AGM 2025

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

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

I'd firstly like to thank the Revenue Commissioners for providing this ideal space for us today to hold our AGM. In particular, Shay and Owen who have ensured that we have been well looked after and that everything is running smoothly.

Our Development officer, Barbara Dillion, having served tirelessly over the last 8 years will be taking up her new position with the Dept of Social Protection next week. She will be a big loss to the team but she has served the Society well and deserves to move on to bigger and better things – thank you Barbara. Kate Murray, our new development officer has her feet well under the table now and has been doing great things in the role.

With regard to the Committee of Management, Orla Kirwan from the Courts Service, who has served us well over the last 3 years is now stepping back and we would like to thank her for her time, commitment and contribution to the management of the Society.

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

So, to the facts and figures for the year 2024.

GRANT AID 2024

Later on, our treasurer, John Meagher, will take you through the Accounts for 2024. So, I will only concentrate on some of the headline figures for 2024.

A total of **€758,299** (approx) was granted by way of grant or loan in **2024 in 835** cases.

The amount of assistance increased by **6%** from 2023's total of **€715,535** (approx.), while the number of cases increased by about **5%.**

Of the **€725,299** total, just under **€428,216** was by way of non-repayable an increase of 6% on 2023.

€330,082 was by means of interest-free loans, also an increase of **6%** over 2023.

Overall, there was a steady increase in the figures from 2023 across the board.

MEMBERSHIP 2024

New member figures have remained at a steady high from 2023 with 247 new members in the year, a minor decrease of 0.4% on 2023. Contributions have for the first time in a few years increased by 1% with the annual contributions at €543,814 for 2024.

This is despite the number of retiring members not renewing their subscriptions on retirement.

PROMOTION OF THE SOCIETY

Department Presentations

The Society continues to promote the work with a mix of online and physical presentations, talks and information stands. Overall, this has seen a significant increase in attendance as had been the case with 'in-person' presentations which were professionally delivered by Barbara and now Kate. We had a very successful attendance at a Customs 'open day' for new recruits in Dublin Port, in the Central Bank and also at several induction days with the Department of Transport where we held information stands for the day. There were also numerous presentations held throughout the year with the Revenue Commissioners (various locations), the Department of Education, the OPW, the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission and at the AHCPS Conference.

Ezine

The Society's newsletter is now issuing twice a year. It goes out to all of the members who we have valid email addresses for, to all of our contacts in Departments for distribution on their internal websites and it goes up on our own website.

Promotional Offers/Member Rewards
Kate has been working hard on our promotional offers and the promotional area is now live on the PSFS website with details of the first 2 offers:

1. The 'back to school' draw – which members who are approved for an educational grant are automatically entered into a draw for 1 of 10 €500 Curry's/PC world vouchers toward the cost of IT equipment for school.

2. The college bursary – which is open to all members to apply for who have a dependent entering full-time education for the first time. There are 5 bursaries of €2,000 per year each to all those who qualify.

Further promotions are still being worked on and we hope to make them available later this year and early next year.

WORK PRACTICES

Online
Our online practices continue to increase and close to 95% of the Society's work is now done online including payments, membership and grant applications and meetings. We still of course offer paper application forms and payments by cheque and we are only too happy to continue to provide this service. While we do most of the case working over the phone and by email, we also still visit people when it is appropriate to do so.

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

IT
Our IT operations are now run via wireless systems and our phones have now moved to an online facility. On the outside there are no changes to our phone numbers but it now makes it more possible for staff to take phone calls anywhere and has created greater flexibility and autonomy from an IT perspective. It has also opened up the opportunity for more remote working or been able to stay connected to work when attending conferences and meetings. This has really helped with our blended working opportunities in the office.

MANY THANKS TO …

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

1. *Cases Committee*

The Cases Committee give so much commitment and dedication to help us process our applications and keep the work on track and we owe a massive debt of gratitude to them**.** So thank you to Eileen Horgan, Joe Keane, David Cleary and John Meagher who continued through 2024 with their ongoing commitment and dedication to helping our members. Everyone on the Cases Committee give their assistance with such empathy, experience and understanding and, I know that all the staff in HQ are extremely appreciative of their contribution.

2. *Trustee and Supervisory Committee*

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

Our 3 Trustees, Mr Niall Cody, Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, Mr John McKeon, Secretary General of the Dept of Social Protection and Ms Mary Hurley, Secretary General of the Department of Rural & Community Development are always very supportive of the work of the Society and their experience and expertise are an invaluable source of help and guidance for the Society.

3. *Committee of Management*

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

We are delighted to have some new members put their names forward for the Committee this year and we have a good mix of working and retired colleagues now which are a great representation of members across the board. We are always very appreciative of the time, expertise and support we receive from the Committee, who guide and govern the work that we do.

4. *Employee Assistance Service*

As ever, we value our relationship with the Employee Assistance Service and in doing so, ensure that the confidential ethos of both the EAS and the Society are honoured. The

Employee Assistance officers continually look out for our members and also promote the Society on our behalf at every opportunity. And we are very glad to have representation from the EAS on the Committee of Management both past and present. So thank you Susan Clarke and all at the EAS.

5. Credit Unions

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

6. Lyons Financial Services

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

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

Go raibh mile maith agat

Sean Treanor
Chairperson
Public Service Friendly Society