structure and level of fees paid to criminal barristers was also welcomed. At the time of writing the July Withdrawal campaign was underway, which continued to achieve prominent traction at a national and local level.

General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Legal Aid) Bill 2023

On the same afternoon of the one-day withdrawal of services, Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland Sara Phelan SC and Chair of the Criminal State Bar committee Seán Guerin SC appeared before the Joint Committee on Justice to provide comment and insight to the General Scheme of the Criminal (Legal Aid) Bill 2023. In her opening statement to the committee, Sara Phelan SC spoke to ways in which legislation can improve the support and protection of victims, vulnerable witnesses and accused persons through the reformation of criminal legal aid in Ireland. It was also stressed to the committee that effective criminal legal aid significantly depends on the work of barristers, and reformation of the criminal justice system requires the restoration of professional fees for barristers.

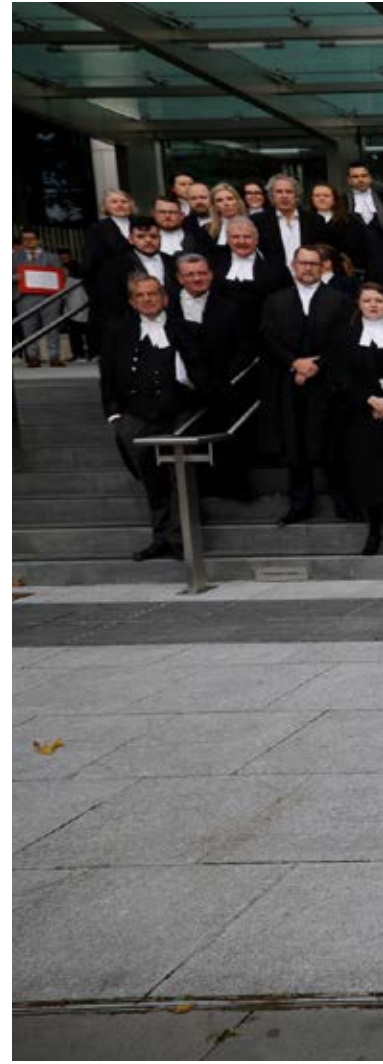


Photo right

Members of the criminal bar gather on the steps of the Criminal Courts of Justice on 3rd October 2023 to protest at the ongoing Government inertia with respect to fee restoration.

Joint Committee on Justice Hearing to Consider the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill 2024

On 16 April, Chair of the Criminal State Bar Committee Seán Guerin SC and Kate Egan BL appeared before the Joint Committee on Justice to provide comprehensive suggestions and feedback regarding the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill 2024 on foot of a submission to the committee made in March 2024.

The Bar of Ireland welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process and re-emphasised the need for careful consideration and potential amendments to the Bill in order to ensure alignment with legal principles and data protection standards.

Safeguarding Legal Integrity & Rule of Law | Where does Ireland stand in 2024?

On 9 January 2024, The Council of The Bar of Ireland submitted its targeted stakeholder consultation on the 2024 Rule of Law Report at the request of the European Commission. As part of the preparation of the 2024 Annual Report on the Rule of Law, the European Commission invited The Bar of Ireland in addition to relevant stakeholders to provide written contributions on the current and significant developments relating to the rule of law in Ireland.



Photo above

Kate Egan BL with Seán Guerin SC, Chair of the Criminal State Bar Committee

The Council's submission focussed on recent developments of importance including:

- The Family Courts Bill
- Common Law distinction in regards to litigation process
- Reform of Civil Legal Aid
- Criminal Legal Aid

The submission included an overview of quality of justice in the Irish justice system including accessibility of courts, resources of the judiciary, training of justice professionals, digitisation within the Courts and a review of the efficiency of the justice system.

Regulating Third Party Litigation Funding in Ireland

In November 2023, the Council made a submission to the Law Reform Commission of Ireland's consultation on Third Party Litigation Funding (July 2023).

Our submission detailed a comparative overview of experiences and approaches to regulation in other jurisdictions, as well as merits and possible demerits of such an innovation in Irish law. The advantages in terms of access to justice, equality of arms, the need to ensure adequate collective redress procedures, and the attraction for business outweigh any potential risks.



SUBMISSIONS IN 2023/24	
October 2023	1. General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Legal Aid) Bill 2023
November 2023	2. Law Reform Commission: Consultation on Third Party Litigation Funding
January 2024	3. Submission to Revenue Commissioners in response to Consultation Real-Time Digital Reporting & Electric Invoicing 4. Submission to the Department of Justice on the Public Consultation on the Reform of the Coroner Service 5. Submission to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority on the Admission Policies of the Legal Professions as Required by Section 33 of The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 6. Submission by the Council of The Bar of Ireland to the European Commission 2024 Rule of Law Report Targeted Stakeholder Consultation
March 2024	7. Submission to Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence – General Scheme of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 8. Submission on The Family Courts Bill 9. Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice General Scheme of the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill 2024
April 2024	10. Submission of the Department of Health and Proposals for Adult Safeguarding in the Health and Social Sector
May 2024	11. Submission to the Department of Justice on the Draft Civil Liability and Courts Act 2004 (Pre-Action Protocol) Regulations 2024

**Photo**

Sara Phelan SC, Paul McCarthy SC, Ingrid Miley BL
and Caroline Counihan, Legal Policy Director
Rape Crisis Network Ireland.

Family Courts Bill Summit

On 17 April 2024, The Bar of Ireland and the Family Lawyers Association hosted the Family Courts Bill Summit in the Alex Hotel to highlight concerns about proposals in the Family Courts Bill 2022 to reallocate the majority of divorce and judicial separation cases to the District Court. The summit was held following a series of engagements with members of the Oireachtas. The summit received widespread media coverage. Details of a survey conducted by the Family Lawyers Association amongst family law practitioners about the proposed changes, were launched at the summit, and revealed widespread opposition to the proposals, and concerns about their impact on litigants.

Following the Family Courts Bill Summit in April 2024, representatives of the Council and the Family Lawyers Association met with Department of Justice officials to discuss our concerns with the Family Courts Bill 2022 and to identify areas where the Department could revisit and revise the Bill as currently drafted. The Council continues to monitor the Bill, which is a priority piece of legislation under the Government.

You can read more about the Family Courts Bill Survey here:

lawlibrary.ie/reports

Chief State Solicitors Office (CSSO) and Office of Attorney General

In May 2024, representatives of the Council met with officials from the CSSO and office of the Attorney General to request, again, that the application of the ongoing 8% reduction in counsel fees, which was applied as a result of the FEMPI-era measures, be ceased. The officials noted that any decision to remove the continued application of the 8% cut was a matter for the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform and that representations were ongoing by both

the CSSO and office of the Attorney General to have the matter addressed. The Council has since followed up with the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform in that regard.

Other issues raised during the meeting included the development of new CSSO guidelines on how to correctly submit fee notes. According to the CSSO, the guidance currently being developed by the CSSO will help to standardise the process and eliminate confusion for counsel around when and how to submit fee notes.

Legal Aid Board

Representatives of the Council met with Legal Aid Board officials to discuss various items of concern in May 2024. Items discussed included the ongoing review of the Civil Legal Aid Scheme, restoration of fees for civil practitioners who are instructed by the Legal Aid Board and the impact of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015. The Council outlined its concern regarding the absence of provision for junior Counsel in the legal aid scheme under the Act, a piece of legislation that is likely to raise complex questions requiring the expertise of junior and senior Counsel.

International Protection Applications

Correspondence was sent to the International Protection Office outlining concerns relating to payment for training, non-payment for work completed, delays in work being carried out and a contractual restraint of trade clause imposed for members of the Law Library who are on the panel. The IPO officials confirmed that a review is underway and their intention to engage with barristers on the panel and The Bar of Ireland during the course of this review.

PRESERVE AND SUPPORT THE EXCELLENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT REFERRAL BAR

Attracting the best candidates to enter the profession and ensuring that they adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.



Professional practice support for members - Professional Practice Advisory Service

A total of 11 meetings of the Professional Practices Committee (PPC) took place during the legal year. The Professional Practice Advisory Service, overseen by the PPC, responded to 144 enquiries from members who had sought the advice and guidance of the Committee in relation to matters under the Code of Conduct for The Bar of Ireland, including 15 urgent rulings between meetings.

Key Statistics:

144

PPC ENQUIRIES FROM MEMBERS

11

MEETINGS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMITTEE

15

URGENT RULINGS BETWEEN MEETINGS

In addition, three stimulating Ethics CPDs were delivered over the course of the year, including:

- Common Issues to come before the PPC
- Examples of Ethical Dilemmas and Solutions
- The Independent Referral Bar in the 21st Century – What Instructions Can We Accept Without a Solicitor

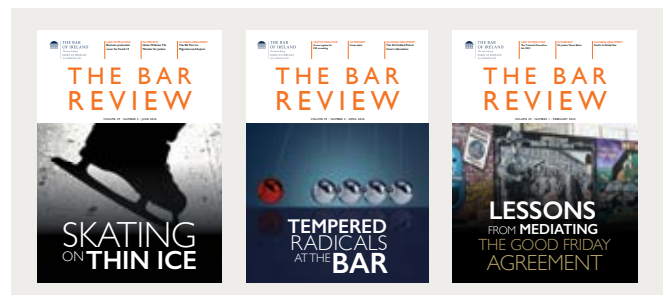
All are available to view on MyCPD Platform.

The Bar Review

The Bar Review - under Editor Helen Murray BL – saw yet another successful year in providing a source of thought leadership in law. The magazine addressed important and timely issues across a range of subject matter including shadow bank regulation, personal injury disputes, the emergence of climate litigation and human rights, and the recent Supreme Court decision in *The Revenue Commissioners v Karshan Midlands Ltd T/A Domino's pizza* to name just a number.

Over the past year, The Bar Review had the honour of interviewing some of the leading voices in Ireland's justice sector- author Niamh Howlin discussed her book on the history of barristers in Ireland, the four leaders of The Young Bars gave their views on challenges and opportunities for the Bar, and Ms Justice Marie Baker spoke to her career in law. This past Spring, The Bar Review heard World Bar Conference 2024 speaker Uwais Iqbal share his thoughts on the future of AI and the rapid evolution of technology in the legal sphere. Finally, to conclude the legal year, we sat down with Minister for Justice Helen McEntee to examine the Minister's legal priorities in the justice sector, including the family courts system and proposed hate speech legislation.

Looking ahead to a new legal year, The Bar Review is look forward to continuing to provide readers with interviews from leaders in the justice system, updates from the Law Library's members and Bar Associations, and expert analysis and opinion across a range of subject matter in legal journalism.



Better at the Bar

In June, the Equality and Resilience Committee delivered a dedicated Mental Health Resilience seminar, with coach Dessie Fitzgerald; and exploring vulnerability, stress and resilience, as well as providing a number of mental health coping techniques. The talk, delivered online and in person, represents a refreshed commencement of how The Bar of Ireland can support its members, and the work context they occupy. This event also coincided with a dedicated Mental Health Champion training, that is intended to roll out biannually.



Sinead O’Callaghan, was appointed as a dedicated specialist EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) & Wellbeing Coordinator to drive forward the Bar’s ambitious Equality Action Plan objectives, as well as spear head cultural change at the Bar in respect of ensuring a workplace and career that is sustainable and accessible to all.



Throughout the year, the Equality and Resilience Committee have worked with Clanwilliam Psychotherapy, to design a bespoke model of support of members in crisis; and who require specialist counselling services. The model will include an offering of specialist support on a co-payment basis, offering direct and discounted access to our members.



The Bar of Ireland is a proud supporting organisation of Outlaw; whose mission is to promote and drive the inclusion of LGBT+ people across the Irish legal community. We were proud to participate at Dublin Pride 2024 and increase the presence and awareness of the Bar through our colleague Amy Walsh BL and Cathy Smith SC as Vice Chair.



Ensuring that the physical environment of the Bar, and the Courts, can better accommodate the needs of all colleagues, our membership of disAbility Legal Network provides a valuable connection with other seeking to effect change. Our Estate Services continue to support the aims of this important initiative.

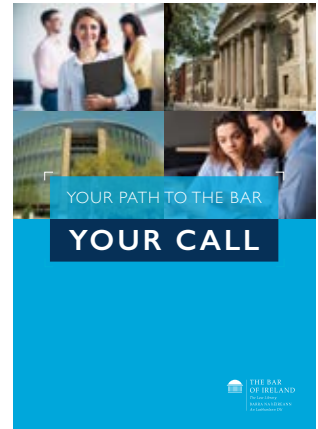
University Outreach

A review of The Bar of Ireland’s activity to promote the profession to law students was undertaken in 2023/24. Following the review a plan has been prepared to enhance The Bar’s presence at universities and law career fairs, and to build better engagement and visibility towards aspiring barristers in Ireland.

A new internship programme for university students will be piloted in June 2025.

Activities in 2024/25 included:

- A new print and electronic prospectus showcasing the profession.
- Attendance at 7 University Law Fairs
- Support & sponsorship of and attendance at the Intersivity Summit
- Development of a Database of 55 University ambassadors available to provide talks at university events.



UCD Law Fair

Joseph Brennan BL and Liam O’Flaherty BL speak to Lhamo Fitzsimons a past Look into Law TY student about a future career at the Bar and the Denham Fellowship.



Look into Law TY

Former Look into Law TY student Louise Sharkey now studying law at Trinity



MOCK TRIALS

- "I like how we got to know about the different parts of law and the history behind it."

- "This was very interesting to experience what it would be like to be in a court."

- "So interesting and gave me such a good insight into law."



OVERVIEW

- 230 School Applications
- 100 Places Offered
- 27% DEIS schools
- 34 Barristers
- 2 Judges
- 1 Judicial assistant
- 4 Day Programme
- 2 Days Online
- 2 Days Onsite



STUDENT FEEDBACK

- "I'd recommend this course to absolutely anyone who has an interest in law."

- "Onsite days were really good and insightful."

- "Barristers and others involved were very helpful and informative."





Transition Year (TY) Look into Law

A huge thank you to the 34 barristers who (along with two judges and a judicial assistant plus staff across several departments) ensured that the 2024 Look into Law TY Programme was such a success.

100 students from across the country were offered places on the 2024 Look into Law TY Programme, 27 of them from DEIS schools. This year's four-day programme consisted of two days online and two days onsite.

The topics covered online included the early years as a barrister, civil and criminal practices, life as a senior counsel, the history of the courts, life as a judge, life as a judicial assistant, Specialist Bar Associations (SBA's) and ethics. Both days also included breakout rooms where the students got the chance to talk in smaller groups with a barrister about the content of the day and the quiz questions and answers.

The Big Legal Q&A – took place on 12th April with over 27 schools (with approx. 450 students) taking part with 7 barristers and a judge on the panel.

PROMOTE AND MARKET MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT REFERRAL BAR

The communications team along side relevant committees and Specialist Bar Associations have progressed a number of projects, campaigns and initiatives in line with The Bar of Ireland's Marketing Plan.

Marketing Open-to-sector Events

Digital campaigns were run for all open events and conferences, each promoted to specialised audiences, through various digital platforms including web, email, digital publications and social media. The top digital sources for ticket registrations were dedicated email campaigns, followed by the In Brief newsletter, LinkedIn and advertisements placed in Irish Legal News.

Promoting Barrister Expertise in the Legal Community

In addition to the promotion of open-to-sector events, the communications team has continued its efforts to promote barrister expertise through the growth of The Bar of Ireland's digital thought leadership platforms (e.g. podcasts, Viewpoints Blog and The Bar Review).

A search engine optimisation plan was implemented to increase the readership of the Viewpoints Blog, with over 20 posts published this Legal Year.

The subscriber base for our Legal Edge Newsletter has grown to approx. 3.5k subscribers, connecting the latest insights and expertise from members of the Law Library to an audience of solicitors, in-house counsel, industry professionals and Bar alumni across Ireland.

Full page advertisements focusing on the services provided by the membership and the Direct Professional Access scheme were placed in the Eolas, Chartered Accountants Ireland and Síocháin magazines.

Building Capacity for Members to Promote their Practice

A dedicated Marketing Essentials course was delivered to members focusing on online presentation, demonstrating expertise as well as exploring perspectives from those who review panel work applications. Speakers included solicitors from a range of practice types as representatives from the Attorney General and the State Claims Agency. Additionally, a podcast episode has been produced with the aim to improve members' skills in writing for various audiences.

Communications consultations were held in Limerick and Galway; one-to-one sessions assisting members with their online presence, marketing and photographs. The new on-line member platform, launched in April 2024 allows members to update their profiles more easily than before. A virtual version of the pocket diary on the website was launched, ensuring easy access to colleagues' contact details in a new format. The majority of our communication supports and resources are now available online to members.

Photo right

L to R, Hugh Mohan SC, Vera Klute (ARHA) and Sara Phelan SC unveiling the commissioned portrait of Frances Moran SC in the King's Inns for the In Plain Sight initiative.





3.5K

**LEGAL EDGE
SUBSCRIBERS**

10

**PAID SOCIAL
MEDIA
CAMPAIGNS
157,000
IMPRESSIONS**

27

**EVENT EMAIL
CAMPAIGNS
51% OPEN RATE
16% CLICK-
THROUGH RATE**

15

**ADS IN
PUBLICATIONS**
11 in Irish Legal News,
1 in Eolas, 1 in Síocháin,
1 in Chartered
Accountants Ireland &
1 in Law Society Gazette



Photo

Darren Lehane SC, Council member and Chair of the PPC, Speaks to Ronnie Robbins SC.

Legacy

In 2023 we launched our **Legacy Series** – an initiative to maintain an oral history of the Law Library through recorded fireside conversations with influential figures from the profession; as well as provide viewers in the Bar the benefit of insights and experiences of skilled advocates and figures who paved the path.



With three videos published on the member site, and a number already recorded; we hope to continue this initiative on a rolling basis over the coming years.

- Maura McNally SC spoke with recently retired Fergus O’Hagan SC in King’s Inns, where they reflect on some of the key people and events that shaped Fergus’ journey at the Bar over the decades.
- Interviewed by Darren Lehane SC in the Sheds Bar, Ronnie Robins SC reflected on the changes witnessed throughout his career at the Bar and the plans for his active retirement.
- Her Hon. Elizabeth Maguire, Circuit Court Judge, met with Sara Phelan SC in King’s Inns for a conversation on the various transitions in her career, from her first day in the Law Library, to taking silk and her recent appointment to the Bench.

In Plain Sight: Improving Representation of Women Through Portraiture

In October 2023, the second portrait under the In Plain Sight initiative was unveiled. This joint project of The Bar of Ireland and King’s Inns seeks to improve representation of influential women in the legal profession through portraiture. The 2023 commission depicted Frances Moran SC, the first woman barrister to take silk in Ireland. It was painted by renowned visual artist Vera Klute and was unveiled at a launch event by Sara Phelan SC, Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland alongside Hugh Mohan SC and Vera Klute.

Natural Justice

In 2023, The Bar of Ireland commenced the Natural Justice campaign, with the aim of improving public knowledge on the intersection of law and the environment, facilitating links with the community in responding to environmental issues and equipping individuals to take action. Actions taken in this campaign included a website featuring the work of The Bar and various organisations in environmental action, joint events hosted with Comhshaoil – The Climate Bar Association, and school visits by barristers to speak on the law and its relationship to environmental action.

We look forward to continuing and building on this campaign over the forthcoming year.

COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS

5

DEVIL'S EZINE ISSUES SENT
AVG. OPEN RATE: **69%**

11

CHAIR'S UPDATES SENT
AVG. OPEN RATE: **63%**

36

IN BRIEF ISSUES SENT
AVG. OPEN RATE: **61%**

9.3K

X/TWITTER FOLLOWERS
INCREASE OF **516**

14.9K

LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS
INCREASE OF **3,350**

10

PODCASTS RELEASED
12,500 PLAYS

PRO-ACTIVE IN THE MEDIA

1.8M

NATIONAL PRINT ITEMS,
TOTAL REACH
1,879,442

7.7M

ONLINE ITEMS,
TOTAL REACH
7,703,196

1.2M

BROADCASTS,
TOTAL REACH
1,248,000

13.9K

REGIONAL PRINT,
TOTAL REACH
139,507



Photo top left

L to R: Laura Neal, Conor Linehan SC, Cliona Kimber SC, Alison Hough BL at the Climate Bar Association event 'Law, Lawyers and the Climate Emergency'.



Photo bottom left

L to R: Caren Geoghegan SC, The Hon. Mr. Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court, The Hon. Ms. Justice Nuala Butler, Paul Gallagher SC at the Construction Bar Association Annual Conference in the Dining Hall at King's Inns.

Photo right

L to R, front to back: Leesha O'Driscoll SC, Sara Phelan SC, Cliona Kimber SC, Stephen Matthews TD, Dr Alan Moore, Neil Foulkes, Brian Leddin TD.



SPECIALIST BAR ASSOCIATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

2023/24 LEGAL YEAR

The Bar of Ireland now supports 17 Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs) and continues to support their enhanced profile and provide awareness to their wider legal community and industry sectors.

An external, market-facing focus has been supported through a programme of annual conferences and dedicated websites, as well as associate membership to solicitors and firms for some of the Specialist Bar Associations.



COMHSHAOL: CLIMATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Chairperson
Cliona Kimber SC



- Held three events to mark the year of Natural Justice. The first event was in Dublin on broader remedies for environmental law. The second event was in Waterford and covered legal rights for nature and the environment. The third was in Belfast and aimed to demystify the cost of environmental justice on the island of Ireland. The final event in this series will take place in Galway in the new legal year.

www.climatebar.ie

CONSTRUCTION BAR ASSOCIATION (CBA)

Chairperson
Lydia Bunni BL



- Held a series of four tech talks on arbitration, building regulations and AI.
- CBA Annual Conference 2024 with speakers including senior and junior members from the Law Library, the President of the High Court and the Head of Construction Planning and Environment Group, Addleshaw Goddard.
- Awarded the CBA Sanfey Prize for 2023 to Gavin Wilson, Civil Engineer, Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

www.cbaireland.ie

CORPORATE & INSOLVENCY BAR ASSOCIATION (CIBA)

Chairperson
Kelley Smith SC



Corporate & Insolvency
Bar Association

- Held Breakfast Briefings on Recent Developments in Receiver Litigation & Common Applications Under the Companies Act 2014.
- Hosted joint events with Restructuring & Insolvency Ireland (RII) on Recent Developments in the legal and practical aspects of receiverships. Joint event with EBA on Section 212 Applications under the Companies Act 2014.
- Held Annual Conference on 5 July 2024.

www.corporateandinsolvency.ie

CUMANN BARRA NA GAELIGE

Cathaoirleach

Cormac Ó Dulacháin AS



- Bhronn an Chumann cúpla Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach (FGL) i rith an mblia.
- Tharla Ard-Fheis Chonradh na Gaeilge: Uachtanna i Ghaelige | Ceardlann Téarmaíochta, Dlí, Taithí & Comhairle bar 23ú Feabhra 2024 in Óstán Carlton, Baile Bhlainséir.
- Bhí Cumann Barra na Gaeilge: Ceardlann Ghairmiúil 2024 ar siúl ar 9ú Marta 2024 i nGaeltacht Rath Cairn Contae na Mí.
- Bhí craic agus comhrá ag an Maidin Caifé ag Na Cúirteanna Breithiúnais Coiriúla ar 14ú Marta 2024.

www.cumannbarra.ie

EMPLOYMENT BAR ASSOCIATION (EBA)

Chairperson

Brendan Kirwan SC



- The EBA had a busy legal year, holding four CPDs, as well as a joint breakfast briefing with the Corporate and Insolvency Bar Association.
- Also held a conference in the River Lee Hotel in Cork on updates in Employment Law, with a panel focusing on Mallon vs the Minister for Justice.
- The EBA Annual Conference 2023 was held on 10 November, with panels chaired by the Hon. Mr. Justice Oisín Quinn and Sara Phelan SC, Chair, The Bar of Ireland.
- Held a BBQ on 7 June in celebration of a successful legal year.

www.eba.ie



EU BAR ASSOCIATION (EUBA)

Chairperson

Brian Kennedy SC

- Held their Annual Conference 2023 on 20 October 2023, which also commemorated 50 years of EU Law in Ireland.
- Held two joint CPD seminars, including one with the Irish Society for European Law (ISEL) and one with the Irish Criminal Bar Association (ICBA).
- Hosted a seminar with Ireland for Law and The Bar of Ireland in the Embassy of Ireland, London.

www.euba.ie

FINANCIAL SERVICES BAR ASSOCIATION (FSBA)

Chairperson

John Breslin SC

- Held two CPD seminars throughout the legal year, one on the implications of UK Supreme Court decision in *Philipp v Barclays* and the other on Summary Judgment and Repossession Orders.
- FSBA Annual Conference 2024 was held in the Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre on 15 February 2024. Three panel discussions between members of the Law Library, solicitors, and experts on financial services provided valuable teaching on the subject.

www.fsba.ie



Photo top right

L to R: The Hon. Mr. Justice David Barnville, President of the High Court, Helen Dixon, former Data Protection Commissioner, Eoin McCullough SC and Emily Egan McGrath SC at the joint EU Bar Association and Ireland for Law seminar in the Embassy of Ireland in London.



Photo bottom right

L to R: Patrick O'Reilly SC, Úna Tighe SC, Colm Kincaid, Central Bank of Ireland, Mike Hawthorne, Pinsent Masons.

Photo left

L to R: Brendan Kirwan SC, Cara Jane Walsh BL, Lorna Madden BL, Ms Justice Marie Baker, Pearse Sreenan SC, Jack Nicholas BL.



Photo top left

L to R: David Leonard BL, Katie Mannion, Siobhan Clabby BL, Sunniva McDonagh SC, Michael Conlon SC, The Hon. Ms. Justice Mary Faherty, Carol Sinnott, Thomas Coughlan at the Joint Irish Immigration Lawyers Association and Immigration, Asylum and Citizenship Bar Association event in the Gaffney Room.

Photo bottom left

L to R: Christopher Hughes BL, Margaret Heavy BL, Eamon Galligan SC and The Hon. Mr. Justice David Holland.

Photo right

The Hon. Mr Justice Paul McDermott, Caroline Cosgrove an Intermediary from Northern Ireland, Miriam Delahunt BL and Séamus Clarke SC.



IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM & CITIZENSHIP BAR ASSOCIATION (IACBA)

Chairperson

Michael Conlon SC



- Hosted a breakfast briefing in October overviewing recent global court interventions by UNHCR to practitioners.
- IACBA Annual Conference 2023 was held on 24 November, chaired by Rossa Fanning SC, Attorney General.
- Held an event in collaboration with the Irish Immigration Lawyers Association (IILA) on 1 March 2024 on navigating ongoing and future challenges in international protection and immigration law.

IRISH CRIMINAL BAR ASSOCIATION (ICBA)

Chairperson

Simon Donagh BL



- Held a well-attended event in collaboration with Clarus Press promoting a new book on the topic of vulnerable witnesses by Miriam Delahunt BL.
- Held a joint event with EUBA on 'The impact of EU Law on the Irish Criminal Process', featuring Jana Bambic of the European Prosecutor's Office as a speaker.
- ICBA Annual Conference 2024 took place on 13 July in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone.



PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT BAR ASSOCIATION (PELGBA)

Chairperson

Stephen Dodd SC



- Two CPDs were held during the year including a session with the Planning Regulator and a public event on planning considerations in the renewable energy sector. Breakfast Briefing 29 November 2023.
- Held two Planning Conferences: New Bill, New Dawn? Focus discussing the key provisions of the Planning & Development Bill 2023 published by the Government in November 2023 and their Annual Conference on 12 July 2024.

www.pelgba.ie

PROBATE BAR ASSOCIATION (PBA)

Chairperson

Catherine Duggan BL



- Held 5 Breakfast Briefings this year discussing the variation of trusts, time limits in section 117 cases, and the update on recent case law and developments in the removal of Executors and administrators.
- Their Annual Conference took place on 3 November 2023 with discussions centered around section 117 in the Succession Act of 1965.

www.probatebar.ie

KEY SPECIALIST BAR ASSOCIATION STATISTICS - 2023/24



60% OF EVENTS
FACILITATED ONLINE
ATTENDANCE
(ONLINE & IN PERSON AT SAME TIME)

17

SPECIALIST BAR
ASSOCIATIONS

74

BAR OF IRELAND
& SBA EVENTS

58%

OF ALL EVENTS
ARE SBA EVENTS

221

SBA COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

67

CPD HOURS

17

SBA ANNUAL
CONFERENCES

245

CONFERENCE
SPEAKERS

4.5K

ATTENDEES AT
EVENTS & CONFERENCES



Photo top left

Vinog Faughnan SC taking questions at the sold out Probate Bar Association Annual Conference November 2023.



Photo left

The Sports Law Bar Association with all speakers at their December 2023 conference, including Attorney General Rossa Fanning SC.

PROFESSIONAL, REGULATORY, DISCIPLINARY BAR ASSOCIATION (PRDBA)

Chairperson

Frank Beatty SC



- PRDBA Annual Conference 2023 was held on 8 December 2023 in the Gaffney Room. Conversations explored common issues arising in fitness to practice proceedings, including the rules of evidence, hearsay, and the issue of delay.
- In February 2024 the Young Bar Committee collaborated with PRDBA to cover the topic of Building Your Practice – Disciplinary Complaints in the Regulated Professions.

www.prdba.ie

SPORTS LAW BAR ASSOCIATION (SLBA)

Chairperson

Aoife Farrelly BL



- Held their SLBA Annual Conference 2023, titled Fair Play, Fair Sport on 1 December 2023 with two panels on governance in sport and disciplinary fairness.
- In Belfast the SLBA hosted Running the Gauntlet: Lawyers at Sports Disciplinary Hearings: An Athlete's Perspective in collaboration with ex-sports people.
- A landmark event, open to both solicitors and barristers was held on 28 June 2024 with the title Not Just a Load of Cock and Bull – cockfighting, bull-baiting, the law and the making of modern sport.

www.slba.ie



Photo top left

Claire Hogan BL, Chair of MIDBA and Dr. Des Hogan, Data Protection Commissioner and Chair of the Data Protection Commission of Ireland.

Photo bottom left

The Hon. Mr. Justice Brian Murray addressing the Tax Bar Association Annual Conference.

Photo right

L to R: Ingrid Miley BL, Sara Phelan SC, Paul McCarthy SC, Keith Walsh and Caroline Counihan BL.



TAX BAR ASSOCIATION (TBA)

Chairperson

Frank Mitchell SC



Tax Bar Association

- Held their Annual Conference on 29 September 2024 to a packed room discussing state litigation principles, tax litigation and notices of appeal, time limits and reliance on professional advice.
- The Tax Bar Association held a CPD on EU Law Perspective on Tax Litigation on 24 January 2024.
- The Tax Bar also recorded a podcast featuring a discussion between Catherine Dunne BL, Dearbhla M Cunningham BL and David K McGrath BL on the High Court decision in *The Revenue Commissioners v Tobin [2024] IEHC 96*.

TORT & INSURANCE BAR ASSOCIATION (TIBA)

Chairperson

Maura McNally SC



Tort & Insurance Bar Association

- Held a CPD seminar which served as an update on disclosure rules, employment PI and PI developments in the Law of Statute of Limitations.
- The TIBA Annual Conference took place on 27 April 2024 in ATU Letterfrack and Renvyle House Hotel. Topics discussed were practice and procedure and Tort, damages 3 years since judicial guidelines, and proposed reforms to expert evidence. Members enjoyed stimulating panel discussions and beautiful scenery.



MEDIA, INTERNET & DATA PROTECTION BAR ASSOCIATION (MIDBA)

Chairperson

Claire Hogan BL



- Held two CPD seminars over the course of the year on artificial intelligence, and romance fraud on the internet.
- The MIDBA Annual Conference 2024 was held in the Gaffney Room on 21 June 2024 with speakers such as Renato Monteiro, the Global Head of Privacy at X, Dr Des Hogan the Data Protection Commissioner and Aodhán Ó Riordáin MEP.

www.midba.ie

FAMILY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (FLA)

Chairperson

Paul McCarthy SC



- The FLA was heavily involved in the Family Courts Bill Summit held on 17 April 2024. This Summit raised issues members of the legal profession had with the Family Courts Bill that was due to go before the Dáil. The event took the form of a panel discussion and encouraged lively debate.

www.familylawyers.ie

SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES TO FACILITATE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

Identifying and expanding professional opportunities for our members in support of the future sustainability of the profession.



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION®

New York Internship

The Arbitration ADR Committee launched the annual Internship to the International Centre for Dispute Resolution in New York. The Internship offers an invaluable insight and exposure to a member of the Bar to observe international arbitration in action. The selected members were Katie Nagle BL and Liam Vanmechelen BL.



Irish legal services on an international stage Ireland for Law

Over the course of the year, a series of trade missions were undertaken; introducing the Irish legal sector to partners and stakeholders overseas; including the US, London, and Germany.

In May, as part of a Philadelphia - Washington DC Mission, Kathaleen McCormick, Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery spoke with the Hon. Mr. Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court, in a discussion moderated by Kelley Smith SC, The Bar of Ireland, and featuring the Attorney General, Rossa Fanning SC, as well as the leadership of a number of Irish based solicitor firms. (Main photo)



Photo bottom left
Delegates from Ireland for Law at the Corporate Restructuring and Corporate Insolvency - The Case for Irish-US Cooperation seminar held in Young Conaway, Delaware, USA.

ENHANCE ACCESS TO ONLINE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Access to online resources and information through the Library & Information service is a core benefit of membership.

Training

Our recent member feedback indicated that members tend to rely on the resources they are familiar with rather than taking the time to understand newer resources that may be more suited to their search needs. Our response was the launch of a new training initiative which consisted of a series of training workshops, made up of small groups. Although primarily aimed at first years, the workshops were open to all with many more established practitioners also attending. This fresh approach invited members to bring their laptops and try out for themselves the techniques and resources as they were demonstrated. This allowed members to identify and resolve any issues they had there and then.

Legal resources and the technology behind them are continually changing. These practical workshops gave members the opportunity to take stock of the depth of our electronic collection and discover the best ways to make best use of it, saving time and accessing relevant and timely information

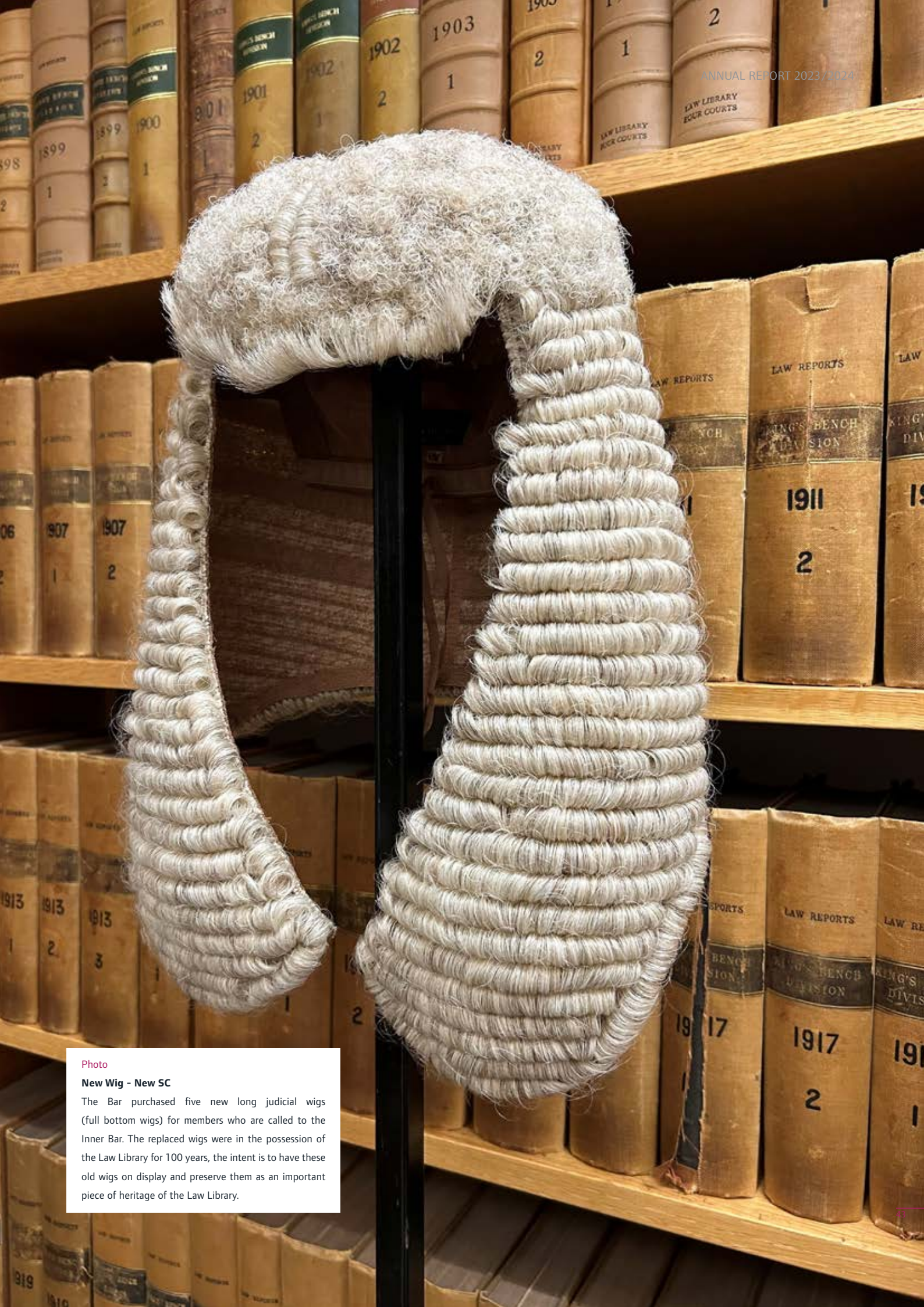
The workshops were very well-received with members coming away with a wider appreciation of what the Library has to offer. More of these workshops are planned for the future.

Collections

The world of online legal information never stands still. New content arrives daily, and the technology available to collect, store and present it is in constant flux. The Library & Information Service strives to harness and optimise this technology for the benefit of practitioners at the Bar.

Lexis+ In January, we rolled out a major upgrade of the LexisNexis platform. Lexis+ replaced the previous Lexis Library site, offering a major upgrade of the user experience, with a clearer modernised search interface and the introduction of AI-powered natural language searching.

Lexis PSL, previously a separate resource, has been integrated into the site under the name "Practical Guidance". In addition to the existing module on UK Dispute Resolution, the Library will subscribe to a new range of Irish Practical Guidance content, covering Commercial, Corporate, Dispute Resolution, Banking & Financial Services, Property and EU Law.



Photo

New Wig - New SC

The Bar purchased five new long judicial wigs (full bottom wigs) for members who are called to the Inner Bar. The replaced wigs were in the possession of the Law Library for 100 years, the intent is to have these old wigs on display and preserve them as an important piece of heritage of the Law Library.

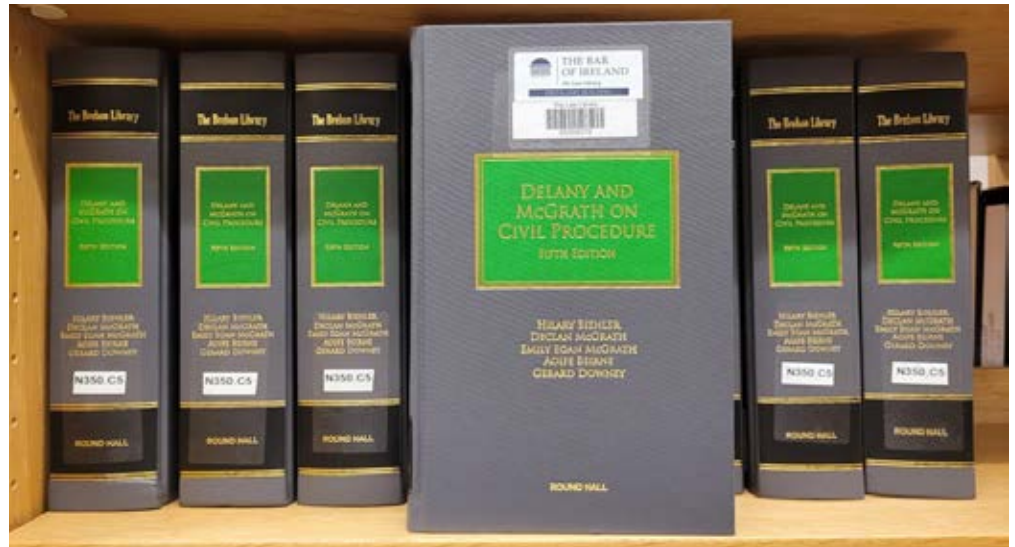


Photo top left

One major addition to our print collection for members was 72 copies of the new 5th edition of Delany & McGrath on Civil Procedure.

Photo right

The new work space within the Library at Distillery Building completed this year.



Training on Demand – Interactive Video Tutorials

Our consultations with members tell us they are time poor and their information seeking behaviour is on a need-to-know basis. We introduced training on demand using interactive video tutorials to meet this need. They are bite-sized, interactive, training tutorials, lasting no more than 10 minutes. Module 3 – Working with eBooks shows you how to get the best of our eBook collection. The Interactive Video series is accessible from the Research skills section on Barrister’s Desktop.

Library Space Improvement

The Legal Research Centre was remodelled and redecorated for the start of the Michaelmas term in 2023, clearing out little-used law reports to make space for the growth of the book collection. This allowed for the addition of two extra unassigned desks in the study space to the rear of the LRC, increasing the number of desks available to 14.

Additionally, the Collections team undertook a major stock relocation project in the Cork Bar Library. Old volumes of law reports which had been taking up valuable shelf space were removed as their usage had fallen off significantly in recent years. New books which it had not been possible to shelve previously were placed on the open shelves for the first time.

The extra shelf space will allow for further development of the Cork Bar Library collection and ensure it is kept as up to date on key texts as our other locations.

Insurance Law eBook Titles

In response to a request from several members, the range of commentary titles available through Westlaw UK was boosted in May with the following major titles:

- Arnould: Law of Marine Insurance and Average
- Colinvaux & Merkin's Insurance Contract Law & Colinvaux's Law of Insurance
- MacGillivray on Insurance Law



The content is fully up to date and includes all updates and supplements issued for the titles.

Print Collection

The Library recognises the prime importance of its print collection to practitioners, and the year saw almost 1,500 new hardcopy titles added to the shelves and available for borrowing.

 **291**
Members
Trained

 **+1,457**
NEW BOOKS

 **50** 
MEMBERS
ENROLLED IN
VIDEO COURSES

35.7K
 **QUERIES TO
HELP DESK**

28K 
28,512 ITEMS BORROWED FROM JUNE TO MAY '23/'24

 **2,026**
Twitter
@LawLibServices

DELIVER BEST-IN-CLASS EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

High-quality education and training opportunities are core benefits of membership.

CPD Scheme

Following a successful pilot with the Mediation Sharing & Learning group the Education & Training Committee approved the addition of Sharing & Learning groups to the list of activities that can be considered for formal / structured CPD. In order to be eligible groups must register with the Education & Professional Development department and meet a set of operational criteria.

(see <https://pd.lawlibrary.ie/sharing-and-learning> for more information)

Pupillage Research Project

2023/24 saw the continuation of the project to map learning opportunities available as part of the pupillage year. This phase of the project identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of pupillage which will be advanced by the Education & Training Committee in 2024/25.

Pilot Peer Support Programme

The Pilot Peer Support Programme, developed following 2023 review of mentoring at The Bar, was launched in January 2024. The initiative focuses on goal setting and professional development. Sixteen junior colleagues, from years 1-7 of practice, are participating in the pilot programme. Each is matched with a senior colleague based on a number of factors including: practice issue identified and area of practice. The programme included:

- Three training sessions for the senior participants.
- Two briefing sessions for the junior participants.
- A CPD event focusing on Optimising Well-being in Legal Practice.

The pilot delivery of the programme will continue in the 2024/25 legal year, concluding in December. The Education and Training Committee would like to thank Lorna Lynch SC and Úna Tighe SC for their considerable work in making the pilot a success.

CPDs and circuit

The Circuit Liaison Committee has organised a number of CPDs on circuit including the following: three seminars on the South Eastern Circuit in October, February and June, one seminar on the South Western Circuit in November which included a visit from the Chair, two in Cork in November and May, one of which was a practical IT skills workshop, and the Western & Midlands Circuit conference in Galway in July.

Furthermore, the committee provided financial support and promotion to several bar association conferences on circuit including the EBA in Cork, Climate Bar Association in Waterford, and Arbitration and Maritime Law in Galway.

The New Practitioners' Programme

The New Practitioners' Programme, designed for barristers in their first year at the Bar, underwent a comprehensive review last year. The programme was evaluated for its relevance of content, timeline, format, delivery, and networking opportunities. Based on member feedback, the programme was restructured and now consists of 8 live seminars and 9 pre-recorded videos including the addition of a new interactive drafting workshop and a seminar on "life after pupillage". This year, 72 members participated in the programme.

Advanced Advocacy Committee

The Advanced Advocacy Committee organised two courses and three seminars this legal year. The seminars were themed under different areas of advocacy in witness handling and covered: An Garda Síochána; family law, childcare and special care; and the Workplace Relations Commission.

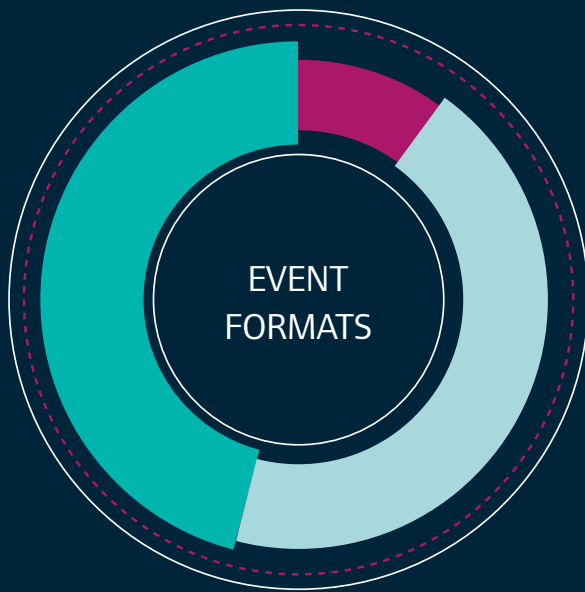
Practice Management Essentials

In 2024 the programme of CPD seminars included a series focused on practice management. These seminars form part of a new course (Practice Management Essentials) that will launch in October 2024.

The course consist of 7 modules designed to equip members with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage their practices.

- Module 1: Your Practice as a Business
- Module 2: Practice Finance
- Module 3: Tax Compliance
- Module 4: Information Technology in Practice
- Module 5: Risk Management
- Module 6: Regulatory Compliance
- Module 7: Practitioner Self Care

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS



EVENT DELIVERY

- 44% IN PERSON
- 46% HYBRID
- 10% ONLINE

415

HOURS OF CONTENT
IN TOTAL ON
MY CPD SYSTEM

84

HOURS OF **NEW**
FORMAL STRUCTURED
CPD ACTIVITIES

97

HOURS OF
NEW ON DEMAND
CONTENT

2,944

LIVE PARTICIPANTS WITH
40 PARTICIPANTS
ON AVERAGE PER EVENT

+6.5%

IN ENGAGEMENT WITH **CPD**
PROVIDED BY THE BAR OF IRELAND

Photo top left

Small Steps And Giant Leaps (L to R)
Ingrid Miley BL and Sinéad McSweeney.

Photo right

Patrick Jackson BL, Mark McMahon BL,
Joseph Brennan BL and Angela Collins BL
at a Denham Fellowship celebratory evening in
the King's Inns.

Photo bottom left

Reflections and Resolutions (L to R)
Sara Phelan SC, Ms Justice Mary Rose Gearty
and Sonja O'Connor BL.



Law & Women Mentoring Programme

Law And Women Mentoring

Now in its ninth year, The Bar of Ireland's Law & Women mentoring programme's aim is to promote equality and improve diversity at the Bar by providing greater levels of support to barristers at all levels. The programme prioritises applicants who have no other support structure at the Bar or in the legal profession generally.

This year there were a further eighteen pairings of barristers who had successfully applied to be accepted onto the programme, leading to one hundred and seventy pairings to date.

The programme includes a schedule of supports, workshops and guidance over a legal year.

Events organised this year include:

- Screening of Confidence & the female barrister – a talk given a few years ago by Prof Ian Robertson
- Reflections and Resolutions – a panel discussion about successful mentoring relationships by mentor Sara Phelan SC and her former mentee Sonja O'Connor BL, moderated by Ms Justice Mary Rose Gearty
- Small Steps & Giant Leaps – Sinéad McSweeney, former VP at Twitter and wife of the late Noel Whelan SC, was interviewed about her life and advice for mentoring by Ingrid Miley BL




THE DENHAM FELLOWSHIP

The Denham Fellowship

2023/24 saw the implementation of the first set of recommendations arising from the 2023 strategic review of the programme which included: the redesign of the application process, expansion of the eligibility criteria to consider SUSI, and enhanced promotion of the fellowship with the addition of new networking and Q&A events alongside attendance at university law fairs.

Networking and events organised this year by the Denham Fellowship Committee included the following:

- A new information event was organised in the Four Courts to which relevant university personnel were invited. 12 University Access

Officers and Law Department Heads were in attendance along with 6 judges, 6 barristers and committee members with 4 Denham Fellows.

- A new webinar was introduced which was broadcast live and hosted on the website to assist those planning to apply for the fellowship. A number of committee members and fellows took part in the webinar.
- A social event was held at the King's Inns for mentors, masters and fellows as a thank you to those involved in assisting with the programme and as an opportunity for fellows to come together with their masters and mentors. Members of the former Board, including Ms Justice Susan Denham (Retired), were in attendance.





World Bar Conference 2024 - Independent Referral Bars: Responding to Global Challenges

Over 250 members of independent referral Bars from around the world came together in Belfast and Dublin for three days of debate and discussion from May 15-17 for the World Bar Conference.

Delegates came from the Bars of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Africa to hear a truly impressive array of panellists discuss issues from cancel culture, the rule of law in an age of conflict, and artificial intelligence (AI), to the climate crisis and migration.

The Conference began in Belfast with a welcome reception at The Bar of Northern Ireland, including an official welcome from Naomi Long MLA, Justice Minister at the Northern Ireland Executive.

Conference topics included:

- Navigating the Crossroads: Cancel Culture, Free Speech, and the Right to Offend
- Rule of Law Under Fire: Existing in an Age of Conflict
- AI Unleashed: Tomorrow's Legal Landscape and the New Normal?
- Law in the Era of Climate Crisis: Unearthing the Legal Challenges
- Humanity on the Move: Legal Frontiers in Migration and Human Rights
- An Independent Bar and an Independent Judiciary: Perspectives from Chief Justices in ICAB Jurisdictions





Photo top left

L to R: Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice in the Northern Ireland Executive, Sara Phelan SC, Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland, Moira Smyth KC, Chair of the Council of The Bar of Northern Ireland and Dame Siobhan Keegan, Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.

Photo above

Evening Welcome Reception at The Bar of Northern Ireland, Belfast.

Photo left & right

Members from the Bar of Ireland playing at the Traditional Irish Night held in the Sheds.



Photo top left

The stage branding of the World Bar Conference - Dublin sessions.

Photo top middle

Law in the Era of the Climate Crisis keynote speaker Sarah Mead with session panel members (R to L) Dr. Andrew Butler KC and Samuel Townend KC.



Photo top right

Keynote speaker for *Humanity on the Move* Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC.

Photo middle left

Humanity on the Move panel chair Sara Moorhead SC.

Photo middle centre

Helen McEntee TD, Minister for Justice, Government of Ireland at the gala dinner held in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.



Photo middle right

World Bar Gala dinner held Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

Photo lower right

From left: Sara Phelan, Chair, Council of The Bar of Ireland; The Rt Hon. Lord Carloway, Lord President of the Court of Session and Lord Justice General of Scotland; The Hon. Dame Susan Glazebrook of the Supreme Court of New Zealand/Te Koti Mana Nui; Moira Smyth KC, Chair, The Bar of Northern Ireland; The Rt Hon. the Baroness Sue Carr, Lady Chief Justice of England & Wales; The Hon. Justice Mark Livesey, President, Court of Appeal of South Australia; The Hon. Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne of the Irish Supreme Court; The Rt Hon Dame Siobhan Keegan, Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland; and, Mr Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court of Ireland.



A truly eminent panel formed the final session of the day, on 'An Independent Bar and an Independent Judiciary: Perspectives from Judges in ICAB Jurisdictions'. The Hon. Mr Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court of Ireland, welcomed seven judges to the stage, including an online contribution from The Hon. Mr Justice Raymond Zondo, Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, asking each judge to speak on a key challenge to judicial and legal independence

The Conference session was brought formally to a close by Sara Phelan SC, Chair, Council of The Bar of Ireland, who thanked attendees and panellists for their contributions, and the staff of the Bars of Northern Ireland and Ireland for their hard work in organising this fantastic event.

The conference ended with a spectacular gala dinner that was held in Christ Church Cathedral where the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD addressed delegates.

The full report on the World Bar 2024 conference can be found in The Bar Review - Vol 29 - No.3 - June 2024. ([Click here to read Bar Review - WBC24](#))

ADVOCATE FOR THE RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Bar of Ireland has an important role in advocating for the rule of law and access to justice.



2024 Irish Council for Civil Liberties Fellow

The Bar of Ireland ICCL Fellowship is a unique opportunity for young barristers looking to gain experience and insight into the policy side of human rights law and advocacy work in Ireland. The Fellowship builds on the long relationship between The Bar of Ireland and ICCL and the mutual interest of both bodies in supporting the rule of law and strengthening the protection of procedural rights in the Irish criminal justice system. The Fellowship also reflects the Bar's strong support for the administration of justice, civil liberties and the protection of constitutional and human rights.



"I have been a part of organisations where human rights have been at the forefront of their work. In the United States I did an internship which gave me something to compare my knowledge of the legal system at home to. It was also a unique chance to research the area of wrongful convictions, where it was evident that human rights had been ignored, and safeguards avoided.

Once I saw that the fellowship was open to me, I wanted to continue to be a part of that kind of work at home. This will allow me to incorporate advocacy and reform into my own practice."

The Bar congratulates Alexander Langan MacDonnell BL on his selection as the 2024 of the Bar of Ireland and Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) Procedural Rights Fellow.

Read Alexander's Viewpoint in full at: lawlibrary.ie/viewpoints

Voluntary Assistance Scheme

The leadership mantle of our Voluntary Assistance Scheme was passed to Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL. This year saw additional expressions of interest by barristers to provide their services on a pro-bono basis; as well as an invitation to solicitors to indicate their availability.

In June, Gemma represented VAS at Pro-Bono Week, led by the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA), where the pro-bono contribution of barristers was highlighted.

Listen to Gemma host a dedicated podcast on the Pro-bono Eco-system with Seán Beatty BL, Liam Herrick of Irish Council for Civil Liberties and Eilis Barry of FLAC - Free Legal Advice Centres: lawlibrary.ie/podcast



18

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

141

BARRISTERS ON THE VAS PANEL

Types of supports:

Advocacy, Legal Opinion, Policy Formulation, Advisory and Litigation

Areas of Law:

Education, Health, Privacy, Animal Welfare and Housing

Innocence Project

The Public Affairs Committee were delighted to re-establish the innocence partnership with a number of US University campuses, after some years of abeyance. This important relationship is one the Bar hopes to foster, in creating a greater awareness and understanding of US criminal justice system.



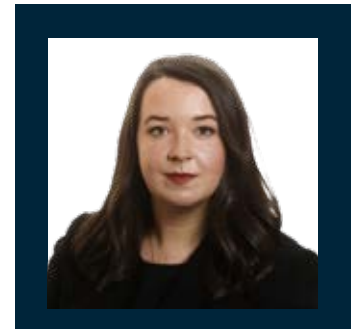
The three selected Innocence Fellows were:



Gemma McLoughlin-Burke BL



Simon Wilson BL



Róisín O'Mara BL

Advocating for Endangered Lawyers

Each year the number of lawyers being prosecuted or assassinated for upholding the rule of law, or their commitment to their clients, increases.

The Human Rights Committee has written to the Ambassadors of the States concerned to remind States of their obligations under international human rights to defend and safeguard lawyers in their work, arising from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966.

Country	Lawyers concerned	Types of violation and summary of case
China	Yu Wensheng	Detention Human Rights lawyer, Yu Wensheng and his wife Xu Yan, are in detention since their arrest on 13 April 2023, as they were on their way to the EU delegation in China. They were arrested for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble".
Israel	Diala Ayesh	Arrest and Detention Diala Ayesh, a Palestinian lawyer and human rights defender, was arrested by Israeli forces on 19 January 2024 as she crossed the "Container" checkpoint near Bethlehem, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. and Palestinian authorities. The judicial review hearing for her detention has been indefinitely postponed, and thus the reasons for her arrest are unknown.
Republic of Yemen	Sami Y. Ka'id Marsh	Detention According to information received by the CCBE, lawyer Sami Yassin Ka'id Marsh has been arbitrarily detained without charge for four months in relation to his work seeking accountability and justice for human rights violations in Yemen.
Russia	Vadim Kobzev, Alexey Liptser and Igor Sergunin	Detention Lawyers, Vadim Kobzev, Alexey Lipster and Igor Sergunin continue to be detained and according to information received by the CCBE, the Basmany District Court of Moscow has extended their arrest to June 2024.

ADVANCE THE ROLE OF THE PRACTICE SUPPORT & FEE RECOVERY SERVICE

For almost four years, The Bar of Ireland Fee Recovery unit has provided an in-house service assisting members with the recovery of their fees. Over this period, we have collected **€1.9m** on behalf of **248 members**, who were experiencing difficulty receiving fees.

Fee Recovery

Over the last 12 months, we have seen a continued growth in the number of members engaging the fee recovery service. The number of members availing of the service increased by 24%, with 248 members (12% of full membership) using the service this Legal Year. The service is available to all members, who can contact the fee recovery team anytime. We recognise that some members appreciate in person meetings so, this year, we held Fee Recovery Clinics in Cork and CCJ. The purpose of these clinics is to allow local members to drop in and discuss any issues they are experiencing with fee notes. We plan to host these clinics in both locations once per term.

Over the last year, we continued to represent members in bringing their fee recovery complaints to the LSRA. We have established a good collaborative relationship with the LSRA and have regular meetings with the Head of Complaints and Resolutions department of the LSRA to assist in the process.

Our terms of service are that members can avail of the service for up to three overdue fee notes at a time, provided they meet the following criteria:

- 1 Reasonable attempts have been made
- 2 Overdue by six months or more
- 3 Additional fee notes may be accepted if they are with the same solicitor, at management's discretion.

THE BAR OF IRELAND
Practice Support & Fee Recovery

Practice Support & Fee Recovery
We are here to help.

FEE RECOVERY CLINIC: CORK

Wed 26 June

Our Fee Recovery manager will offer short individual sessions

To find out more email: feerecovery@lawlibrary.ie or scan the QR code to book directly

THE BAR OF IRELAND
Practice Support & Fee Recovery

Practice Support & Fee Recovery
We are here to help.

FEE RECOVERY CLINIC: CCJ

Wed 17 April

Our Fee Recovery manager will offer short individual sessions

To find out more email: feerecovery@lawlibrary.ie or scan the QR code to book directly

THE BAR OF IRELAND
Practice Support & Fee Recovery

Practice Support & Fee Recovery
We are here to help.

FEE RECOVERY CLINIC: CORK

Wed 13 March

Our Fee Recovery manager will offer short individual sessions

To find out more email: feerecovery@lawlibrary.ie or scan the QR code to book directly

CLICK HERE TO BOOK DIRECTLY

PRACTICE SUPPORT & FEE RECOVERY SERVICE STATISTICS

4

YEARS SINCE SERVICE WAS LAUNCHED (JULY 2020)

+12%

OF THE **MEMBERSHIP** NOW SIGNED UP TO THE SERVICE (248 MEMBERS) (PRIOR YEAR 9% 200 MEMBERS)

€1.9M

RECOVERED IN **OVERDUE FEE NOTES** FOR MEMBERS, €1.2M LAST YEAR

211

FEE NOTES ACTIVELY PURSUING WITH A VALUE OF **€2.3M**

€321k

SETTLED FOLLOWING REFERRAL TO THE LSRA, VIA PAYMENT IN FULL, INSTALMENT ARRANGEMENT AND SETTLEMENT DISCOUNT.

OUR OPERATIONS

To deliver on our services the core operational capabilities required by the organisation are strong finances, appropriate systems and IT, a skilled and agile workforce, fit-for-purpose workspaces and physical infrastructure, and good governance.

FINANCE

Financial Performance – Half year to 31st March 2024

TBOI Consolidated Income & Expenditure					
Period ended 31st Mar 2024	Current Year Actual €'000	Prior Year Actual €'000	% Diff	Budget €'000	% Diff
Income	8,929	8,580	4%	9,049	-1%
Expenditure	(8,134)	(7,744)	7%	(8,380)	-1%
Net Surplus	615	836	-26%	669	-8%
% Net Surplus	7%	10%		7%	-7%

In the half year October 2023 to March 2024, The Bar of Ireland Group reported a **consolidated income and expenditure surplus of €615k**, which is 8% behind budget for the period.

Across the 6 entities, there are marginal positive and negative variances which explain the reduced surplus level. The following are key points on TBOI group half year financial performance.

- Subscription income at The Bar of Ireland is marginally down on budget mainly due to the fact that fewer members joined in October 2023 than had been anticipated, which was based on the number sitting exams in King's Inns in 2023. For the half year, we had budgeted subscription income to be €5.8M but actual income was 2% less at €5.7M.
- Rental and Service Charge income in Law Library Properties Ltd. at €2.3M is on budget and income in Law Library Finance Ltd. at €184K, is 35% ahead of budget as the company benefited from higher deposit interest rates. Bar Income in the Sheds members club has fallen by 18% from last year to €87k as general usage has fallen and there were fewer events this year than prior year, and DDRC room hire income at €168K has also fallen from last year by 15% due to fewer bookings in the period.
- Overall group expenditure at €8.3M is €80K lower than budget and 7% higher than last year. Comparing to budget, in most areas expenditure is in line with target. Bank interest rates continued to increase after last years budget process and bank interest for the half year at €520K is 6% higher than budget and 44% higher than last year. The increase in energy costs and bank interest would explain a large portion

of the increased expenditure when compared to the previous year. In Law Library Properties Ltd, Repairs and Maintenance expenditure is 20% ahead of budget due to increased level of repairs and maintenance in the buildings. In addition, in LLPL, there were some legal and professional fees incurred as part of the new refinance arrangement agreed with AIB in October 2023, covered in more detail below.

Given the impact of the increase in interest rates and the one-off costs incurred relating to the debt refinancing, the overall position is stable, albeit a little disappointing that half year target was not reached.

Property Financing

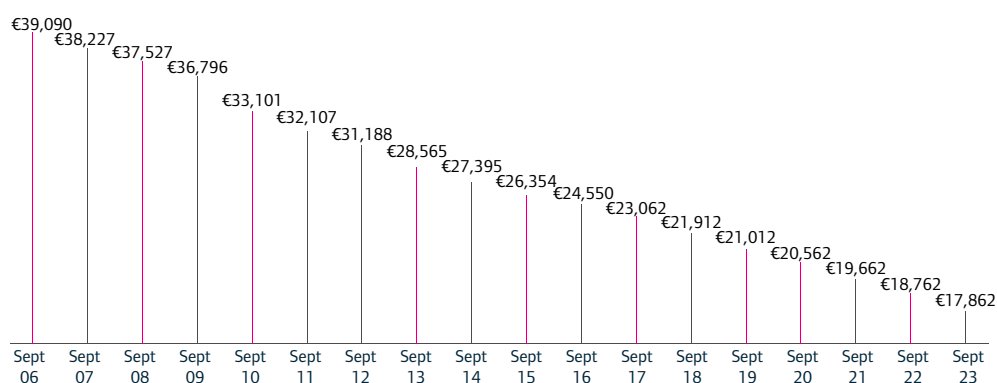
In October 2023, Law Library Properties Ltd. entered into a new 7-year loan agreement with AIB. This followed a tender process undertaken in late 2022 prior to the expiry of the previous agreement. This is the 2nd agreement with AIB and we managed to agree this new arrangement on improved terms, including a reduction in the interest rate margin from 2.15% to 2%.

As part of this process, a building survey was undertaken to review the condition of the three buildings owned by the company. AIB engaged 'The Building Consultancy' to survey LLPLs 3 buildings. In the case of all 3 buildings, they reported that the building was "in sound condition with no major issues, however we note some areas of concern". LLPL engaged structural and fire specialists to review the findings and a schedule of rectification works was agreed. The total estimate of these works is €1.1M and these works are progressing well.

The key terms agreed between LLPL / AIB to refinance the debt.

- €18M & €1M to part fund building rectification works.
- 2.0% margin
- Annual Capital Repayments Y1, €450K, Y2 €500K, Y3-Y7 €550k.
- 5 years plus two one-year extension options.
- 50% of loan to be fixed.

Over the last number of years, the company have reduced debt from a high of €39M in 2006 to €17.9M in September 2023 and reducing debt remains a key priority of LLPL.



2022 LSRA Levy Collection

In November 2023, the LSRA issued the Levy Assessment Notice 2022 (LAN) to The Bar of Ireland. The amount invoiced for 2022 was €671,614, and the levy was applied to each members of the Law Library at a sum of €301.85 per barrister.

Collection of 2023 Levy

The LSRA are due to issue the levy for 2023 in June 2024. It is expected that the 2023 LSRA Levy will be in the region of €373 per member.

ESTATE SERVICES

Over the last year, the Estates Service Team made very good progress in several important areas across our property portfolio, which has improved services to members with the reopening of the Café in the Distillery building and ensured a successful refinancing of Law Library Properties Ltd. property debt. The team are also leading several projects aimed at addressing on going challenges of managing our aging properties and, working closely with the Environmental Sustainability Sub-committee, have introduced several initiatives to help the Council progress the environmental strategy.

Operational Update

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of calls to the Estates Helpdesk. In 2023, a total of 2,603 calls were logged, an increase of 40% on the previous year. Most of the calls logged relate to heating and electrical issues, leaks, and lighting. In most cases, the calls are addressed immediately, and of the total calls logged, 93% are closed and the balance relate to issues that require longer term solutions, some of which are covered below.

In May 2024, following a detailed investigation by a specialist surveyor, we engaged a roofing firm to fix the 46 leaks identified in a survey of Distillery & Church Street buildings. We expect most of this work to be completed this summer.

Covered in more detail in the Environmental Sustainability report, a key focus of the Estate Services team rectifying findings from our energy audit. Our aging buildings are operating on older and inefficient systems. However, we have improved some of the building control systems which enable proactive daily management of our buildings. This has resulted in reduction in the consumption of gas, electricity, and water usage, which not only helps with the environmental sustainability strategy but also reduces costs.

Office occupancy remained strong through the year and the Estates team are managing a waiting list with over 50 members currently seeking offices. Currently Church Street is 100% occupied and there is just one room vacant in the Distillery building. Estates supported over 50 members take occupancy in 41 offices between June 23 and May 2024, with 35 members vacating or moving offices in this period.

Projects: Jorge's at the Bar

Members will be aware that the Dock facility closed in September 2022 following a period of poor trade, partly but not entirely, as a result of the pandemic. In October 2023, the Council approved a proposal to upgrade and re-open the café, in partnership with Jorge Pastor, the caterer who also provides services at The Tea Rooms and in Church Street and the Estates Team managed this project. In order to re-introduce a service as soon as possible, in January 2024, Jorge's Café opened a take-away service while the refurbishment works continued on the large sit-in venue. In April 2024, the new sit-in café, **Jorge's at the Bar**, opened providing a full dine-in service for breakfast and lunch to members.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from members as they greatly appreciate an informal area for meetings with clients and colleagues. Members are asked to continue to support this new amenity.



Law Library Properties Ltd – Building Rectification Works

Following structural and fire safety surveys, undertaken during the property loan refinancing with AIB, a schedule of rectification works was prepared. The total estimate for these works, provided by specialists, was in the region of €1.1M. Works commenced immediately and will take approximately two years to complete in full. One of the key projects, the upgrading of all fire doors, is scheduled to commence in July at a cost, fully tendered, of €0.4M. These projects will be a focus of the Estates Team in 2024 and 2025.

THE BAR OF IRELAND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP

The Bar of Ireland’s strategy reflects an understanding that change is needed in how we manage our organisation in order to work towards a carbon neutral future. We are passionate and excited about making changes that will make our future safer and environmentally sustainable.

Our four core themes which will enable us to that are:

- Act as a sustainable organisation
- Empower our People
- Reduce our GHG emissions
- Inclusion of Biodiversity

2023 MILESTONES

We have already made significant progress in our aims to act as a sustainable organisation.



Electricity (LLPS) procured from 100% renewable energy



Energy consumption (LLPL)
2022- 3.9M kWh
2023 - 3.1M kWh
Consumption saving 21%



139.36 tonnes of paper waste shredded



230 Kg of fluorescent light tubes recycled



2,204Kg electrical waste equipment recycled



Hybrid working contributes to the reduction of our overall carbon footprint



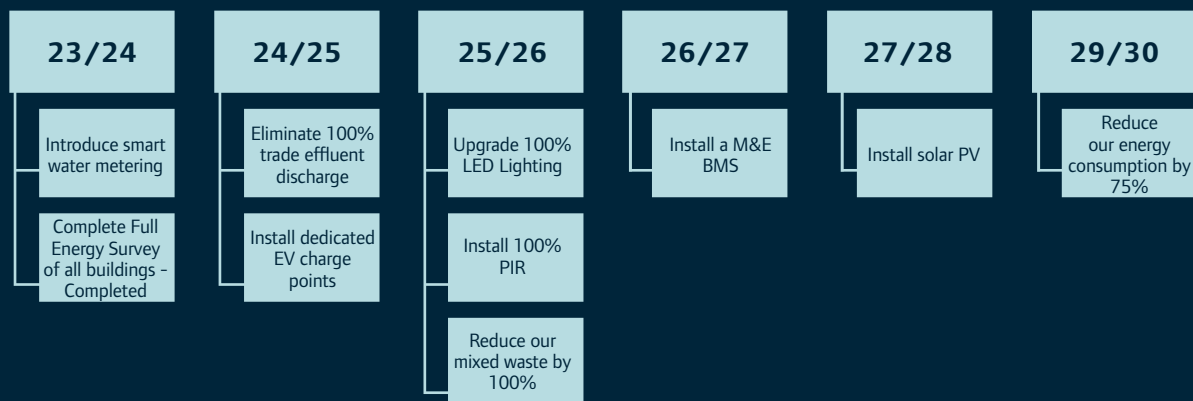
6 tonnes of Ink cartridges recycled



3.545 tonnes of glass recycled from the Sheds

OUR 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We have set out clear targets and goals, in order for us to reduce our carbon footprint from 2.85¹, protect the planet and make a positive impact on people’s lives. Some of the projects planned in furtherance of our aims are:



Note: ¹ Level one carbon footprint only based on the consumption of energy and number of persons using the building.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE -ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

Last year, under the auspices of the Finance Committee, the Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee was established. Currently chaired by Leesha O'Driscoll SC, the establishment of the subcommittee is a further step in raising the awareness of and setting targets for Environmental Sustainability.

Environmental Sustainability

The Bar of Ireland is committed to integrating environmental sustainability principles into our core business strategy and aims to be a leader in environmental sustainability in the legal sector. The implementation of an organisational Sustainability/Environmental Strategy is one of the Council's priority objectives for 2023/24 and the Environmental Sustainability subcommittee is working to encourage member participation and engagement in environmentally sustainable practices. The Council will be establishing organisational goals for the future in order to progress our Environmental Sustainability policy. Improving our environmental sustainability as an organisation will bring many benefits to members by enhancing the environment in which we work and reducing energy costs. We are all required to work towards the Irish government pledge to halve emissions by 2030.

Future proofing & other initiatives

At an organisational level, an energy audit was carried out in September 2023 which made over thirty recommendations on how we can reduce our energy usage. Some of these have already been implemented and others are in train.

In addition:

- Smart Flow water meters have been installed in the Church Street and Distillery Buildings to enable the Estates team to monitor overall water usage, identify leaks and reduce water usage.
- A bin compactor has been recently installed to reduce waste volume.
- Procurement and travel policies have been updated in accordance with our environmental sustainability objectives.
- The Director of the Bar of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme was asked to report on the approach of the investment fund managers to integrating ESG and responsible investment in their decision making and this information will be considered by the Finance Committee.

Biodiversity

The subcommittee engaged with the Courts Service and OPW and obtained agreement for the back lawn behind the Law Library to be rewilded. It is therefore being left uncut from May to September. Successive natural reseeding should lead to increased biodiversity in this space over time. The OPW have also been asked to consider whether a section against the back wall could be devoted to planting hedgerows. Within the boundaries of the Distillery building, the subcommittee has identified three areas where biodiversity can be introduced and/or improved and works are expected to commence on this shortly.

Solar PV and LED lights

Due to the age of our buildings, the most beneficial upgrading works, such as changing to LED sensor lighting and installing PV solar panels, will require significant capital expenditure and therefore of necessity must be implemented on a phased bases over the coming years and this is being planned.

LED Lights:

After completing a tender process to upgrade all lights the most competitive cost was €1.3M which was higher than expected. This work will now take place on a phased bases depending on financial constraints and having regard to other priority projects such as fire safety works.

Solar PV:

We have recently engaged a solar PV contractor and are currently reviewing their proposal to install panels in Church Street and Distillery buildings.

Paper usage and folders

The figure for member printing and copying in 2023 was 3,381,359. This is an increase from 2022 a decrease on the 2019 figure which was the last full year before the pandemic and therefore provides the baseline. The current figure equates to over one tree every working day being used up by the Bar. The subcommittee has been working with the IT and communications departments on an information campaign to inform members of ways to reduce printing and copying through better practices and better use of technology. Leftover folders following the conclusion of cases is a source of considerable waste as they end up in landfill if not reused. Members are being encouraged to re-use them or send them back to the law firms from whence they came through the DX. Areas in the middle atrium in the Distillery building and outside the issue desk in the Law Library have been allocated for spare folders to be taken by those who can reuse them. The subcommittee is endeavouring to liaise with the Law Society to find a circular economy solution in the longer term in relation to this issue.

Segregation of waste

Sixty new bins for segregating waste have been placed in the Four Courts, Church St. and Distillery buildings, alongside a campaign on the digital noticeboards encouraging members to segregate their waste. Tenants of offices in the Distillery and Church Street buildings have been invited by Estates to indicate if they wish to actively opt in to the 'reduce waste' initiative by dispensing with the need for a general office bin. So far we have had a positive uptake on this from members but we would like more members to opt in.

EV charge points

The EU (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2021 for Electric Vehicle recharging infrastructure places a requirement on all existing non-residential buildings with more than twenty car parking spaces to have a minimum number of recharging points installed by 1st January 2025. Estates are currently considering this requirement and are investigating suitable locations and operational needs. This may impact on fire safety and the management and operation of car parking spaces within both the Distillery and Church St. Buildings.

Environmental Sustainability reporting

The subcommittee is in the process of finalising an environmental sustainability reporting template which is based on the CCBE and other guidance. It is designed to capture all information about the Bar's activities relevant to environmental sustainability so that the Bar will be ready for any legislative requirement that is imposed in the future regarding environmental sustainability reporting.

- Many members, either individually or through the Specialist Bar Associations, play a significant role in activities to the benefit of the environment in terms of engaging with the public and policy makers and legislators on climate matters, strategic litigation and pro bono work.
- The Council launched the natural justice campaign in December 2023 and this is another example of the intangible positive impact our organisation can have. For more information visit www.naturaljustice.ie
- Our environmental sustainability reporting should, in the future, provide information on these intangible benefits so that the Bar's collective positive impact can be recorded and reported.

The members of the Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee for 2024 are Leesha O'Driscoll SC (chair), Bartholomew Begley BL, Harriet Burgess BL, Roddy Maguire BL, Kate O'Loughlin BL, Sarah Reid BL, Gavin Rothwell BL, Tricia Sheehy Skeffington BL, Colin Potts (Director of Finance & Operations), John Cronin (Estates Manager) and Nuala Brangan (EHS Coordinator).

HUMAN RESOURCES

2024 has been a year of significant successes and challenges for the People Strategy of our organisation. We have effectively implemented a number of key initiatives that have improved our workplace wellbeing and enhanced employee satisfaction.

The importance of diversity and inclusion in our work environment has moved further into focus in recent times. The executive staff will continue to embrace diversity and inclusion by tackling bias through awareness training, practicing inclusive leadership and being accountable. These actions not only impact our organisational culture, but also directly contribute to an improved service experience for members.

In a tight labour market with an elevated competition for talent, our recruitment activities have been challenging and time consuming. We welcomed 17 new staff members this year, many of whom were replacing staff leaving the organisation and 3 of whom were new positions, approved by the Council. To aid their integration into our team, we have improved the onboarding protocol to ensure the transition into role is as smooth as possible. HR maintains an ongoing review of our employee policies, benefits and career pathways to manage our brand as an employer of choice. The attraction of strong candidates and the retention of the existing talent within our organisation is a central focus for the new legal year.

Total headcount: 80 people

FTE [full time equivalent] :72.3

FTE Report 30th June 2024	
Department	FTE
CEO	1
Communications & Member Services	10
Estate Services	5.53
Finance [Inc Fee Recovery] & Member Relations	8.6
Human Resources	1.2
IT Department	7
Library & Information Services	24.98
Reception	4.16
Regulation	2
Education and Professional Development	3.8
Sheds Club Bar	2.06
DDRC	2

Gender Break Down

Undefined: 2%



Male: 40% Female: 58%

Gender Break Down in Management Position

[Employee holds a manager or director role]



Male: 50% Female: 50%

& Part Time Full Time Employees:
26% v 74%

Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap Median %: **2.66%**

Gender Pay Gap Mean %: **4.44%**



The GPG in Ireland for 2022 was 9.6% i.e., the average male earned 9.6% more than the average female.

For comparison see recent report published in Oct 2023 by CSO: [Structure of Earnings Survey 2022](#)

SYSTEMS & ICT

The IT helpdesk has seen another busy year with over **5,400** calls logged from members seeking assistance. It is noteworthy that the majority of the tickets raised with IT are now related to suspicious email activity. This is not surprising given the increased activity we see targeting professional services, and indeed there have been many high-profile data breaches involving solicitors practices.

Our **Connect** system was launched in April offering members the opportunity to update their profiles and consume services in an online forum. More functionality is being developed and the **Connect** platform will be our primary delivery channel for most of our member services.

Our networking infrastructure was upgraded in October and included enhanced security measures designed to reduce our risk of data breach. All of our open access terminals in our buildings have been upgraded this year and are running Windows11.

Our firewalls were also refreshed during the year to ensure that these essential security appliances have the latest AI driven security detection technology in place.

The provision of ICT related training sessions continued this year and a number of very worthwhile sessions for members on Office 365 were held as well as a CPD event in the Cork Library.



5,400

calls logged to **IT Help Desk**

167 ICT-Related Training Sessions



TREASURER'S REPORT

Review of Financial Performance for The Bar of Ireland and Related Entities for year ended 30th September 2023

The audited financial statements for the Bar of Ireland are set out in the following pages of this annual report. In the following section I provide an overview of the financial performance of The Bar of Ireland. I have also included a consolidated income and expenditure report for The Bar of Ireland and the other entities which form part of the organisation's group financial structure, with commentary on the key year on year variances between the period under review and the prior year. The financial statements for all entities in The Bar of Ireland Group will be made available at the Annual General Meeting in July.

TBOI External Auditors, HLB Ryan & Co., have been in place for many years. In 2022, the Finance Committee established the Audit Tender Working Group to oversee the appointment of an auditor for a five-year period commencing with the audit of The Bar of Ireland and all subsidiary entities for year ended 30th September 2023. At its meeting on 27th April 2023, the Council approved the appointment of Azets as auditors to The Bar of Ireland for a period of five years commencing with the audit for all entities financial statements for year ended 30th September 2023. Azets completed the audit in January 2024 and presented a clean report to the finance committee on 15th February 2024.

The Bar Of Ireland Financial Accounts

In the legal year ended 30th September 2023, The Council of the Bar of Ireland reported a net income and expenditure surplus of €591K (2022 €1,312K). The surplus is mainly due to gains arising from the decision to include the FRS102 accounting treatment for the employees defined benefit pension scheme, which was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010. More information on this element is provided later in this report.

Excluding the financial adjustments relating to the defined benefit scheme, the organisation recorded an operational surplus of €216K (2022 deficit €2K). The Council approved a break-even budget for the period and the reason for the surplus was a slightly lower level of expenditure than budgeted.

Review of Income & Expenditure

Income at €10.9M was 8.3% higher than the previous year. Subscription rates were set at a level to achieve a break-even budget based on expected member numbers and on planned expenditure on provision of member services. In 2023, general subscription rates increased by 3.4%.

Expenditure at €10.7M was 7% higher than prior year arising partly from a higher inflationary environment and some additional expenditure on services to members. The key year-on-year variances between legal years 2021/22 and 2022/23 are;

- **Library Services** expenditure increased from €1.27M in 2021/22 to €1.37M in 2022/23. At the start of the new legal year, members were provided with access to the new Legal Search Connect service at an annual cost of €90K. In addition, the Westlaw UK legal database service was expanded to beyond Law Library premises, making it available to all members, for an additional cost of €29K.
- **IT Services** expenditure increased by 10%, to €1.28M. There are two main reasons for this increased expenditure. Firstly, the most significant IT cost is the software licenses for the provision of Office 365 to all members, which at a cost of €0.7M, is 55% of the total IT Services budget. In 2022, when the previous 3-year fixed price agreement with Microsoft expired there was an inflationary increase applied, which increased the overall costs by approx. 11%. This new price will be held for 3 years. Following a detailed review of cyber risks, the finance committee approved an investment in cyber security to provide a 24/7 service in this area. The cost of providing this increased cyber cover was €80K.

- Under the cost centre, **Member Services**, there was a 10% increase in the costs of providing the member life and illness benefit in 2023 from €0.45M to €0.5M due to inflation and an increased level of claims. This service was fully tendered.
- Included in **Legal and Consultancy** is the Hannah Carney & Associates fee for delivering the future business model report which was noted in last year's annual report and shared with members in advance of the July 2023 AGM.
- **Staff** costs increased by 7.7% to €4.14M, which is partly due to inflationary increases and also includes new positions approved by Council in education and training and marketing. As noted in last year's annual report, there is more active promotion of the profession underway and increased supports required for the 17 Specialist Bar Associations.
- The income and expenditure report includes actuarial gains on the **defined benefit pension scheme**. A detailed note is provided later in this report but in summary, following an actuarial review of the closed staff defined benefit pension scheme (closed to any new staff since 2010) at 30th September 2023, the actuary reports a net surplus of assets less obligations of €2.3M. As part of this surplus relates to prior years, a portion of this has been treated as a prior year adjustment and the surplus relating to this year, as reported in the accounts, is €464K.

Summary

For year ended 30th September 2022, The Bar of Ireland reported an income and expenditure surplus of €591,728, (2022 surplus €1,311,732). However, adjusted for the actuarial gains on the pension scheme, which are not available to fund expenditure other than future pension scheme obligations, the surplus was €216,392 (2022 deficit of €2,268).

Reserves for The Bar of Ireland at 30th September 2023 are €10,668.380m (2022, €10,076,651).

Note on Pension Commitments & FRS102 Accounting.

The Council of The Bar of Ireland provides the following pension schemes for employees:

DEFINED BENEFIT SCHEME (DB)	DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEME (DC)
This scheme was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010 and replaced with DC Scheme.	This scheme was established on 1st January 2011 replacing the closed DB Scheme.

Currently there are 23 active members (current staff), 26 deferred members (ex-staff not reached retirement age) and 11 pensioners.

Historically, TBOI has accounted for the DB scheme on a full liability basis, linked to the triennial review processes noted above and up to 2022, the scheme has remained in a liability position.

Our new auditors, Azets, recommended applying the FRS102 accounting standard for Defined Benefit Pension accounting. This is quite an onerous obligation and costly obligation. However, the finance committee agreed with their recommendation and the financial statements for year ended 30th September 2023 include this detailed note in accordance with the standard. Please refer to note 8 'Pension Commitments' of the financial statements.

In summary, the pension scheme actuary has carried out a review of the Defined Benefit Scheme financial position as at 30th September 2023 and has reported that the scheme is now in surplus with an asset position of €2.3M. FRS102 requires the organisation to treat this as an asset in the balance sheet and as such, the net asset position of The Council of the Bar of Ireland has increased to reflect this.

It is important to note that the standard requires us to include this asset, and it's positive that the financial position of this pension obligation has improved from a previous liability position, the organisation does not have access to this asset as it can only be used to fund future pensions obligations.

THE BAR OF IRELAND GROUP CONSOLIDATED INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Table 1 summarises the consolidated income and expenditure position of the Bar of Ireland Group the year ended 30th September 2023.

The Bar of Ireland and Subsidiary Entities recorded a **consolidated operating surplus before taxation of €1.66M** for year ended 30th September 2023, a fall of 23% on prior year mainly due to the increase in interest rates and the impact on the cost of financing the property debt in Law Library Properties Ltd.

Table 1

TBOI Group Consolidated Income & Expenditure		
Year Ended 30th September	2023 €'000 Actual	2022 €'000 Actual
Turnover	16,595	15,789
Administrative Expenses	(14,072)	(13,194)
Operating Surplus	2,523	2,595
Interest Payable and Similar Chargers	(864)	(426)
Surplus on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation	1,659	2,169
Tax on Surplus on Ordinary Activities	(263)	(77)
Surplus on Ordinary Activities After Taxation	1,396	2,092
Payment of LSRA Levy for 2021	0	(127)
Retained Operating Surplus for Year	1,269	1,965
Exceptional Items		
Loss on Investment Property	(2,076)	(4,530)
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	375	1,314
Retained Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	(432)	(1,251)
Reserve Movement		
Opening Reserves	42,013	43,264
Retained Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	(432)	(1,251)
Closing Reserves	41,582	42,013

There are two 'exceptional items' to note.

1. The loss on Investment property arises from a reduction in the valuation of the three properties owned by Law Library Properties Ltd., which is explained in more detail below.
2. An actuarial gain on the defined benefit pension scheme following an actuarial review at 30th September 2023, covered in detail earlier in this report.

Review of Income:

Consolidated income at €16.6M is 5% higher than prior year mainly due to the increase in subscriptions required to pay for member services, partly due to inflation, and the increase in service charges in Law Library Properties Ltd. required to cover the increase in energy costs and building maintenance and repairs.

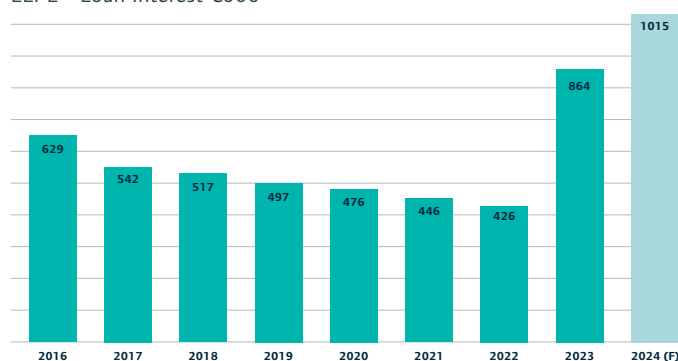
TBOI GROUP TURNOVER		
Entity	€000	% of Total
- TBOI	10,695	64%
- LLPL	4,795	29%
- LLSL	295	2%
- LLFL	270	2%
- CS Club	169	1%
- DDRC	371	2%
TOTAL	16,595	

Review of Expenditure:

Consolidated administrative expenses at €14M is 6% higher than last year. The main variances are already explained under The Bar of Ireland review, which accounts for 77% of the total group expenditure. In addition, there were material inflationary increases in Law Library Properties Ltd. (LLPL) service charge expenses in Cleaning, Security, Repairs and Maintenance, Insurance, and other expenses. Also, in LLPL, Legal and Consulting fees were higher for several, non-recurring, reasons including Legal Fees and Stamp Duty supporting tenants with lease renewals for offices (€47K), Legal and other Professional Fees associated with the refinancing of the property loan with AIB (€63K), and Professional Fees associated with the organisational property strategy feasibility review (€75K).

Interest payable on property debt increased from €0.42M in 2021/22 to €0.86M in 2022/23 following the record run of 10 interest rate increases between July 2022 and September 2023, which placed an additional financial challenge on Law Library Properties Ltd. Table 3 summarised the cost of interest in LLPL over the last number of years.

LLPL - Loan Interest €000



Loss on Investment Property - Reduction in Property Valuation

As noted last year, as part of our property loan arrangement with AIB, Law Library Properties Ltd. is required to engage a professional valuer to assess the property valuations on a regular basis. Lisney were engaged to carry out the valuation of our buildings on 30th September 2022 and this resulted in a reduction of €4.5M from the higher 2019 Lisney valuation. As part of the debt refinancing, which was completed in October 2023, AIB required an updated valuation as at September 2023. This valuation resulted in a further diminution from €49.1M in September 2022 to €47.1M in September 2023. Table 4 summarises the original cost, the valuations over the years and the Loan to Value (LTV), which despite the fall in value, will remain low at 38%.

LLPL - PROPERTY COST, VALUATIONS & LTV

	Original Cost	Valuations						
		Dec-10	Jan-14	Jan-15	Sep-17	Sep-19	Sep-22	Sep-23
	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M
Church St.	6.5	9.8	10.5	11.6	12.6	12.8	10.6	10.2
Distillery	38.4	30.0	30.0	31.5	37.8	38.4	36.9	35.3
Jameson	7.3	2.5	1.7	1.2	1.8	2.3	1.6	1.6
TOTAL	52.1	42.3	42.2	44.3	52.1	53.5	49.1	47.1
Debt	33.0	33.0	29.0	25.0	23.8	21.0	18.7	17.9
LTV	63.3%	78.1%	68.7%	56.4%	45.6%	39.3%	38.1%	38.0%

Summary

For year ended 30th September 2023, The Bar of Ireland reported a consolidated income and expenditure operating surplus €1.27M, (€1.96M, 2022) before the exceptional items.

Overall, despite the challenges posed by inflation, and the interest rate increased, the organisation's financial position remains stable.



SEÁN Ó HUALLACHÁIN SC

Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

REPORTS AND NON-STATUTORY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

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Trustees

Conor J Maguire SC
Denis McCullough SC
Turlough O'Donnell SC

Bankers

Bank Of Ireland
Law Library Financial Services
Four Courts
Dublin 7

Auditors

Azets Audit Services Ireland Limited
3rd Floor
40 Mespil Road
Dublin 4
D04 C2N4

Solicitors

McKenna Durkan Solicitors
66 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2

Fieldfisher Ireland
The Capel Building
Mary's Abbey
Dublin 7

Statement of Finance Committee Responsibilities

Section 29 of the Constitution of the Council of the Bar of Ireland states that the business of the Council shall be conducted by eight permanent committees and such other committees as the Council may, from time to time, establish. This includes the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee shall have the function of dealing with all matters relating the finances of the Council and its associate companies for the maintenance and development of the Law Library and other properties of the Council and the development of information technology in the Law Library.

Under the terms of reference of the Finance Committee, reference 2 states that the committee will monitor all matters relating to external audit requirements, banking arrangements, debt compliance obligations, treasury & financial risk management, and other financial regulatory and accounting standard compliance.

In preparing the financial statements the members of the Committee are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the entity will continue in business.

The members of the Committee are responsible for ensuring that the organisation maintains proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the entity and to help them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the entity's Constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by Committee on 11th April 2024 and by The Council of the Bar of Ireland on 18th April 2024

Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements

Opinion on the non-statutory financial statements (the 'financial statements') of The Council of the Bar of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the entity as at 30 September 2023 and of the net movement in funds for the financial year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

- Income and Expenditure Account;
- the Balance Sheet; and
- the related notes 1 to 11 including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' issued by the Financial Reporting Council ("the relevant financial reporting framework").

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report.

We are independent of the organisation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the members' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the members with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this reports.

Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements (continued)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Finance Committee Report and Audited Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Finance Committee are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Finance Committee Responsibilities Statement, the Finance Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Finance Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Finance Committee are responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Finance Committee either intend to liquidate the organisation or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

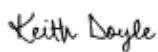
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: <https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards>. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

Use of our report

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Council of The Bar of Ireland as a body, for management purposes in accordance with our engagement letter and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the organisation, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.



Keith Doyle

For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services Ireland Limited
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm,
3rd Floor, 40 Mespil Road, Dublin 4, D04 C2N4.

Date: 25 • 6 • 2024

Income and Expenditure Account

For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

	Note	2023 €	As restated 2022 €
INCOME			
Entrance & Application Fees		141,030	161,740
Junior Subscriptions		7,913,700	7,403,002
Senior Subscriptions		2,724,236	2,450,596
Parental/Personal Leave Subscriptions		31,247	40,347
Other Income		93,066	75,004
Total		<u>10,903,279</u>	<u>10,130,689</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Library Services	AP 1	1,368,073	1,269,241
IT Services	AP 2	1,280,245	1,167,420
Member Services	AP 3	1,459,982	1,419,057
Placement/Representation		16,000	16,000
CSR Schemes		57,832	56,967
Communications & Policy		221,221	182,238
Marketing & Events		79,659	60,579
Participation International Forums		55,042	54,250
Bar Council & Committee meetings / expenses		45,076	25,130
Membership of Professional Associations		11,382	12,967
Education & Training		105,922	91,280
Regulation		(17,098)	80,145
Properties & Facilities	AP 4	1,566,133	1,469,399
Administration Expenses	AP 5	301,948	263,021
Staff Costs	AP 6	4,135,470	3,837,794
		<u>10,686,887</u>	<u>10,005,487</u>
OTHER ITEMS			
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pensions schemes	8	464,000	1,314,000
Exceptional items	AP 7	(88,664)	(127,470)
		<u>375,336</u>	<u>1,186,530</u>
Net Surplus to Reserves		<u>591,728</u>	<u>1,311,732</u>


All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet**As At 30 September 2023**

	<i>Note</i>	2023 €	As restated 2022 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Fixed Assets	2	2,821,208	2,580,212
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Current Assets			
Debtors	3	7,990,022	9,177,674
Cash at bank and in hand	4	194,876	413,159
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		8,184,898	9,530,833
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	(2,674,726)	(3,904,394)
Net Current Assets		<u>5,510,172</u>	<u>5,686,439</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		8,331,380	8,266,651
Pension asset	8	2,337,000	1,810,000
Net Assets		<u><u>10,668,380</u></u>	<u><u>10,016,651</u></u>
Financed By:			
Reserves	6	10,668,380	10,076,651
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		<u>10,668,380</u>	<u>10,076,651</u>



Sara Phelan
Date: 18 · 4 · 2024



Roderick Maguire
Date: 18 · 4 · 2024

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The significant accounting policies and measurement bases adopted are summarised below. They have all been applied consistently throughout the financial year and to the preceding year.

General Information and Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (which has been recognised as best practice for financial reporting by charities in Ireland) and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

The Council has availed of the exemption in FRS 102 7.1B from including a cash flow statement in the financial statements on the grounds that the Council is small.

The Council's functional and presentational currency is Euros.

Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a basis other than going concern.

Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Fixed assets are recorded at cost.

Depreciation is provided so as to write off the cost of the assets to their residual value of nil, over their estimated useful lives. The rates of depreciation are as follows:

Long leasehold	10% straight line
Fixtures and fittings and Equipment	12.5% straight line
Equipment	20% & 33.3% straight line
IT Systems and Infrastructure	20% straight line

The costs of assets specifically acquired for a project and funded by that project are charged to income and expenditure in the financial year in which they are acquired.

Defined contribution pension plan

The Council operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the Council pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the Council has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in profit or loss when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Statement of Financial Position. The assets of the plan are held separately from the Council in independently administered funds.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Defined benefit pension plan

The Council operates a defined benefit plan for certain employees. A defined benefit plan defines the pension benefit that the employee will receive on retirement, usually dependent upon several factors including but not limited to age, length of service and remuneration. A defined benefit plan is a pension plan that is not a defined contribution plan.

The liability recognised in the Statement of Financial Position in respect of the defined benefit plan is the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting date less the fair value of plan assets at the reporting date (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled.

The defined benefit obligation is calculated using the projected unit credit method. Annually the company engages independent actuaries to calculate the obligation. The present value is determined by discounting the estimated future payments using market yields on high quality corporate bonds that are denominated in Euros and that have terms approximating to the estimated period of the future payments ('discount rate').

The fair value of plan assets is measured in accordance with the FRS 102 fair value hierarchy and in accordance with the Council's policy for similarly held assets. This includes the use of appropriate valuation techniques.

Actuarial gains and losses arising from experience adjustments and changes in actuarial assumptions are charged or credited to other comprehensive income. These amounts together with the return on plan assets, less amounts included in net interest, are disclosed as 'Remeasurement of net defined benefit liability'.

The cost of the defined benefit plan, recognised in profit or loss as employee costs, except where included in the cost of an asset, comprises:

- a) the increase in net pension benefit liability arising from employee service during the period; and
- b) the cost of plan introductions, benefit changes, curtailments and settlements.

The net interest cost is calculated by applying the discount rate to the net balance of the defined benefit obligation and the fair value of plan assets.

Trade and Other Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised initially at transaction price (including transaction costs) unless a financing arrangement exists in which case, they are measured at the present value of future receipts discounted at a market rate. Subsequently these are measured at amortised cost less any provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the Council will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The amount of the provision is the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the effective interest rate. All movements in the level of the provision required are recognised in the profit and loss.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Council has a present legal or constructive obligation arising as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made. Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the same value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to passage of time is recognised as interest expense.

Creditors

Trade and other creditors are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at bank and in hand and short-term current asset investments.

Current asset investments comprise cash deposits and are measured initially at the cash amount on deposit and subsequently at the cash amount expected to be received.

Income

Income is recognised to the extent that the Council obtains the right to consideration in exchange for its performance. Income comprises the fair value of consideration received and receivable exclusive of value added tax and after discounts and rebates.

Income from the provision of services is recognised in the accounting period in which the services are provided.

Income from Donations and other sponsorships is recognised when it is receivable.

Stock of books

It is the policy of the Council of the Bar of Ireland to write off the cost of books against income in the year in which they are purchased thereby leaving a nil value for the stock of books held on the balance sheet.

Exceptional Item

Exceptional items are those that the management' view are required to be separately disclosed by virtue of their size or incidence to enable a full understanding of the entity's financial performance.

Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Benefits received and receivable as an incentive to sign an operating lease are recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term unless another systematic basis is representative of the time pattern of the lessee's benefit from the use of the leased asset.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Impairments of assets, other than financial instruments

Where there is objective evidence that recoverable amounts of an asset is less than its carrying value the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount resulting in an impairment loss. Impairment losses are recognised immediately in the profit and loss account, with the exception of losses on previously revalued tangible fixed assets, which are recognised in other comprehensive income to the extent of any previously recognised revaluation increase accumulated in equity, in respect of that asset.

Where the circumstances causing an impairment of an asset no longer apply, then the impairment is reversed through the profit and loss account, except for impairments on previously revalued tangible assets, which are treated as revaluation increases to the extent that the revaluation was recognised in equity.

The recoverable amount of tangible fixed assets, goodwill and other intangible fixed assets is the higher of the fair value less cost to sell of the asset and its value in use. The value in use of these assets is the present value of the cash flows expected to be derived from those assets. This is determined by reference to the present value of the future cash flows of the Company which is considered by the members to be a single cash generating unit.

Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectation of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The Council makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The management consider the accounting estimates and assumptions below to be its critical accounting judgements and estimates:

(1) Establishing useful economic lives for depreciation purposes of property, plant and equipment

Long-lived assets, consisting primarily of plant and machinery, fixtures, fittings and equipment, comprise a significant portion of the total assets. The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on the estimated useful economic lives of each type of asset estimates of residual values. The management regularly review the assets useful economic lives and change them as necessary to reflect current thinking on remaining lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in asset useful lives can have a significant impact on the depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. Detail of the useful economic live is included in the accounting policies.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

(2) Providing for doubtful debts

The Council makes an estimate of the recoverable value of the trade and other debtors. The Council uses estimates based on historical experience in determining the level of debts, which the Council believes, will not be collected. These estimates include such factors as the current credit rating of the debtor, the ageing profile of debtors and historical experience. Any significant reduction in the level of customers that default on payments or other significant improvements that resulted in a reduction in the level of the bad debt provision would have a positive impact on the operating results. The level of provision required is reviewed by management on an on-going basis.

(3) Provisions and accruals

Provisions are recognised when the Council has present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that the Council will be required to settle the probable outflow of resources, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

(4) Prepayments

Prepayments have been estimated based on payments made in one period, for services which the Council expects to receive the benefit in a future period. The basis of estimation used by the Council has been formed by a calculation of the number of days to which the expense relates, and therefore the deferral of this expense.

2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	<i>Leasehold Premises</i>	<i>Fixtures & Fittings</i>	<i>Equipment</i>	<i>IT Systems & Infrastructure</i>	<i>Total</i>
	€	€	€	€	€
Cost:					
At 1 October 2022	3,611,154	443,657	207,345	1,082,146	5,344,302
Additions	-	1,279	3,360	571,949	576,588
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 30 September 2023	3,611,154	444,936	210,705	1,654,095	5,920,890
Accumulated depreciation:					
At 1 October 2022	1,742,272	401,695	159,433	460,690	2,764,090
Charge for the year	108,062	19,835	20,165	187,530	335,592
On disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 30 September 2023	1,850,334	421,530	179,598	648,220	3,099,682
Net Book Value:					
At 30 September 2023	1,760,820	23,406	31,107	1,005,875	2,821,208
At 30 September 2022	1,868,869	41,962	47,913	621,468	2,580,212

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

3. DEBTORS

	2023	2022
	€	€
Due after more than one year		
Amount due from Related Entities	900,000	900,000
Due within one year		
Subscriptions in Arrears	102,247	146,293
Prepayments and Sundry Debtors	1,267,090	1,349,654
Amounts due from Related Entities	5,720,685	6,781,727
	<u>7,990,022</u>	<u>9,177,674</u>

All balances due from connect parties are unsecured, non-interest bearing and repayable on demand.

4. CASH AT BANK

	2023	2022
	€	€
Cash on Hand	1,048	4,532
B.O.I. Account	193,819	408,618
B.O.I. Sterling Account	9	9
	<u>194,876</u>	<u>413,159</u>

5. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one-year

	2023	As restated 2022
	€	€
Subscriptions paid in advance	421,344	501,154
Creditors & Accruals	2,310,674	3,279,697
Taxation Creditors	122,708	123,543
	<u>2,674,726</u>	<u>3,904,397</u>

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

6. RESERVES

	2023 €	As restated 2022 €
Opening Balance	7,553,348	7,555,615
Prior year adjustments	2,523,304	1,209,304
Add Net Surplus	591,728	1,311,732
	<u>10,668,380</u>	<u>10,076,651</u>

7. RETIREMENT BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS

The company operates a defined contribution scheme for some of its employees. The pension entitlements of employees are secured by contributions of the company to a separately administered pensions fund. The defined contribution pension charge for the financial year was €369,301 (2022: €328,724). The amount outstanding at the financial year end was €35,100 (2022: €28,858).

8. PENSION COMMITMENTS

The Council of The Bar of Ireland provides the following pension schemes for employees:

- A Defined Benefit scheme was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010 and
- A Defined Contribution scheme, which was established on 1st January 2011 replacing the DB Scheme.

The Defined Benefit scheme was closed in 2010 due to the increased substantial costs of maintaining such schemes. Although the scheme was closed in 2010, accrued benefits remain and the Council for the Bar of Ireland are required to fund scheme deficits arising from triennial Actuarial Valuations, which are required by the Pensions Authority.

In 2016, the Defined Benefit Scheme failed to meet the Minimum Funding Standard as defined by the Pensions Authority. This arose due to a major increase in scheme liabilities not being matched with a corresponding increase in scheme assets. This was due to prevailing economic conditions. In particular, falling interest rates which had a compounding effect on the Scheme due to pension increases provisions in the Scheme rules.

In order to address this, an amendment to some of the terms and conditions was made. This followed a consultation process between the Employer and SIPTU / Staff representatives, which ultimately led to a Labour Court hearing on 15th March 2018. On 27th March 2018, the Labour Court issued a recommendation permitting the Employer to limit guaranteed increases to be payable for a period of 5 years post-retirement only. This amendment to Scheme rules was agreed between the Employer, the Trustees and the Pensions Authority.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

Following the subsequent actuarial valuation on 1 April 2018, the Employer was required to pay deficit-reduction contributions to the value of €98,785 per annum for a period of 10 years.

At the April 2021 valuation, the funding position had improved. Following this, the Actuary recommended that the contribution rates could be reduced from 1st April 2021 to €82,000 per annum for a period of 7 years, while remaining on track to close the deficit by the target date. The next Actuarial Valuation is due in April 2024.

The FRS 102 valuations were carried out for the schemes by independent firms of actuary and pension advisors and were based on the benefit structures in place at 30 September 2023.

Defined contribution pension (DC scheme) arrangements are in place for employees joining service after 1 December 2010. Contributions to the DC scheme are charged to the profit and loss as they are incurred.

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2023 €	As restated 2022 €
Reconciliation of present value of plan liabilities		
At the beginning of the year	1,810,000	493,000
Current service cost	63,000	3,000
Actuarial gains/losses	464,000	1,314,000
Contributions	82,000	82,000
Reversal of accrued contributions	(82,000)	(82,000)
	<u>2,337,000</u>	<u>1,810,000</u>

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Current service cost	(63,000)	2,000
	<u>(63,000)</u>	<u>2,000</u>

The amount recognised in the statement of comprehensive income is an actuarial gain of €464,000 (2022 gain of €1,314,000).

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Opening defined benefit obligation	5,267,000	8,930,000
Interest cost	193,000	88,000
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities – Financial assumptions	(380,000)	(3,690,000)
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities – Experience	(58,000)	202,000
Net benefits paid out	(94,000)	(263,000)
Closing defined benefit obligation	<u>4,928,000</u>	<u>5,267,000</u>

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Opening fair value of scheme assets	6,913,000	9,177,000
Expected return on assets (Interest income)	256,000	91,000
Actuarial gains/(losses) on assets	26,000	(2,174,000)
Employer contributions	82,000	82,000
Net benefits paid out	(94,000)	(263,000)
Closing fair value of assets	<u>7,183,000</u>	<u>6,913,000</u>

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date (expressed as weighted averages):

	2023	2022
	%	%
Discount rate	4.20	4.20
Price Inflation	2.70	2.45
Future Salary increases	2.70	2.45
Future Pension increases	3.00-5.00	3.00-5.00
Mortality rates		
For a male aged 65 now	22.7	22.6
For a female aged 65 now	25.1	25.0

Amounts for the current and previous periods are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Defined benefit pension schemes		
Defined benefit obligation	(4,928,000)	(5,267,000)
Scheme	7,183,000	6,913,000
Accrued contributions	82,000	164,000
	<u>2,337,000</u>	<u>1,810,000</u>
Surplus		
Experience adjustments on scheme liabilities	438,000	3,488,000
Experience adjustments on scheme assets	26,000	(2,174,000)
	<u>464,000</u>	<u>1,314,000</u>

9. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS)

The Company has availed of the exemption provided in FRS 102, Section 33, "Related Party Disclosures", not to disclose transactions entered into with fellow group companies that are wholly owned within the group of companies of which the company is a wholly owned member.

Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

10. PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENT

During the year the Trustees identified an error in relation to the accounting treatment and disclosure of the defined benefit pension in the prior year financial statements, resulting in an understatement of the pension asset valuation and fair value movements which has been corrected by way of a prior year adjustment in these financial statements.

The impact was to increase the fair value movement by €1,314,000 and the costs associated with servicing the fund of €48,639. In addition, the 2022 opening retained earnings were increased by €1,209,304.

11. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There have been no significant events since the balance sheet date.

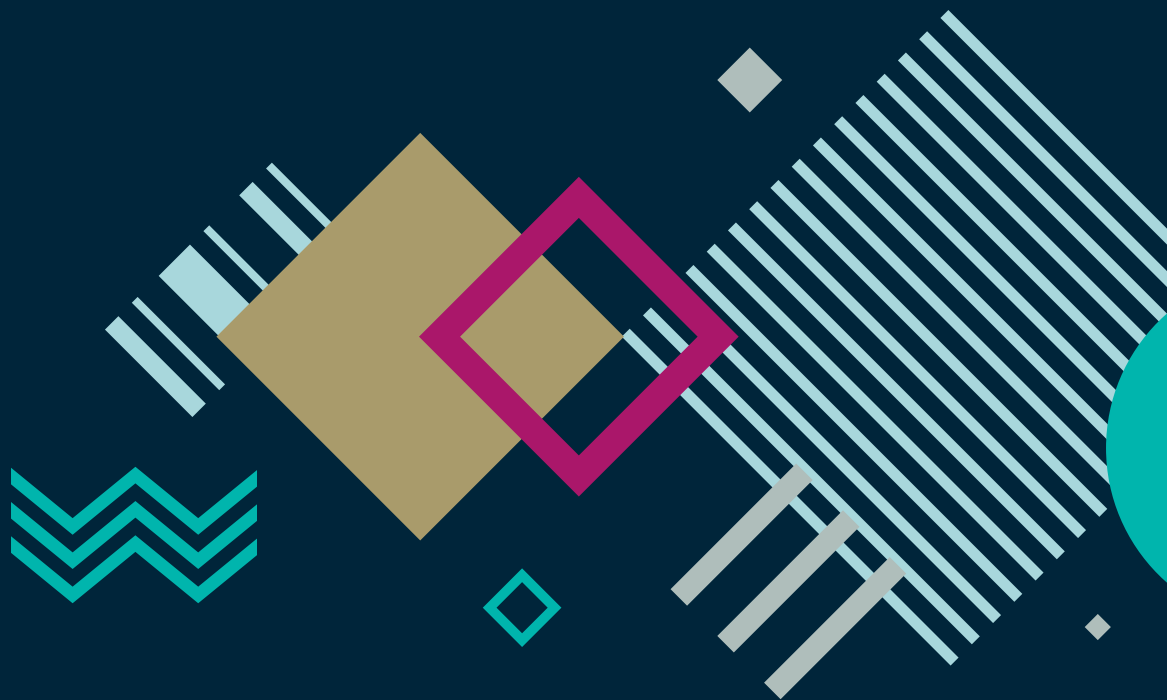
Appendix

For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
1) Library Services		
Books	310,390	332,450
Book Binding / Storage	23,144	23,515
Legal Databases	880,284	760,828
Law Reports & Pink Sheets	150,000	150,000
Library System Maintenance	39,876	39,815
Library Printing & Stationery	6,339	1,773
Other Library Costs	4,273	484
Commission on JILL Database	(46,233)	(39,624)
	<u>1,368,073</u>	<u>1,269,241</u>
2) IT Services		
Software Licensing	698,750	628,818
Managed Services	61,329	66,140
Bandwidth	20,608	56,223
Software Maintenance	52,279	49,538
Web Services	7,740	8,483
Cyber Security	146,476	45,730
Member System Developments	105,534	157,502
Depreciation Charge (LLSL)	-	4,547
Depreciation	187,529	150,439
	<u>1,280,245</u>	<u>1,167,420</u>
3) Member Services		
Document Exchange Service	603,629	627,417
Bar Group Life Assurance	500,000	454,336
Subvention to Kings Inns	91,029	87,418
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	54,605	42,510
Practice Support & Fee Recovery	154,935	159,898
Young Bar Association	14,529	12,314
Specialist Bar Association	9,455	5,169
Member Clubs & Societies	31,800	29,995
	<u>1,459,982</u>	<u>1,419,057</u>

Appendix (Continued)
For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
4) Estate Services		
Criminal Courts of Justice Rent	482,665	479,669
Distillery Usage Fee & Service Charge	268,800	244,000
Cork Rent	56,569	49,866
Rates	223,018	200,985
Light & Heat	57,486	44,905
Security	167,834	167,834
Repairs & Maintenance	53,389	41,239
Cleaning & Laundry	72,742	46,507
Removals, Storage & Shredding	30,565	33,015
Property Insurance	5,002	5,237
Property Insurance	148,063	156,142
	<u>1,566,133</u>	<u>1,469,399</u>
5) Administration Expenses		
Telephone, Printing, Stationery, etc	70,682	58,542
Travel & Meeting Expenses	4,698	3,164
Professional Subscriptions	2,792	3,768
Audit Fees	7,626	7,626
Legal & Other Consultancy	78,242	48,471
General Insurances	84,119	82,424
Bank Charges	41,860	28,189
Provision for Bad Debts	(19,692)	6,360
Miscellaneous	31,622	24,477
	<u>301,948</u>	<u>263,021</u>
6) Staff Costs		
Salaries incl. Employer's PRSI	3,624,551	3,386,999
Employer's contribution to pension scheme	369,301	328,727
Staff Recruitment	37,645	17,451
Staff Training	43,607	48,512
Other Staff Costs	60,366	56,108
	<u>4,135,470</u>	<u>3,837,794</u>
7) Exceptional Express		
LSRA Levy paid on behalf of members	-	127,470
Defined benefit pension adjustment	88,664	-
	<u>88,664</u>	<u>127,470</u>



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