



Irish Deaf Society

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

34th Annual General Meeting

At Deaf Heritage Centre, Deaf Village Ireland

Saturday, 9th April 2016 at 2pm

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Irish Deaf Society as the leading national organisation of the Deaf in Ireland brings equality and human rights to members of the Deaf Community through advocacy and empowerment as full citizens. It shall be achieved through promotion of Irish Sign Language and its related culture and norms.

STANDING ORDERS

1. No alcohol or smoking is permitted in this room
2. Only one signer at a time is permitted with a maximum duration of three minutes
3. All signers must address conference from the platform
4. All remarks must be addressed to the Chairperson
5. All members must be seated when the Chairperson is signing
6. No members shall sign more than once on the same subject. However, any member exercising the right to reply may sign a second time for no more than two minutes
7. The Chairperson shall have the discretion to declare any unresolved subject closed
8. Any members wilfully disregarding the Chairperson's ruling may be suspended during the remainder of a subject under discussion, or for the whole AGM
9. A point of order shall be made where the Chairperson rules as follows:
 1. Incorrect procedures – contrary to Standing Order, e.g. signing longer than allowed
 2. Irrelevancy – wandering from the subject
 3. Inappropriate language – swearing, personal abuse or other inappropriate remarks

4. Breach of Rules – procedures contrary to that laid down by Standing Order
10. A point of information shall apply where a member calls for;
 1. Clarification of a point raised by a signer
 2. Provision of additional information
 3. Correction of a signer on a point of fact
11. Voting on motions and elections shall be made in accordance with the rules laid down by the Constitution
12. The decision of the Chairperson on the matter of procedure is final.

IDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Chairperson | Wendy Murray Jnr |
| Vice Chairperson | Gillian (Lianne) Quigley |
| Honorary Secretary | Ronan Lowry |
| Honorary Treasurer | Melissa Howlett |
| Board of Directors | Lorraine Creed |
| | John Bosco Conama |
| | Jennifer Lynch |
| | Breda O'Grady (resigned November 2015) |

STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chief Executive Officer (CEO) | Eddie Redmond |
| Personal Assistant to CEO | Louise Sheerin |
| Chartered Public Accountant | Fiona Noone |
| Assistant Accountant | Shreyoshi (Julie) Banerjee |
| Advocacy Services Manager | Elaine Grehan |

| | |
|---|--|
| Advocacy Development Worker | Tracey Treanor |
| Advocacy Services Administrator | Fergal Dunne |
| Deaf Adult Literacy Services (DALs) Manager | Brian Crean |
| DALS Supervisor | Susan Whelan |
| ISL Academy Co-ordinator | Tracey Treanor (February 2015) |
| Receptionist | Anna Murphy (June 2015) |
| Fundraising Manager | Janette Byrne |
| Fundraising Administrator | Kate Mullin (December 2015) |
| Charity Shop Supervisors | Lorraine Cullen (Phibsboro) Anne Moloney (Ashbourne) |
| Shop Assistants | Noeleen Galvin (Ashbourne) Lisa O'Neill (Phibsboro) |
| Warehouse Supervisor | Vicki Duffy-Gillen (December 2015) |
| Warehouse Assistant | Mary Esther English (November 2015) |
| Van Driver | Krzysztof (Kris) Bury |
| Temp data-entry clerk | Sandra Kennedy (Oct-Dec 2015) Marina Young (Oct-Dec 2015) |

AGENDA

1. Standing Order
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. The Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting
4. Matters arising
5. Chairperson's Address
6. 2015 Review
7. Financial Report
8. Elections
9. Motions/Resolutions
10. Any Other Business

The 33rd Annual General Meeting

33rd Annual General Meeting 11th April 2015 at 2pm

Boyne Valley Hotel, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Attendance:

Chairperson Wendy Murray, **Vice Chairperson** Lianne Quigley, **Acting Hon. Secretary** Ronan Lowry, **Hon. Treasurer** Melissa Howlett, and **Board Directors** Lorraine Creed, Breda O'Grady and John Bosco Conama

Apologies: **Board Director** Jennifer Lynch

Minute Taker: Susan Whelan

Auditor: Richard Kendrick

Interpreters: Tracey Daly and Cormac Leonard

The Chairperson, **Wendy Murray** declared the 33rd AGM open at **2.05pm**

The IDS AGM Quorum is set at 44 people (15 people currently in attendance). The Chairperson asked members if they wished to proceed with the AGM. A majority vote of 10 was needed to proceed.

This was proposed and seconded by **Krzysztof Bury** and **Patricia Pentony** and passed by a majority vote

Please Note, by 3.44pm, a peak attendance of 26 was recorded.

Mission Statement

The Irish Deaf Society as the leading national organisation of the Deaf in Ireland brings equality and human rights to members of the Deaf Community through advocacy and empowerment as full citizens. It shall be achieved through promotion of Irish Sign Language and its related culture and norms.

1. Standing Orders

Standing orders were read out and proposed and seconded by **Krzysztof Bury** and **Raymond Grehan** and passed by a majority vote.

Tellers

Gaye Regan was proposed and seconded by **Lorraine Creed** and **Raymond Grehan** and passed by a majority vote.

Patricia Pentony was proposed and seconded by **Philip Grehan** and **Graham O'Shea** and passed by a majority vote.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

1. Standing orders
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Minutes of the 32nd AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairperson's Address
6. 2014 Review
7. Financial Report
8. CEO report
9. Elections
10. Any Other Business.

The agenda was proposed and seconded by **Graham O'Shea** and **Kevin Lynch** and passed by a majority vote.

3. Minutes of the 32nd AGM

No changes or amendments made

The minutes of the 32nd AGM were proposed and seconded by **Eilish Bradley** and **Graham O'Shea** and passed by a majority vote.

4. Matters Arising

1. **Graham O'Shea:** Page 11 (AOB) point C "Graham O'Shea suggested ISL recognition to promote ISL Awareness through postage stamps like 'ABC'. Mr. O'Shea was informed that his comments were taken on board. An Post confirmed that it could take up to two years for a response for ideas for postage stamps.
2. **Kevin Lynch:** commented that the IDS 32nd AGM minutes sent out did not include the date of the last meeting.
3. **Kevin Lynch:** Page 7, (2014 review), point H, regarding the Education Partnership Group and its update. The Chairperson informed Mr. Lynch that there were regular meetings and a new parent's representative had been sourced and although things are progressing slowly, it looks promising.
4. **Kevin Lynch:** Page 9, (30 Blessington Street) asked what will happen to the proceeds of the sale of 30 Blessington Street. The Chairperson responded that the IDS just received the funds and the IDS Sub finance committee would not rush into a decision, but a third charity shop is on the agenda.
5. **Kevin Lynch:** Page 9 (Strategic Plan) asked for an update on the IDS strategic plan. The Chairperson responded that the IDS needed to improve its structure before preparing a strategic plan, this was a priority before spending money.
6. **Chairperson** highlighted a query by **Ms. Mary Brazil** who raised a question at the previous AGM regarding a family donation in 2007 and asked how this donation was spent. As the donation was made 8 years previous, too much time had passed to determine how exactly these funds were spent, especially as there had been a different CEO and board members. She confirmed that the donation was received but cannot determine exactly how it was spent. It was advised that any donation queries be asked within three years of the donation.

5. Chairperson's Address

The Chairperson addressed the IDS AGM with her Chairperson's Address.

6. 2014 Review

1. **Graham O'Shea:** Asked why there had been no update on Hands On. The Chairperson pointed out the broadcasting Report on Page 23 (top point) which stated that Hands On would be replaced by two documentaries. The Chairperson also encouraged members who would like Hands On to return, to contact RTÉ or the IDS as people power is needed.
2. **Philip Grehan:** (Page 22, Access Targets and Timeframe) commented that he was disappointed at the rate of increase in the targets which are often small increment of 2%. The Chairperson responded that this was the target agreed by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland but he could write to them to convey his dissatisfaction at the targets set.

7. Finance Report

1. The Auditor **Richard Kendrick** confirmed that the 2014 IDS Finances were in a much healthier state than the 2013 reports. He confirmed that the CRC crisis had an impact on finances, however the delaying of the IDS raffle to January 2014, improved our funds.
2. Mr. Kendrick confirmed in a note on Page 3 of the finance report, that the 2014 report did not include the sale of 30 Blessington Street and the clearing of loans owed to the DDA and the CIDP. As a result, these funds will be included in the 2015 finance report.
3. An anonymous donation (page 18, Finance Report) was positive for finances.
4. The IDS currently has no debts for the first time in years which is due to a lot of hard work and sacrifices. As a result, the IDS can now spend money to improve its structure.

Queries by members

1. **Kevin Lynch:** Praised the IDS for its finance report. Mr. Kendrick agreed with him and commented that the IDS continued to work sensibly, and credit to the board and staff.
2. The IDS Finance Report 2014 was proposed and seconded by **Ronan McDonagh** and **Raymond Grehan** and passed by a majority vote.

Retaining the services of Richard Kendrick as Auditor

This was proposed and seconded by **Kevin Lynch** and **Gerard Boyce** and passed by a majority vote. Richard Kendrick will continue to be the auditor for the Irish Deaf Society.

8. Chief Executive Report – Eddie Redmond

1. IDS Finance
2. Fundraising
3. Deaf Forward Update
4. Sale of 30 Blessington Street
5. IDS – Future Plans

1. IDS Finance

Our debt to CIDP was cleared; this was compulsory before receiving the proceeds of the sale of Blessington Street.

Income for 2014

52% from Fundraising – ie Rapport

32% from Charity Shops

14% from Donations and sponsorships

1% from Rent at TMB last year

0.01% from Membership

Expenditure for 2014

34% fundraising expenses

25% wages

19% charity shops

8% miscellaneous

5% Utilities

4% rent

2. Fundraising

- a. Our National Raffle, run twice a year, organised by Rapport in Belfast. These raffles were successful in comparison to other organisations. The next raffle is due May 2015. As always the income from the raffle is unpredictable.
- b. Our charity shops are doing well and have proven necessary for the IDS. Thanks to all who donate to the shop and to all the volunteers who have helped us this past year. It can be difficult to find volunteers and we really

appreciate your assistance. We are always looking for volunteers, if you are interested, contact Janette Byrne our Fundraising Manager.

- c. CIDP have allowed us to use Cloyne House as a temporary Warehouse. We are currently looking for new premises, which is necessary to stock more shops.
- d. We received two anonymous donations via Ulster bank in September and November worth €5,000 and €45,000.

3. Deaforward

- a. **Temporary closure last summer** – The Government rejected our application for funding and we had to temporarily close Deaforward. Thanks to all who supported our campaign to re-open.
- b. **SSNO updates** – We currently have no update. We are still awaiting a reply from our appeal.
- c. **Bridging Funding** – We have received Bridging funding – which is to keep Deaforward open until June 2015. Staff are currently working part-time. Unfortunately the funding is a once-off agreement.
- d. **Meeting with Politicians:** We have met with various politicians such as Senator Mark Daly, Tánaiste Joan Burton TD, Aodhan O’Riordan TD who is the Minister of State at the Dept of Justice and Equality and Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with special responsibility for Equality, New Communities and Culture, Joe Costello TD and Claire Daly TD.
- e. **Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI):** 23 organisations including the IDS are working with DFI regarding the SSNO funding. The group of organisations propose that Bridge Funding be extended to 2016. We have not yet received a response to this proposal.

4. Sale of 30 Blessington street

We tried to rent out 30 Blessington Street to no avail. It was then decided to sell the building. The building was sold for €395,000 less expenses which includes all debts, solicitors’ fees and auctioneer fees which left a total of €317,262.

5. Future Plans

- a. **A new sub-Finance committee** was set up which includes: IDS Chairperson Wendy Murray, Hon. Treasurer Melissa Howlett, Auditor Richard Kendrick, Fundraising Manager Janette Byrne, CEO Eddie Redmond and accountant Fiona Noone to prepare plans on how to allocate funding.
- b. We plan to have more **Regular Brainstorming meetings** with staff and hope to incorporate these ideas into the new IDS Structure and strategic plan, these include changes to policies, office space, staffing, National Council plans and memberships, etc
- c. **Funding Sources.** We are now looking into more funding from corporations and other sources.
- d. **Meeting politicians regularly:** We aim to meet with politicians on a more regular basis to highlight the work of the IDS.

Questions arising from the CEO Report

1. **Fergus Dunne** praised the CEO report but was concerned about the payment to the fundraising company. The CEO responded that this was the agreement set by the previous CEO and Board and due to the CRC crisis and IDS's previous financial history, we were unable to negotiate a better contract. Now that we are in a better financial situation and have a better working relationship, we hope to re-negotiate.
2. **Sean Dunphy** asked if we should build a second warehouse. The CEO responded that we have discussed many ideas for new premises as we have to move out of Cloyne.
3. **Philip Grehan:** asked what the plan was for the money secured from the sale of 30 Blessington Street and asked if buying property is a possibility as an investment. The CEO responded that the Sub Finance Committee will be responsible for monitoring the finances of the IDS and preparing business plans and they will discuss proposals on how to spend income from the IDS in relation to the strategic plan.
4. **Krzysztof Bury:** asked if the IDS plan to buy or rent a warehouse space? The CEO responded that no final decision has been made.

9. Elections

Proposal: **Jennifer Lynch** wanted to step down as Hon. Secretary but remain on the Board of Directors. It was proposed that **Ronan Lowry** becomes the new Hon. Secretary. This was proposed and seconded by **Lorraine Creed** and **Lianne Quigley** and passed by a majority vote.

10. Any Other Business

1. **Graham O'Shea**: said he would like to see IDS representatives relay reports from the EUD and WFD back to IDS members.
2. **Graham O'Shea**: suggested that the ISL Weather be on daily during ISL Awareness Week 2015 as opposed to just Sunday.
3. **Philip Grehan**: recommended that ISL home tuition scheme teachers be included in the workings of the NSCE and within any discussions related to Deaf children.
4. **Philip Grehan**: agreed with Graham O'Shea's comments (point 1 AOB) and asked that they be translated into ISL.
5. **Philip Grehan**: proposed that plans be made now for the election (and not at the last minute) with regard to questioning party manifestos and would like to have leaflets on hand to give to politicians who knock on the door.
6. **Philip Grehan**: expressed his disappointment that RTÉ interviewed a hearing staff member from Deafhear who chose to sign and talk on RTÉ in response to a Deaf man being incarcerated. Mr. Grehan felt that this person did not encompass enough knowledge on Deaf culture or Irish Sign Language to represent this Deaf man and focussed on the medical side of Deafness.
7. **Edwina Murray**: would like the IDS to be proactive about the issue with St. Joseph's home and to ensure that Deaf people have a space and home to call their own. There are also issues regarding transport from people's homes to DVI, especially for the day centre which needs to be fixed.
8. **Audrey Conama**: felt that starting the AGM at 2.05pm was too early and there should have been attempts to wait for a quorum.
9. **Audrey Conama**: asked if there should have been a vote for the passing of the Secretary/Year in Review report and the CEO report.
10. **Audrey Conama**: asked why the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer did not give their respective reports.

11. **Gaye Regan:** commended the IDS on its work especially as activity was low last year in comparison to this year and she was surprised to learn all the new information today. She felt that information should be distributed more often amongst members.
12. **Fergus Dunne:** asked to consider, now that IDS is in profit, that the Irish Deaf News (magazine) be brought back. Not everyone has the internet and gets information on the work of the IDS.
13. **Fergus Dunne:** said he was disappointed to see Mind The Gap films are currently filming a documentary and using a CODA to present the documentary. He said he was disappointed that a Deaf person is not involved.

End of AGM

The Chairperson thanked the Members, Board, Tellers, Minute Taker and Interpreters for attending the AGM. A Social event has been organised by the Drogheda Deaf Society and all are welcome.

The Chairperson declared the 33rd AGM closed at **3.44pm**.

Chairperson's Address

2015 was a steady year for the IDS but we still have a lot of work to do, especially around the recognition of Irish Sign Language (ISL) which is a priority for IDS. IDS Board Director Dr John Bosco Conama received the Leargas Language Ambassador of the Year 2015 in Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park in conjunction with ISL Awareness Week in September. Many thanks to everyone involved in supporting and organising events for ISL Awareness week. We hope you will all be back next year!

Two National Council (NC) meetings were held in February and September 2015. It is great for IDS to work with NC members, to build strong networks and to work on building confidence. We look forward to mutually beneficial relationships with the NC members in the years to come.

In November, Lianne Quigley and I represented IDS at the European Union of the Deaf's GA in Brussels which was also their 30th Anniversary. John Bosco Conama was also there as a guest of the EUD. The conference was called *'Invisible in Europe: Exploring the meeting of reasonable accommodation from Deaf and Sign Language's perspective'*. In July, Melissa Howlett and I attended the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)'s 17th Congress in Istanbul, Turkey with the title *'Strengthening Human Diversity.'*

Unfortunately, one of our Board Directors Breda O'Grady stepped down in November after serving for over a year. Lorraine Creed is also stepping down at the AGM after serving for two and a half years. Thank you and the best of luck Breda and Lorraine! We are delighted that our Board Director Dr John Bosco Conama has taken a 6 month sabbatical to do research in Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. The IDS constitution states that we are allowed to use video conference for meetings which means he is still able to continue on the IDS board. We wish him the best of luck! We have also reduced the number of Board Meetings per year, from ten meetings to four plus one special AGM meeting.

Sadly, former IDS Board Director Linda McLoughlin passed away in February 2015, may she rest in peace.

We are delighted that Summerfest was back in July 2015 - thanks to the Advocacy department who made it happen and also thanks to everyone who got involved and contributed. We are looking forward to Summerfest 2016!

Thank you to all IDS members, members of the Deaf community, Board and staff for their hard work in keeping IDS strong and steady in 2015. Thank you all.

Wendy Murray, Jnr

2015 Review

IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE ACADEMY

Lorraine Creed became the IDS Representative for the ISL Academy on 28th of November. A new advisory committee was formed in January. The Advisory committee included, Valerie Mahon (Secretary), Stephen Bates (treasurer), with committee members Bernadette Walsh and Wayne Reid. Subsequently, Stephen Bates resigned and was replaced with Teresa Lynch as co-opt treasurer, but has since resigned. We thank them for their time.

The annual forum was postponed in February due to the new advisory committee and changes to the structure; therefore the forum took place at a later date on 27th of February 2016.

We have good news; in February 2015, **Tracey Treanor** was appointed as ISL Academy Co-ordinator and works two days a week. She works closely with our new curriculum committee drafting qualification specification content for Level 3 and 4 materials while assuring we meet QQI standards and examination processes. We are in the process of content, structure, delivery and assessment of ISL Level 5 curriculum.

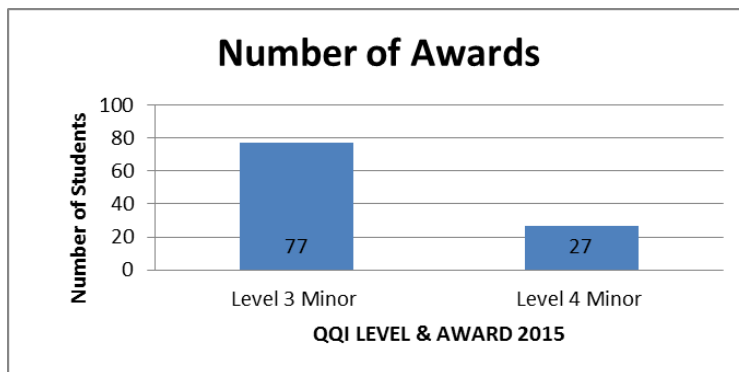
On June 6th, we had an ISL stand at the *One Voice for Languages* fair, raising diversity and vibrancy of language learning at Primary, Secondary and Third Level as well as promoting Life-Long language learning. It was the first event of its kind in Ireland.

During the summer, the ISL Advisory committee reviewed its Operational Plan 2010 and are progressing towards meeting the strategic aims and objectives of the ISL Academy. There are internal and external adjustments required to the academy in order to achieve its objectives within the budget.

On 29th of October, we called for a meeting with the Teaching Council of Ireland to review our teachers being registered with the Teaching Council and to look at the process required to teach in Primary or Post-primary schools, which is the main focus of the Council's work.

As all our qualifications are nationally recognised and accredited by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).The ISL Academy work closely with QQI to establish a comprehensive, coherent set of QQI policies and procedures along with the NFQ, ensuring high standards of ISL teaching.

Over 104 learners have taken our exams in 11 different venues, 77 took level 3 and 27 took level 4.



In September, forty-one new learners registered under the ISL Academy in different locations including Dublin, Limerick and Offaly.

The ISL Academy is striving for a big vision with core values such as quality and reliability while working with professionals towards a successful future.

ISL Academy Representative **Lorraine Creed** and ISL Coordinator **Tracey Treanor**

Quality and Qualifications of Ireland

In September 2015, a newly formed committee; Carmel Grehan, Brian Lynch and John Patrick Doherty worked with Tracey Treanor on the following:

- Updating the QQI (formerly known as FETAC) handbooks for students.
- Proposal for QQI Level 5
- Compiling additional reference materials for students to improve learning outcomes
- Level 3 and 4 recommendations in line with CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is an international standard for describing language ability, used around the world to describe learner's language skills)

- Workshops to provide Continuing Professional Development to document the skills, knowledge and experience for teachers to apply to their teaching
- Recommendation for future QQI exams
- Proposal to provide online support materials and resources for Teachers and learners
- ISL Academy to work with Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College and the ISL Teachers of the future to become members of the academy once graduated

The QQI committee works in line with The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) maintaining standards of what a student is expected to know to achieve an award as well as ensuring quality assurance in providing the courses.

Carmel Grehan, Brian Lynch and John Patrick Doherty

Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign

2015 was another busy and very active year for the ISL Recognition team. The ISL recognition campaign is getting stronger and more vocal than ever before through working with various people and groups. We are really thrilled with several developments in 2015 and we are happy to report that there have been positive moves as a result of our efforts.

Council Motions

We have managed to get 47 councils (including town councils) to table a motion calling on the government to recognise ISL since 2012. Once the motion is passed, the councils are obliged to write to the government to notify them. Many thanks to everyone across Ireland who helped this campaign by contacting their local councillors to raise the motion in 2015. The aim was to get all councils to pass the motion in 2015 – unfortunately, Waterford City and County have not yet done so. This is one of our aims in our action plan for 2016.

International Mother Language Day – 21st February 2015

Newstalk radio station has a show called Global Village, and they had a series of interviews to celebrate the day. Dr John Bosco Conama, Teresa Lynch, Professor Lorraine Lesson, Daniel Crean and Claudia Gray were interviewed by Dil Wickremasinghe. This interview was shown live in ISL on the website at the same

time as on the radio. This was the first radio show of its kind in this country.

A Parallel report in response to the Irish Government's report to the UN - ICESCR

The International Convention for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights published a report for the United Nations. ISL recognition was mentioned in article 15. The Irish Government were then questioned by the UN panel in Geneva in June 2015. Unfortunately, there was very little mention of ISL recognition.

ISL interpretation at the Houses of Oireachtas

In June 2015, the House of Oireachtas began using an ISL interpreter (ISL bubble) during Leader's Questions every week. We hope this will lead to more access at the Houses of Oireachtas in future.

ISL Awareness Week

ISL awareness week was launched by Deputy Mayor Cllr. John O'Leary in Waterford City on 19th September and ran until 27th September with the theme 'With Sign Language Rights, Our Children can'.

We used a 'social frame' for photos and used the hashtag **#ISL4all** for social networks.

We also organised an ISL awareness rally outside Leinster House on 23rd September which was a great success. Approximately 100 people attended with many politicians stopping by and talking with us. There were many events across Ireland:

- IDS's fundraising Cycle Fun in Waterford
- Waterford Deaf Centre's table quiz in Waterford city
- Cork Deaf Association: Lianne Quigley gave a presentation 'Why we need ISL recognition campaign'. Lord Mayor of Cork City John O'Shea visited CDA office
- CDA organised a series of events
- Cork Deaf Club – ISL staff at *Electric bar and restaurant* – two Deaf bar staff served food and drink in ISL

- CDC representatives Graham O'Shea and Lianne Quigley met Micheál Martin from Fianna Fáil for a meeting where he pledged to support the campaign for ISL recognition.
- CODA night 'What life is like in a Deaf Family'
- IDS organised a seminar with Centre for Deaf Studies – 'What can we learn from Europe? The case for ISL recognition'. The presenters were Ms. Rachel O'Neill (University of Edinburgh) and Ms. Kaise Alanne (Finnish Association of the Deaf). Their presentations were on their views of their countries progress in getting their signed languages officially recognised
- Irish Deaf Women's Group organised coffee mornings across Ireland and also a seminar entitled 'Deaf Women of Ireland: Report and Survey through three Generations 1922 -2012' by Anne Coogan and Josephine O'Leary
- Dublin Deaf Association held a social evening
- Irish Deaf Folklore – Storytelling and Poetry in ISL
- Dublin Theatre of the Deaf celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a very special show
- Deaf Heritage Centre - ISL exhibition
- Cork Deaf Club – Social gathering
- Irish Deaf Youth Association – Flashmob on Henry Street
- St Joseph's house for Adult Deaf and Deafblind: ISL coffee morning
- Greenbow Deaf LGBT – Afternoon Tea in the Hub, DVI
- Athy Sign Song

European Language Label Awards

IDS board nominated Dr John Bosco Conama for his many years of hard work for the ISL recognition campaign. He was awarded one of the language Ambassadors of the year in Farmleigh House on 25th September 2015.

Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party Meeting – December 2015

CEO Eddie Redmond and Dr John Bosco Conama met Fianna Fáil at a meeting in Leinster House on 3rd December. The meeting discussed the reasons for ISL recognition and was followed by a question and answer session. Fianna Fáil agreed to re-introduce the ISL Bill in the New Year.

Universal Periodic Review

We attended several meetings of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. During the meetings, we had a chance to network with other organisations such as Free Legal Advice Clinics and Children's Rights Alliance and we submitted our views and reports on the situation facing Deaf ISL users. We then submitted these reports for two separate parallel reports for UPR; Human Rights and Children's Rights. Human Rights UPR will be held in April and Children's Rights in January 2016.

Public Awareness

We maintained a public awareness programme; we had representatives on television and radio stations being interviewed about the ISL Recognition Campaign. We also had representatives giving presentations at several locations including universities and other public places. We sent letters to the editors of the main newspapers and when a motion was passed by a local authority, we contacted the local newspaper to report on our campaign and the ISL motion. We also sent press releases to the media. During ISL awareness week, there was plenty of media coverage such as local papers and interviews.

ISL Recognition Social Networks – Facebook and Twitter

We now have over 2,060 likes on Facebook. We constantly send updated news via social media to build a wide social network among the Deaf community and the general public. We have over 270 followers on Twitter.

We would like to thank the IDS board and Staff and the Deaf Community who are involved in and support our campaign. We value their continued support for this campaign.

Lianne Quigley and John Bosco Conama

ISL Home Tuition and ISL Scheme

Kevin Mulqueen took the reins of the ISL schemes in November 2014.

The Dept. of Education is responsible for processing schemes such as Home Tuition e.g. ISL Home Tuition (grant for parents/guardians in their home) and the ISL Scheme (grant for schools /organisations).

The Dept. of Education provides payment for ISL home tuition in the Deaf child's home. It is available for all Deaf children and families up to the age of 18. The teaching hours remain the same; in the case of home tuition, this means 1 hour of teaching time per week during the school year, in July / August up to 7.5 hours of teaching time per week.

There have been a few changes within the scheme:

- All tutors must have QQI or CDS qualifications to take up employment in this scheme.
- Tutors must be registered with the Teaching Council
- Reduction of 12% to the payment arrangements for the Home Tuition scheme.

Kevin Mulqueen

Deafhood Ireland

Deafhood numbers currently stand at 143 people who attended workshops and presentations over the last 5 years which is a 13% increase in 2015. The aim of the workshops are to show positive acceptance of being Deaf and look at Deaf identity and Culture.

Workshops / Presentations were postponed numerous times due to external factors and low numbers. The ISL Academy will keep reviewing Deafhood and make adjustments where necessary to ensure that activities are kept within the organisation's vision.

The Deafhood Conference had to be postponed until April 2016 and will be held in Dublin.

Anthony Moore

ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

It was a strong year for IDS's Deaforward Deaf Advocacy Service, especially when you think that the staff; Elaine, Tracey and Fergal were working part-time, and also that our Bridging Funding from the SSNO was due to expire in July. After a campaign with the Disability Federation of Ireland, the IDS managed to extend the funding for another year until June 2016.

Our achievements through the year have included; contributing to the HSE's Residential Needs Working Group for Vulnerable Deaf Adults; the publication of the HSE's National Guidelines for Accessible Health Services; the second round of the UCD/ IDS Equality Studies course; the ISL accessible information video for the Marriage Equality Referendum; an Equality and Human Rights workshop with Niall Crowley, funded by the Tolka Area Partnership; GP access through ISL interpreters for medical card holders; the inclusion of ISL Recognition in the UNHRC Periodic Review; the IDS Summerfest; the IDS/ DSI/ Inspire Fitness Centre 5km Santa Fun Run; and progress with the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) with RTÉ for improving subtitling and ISL on television.

Deaforward held the Bi-annual Roadshows in April and November; topics in April included: the Marriage Equality Referendum, Eircode, the water charges, the Children & Families Relationships Bill 2015, the passport express service, the HSE accessibility guidelines for social & healthcare services: guide for staff, and the text relay service consultation with Comreg. November topics included: Employment incentives & work support, Budget 2015, and information about Repealing the 8th Amendment. It was a great year for many Deaf LGBT members with the passing of the Marriage Equality Bill when Ireland became the first country in the world to democratically vote for gay marriage, and it was great to see so much lively and well-informed discussion within the Deaf community about it from interested and passionate individuals and groups.

The Deaforward Drop-in service has continued to provide advocacy to numerous Deaf individuals and groups. Our client numbers have increased by approximately 20%, despite the cutbacks to the staff hours. The majority of visits are for phone calls and advocacy & information with the most frequent topics being Welfare, Education and Employment. We continue to provide a service that recognises the barriers that

Deaf people face in accessing public services, and also for private services such as banking and billing which very frequently depend on telephone communication. As part of the IDS, we try to seek ways to empower and enable members of the Deaf community; we fully recognise the importance of ISL in personal development and our advocacy service aims to cultivate a supportive environment for Deaf people by working at individual and policy level pushing to promote better access and equality.

Looking ahead to 2016, we will have an opportunity to apply for the new round of SSNO funding in January where a 3 year contract would ensure stability for Deafward and allow us to plan and develop longer-term projects for the Deaf community. We will have the opportunity to work on the Department of Justice's Disability Inclusion Strategy as part of the new National Disability Strategy where the IDS will represent the views and needs of the Deaf community. We also received grants in 2015 for Mental Health, Advocacy training, and Deaf Awareness to Promote Positive Attitudes, which we hope to roll out in 2016. 2015 has given us a lot of direction for where we see need for additional services and provision, and we hope to get the support of the new government after elections in February to oversee greater developments over the next few years for the Deaf community and the pursuit of Equality and ISL Recognition!

Elaine Grehan – Advocacy Manager

EDUCATION

Funding

The IDS's Deaf Adult Literacy Services is delighted to have received a 14% increase in funding from the Department of Education and Skills. This brings the amount up to €214,000. We continue to be very grateful to the DES who endeavour to ensure that access is made for Deaf adults nationwide.

FETAC/ QQI Awards

There have been big changes with FETAC. It is now called QQI – *Quality and Qualification Ireland* and these changes have delayed some students in getting certificates. We are pleased to say that 98% of the students who have completed the QQI courses such as *Computer Literacy* level 3 and 4 and *Photography* have been successful.

We are concentrating on providing QQI Level 5 courses.

Classes we provide

| In Dublin | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| English – 7 classes | Craft – Cake decoration – one class |
| English as a foreign language – one class | Craft– Knitting – two classes |
| Computer QQI level 3 – 6 classes | Driving Theory Test – 2 classes |
| Computer QQI Level 4 – 5 classes | Maths – one class |
| Computer – Word processing – QQI level 3 – 1 class | Personal Development – 3 classes |
| Computer – Desktop Publishing - QQI level 3 – 1 class | Photography – 1 class |
| Deaf history – 1 class | |

For outside Dublin, we have courses running in Cork, Limerick, Offaly, Kerry, Waterford and Wexford.

Classes we provide

Classes we provide include: English, Maths, Personal Development, and English as a Foreign Language, Computer Literacy, Digital Photography, Photoshop, Driving Theory Test, Irish Sign Language, Web-Design, Knitting, and Arts and Crafts etc.

One-Day workshops

We now provide a variety of 1-day workshops including how to use Facebook, Social Media, Cake decoration, Make Up tutorials, Basic Car Maintenance and CV and Interview skills. We will continue organising more workshops in 2016. There has been a high demand for these 1-day workshops.

Irish Deaf Folklore

Irish Deaf Folklore was set up in 2014 to promote Irish Sign Language through the medium of storytelling and poetry. Folklore is an important part of Deaf culture and has become popular worldwide as a way of Deaf people sharing their Deaf culture and identity. Irish Deaf Folklore had two successful performances in June and November 2015 and are currently looking for new faces to join our club. We would like to express our thanks to the Dublin Theatre for the Deaf for involving us in their performances too.

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Grant:

We had a successful grant application from the BAI with a grant worth €2,500 which went towards "*Film Appreciation*" workshops. The aim of which was to learn about themes, issues and general appreciation of films. We had workshops in 2015 in Waterford and Cork and aim to continue in 2016 with more workshops.

Educational Partnership Group

The Irish Deaf Society is involved with The EPG along with TCD's Centre for Deaf Studies, CIDP, Deafhear, St. Joseph's School for Deaf boys, St. Mary's school for Deaf girls, Our New Ears (Parent group) and Sharing the Journey (Parent group). The main purpose of the EPG is to improve standards of Education for Deaf children in Ireland which includes the creation of new policies i.e. resources being made available for Deaf children and their parents and a more formal Irish Sign Language policy to be used in Education.

Brian Crean – Deaf Adults Literacy Services Manager

FUNDRAISING

In 2015, our **Phibsboro** shop continued to be very successful, with thanks to **Lorraine Cullen** (Manager) **Lisa O'Neill** (Supervisor) and a special thanks to all our volunteers. We have signed a lease for another year – so you can find us on the North Circular Road until November 2016.

We are very grateful for all donations received and to all our loyal customers in 2015. Our shops depend on the public to stay up and running – both for staff and for donations. If you have any free time to spare, we would be very grateful if you volunteered in our shop. We are also happy to collect any of your unwanted items or you can drop them at our shops or office.

The **Ashbourne** shop has also had a hugely successful 2015. **Anne Moloney** is our manager and has been working hard promoting the shop. The shop was involved in two fashion shows in April and November, where our stock was modelled – one model was Rose of Tralee Elysha Brennan. These events were very successful and a big thanks to all involved for giving up their time and for all their hard work.

We had, and continue to have great support from both local people and local businesses, special thanks to Tesco who have been very supportive with the blue token campaign.

A huge thanks also, to Boots Chemist, Hyland Jewellers, the Parish Hall and library for use of their rooms and to our pals in St Vincent's Charity shop.

We hope to move to a larger shop in Ashbourne this year. Again we are looking for volunteers and donations, we can either collect, or you can drop in to the shop, we are always very grateful for donations.

Warehouse Santry

Unfortunately, in summer 2015, we had to move urgently from Cloyne House, in St Joseph's Cabra to a new warehouse in Santry. This was a huge task, we are very grateful to the many Deaf members and volunteers who made it a success.

Due to our urgent move we now find this warehouse is no longer suitable in size and with plans for a third shop, even more so. We plan to look for larger premises in 2016. **Vicki Duffy-Gillen** joined us as the new Warehouse Manager, **Mary Esther English** is the warehouse assistant, **Krzysztof Bury** is our van driver and has two

helpers; Paul and Fran (TUS workers). So far things have been going great. We have many plans for 2016 one of which is to sell wedding dresses, so if you wish to donate yours, we would be very grateful.

We would like to say a special thanks to **Eilish Bradley** our volunteer, she is a treasure we don't know what we'd do without her!

A huge thank you to all our TUS workers who were a great help in 2015, and also, thanks to Debbie Whelan (Tolka Area Partnership) and to Patricia Lynch (Meath Partnership) who organised the placement of the workers in the IDS.

We take this opportunity to say a special thanks to all our kind donors and volunteers - without you, we could not keep the shop open. We are planning to open a third shop this year and currently doing the research so will need many more donations and volunteers in 2016.

Irish Deaf Society Raffles

We try to have two raffles each year when possible. IDS are one of the lucky charities who still gets great public support, resulting in another Christmas raffle success. A huge thank you to **Sandra Kennedy** and **Marina Young** for handling the Christmas raffle.

We continue to look for support. If you wish to make a donation or organise a fundraiser or if you require tickets, please see contact details on next page.

This year's winners were:

Summer 2015

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| First prize €1,000 | Second Prize €750 | Third Prize €250 |
| Eileen Cotter | Ger Ryan | Eoghan Herity |

Christmas 2015

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| First prize €1,000 | Second Prize €750 | Third Prize €250 |
| Cian Dunne | Martin Kiely | Patricia McKeown |

General Fundraising

Marathons: We have had some runners doing marathons and donating to us, especially the Women's mini-marathon. If you are thinking of running a marathon or organising a fundraising event please think of IDS, we can arrange t shirts and sponsorship cards etc.

Bequests: People have supported us this year by mentioning us in their will, one lady kindly left us €19,500.

I have attended many courses and training events for example; Antiques workshop, Understanding best practice, Regulations / guiding principles, Managing volunteers, Ready for Regulations and Guiding Principles to name a few.

Bogus collectors

There have been a number of bogus collectors around the country claiming to be raising money for IDS. All legitimate IDS collectors will have a Garda permit and IDS identification badge. Please report any suspicious collectors to the Garda immediately and please also let us know so we can follow up with the Garda.

Wedding cards

In 2016, we plan on printing a wedding tent card. People will buy it from us for their wedding instead of wedding favours on the table for guests. This is becoming very popular now.

Fundraising: Janette Byrne 086.7851713 funds@irishdeafociety.ie

Kate 01.8601878 kate@irishdeafociety.ie

Phibsboro: Lorraine Cullen 086.4137970

Ashbourne: Anne Moloney – 086.4682800
ashbourne@irishdeafociety.ie

Warehouse: Vikki 086.1305029/01.8624098
warehouse@irishdeafociety.ie

Janette Byrne – Fundraising Manager

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

European Union of the Deaf

EUD workshop, Seminar and General Assembly – May 2015

Lianne Quigley and Melissa Howlett represented IDS at the 2015 EUD workshop, seminar and General Assembly in Riga, Latvia from the 14th-17th May. The theme of the year was “Equal Employment Rights in Europe?”

- There were two workshops provided for EUD delegates:
 - a. To discuss what to do after UNCRPD is ratified in each country - Ireland is one of three EU countries that has not yet ratified
 - b. EUD collecting information to publish their third book by the end of 2015 on Article 33 of UNCRPD - National implementation and monitoring.
- A joint seminar by EUD and Latvian Association of the Deaf (LNS) ‘A Deaf Individual in the EU Labour Market – Equal Rights on Employment in Europe’.
 - a. Latvian Minister of Welfare opened the seminar
 - b. Various presentations on EU parliament – Disability intergroup, People with disabilities in employment through inclusion, UNCRPD, local employment (Latvian), Flexicurity and protection of people with disabilities in the labour market.
- The General Assembly was on for two days. The hot topic was the motion about membership – there was a lot of debate over increasing or decreasing membership fees. The EUD members agreed to postpone this motion to next year after some research has been done.
- LNS celebrated their 95th Anniversary and invited us all out to their club where we watched some really good performances.
- In 2016 The Netherlands will host the EUD from 19th to 22nd May.

Lianne Quigley and Melissa Howlett – IDS Delegates

EUD 30th Anniversary – November 2015

The European Union of the Deaf marked their 30th Anniversary by holding a conference in the European Parliament in Brussels. The EUD was first established in 1985 by five Deaf people from around Europe - unfortunately, today only one of the five is still alive – may the other four rest in peace. The IDS Chairperson, Wendy Murray Jr., and the IDS Vice Chairperson, Lianne Quigley were the Irish representatives, along with EUD guest Dr John Bosco Conama and our ISL interpreter Cormac Leonard.

Presentations were given by the EUD Board and staff along with two Deaf elected Members of European Parliament (MEPs). They were Dr Ádám Kosa from Hungary (European People's Party (Christian Democrats) - EPP) and Helga Stevens from Belgium (European Conservatives and Reformists Group – ECR) who both gave presentations on their party and their involvement in the EU Parliament. Following this, there was a tour of the EU parliament.

The evening reception was held by two Belgian Deaf organisations; FFSB (Wallonia) and FEVLADO (Flanders)'s who hosted a reception for the EUD delegates in a beautiful Art Gallery where they served their famous Belgian chips.

The next day we returned to the EU Parliament for a conference; *'Invisible in Europe: Exploring the meaning of reasonable accommodation from Deaf and Sign Language's perspective'*. Dr John Bosco Conama gave his presentation on *'Citizenship and Equality in the EU'* along with other presenters. He signed in ISL at the conference rather than International sign which is rarely done at EUD events.

In the conference, it was stated that The European Accessibility Act 2015 would be released by the European commission on 2nd December 2015. The purpose of this Act is to make sure all services would be accessible for all people with disabilities in the EU. This Act is linked to UNCRPD and we were encouraged to ask our MEPs to support this Act.

Meeting with 6 Irish MEPs

In the afternoon, we met several MEPs; Liadh Ní Riada and Lynn Boylan, from Sinn Féin and Independent MEP Luke 'Ming' Flanagan. We discussed the importance of ISL recognition, disability allowance and how it affects attitudes and how an access to work scheme is needed. In the EU parliament they are members of European

United Left and Nordic Green Left. They would bring this information back to their party colleagues.

The next meeting was with Independent MEP Nessa Childers; we had a brief meeting with her as she was aware of us and our aims. She is a member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament and she is a member of a public health group in the EU.

Following this, we had a good meeting with Independent MEP Marian Harkin, she is very keen on ISL recognition and asked plenty of questions about it and other Deaf issues. She is a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe in the European parliament.

Finally, our last meeting was with Fine Gael MEP Seán Kelly. He knew a lot about the Irish Deaf Community after attending an interprovincial tournament in Waterford earlier in the year and he is a member of the European People's Party. He fully supports the ISL recognition campaign.

We were happy that we got to meet 6 out of 11 Irish MEPs in a short space of time – one of the MEPs, Brian Crowley of Fianna Fáil was sick and unavailable to meet us. When we got home, we emailed them information on ISL Recognition. We look forward to working with them on the recognition of Irish Sign Language.

After a long exhausting day, we were invited to a cocktail party, which was sponsored by SignVideo and Overseas Interpreting Jeff McWhinney and Oliver Pouliot. This was followed by an evening meal to celebrate EUD's 30 years of achievement. At the meal, we were shown a film of 30 years of EUD videos where we saw some familiar Irish faces. There was also a presentation by former and current EUD board members.

It was a really busy few days with a lot crammed into each day so we were exhausted by the end! We wish the EUD the best of luck and hope it continues to thrive over the next 30 years!

Wendy Murray, Lianne Quigley – Irish Delegates and John Bosco Conama – Guest Presenter

World Federation of the Deaf

17th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in Istanbul, Turkey from 25th to 31st July 2015

Theme: “Strengthening Human Diversity”

WFD Board and Ordinary Members (OM) Workshop:

Wendy Murray and **Melissa Howlett** attended six workshops in one day;

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
2. WFD Membership fee
3. WFD Statuses
4. WFD Action Plans
5. Sign Manual Launched by Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD) and WFD with Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) and the Kosovar Association of the Deaf (KAD) - www.slwmanual.info
6. Women’s Rights

Having all six workshops in one day was a lot of information to absorb in preparation for the General Assembly (GA) especially the WFD membership fees and statuses.

The General Assembly:

WFD’s Membership fee

This was poorly presented by WFD Board Members - the information was not explained clearly. This motion was passed.

WFD Statuses

Again, this was poorly presented by WFD Board Members as again, information was not explained clearly. This motion was passed.

Motions by the O.M.

Deaf Flag

The OM rejected this motion as there were not enough competition entrants shortlisted. The Nepal Deaf Association had withdrawn its entry before the motion which left just the French entry.

The OM chose a working group from four countries to focus on this.

Deaf Pride for International Week of the Deaf

French Deaf Association withdrew this motion because the Vice President had badly presented it which led to a lot of confusion.

Sign symbols (Japanese and Australian motions)

Both motions were rejected because the information was not clear. In our opinion, these motions should have been included at the workshops the day before GA so the OM could have a more clear understanding of the motions. The WFD Board did not give OM enough time to discuss it.

WFD's General Assembly and Congress every 2 years instead of 4 years

We supported this motion proposed by the Greek Deaf Association. We voted yes because we felt it would be ideal to reduce the time between each GA as four years is too long for urgent issues like Genetic Modification, Deaf Education etc.

This motion was rejected by a majority vote. We were disappointed but accepted it.

France and Hong Kong's bid for WFD's 18th Congress in 2019

Two countries gave presentation on why their country should be picked to host 2019 WFD's 18th Congress.

We voted for France over Hong Kong because their presentation was well planned, they focussed on Deaf issues, and they were able to respond well to questions. The Hong Kong presentation was not focussed on Deaf issues, it concentrated more on how Hong Kong is a good tourist destination i.e. amusement parks. They also had poor responses when questioned.

France won by a margin of three votes, therefore, the WFD's 18th Congress will be in Paris in 2019.

Board elections

WFD President Colin Allen was elected as President of the WFD for a further four years. He stood unopposed and was voted in unanimously.

Most of the candidates for the Board were elected automatically as there were enough vacancies.

General Assembly

For the first time in WFD's history we had to have extra time for the GA meeting on Tuesday morning before the opening ceremony due to time restraints and a lot of delays with arguments and debates on motions.

Feedback on WFD workshop and General Assembly

WFD Board emailed all OM asking us for feedback on the workshops and GA in early December. We explained our dissatisfaction about how it affected the entire GA proceedings with both time restraints at workshops and a lack of clarity of information.

Presentations

1. Archiving and Accessing our Visual Deaf Heritage
2. Sign Language Bilingual E-books for Children
3. The Deaf Resurgence in France: Utilising and Problematising Ladd's Model
4. The Power of Interactive Storytelling and Digital Technology: The Future of Learning for Deaf Children
5. Seeing Through New Eyes – Deafhood Pedagogies and the Unrecognised Curriculum
6. Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Language to Teach Sign Language to Parents of Deaf Children
7. Traversing Technology: A Deaf Designed Visual Landscape
8. Deaf College Students' Experience with Facebook
9. Write Excellent Project Proposals to Win Donor Funding
10. I Exist when I am Using Sign Language
11. Making Legislation Work for Deaf People

Wendy Murray and Melissa Howlett – IDS Delegates

BROADCASTING AND WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA

Website

The Irish Deaf Society webpage was launched in October 2014, all permanent content is translated into ISL (except previous AGMs and Financial Reports). We have made minor changes to the website and plan to do a mini upgrade in early 2016.

Sections include:

- Classes for Deaf Adults (DALs)
- Advocacy and Information (Deaf Forward)
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Irish Sign Language (information and classes)
- Interpreters
- Information for Parents
- News & Events
- About the IDS
- How to get involved

Facebook (as of 21st December 2015)

1. Irish Deaf Society (main Facebook page) has 3777 'Likes' (last year's report for Feb 20th 2014 was 3452 'likes')
2. Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign has 2019 'likes'

We update this page with regular events, announcements, photographs or discussion items. If you would like to join our page, look for *Irish Deaf Society* and add us as a friend. If you would like the IDS to display your events on Facebook – please email facebook@irishdeafsociety.ie

Twitter (as of 21st December 2015)

We set up a twitter page @irishdeafsoc we now have sent 588 tweets and have 2111 subscribers to our page (last report was 1427 followers)

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

The IDS attended two meetings with the User Consultative Panel in 2015

The meetings this year were represented either by Susan Whelan or Tracey Treanor (or both). Each meeting lasts for 2 hours and other representatives from Hearing Loss Ireland, Deafhear and IDYA are invited to meetings.

Why do we have the meetings? The BAI need advice from the Deaf community in relation to subtitles, ISL on screen and all Deaf related materials that are seen on Irish TV. We also get information from the broadcasters (like RTE, TV3, etc) on upcoming plans. Our comments and views are brought to a “compliance committee” who represent us in meetings with TV broadcasters.

Below are some general points/summary that were raised in **all** meetings this year:

- Were the Access Rules complied with? If not, what are the repercussions? We have yet to get a satisfactory answer regarding what happens when a broadcaster fails to meet the access rules.
- There is still confusion regarding platforms (i.e. who is responsible for SKY, Virgin Media, Saorview). There have been subtitling errors evident on one platform and not another and the BAI have failed to give an answer regarding responsibility.
- Issues continued to be raised about the standards of TV3 subtitles.
- Issues raised about the standard of ISL interpreting on RTE TV programmes.
- BAI will be reviewing the Access Rules in 2016

RTE

RTE holds its regular meeting annually and the IDS was again in attendance on the 16th November. Issues that were raised included;

- New complaint procedure subtitles/Irish sign language. You are now advised to contact feedback@rte.ie where your complaint/issue will be dealt with. You can still email subtitle@rte.ie as well if you so wish.
- Issues raised about the quality of ISL interpretation via the signpost company (i.e. the late night Interpretation). Signpost were in attendance and have agreed to look into this further.

- RTE Player – We informed the committee that we are still disappointed about the quality of subtitles on the player and were informed that the subtitles are still in the trial stages however, there is no end date for the trial scheduled and feedback given to RTE has shown that viewers are not happy with the subtitles on the RTE Player.
- Documentaries – we highlighted our concern that the two documentaries that were aired on RTE (Cochlear Implant and St. Joseph’s School) whilst excellently made were funded by monies that had been previously allocated to ‘Hands On’. We were disappointed that Irish Sign Language was not the main language used in either programme (as had been the case with Hands On) nor was an ISL translation available on screen.

TV3

We do not plan to meet TV3 until January 2016. We regularly highlight with TV3 the problems with their subtitles. We acknowledge that there has been improvements in certain areas of their subtitles and appreciate the increase of subtitles on their live programming however, it still remains a problem.

UTV Ireland

This AGM report is related to January - December 2015. UTV Ireland which has been running since January 2015 will fall under the remit of the Access Rules in 2016.

Other channels

IDS is also working with Irish TV and TG4. We are also aiming to build up a relationship with Setanta.

Complaints to RTE/TV3/UTV Ireland

If you wish to contact RTE or TV3 with your opinions/complaints about their services to the Deaf community you can contact:

RTE EMAIL: Feedback@rte.ie subtitle@rte.ie

TV3 EMAIL: subtitles@tv3.ie

Or if you are not comfortable sending a complaint text, you can contact the IDS and get assistance with writing a complaint.

Susan Whelan – Social Media Coordinator