



**Irish Deaf Society**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

**35th Annual General Meeting**

**At Deaf Heritage Centre, Deaf Village Ireland**

**Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 2pm**

# Table of Contents

Introduction of the Irish Deaf Society .....	4
Mission Statement.....	4
Contact Details .....	4
Standing Orders.....	5
Board of Directors.....	6
Staff.....	6
Agenda .....	8
The 34th Annual General Meeting .....	9
The Extraordinary General Meeting .....	17
Chairperson's Address.....	21
(2016) Review .....	23
Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign 2016 .....	23
Irish Sign Language Academy .....	25
Irish Sign Language Home Tuition Scheme.....	25
The year ahead.....	26
Advocacy and Representation.....	27
Education .....	29
Funding.....	29
Classes we provide .....	29
One-Day workshops.....	30
Healthcare.....	30
Deaf Education forum.....	30
Portlaoise Deaf Conference .....	30
Educational Partnership Group.....	30
Fundraising.....	31
International Affairs.....	33

European Union of the Deaf .....	33
First Day – Workshop .....	33
Second Day – EUD/Dovenschap Seminar 2016.....	33
Third and fourth Day.....	34
EU Parliament .....	35
Broadcasting.....	37
Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.....	37
RTE/TV3.....	37
Other channels/Platform providers.....	38
Complaints to RTE/TV3/UTV Ireland .....	38
Website and Social Media .....	39
Facebook (as of 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2016).....	39
Twitter (as of 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2016).....	39

# Introduction of the Irish Deaf Society

## 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.

## Contact Details

<b>Office Address</b>	Irish Deaf Society (IDS), Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7.
<b>Text</b>	+353 (86) 380 7033
<b>Email</b>	info@irishdeafsociety.ie
<b>Skype</b>	irishdeafsociety
<b>Telephone</b>	+353 (01) 860 1878
<b>Registered Company No</b>	321657
<b>Registered Charity No</b>	CHY 8674

## 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 willfully 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:
  - a. Incorrect procedures – contrary to Standing Order, e.g. signing longer than allowed.
  - b. Irrelevancy – wandering from the subject.
  - c. Inappropriate language – swearing, personal abuse or other inappropriate remarks.
  - d. Breach of Rules – procedures contrary to that laid down by Standing Order
10. A point of information shall apply where a member calls for
  - a. Clarification of a point raised by a signer
  - b. Provision of additional information
  - c. 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.

## Board of Directors

<b>Chairperson</b>	Wendy Murray Jnr (to Sept 16) Lianne Quigley (from Sept 16)
<b>Vice Chairperson</b>	Lianne Quigley (to Sept 16)
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	Ronan Lowry
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	Melissa Howlett (Acting)
<b>Board of Directors</b>	Wendy Murray Jnr John Bosco Conama Jennifer Lynch Colm Finnegan (co-opt Sept 16)

## Staff

<b>Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</b>	Eddie Redmond
<b>Personal Assistant to CEO</b>	Louise Sheerin
<b>Chartered Public Accountant</b>	Fiona Noone
<b>Advocacy Services Manager</b>	Elaine Grehan
<b>Community Resource Officer</b>	Orla Grehan
<b>Advocacy Services Administrator</b>	Alison Harrington
<b>Deaf Adult Literacy Services (DALs) Manager</b>	Brian Crean
<b>DALS Supervisor</b>	Susan Whelan
<b>ISL Academy Manager</b>	Tracey Treanor
<b>Receptionist</b>	Anna Murphy
<b>Fundraising Manager</b>	Janette Byrne
<b>Fundraising Administrator</b>	Kate Mullin
<b>Charity Shop Supervisors</b>	Lorraine Cullen (Phibsboro) Anne Moloney (Ashbourne)

**Shop Assistants**

Debra Kerr (Drogheda) (Jan 17)

Lisa O'Neill (Phibsboro)

Noeleen Galvin (Ashbourne)

Jacqueline Rossiter (Drogheda)  
(Feb 17)

**Warehouse Manager**

Mary Esther English (Acting)

**Van Driver**

Krzysztof (Kris) Bury

**Temp data-entry clerk**

Sandra Kennedy

Marina Young

## Agenda

1. Standing Order
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. The Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting
4. EGM Minutes
5. Matters arising
6. Chairperson's Address
7. The 2016 Review
8. Financial Report
9. Elections
10. Motions/Resolutions
11. Any Other Business

# The 34th Annual General Meeting

34<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 2pm

Deaf Heritage Centre, Deaf Village Ireland, Cabra, Dublin 7.

## Attendance:

**Chairperson** Wendy Murray, **Vice Chairperson** Lianne Quigley, **Acting Hon. Secretary** Ronan Lowry, **Hon. Treasurer** Melissa Howlett, and **Board Directors** Lorraine Creed, Jennifer Lynch

**Apologies:** John Bosco Conama

**Minute Taker:** Anna Murphy

**Auditor:** Richard Kendrick

**Interpreters:** Mary Stringer and Amanda Dunne

The Chairperson, **Wendy Murray** declared the 34<sup>th</sup> AGM open at **2.03pm**

---

The IDS AGM Quorum is set at 28 people (16 people currently in attendance). The Chairperson asked members if they wished to delay proceeding with the AGM for 15 minutes.

This was proposed and seconded by **Bernadette Power** and **John Giles** and passed by a majority vote.

At 2.20pm there were 22 members present, still not enough for the quorum of 28. The Chairperson asked members if they wished to go ahead with the AGM.

This was proposed by and seconded by **Audrey Conama** and **Catherine Stewart** and passed by a majority vote.

Please Note, by 2.45pm, a peak attendance of 23 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 **John Giles** and **Krzysztof Bury** and passed by a majority vote.

### Tellers

**Edward Power** was proposed and seconded by **Bridie Power** and **John Giles** and passed by a majority vote.

**Ronan McDonagh** was proposed and seconded by **Felix Brazil** 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 33rd AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairperson's Address
6. 2015 Review
7. Financial Report
8. CEO report
9. Elections
10. Any Other Business.

The agenda was proposed and seconded by **Bernadette Power** and **Kevin Lynch** and passed by a majority vote.

## 3. Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> AGM

**Felix Brazil** asked for clarification of number 6 (pg. 9) in last year's minutes re: the donation of €40,000 and presented the Chairperson with a letter. The Chairperson said that it had been investigated and discussed with the auditors but because it was brought up 7 years after the donation, 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 said that at the time the IDS Board sent a letter to the family but received no response. She advised that all queries in relation to donations need to be made by the donor within a 3 year period and declared this matter now closed.

No changes or amendments made

The minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> AGM were proposed and seconded by **Bridie Power** and **Kevin Lynch** and passed by a majority vote.

#### 4. Matters Arising

1. **Graham O'Shea:** Page 9, 4.1 "Graham O'Shea suggested ISL recognition to promote ISL Awareness through postage stamps like 'ABC'". Mr. O'Shea asked for an update in relation to this and was informed that there was no action on this yet but the IDS are still keeping it in mind.

#### 5. Chairperson's Address

The Chairperson addressed the IDS AGM, at the end of her address she announced the good news that on 08/04/16, DALs received funding of €214,000, to continue its services to the Deaf community.

#### 6. 2015 Review

1. **Graham O'Shea:** Thanked the IDS for the information from the WFD and EUD (Number 5, pg.32) conferences on YouTube etc., but expressed his disappointment that one of the days was missing. The Chairperson responded that they had filmed and uploaded 3-4 videos from the conference and did not realise until 2-3 months later that there was some information missing. She will ensure that next time the videos will be uploaded to social media quicker.

The Chairperson also mentioned that due to the Alexander Graham Bell programme, the system for Deaf children in America changed. A Greek organisation proposed that the WFD meetings/conferences take place every 2 years rather than every 4 years to deal with any important issues like this that arise but this suggestion was rejected. The IDS supported the change but the majority rejected it.

**Graham O'Shea** then suggested that at the next meeting we could propose to have it every 3 years.

**The Chairperson accepted this idea and advised that they would discuss it in the upcoming Board meeting.**

2. **Kevin Lynch:** pg. 31, Fundraising Report mentions an IDS wedding card wondering what this was and if this was successful.

The Chairperson explained that this was a business initiative to have IDS cards at weddings as a way of generating donations.

**The Chairperson agreed that this information should be put on our website.**

3. **Graham O'Shea:** in relation to ISL awareness week the wrong mayor's name was used should have been Chris O'Leary and not John O'Shea. Also, enquired about the ISL Recognition Bill, who was responsible for putting this together?

The Chairperson replied to say that they had worked closely with Mark Daly from Fianna Fáil to

create the Bill and had also been meeting other senators and asking them to support the Bill. Fine Gael and Labour both rejected the Bill but support the idea. The Chairperson expressed the importance of the Bill and how it is a Human Rights and Language issue and that the Deaf Community don't want it to be something the politicians can play with or use just to get votes.

4. **Edward Power:** feels that RTE are not providing a good subtitling service and expressed his disappointment.

The Chairperson advised that all subtitling complaints be made to Susan Whelan and that she can bring them to RTE.

The IDS 2015 Review was proposed and seconded by **Audrey Conama** and **Kevin Lynch** and passed by a majority vote.

## 7. Finance Report

1. The Auditor **Richard Kendrick** confirmed that the 2015 IDS Finances were much stronger than in 2014. He confirmed that the income had stabilised and although the admin costs were higher in 2015 it was a good thing as it meant people were back working more hours.
2. Mr. Kendrick explained that on pg. 9 the profit of €375,000 in the bank was because the sale of 30 Blessington Street had been completed.

### Queries by members

1. **Felix Brazil:** asked if the money from the sale of Blessington Street €375,000 was used and queried if it was sold at the wrong time. Blessington Street now has a better reputation and asked if we had waited would the IDS have made more profit. Mr. Kendrick assured him that the money had not been used and that this could be seen on Page 9 of the Auditors Report. In relation to the sale of Blessington Street Mr. Kendrick explained that there was no way of knowing if Blessington Street was going to improve, the building had been lying empty for months with no prospective rental income. A good profit was made from the sale.
2. **Kevin Lynch:** Page 21, the figure for membership in 2013 was €3,000 but in 2014 it was nearly half that. This is very important and something the IDS need to work on. He also commented that people miss the IDS journal and that maybe the IDS could bring this back.

The Chairperson responded that this could have been due to people's finances in 2015 or that they were just not interested in becoming IDS members. **The Chairperson assured members that the IDS have planned a membership review to work on making membership more attractive.**

The IDS Finance Report 2015 was proposed and seconded by **Kevin Lynch** and **Bridie Power** and passed by a majority vote.

## **Retaining the services of Richard Kendrick as Auditor**

This was proposed and seconded by **John Giles** and **Sharon Campbell** and passed by a majority vote. Richard Kendrick will continue to be the auditor, and give advice and guidance to the Irish Deaf Society.

## **8. Chief Executive Report – Eddie Redmond**

1. Fundraising
2. Deafward
3. DALs
4. ISL Academy
5. Meetings- ISL Recognition, Education Partnership. IDS – Future Plans
6. IDS Future Plans

### **1. Fundraising**

- a. There was a lot of action in this department over the last three years. The focus has been on raising funds and we are now looking at expanding our services.
- b. Our National Raffles, organised by Rapport took place over the summer and in December 2015. After the summer raffle the IDS met with Rapport to review how the raffle was run and made some changes that allowed the December raffle to be more successful. The next raffle is due to start in the next couple of weeks and the two staff who worked on the December raffle will be returning to continue their work for this.
- c. The Charity shops are both doing well and there are plans to open a third shop. Both shops now have a manager and an assistant manager which allows us to open Monday to Saturday.
- d. The warehouse had to move to Santry after the previous building we used was sold. CIDP had allowed us use a boarding house free of charge and now we must pay rent on the new premises. This is always very busy with donations and is managed by a warehouse supervisor, a van driver, TUS workers and a small number of volunteers.
- e. The IDS has been notified of many bogus collectors going door to door collecting money. We *never* do door to door or street collections so it is very important that any bogus collectors are reported to both the IDS and the guards.
- f. We are now working with The Charity Regulatory Authority, which has strict regulations around the charity sector to prevent fraud, corruption etc. The IDS supply them with all the information they require, we follow their guidelines and can go to them for any advice we may need.

### **2. Deafward**

- a. After the rejection of our SSNO funding two years ago, Deafward is operating on bridge funding and has three part-time staff members who work very hard.
- b. A new application for SSNO funding has been submitted and we should find out the result in May.
- c. Deafward receive a number of grants for different projects including Deaf Awareness Training, Peer Advocacy Roadshows and to educate people working in mental Health Services about Deafness.

### **3. DALIS**

- a. DALIS received news that funding of €214,000 has been approved for 2016.
- b. This service is mainly based in Dublin but it has expanded nationally to include some classes and workshops around Ireland.

### **4. ISL Academy**

- a. Tracey Treanor is now working as ISL Coordinator part-time, focusing on ISL classes and ISL recognition. She is working very hard organising meetings, the ISL forum and setting up new classes.
- b. FETAC has been changed to QQI. The ISLA currently provide level 3 and 4 ISL classes and are hoping to add level 5 in the future.
- c. The ISL Academy and ISL recognition group are working hard in preparation for this year's ISL awareness week. We hope all organisations will be involved this year and focus on getting awareness out to hearing people and the media.
- d. The IDS hope to get someone to work specifically around ISL Awareness meeting politicians, members of the government and the media.

### **5. Meetings**

- a. The IDS, the Deaf schools, Sharing the Journey, CIDP and Deafhear are involved in the Education Partnership Group. Following on from the NSCE report on education of Deaf children, a lot of policies need to change. This group lobbies the Department of Education to improve Deaf education and stand up for the rights of Deaf children in Ireland.
- b. The IDS were involved with The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) during the time of the General Election and they are willing to support ISL Recognition.
- c. The IDS nominated Mark Daly to the Seanad so we are now awaiting our voting card. We hope Mark Daly and John Dolan (Chairperson of DFI) both get elected.
- d. The IDS are also involved with IRIS which is expanding all the time with some new ideas in the pipeline.

- e. The IDS are on the board of management of the Deaf Village Ireland and there have been a few issues here. Damien Barry (Chairperson) is very busy and was due to step down but is committed to staying on until the issues are sorted out.
- f. The IDS has been involved with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and different political parties. Once a government has been formed, we will make an effort to meet more members of political parties.
- g. Recently the IDS met with a person regarding the IDS Business plan which is being working on.

## 6. Future Plans

- a. We hope to **expand both Deafward and the ISLA**. Get staff back working full-time and maybe rent more office space.
- b. Fergal is currently working on **IDS policy documents** for donations etc. we plan to have these finished and formalised.
- c. We plan to **work on Membership**, come up with new ideas for members and make membership more attractive to people. We hope to build the popularity back up to where it was in previous years. The IDS would be happy to hear any ideas from people in relation to this.

## Questions arising from the CEO Report

1. **Edward Power** asked if the IDS go to other businesses asking for support and expressed concern over the donation by Felix Brazil. The CEO responded to say that the IDS fundraising department do this. The Fundraising Manager often meets with different people and businesses. The Chairperson responded to the second query to say that the problem with that donation happened when the IDS had a different Board and CEO who were not managing the paperwork surrounding finances correctly. The current Board have very strict rules and policies in place to ensure this isn't repeated.
2. **Graham O'Shea** expressed the need for the IDS Journal to come back as some older members may not be familiar with technology to access the news on social media. The Chairperson responded that the IDS would like to bring back the Journal but at the moment there is just not enough staff for this. The Chairperson explained that it was on the agenda but the main focus at the moment was on funds and making sure the IDS can maintain their services and not get in to difficulty again.
3. **Ronan McDonagh** asked if the IDS could link ISL Recognition with the 1916 proclamation (equality as is ISL recognition) and asked if IDS membership was online. The Chairperson agreed that the proclamation is about equality and human rights and that it is

being used to back up the need for equal access for the Deaf community. The Chairperson said that following the success of the marriage equality referendum, we are looking at using the same points for equality in the Deaf community.

The Chairperson said that the IDS do have online membership through our website but we might need to look at making it easier to do.

4. **Kevin Lynch** said the IDS were very lucky to have Eddie and thanked him for all his work. He then asked if the move from Blessington Street to DVI had been successful. He also suggested that the IDS ask the students in classes and Deafward clients about membership and encourage them to become members.

The CEO thanked Kevin and explained that there were positives and negatives to the move but that it was important for the IDS to be present in DVI. It allows more people to access the services and allows us to have more classes.

The IDS CEO Report 2015 was proposed and seconded by **Sharon Campbell** and **Graham O'Shea** and passed by a majority vote.

## 9. Elections

1. Melissa Howlett's term as IDS Treasurer ended on the 9/04/16 but she was willing to retain this role for three more years. Proposal: **Melissa Howlett** to remain as IDS Treasurer for another term. This was proposed and seconded by **Lorraine Creed** and **Fiona Ennis** and passed by a majority vote.
2. Two Board members **Lorraine Creed** and **Breda O'Grady** stepped down this year so there are two vacancies. No nominations were received before the AGM so the Chairperson opened it to the floor.  
No one came forward so the Chairperson and the Board would discuss and co-opt additional members.

## Questions Arising from the Elections

1. **Edward Power** brought up the fact that the IDS is for all of the Deaf Community and that we need to look at getting young people involved on the Board. He suggested asking an IDYA member to get involved.  
The Chairperson replied that the oldest person on the Board at the moment is under 50 and that the Board want someone who is confident, motivated and can bring something to the IDS. She explained that they want someone who is focused on the IDS.
2. **Audrey Conama** said that the IDS have to be open to people joining the board and not to stop people who are on Board of Managements of other organisations from also being on

the IDS Board. The Chairperson responded that IDS is open to all apart from IDS staff or their families as this could become a conflict of interest.

## 10. Any Other Business

1. **Sharon Campbell** felt having an ISL Awareness week once a year is not enough and was disappointed that there wasn't much mention of it in the media. She thinks a Deaf month would be better. She also suggested contacting google and asking them to change their logo.
2. **Kevin Lynch** proposed that a minutes silence should be held in memory of Linda McLoughlin a former Board member of the IDS.
3. **Martin Power** proposed that the membership fee be cut in order to make it accessible for people who may be in financial difficulty. He also proposed the IDS get more media attention for events and/or hold one big event to help us lobby and get members.
4. **Angela Larkin** asked about certification from DALs classes. She said that the IDS provide FETAC 3 AND 4 classes and she has passed both but heard nothing about her certificate.

## End of AGM

---

**The Chairperson** thanked the Members, Board, Tellers, Minute Taker and Interpreters for attending the AGM and if anyone had any other questions to send an email. A drama event has been organised by the Dublin Deaf Drama and all are welcome.

The Chairperson declared the 34th AGM closed at **4.15pm**.

## The Extraordinary General Meeting

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 4.30pm

Cabragh Hall, Deaf Village Ireland, Cabra, Dublin 7

### Attendance:

**Acting Chairperson** Lianne Quigley, **Hon. Secretary** Ronan Lowry and **Board Directors** Jennifer Lynch, Wendy Murray, Melissa Howlett, John Bosco Conama

**Minute Taker:** Eddie Redmond

Acting Chairperson, **Lianne Quigley** declared the EGM open at **4.40pm**

---

The IDS EGM Quorum is set at 59 people (18 people currently in attendance). The Acting Chairperson asked members if they wished to proceed.

This was proposed and seconded by **Lorraine Creed** and **Libby Brehney** and passed by a majority vote. Result – 9 accepted, 1 rejected and 5 abstained.

Before going ahead with the meeting, two tellers were appointed **Rita McMahon** was proposed and seconded by **Lorraine Creed** and **Libby Brehney**. **Ronan McDonagh** was proposed and seconded by **Graham O’Shea** and **Kevin Lynch**. Members from the floor accepted with a majority vote.

The Acting Chairperson apologised to the floor for the 10 minute delay of the board’s arrival. She proceeded with the mission statement of the IDS and explained the Standing order of the EGM. She also announced that the meeting would be live-streamed on social media.

The Standing orders were proposed by **Lorraine Creed** and seconded by **Libby Brehney** and passed with a majority vote.

## 1. Adoption of the Agenda

1. Opening of the EGM
2. Reasons for the EGM
3. Elections
4. AOB (time permitting)
5. Close.

The agenda was proposed and seconded by **Teresa Lynch** and **Peter Murray** and passed by a majority vote.

## 2. Reasons for the EGM

The Acting Chairperson explained the reason for calling the EGM; there are six board members currently sitting since the AGM in April and the board have been seeking two new board members but to no avail. Two board members **Wendy Murray** and **Melissa Howlett** have stepped down from their positions as Chairperson and Hon. Treasurer respectively, due to the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) saying that it is not best practice for paid staff to sit on the Board of a charity. She

stressed that the IDS were not breaking any laws over this issue and had consultations with Boardmatch, The Wheel and our solicitor for legal advice. The board had a meeting for an hour before the EGM and decided to provide two options to the members. She explained that the IDS remains in compliance with the Governance Code, [www.governancecode.ie](http://www.governancecode.ie) under 1.3 **Comply or Explain** *ensuring accountability and transparency by declaring this conflict of interest and moving to resolve it*. The two options were given Option A – two board members to step down or Option B – two board members to remain with conditions that they must leave a meeting when issues around DALs and ISL Academy are discussed. She also assured the members that IDS would comply with the Governance Code by being transparent and a statement would be issued on the website and in the IDS office.

- a. **Teresa Lynch**- clarified that Wendy Murray and Melissa Howlett would not be part of the 'top four' if option B is chosen and Acting Chairperson responded that she is correct.
- b. **Kevin Lynch** – asked if there is a conflict of interest if board members are being paid as staff as well as on board. Acting Chairperson responded that as per Governance Code 1.3 we can explain the reason for having these members on the board as it has proved difficult to get any new board members as previously stated.
- c. **Audrey Conama** – asked for clarification of Governance 1.3 and did the board investigate before or after the AGM? **Wendy Murray** responded that the CEO informed her after the AGM about the complication of some board members being paid staff. A meeting with the Wheel was held where we were informed that it was a conflict of interest and bad practice but not illegal. She decided to step down in the best interest of the IDS and after the bad press other charities had received recently. Audrey Conama suggested that they stay until the next AGM and then make a decision.
- d. **Ronan McDonagh** – he recalled that staff could not be on the board in the past and wondered if DALs is independently funded. The Acting Chairperson responded that it is under the IDS.
- e. **Rita McMahon** – asked for clarification; if both board members stayed on, for what issues would they have to leave a meeting. Acting chairperson responded that they would leave the meeting when DALs and ISL Academy issues are discussed.

The Acting Chairperson now asked the floor for voting on Option B – allow two board members to remain until the next AGM. **Teresa Lynch** proposed and **Lorraine Creed** seconded. 13 voted in favour out of 18 therefore it was passed by a majority.

### 3. Election

#### a. Chairperson

**Ronan Lowry** chaired the meeting for the duration of the election for the chairperson. Ronan

Lowry proposed **Lianne Quigley** to be Chairperson and this was seconded by **Wendy Murray**. 14 members voted in favour therefore Lianne Quigley was elected as Chairperson.

**Lianne Quigley** thanked the members for electing her as chairperson.

b. **Hon. Treasurer**

The Chairperson asked the floor for a new Treasurer. No one came forward. The Majority agreed to leave it to the board to make a decision.

c. **Board Director**

The Chairperson explained that **Colm Finnegan** expressed an interest in becoming a member of the board. He sent his apologies via text message that he could not come to the EGM. After a discussion, it was agreed that he would be co-opted until the AGM. The majority was in favour of this proposal.

4. **A.O.B**

- a. **Eddie Redmond** – announced an information night after the EGM in relation to ISL Recognition during ISL Awareness week.
- b. **Teresa Lynch** – expressed concern about the number of IDS members and now that IDS have recovered from the mess a couple of years ago it is time to attract new members.
- c. **Graham O'Shea** – asked that the press release on ISL Awareness week be ready a few weeks before the event.
- d. **Lianne Quigley** – Deaf Education Conference in Portlaoise on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October

5. **Close**

The Chairperson thanks all who attended the EGM at such short notice. She then officially declared the EGM closed at 5.40pm.

## Chairperson's Address

Dear Members,

This is my first Chairperson's Address; I would like to thank those who attended the EGM on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 and elected me as Chairperson. My tenure as chairperson has flown by very quickly. 2016 was a good year for the IDS however, there is still much work to be done.

As you know, the centenary of 1916 was a very special event for Irish people on the island of Ireland. The Proclamation of the Irish Republic clearly guarantees "religious and civil liberty, equal rights, and equal opportunities of all its citizens".

Today, the Irish Deaf community strives for equality. Substantive equality is still denied to us because ISL is not recognised as an official language within the Irish State. We continue to lobby for our rights and as a community we have hope for the future.

The IDS AGM was held in Dublin on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. A month after the AGM, we came across an issue within the governance code which was drafted by a range of national organisations who came together under the shared vision of creating the resource that is the Governance Code Boardmatch, The Wheel and DFI as well as 6 others. In order to gain credibility in a climate of charities losing public trust, we have had to look at the IDS and were advised that it is not best practice to have members of the board working for the IDS. This was a grey area for us as two board directors are working tutors with DALs, but not IDS staff members. We were told that that this is not '*best practice*' – though not illegal, therefore, we called an EGM to explain this to members. At the EGM, it was agreed that board directors who are working for DALs or ISL Academy must leave any meetings when items related to DALs/ISL Academy are being discussed. The IDS remains in compliance with the governance code under 3:1 '*to comply or explain*' ensuring accountability and transparency by declaring this conflict of interest and the IDS are presently moving to resolve this issue.

One of the most important events on the IDS calendar was ISL awareness week. The week was a great success thanks to several organisations across Ireland arranging events to promote ISL. A huge thanks to all who got involved. Please keep up the good work! During the launch, we strongly reminded Minister Finian McGrath – (Minister of State at the Departments of Social Protection, Justice & Equality and Health with special responsibility for Disabilities.) to ratify UNCRPD. Ireland is one of the last EU countries yet to ratify. This would be an important step towards getting ISL recognised in Ireland.

We witnessed a historic moment in the EU parliament "Multilingualism and equal rights in the EU: the

role of sign languages” organised by MEP Helga Stevens. This involved 24 spoken and 32 signed languages all at the same time in one room! It was an impressive sight!

An important historic moment for the Irish Deaf Community was the Joint Oireachtas committee on Justice and Equality inviting the IDS to attend a meeting at Leinster House. After the meeting, a report on the formal recognition of Irish Sign Language was published. One of the recommendations of this report was to ask Frances Fitzgerald, Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality) to support the ISL bill.

There were several developments in the ISL recognition campaign in late 2016. We were delighted to see the ISL bill getting through its 2nd stage in the Seanad. At the same time, the Deaf Community was hit by the very sad and tragic deaths of the McCarthy brothers.

I'm delighted to say that the IDS set up our 3<sup>rd</sup> Charity shop in Drogheda in December 2016. This will generate more income for the IDS. We monitor IDS finances carefully but still heavily rely on fundraising and donations. We are delighted that Deaforward secured funding under the *Scheme to Support National Organisations Programme* for the next 3 years and DALs also secured funding. I would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all the people who donated to the IDS in 2016.

Since September 2016, the ISL Academy has a full time manager. We hope this department will produce more ISL classes across the country and provide training for ISL teachers.

The Honorary secretary, Ronan Lowry has decided to step down at the 2017 AGM after serving for 3 years. Thank you for serving Ronan, and we wish you the best of luck for the future. All IDS Board directors come to the end of their tenures this coming April 2017. I would like to thank them for volunteering their time and service for the past few years. I wish them the best of luck for the upcoming AGM elections.

On a sad note, IDS staff member Brian Crean's father, Ned Crean passed away in October 2016, may he rest in peace. He was the author of the book 'Breaking the Silence' and was very involved in Deaf education in Ireland. He was a big supporter of IDS.

Finally, many thanks to all IDS members, members of the Deaf Community, Board and Staff for their hard work in 2016.

**Lianne Quigley**

## (2016) Review

### Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign 2016

2016 has been a very significant year for our ISL Recognition campaign. During the general election, we worked hard to get political parties to prioritise ISL recognition on their manifestos. We were successful in getting ISL Recognition mentions by only three parties. After a long wait, there was no mention of ISL recognition in the subsequent programme for government that was agreed by Fine Gael and some independents. We were very disappointed with the lack of progress here.

However, the latter part of 2016 witnessed a series of significant campaign progresses. Following our consultation with Senator Mark Daly, it was decided to re-table the Recognition of ISL for the Deaf Community Bill in July. We managed to intensively lobby a number of senators and TDs, with great help from our supporters. The Bill passed the second stage in the Seanad and also gained plenty of publicity, which was very helpful. The Bill is now awaiting the third stage of the Seanad – committee stage that should take place in 2017.

We managed to secure a barrister to support our case, he examined the submissions suggesting additional clauses and changes to the Bill. We are grateful for the submissions sent to us by a number of people.

In the mainstream, we decided to avail of the *United Nations convention on the rights of the child* and the *United Nations convention on human rights*. We submitted reports which included supporting evidence from the Deaf Community to both periodic reviews. We will continue to raise the profile of ISL Recognition through the various UN conventions. It is very disappointing to note that Ireland has still not ratified the UN Convention on Rights for People with Disability.

2016 saw four significant events in the Deaf community: ISL awareness week, the tragic deaths of the McCarthy brothers in Bluebell, the Oireachtas joint committee report and the Dáil debate on ISL Recognition report. ISL awareness week was very successful with many events organised by groups outside IDS. We, in IDS, are grateful to these groups and we are determined to have an even bigger and better ISL Awareness week in 2017.

The tragic deaths of McCarthy brothers: Daniel and William drew totally unexpected, unintentional and massive media attention to the related issues: access to public services in ISL. We feel we owe the late brothers a massive thank you for this and it seems fitting that their deaths were not in vain.

The Oireachtas joint committee published a report strongly recommending the swift recognition of ISL after hearing testimonies from three IDS members, Dr John Bosco Conama, Wendy Murray and Brian Crean. This report became a historic debate in Dáil Éireann where TDs debated on the report for two solid hours.

We are hopeful for the recognition of ISL but we must be very vigilant of how the Bill is handled. With your continued and marvellous support, we are keen to continue the campaign. There is a Facebook page and Twitter page devoted to this campaign so members can keep abreast of all developments.

**Dr John Bosco Conama and Lianne Quigley**

## **Irish Sign Language Academy**

There have been a few changes in the Academy; a new full time manager, a course & syllabus design team, new contracts for ISL classes and the campaign for ISL recognition which is strengthening more than ever with positive media coverage on the Deaf community.

Tracey Treanor has taken up the Manager position since 1<sup>st</sup> September, leading and guiding the service; reviewing its Operational Plan 2010 to ensure aims and objectives are on par and within our budget.

The ISL Academy advisory committee that was formed in 2015 has now been dissolved since a Manager has been appointed, however the Course and Syllabus design team remained to focus on the contents of the course, it is a team consisting of ISL teachers and professors from Centre for Deaf Studies determining student learning and planning activities for our accredited courses.

The Academy functions in relation to continuing professional development (CPD). This will benefit both the service and teachers as it provides a structured approach to workplace training and development, it is an essential investment in our service. We have provided four In-service training days focusing on our accredited QQI curriculums, assessment training, IT Support and the policies of the ISL Academy.

It is encouraging to see 116 learners being awarded; 24 QQI Level 4 (ISL 2) and 92 QQI Level 3 (ISL 1) and the Academy seeing an 19% increase in class registration particularly with corporates and schools nationwide, however the planning of teachers and classes supply and demand is a central concern.

### ***Irish Sign Language Home Tuition Scheme***

The ISL Academy and the Dept. of Education have been working together to ensure the continuation of the ISL Home Tuition Scheme and to ensure it is streamlined with the recent change to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016. IDS, in co-operation with the Archdiocese of Dublin (AOD) Child Safeguarding and Protection Services have agreed together to facilitate the Garda Vetting of tutors of the ISL Home Tuition scheme, liaising with the National Vetting Bureau to process the vetting applications. The AOD process applications on behalf of the IDS.

This is a fantastic as it makes a difference to families with Deaf children as it not only provides communication and language support, it gives Deaf children a good start in life and welcomes families to the Deaf community.

### ***The year ahead***

The ISL Academy continues to strive for progression and growth, focusing on steps along the way that will help us understand what is needed for our service to reach the bigger goal. The progression of ISL recognition may raise the bar ever more, therefore we need to prepare for and have the ability to provide the services to the public.

Considering the challenges of financial constraints, we will explore innovative ways to develop resources; education programmes and seeking funding for research and training. As we are extending and developing services, the need is outstripping resources as we don't have any government funding. We will not stray from our determination to get core funding for the academy to ensure we achieve its aims and objectives.

**Tracey Treanor – ISL Academy Manager**

## Advocacy and Representation

Firstly, we are delighted that in June, Deaforward were awarded a contract for three years funding under the SSNO programme. This has allowed our staff to return to full-time work and make long-term plans and projects after a 2 year battle following an overnight closure of the service in 2014.

Deaforward has continued its service throughout the year, organising Roadshows, Information Nights, Peer-advocacy training, and providing individual and national-level advocacy through the Drop-in service. Demand for our drop-in service has remained consistent, even with the addition of the IRIS program and the CIC next door. Our records show a large percentage of services that our clients require from us are not available anywhere else.

We have coordinated numerous Deaf Awareness Training workshops with various businesses, schools, workplaces, and public services and departments. On top of this, we were awarded a grant to provide more DAT workshops to businesses and schools through the *Promoting Positive Attitudes to People with Disabilities Grant* from the Department of Justice.

We also received two other grants, one from the HSE & the National Lottery for *Mental Health workshops*, and the other from St Stephen's Green Trust to organise a *Deaf Advocacy Studies Course*.

We have collaborated with numerous organisations and groups on various issues, such as HSE, Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Caranua, Inclusion Ireland, FLAC, IRIS, and others. With every collaboration we aim to achieve progress in access for Deaf people to services and information. CIB have released a survey examining access for Deaf people to public services and information and this survey will be used to influence policy and practice for services in Ireland.

The Equality Studies course that IDS is running with UCD is in the final year of the second two year course. Graduation is expected to take place in April 2017.

We held the Summerfest this year, with glorious hot weather and with support from our volunteers and volunteers from Bank of Ireland. However, a low turnout caused concern and a review of the event might need to take place before next year.

In other news, IDS staff were among a delegation of Deaf visitors to the European Parliament in Brussels. ISL Awareness Week 2016 attracted some media attention from RTE Jr for the ISL videos provided to all the primary schools in Ireland in a collaboration between IDS and Deafhear. IDS is participating in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy which is currently at Stage 3 of its implementation. A report on the Formal Recognition of ISL was published by the Oireachtas

Committee on Justice & Equality, which included the recommendation that the government should support the ISL Bill introduced by Senator Mark Daly which will reach the Second Stage on 19<sup>th</sup> October.

And lastly, Deaforward staff member Tracey Treanor has taken a year's secondment to work full time with the ISL Academy, we wish her the best of luck with her new role. Taking over as Community Resource Officer is Orla Grehan; she used to work with Deaf Sports Ireland and is currently involved with Tallaght Deaf Club on a voluntary basis. Our administrator Fergal Dunne left for the far lands of New Zealand, we wish him well on his travels! He is replaced by Alison Harrington, who completed her diploma in Deaf Studies in TCD Centre for Deaf Studies several years ago. Both Orla and Alison have an awareness of the Deaf community and issues that Deaforward work with. We are hoping they will make a positive contribution to the IDS and Deaforward team. Welcome to the team Alison and Orla!

**Elaine Grehan – Advocacy Manager**

## Education

### *Funding*

The IDS's Deaf Adult Literacy Services is delighted to say that we received no less than our previous years funding which was €214,000 from the Department of Education and Skills. We continue to be very grateful to the DES who ensure that educational access is made available for Deaf adults nationwide.

### *Classes we provide*

45 classes were put in place from September 2016 and we had 8 one-day workshops that took place in various places nationwide.

	Jan to Mar 2016	Apr to June 2016	Sep to Dec 2016
Limerick	1	1	1
Louth	1	1	1
Dublin (DVI)	32	32	34
Kerry	1	1	0
Cork	1	1	1
Laois	1	1	0
Dublin (Tallaght)	1	1	1
Waterford	2	2	2
Wexford	1	1	1

We also provide a number of 1 to 1 classes for those who are either blind or have vision issues and Deaf learners with additional needs.

### ***One-Day workshops***

We have provided a variety of 1-day workshops on topics like; how to use Facebook, Social Media, pain management, Cake decoration, Make Up tutorials, neck and shoulder massage, Basic Car Maintenance, CV/Interview skills and DIY workshops. We will continue to organise more workshops in 2017. We have noticed that there is a high demand for these 1-day workshops.

### ***Healthcare***

There is a huge number of people within the Deaf community interested in studying Health care (QQI Major Award), especially working with elderly Deaf people. We are currently working in partnership with City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CTETB) who are experienced in providing this course. As we do not have any Deaf tutors who can tutor in this subject, we will follow the example of the IDS/UCD Equality Studies programme - to have hearing tutors with interpreters. If any Deaf/HH people are interested in this course, please submit your interest: [dals@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:dals@irishdeafsociety.ie)

### ***Deaf Education forum***

We ran a successful forum with a good number of Deaf/HH education users present. Nearly all of the attendees were concerned about the lack of Irish Sign Language fluency in the Deaf Education system. We have a 46 page transcript of the forum and a summary report will be completed in due course.

### ***Portlaoise Deaf Conference***

We would like to extend our thanks to the Father of a Deaf child, Andrew Geary for his hard work in running a successful Deaf Education Conference in Portlaoise. We were disappointed that questions could only be asked via a text system which made it more difficult for those who communicate in Irish Sign Language.

### ***Educational Partnership Group***

The Irish Deaf Society continues to be 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 policy regarding 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 – DALs Manager**

## Fundraising

**Drogheda shop** opened at the end of 2016 and is doing great and there has been a very positive reaction from the local community. Debra Kerr is Manager and Jacqueline Rossiter is Supervisor. We are continuing to build up business and donations. We always need more Volunteers and donations so if you have spare time we would be grateful. We can collect your donations or you can drop them into the shop.

**Contact: Debra 086-1422581 or Supervisor: Jacqueline Rossiter**

**Ashbourne Shop** is moving to a new premises in the near future. Due to the volume of donations, the current shop is too small. It is a very busy shop with great volunteers and staff. We were involved with the Town Centre fashion show again this year which has proven great for promoting the shop.

**Contact Manager: Anne Moloney 086-4682800 Supervisor: Noeleen Galvin.**

**Phibsborough Shop** has renewed our lease up to November 2017. We will need to move premises in 2018 when the lease is up so are currently looking for a unit on the Northside **of Dublin.**

**Contact: Manager Lorraine Cullen 086-4137970, Supervisor Lisa O' Neill**

IDS Warehouse is very busy, **MaryEsther English is the Supervisor**, she is dealing with huge levels of stock, collections, sorting and deliveries to three shops.

**Contacts: MaryEsther 086-1305029 Driver: Krzystof Bury, Van Assistants: Brian Capper and Amy Nioyi-Mola**

Our shop depends 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 decided to volunteer in our shops or the Warehouse. We are also happy to collect any of your unwanted items or you can drop them at our shops or office. 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 fourth shop hopefully this year and currently doing the research so will need many more donations and volunteers in 2017.

Also a huge thank you to TUS workers and to Debbie, and Dympna (Tolka Area Partnership) Tatyana (Meath Partnership) and Oliver (Louth Partnership) who organise the placement of workers in the IDS.

**Irish Deaf Society Raffles**

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

We continue to look for support. If you wish to make a donation or organise a fundraiser or if you require tickets e-mail [kate@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:kate@irishdeafsociety.ie), or text **Janette – 086-7851713**

**Janette Byrne – Fundraising Manager**

## International Affairs

### European Union of the Deaf

**Jennifer Lynch and Eddie Redmond** represented Ireland at the four day event in Scheveningen, The Hague, The Netherlands from 19th -22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016.

#### ***First Day – Workshop***

Two representatives from NEXES (Next Generation Emergency Services) gave background about the company and how to design and improve accessibility in emergency services for all citizens in Europe including Deaf people, disabled people and those with special needs using Real time text and video. It would give choices to everyone to find the best suited communication channel to reach emergency services. They also explained how to create better accessibility for 112 apps and sign language access to emergency services.

NEXES also showed how a smartphone can show the exact location of the caller during the emergency. EUD will work closely with NEXES and keep us updated on the development of the project. For more information see [www.nexes.eu](http://www.nexes.eu)

#### ***Second Day – EUD/Dovenschap Seminar 2016***

##### **Theme- European Deaf Innovations: Best Practices**

Markku Jokinen, EUD President and Eva Westerhoff, Dovenschap President opened and welcomed EUD delegates and other deaf members to the seminar.

##### **Morning Sessions**

1. **EUDY Academy – A platform of knowledge for Deaf people by Timothy Rowies (Belguim) [www.academy.eudy.eu](http://www.academy.eudy.eu)**
2. **Theatre for Deaf young people by Pamela Tollenaar (Netherlands)**
3. **Deaf Soccer Academy by Ado Peljto (Netherlands) [Www.deafsocceracademy.com](http://Www.deafsocceracademy.com)**
4. **Accessibility handbook for the professional sector by Frederic Bouquelloen (Belgium) [www.visualmundi.be](http://www.visualmundi.be)**
5. **Accessibility in museums by Martine and Roos Wattel (Netherlands) [Www.wattelt.org](http://Www.wattelt.org)**
6. **NEXES: Accessibility emergency services for people with disabilities by Marco Manso (Belguim)**

## Afternoon Session

1. **L'Altro Spazio: Coffee Café with Deaf people by Jascha Blume (Italy)**  
[www.laltrospazio.com](http://www.laltrospazio.com)
2. **Baby Signs by Lissa Zeviar (Netherlands)** [www.babygebaren.nl](http://www.babygebaren.nl)
3. **Wesemann Travel: travel programme for Deaf people by Johan Wesemann (Netherlands)**  
[www.wesemanntravel.com](http://www.wesemanntravel.com)
4. **Ratification of UNCRPD in the Netherlands by Professor Jenny Goldschmidt (Netherlands)**  
[www.uu.nl/staff/JEGoldschmidt/0](http://www.uu.nl/staff/JEGoldschmidt/0)
5. **Deaf Interpreters in Europe by Jette Holte Zehnter (Denmark)**
6. **Conclusions and closing**

Humberto Insolera, EUD Vice President & Dennis Hoogeveen Dovenschap Vice President gave the summary and conclusion of the seminar and thanked all presenters and the Dutch Deaf Association for their excellent preparation of the event. One important issue they mentioned is that protesting seems to be out of date and social media i.e. twitter and Facebook is the best way forward to get attention.

## *Third and fourth Day*

### **EUD General Assembly**

The main topics of the General Assembly were:

1. **EUD Annual Report 2015, Financial Accounts 2015.**
2. **Motions - First motion** on EUD Memberships which showed four different categories based on GDP, Populations and Membership fees. **Second Motion** - proposal to develop a new symbol for 'Deaf' by FEVLADO (Flemish Deaf Organisation) it was explained that the EDF was using the American logo of ASL interpreters as Deaf logo. After a short discussion, it was agreed that EUD and WFD will work together to create a new symbol for Deaf. It was accepted unanimously. **Third Motion** – by EUD – submit a motion to terminate the affiliated membership status for Turkish Federation of the Deaf and Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation of the Deaf due to outstanding membership fees since 2015. After some discussion. It was accepted unanimously.
3. **Summary Report on EUD work programme for 2016** Mark Wheatley EUD Executive Director gave a few points on plans for 2016 programme such as UNCRPD, NEXES Project and SignTeach.

#### 4. **Budget 2016**

#### 5. **Presentation of EUD Policy Strategy**

- a. Monitoring all relevant organisations to follow such as EDF, UN, to follow empowerment through information and communication channels.
- b. Working closing with UNCRPD
- c. Sign Language Legalisation in EU countries –Recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language

#### 6. **Presentation on EUD Communication and Media strategy**

David Hay EUD Media and Communications officer shows the statistics of social media.

#### 7. **Report on relations with EUD co-operative partners in 2015 such as European Disability Forum (EDF), WFD, EFSLI and EUDY**

#### 8. **Presentation from Malta**

Steven Mulvaney gave a powerpoint presentation about Malta who will host the 2017 EUD Workshop, Seminar and General Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May.

We also had the opportunity to witness the signing of the WFD Congress contract between FNSF (France) and WFD for the next WFD Congress in Paris in 2019.

## **EU Parliament**

On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, a historic conference on “Multilingualism and equal rights in the EU: the role of sign languages” organised by MEP Helga Stevens, took place in the hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels. More than 832 people, the majority of them deaf, from all over Europe and beyond, came to discuss this important topic, including 46 Irish Deaf and hearing delegates. In order to make this possible, interpretation into 31 European national and regional sign languages, one non-European sign language and the EU’s 24 spoken languages was provided by a total of 145 interpreters! Never before had so many sign language interpreters assembled in one room, it was an impressive sight indeed!

Many important topics regarding sign languages and sign language interpretation were discussed by a variety of speakers, for instance sign language recognition, the two previous European Parliament resolutions on the topic and the situation of professional sign language interpretation in the EU and the European Parliament.

The speakers unanimously highlighted the crucial importance of sign language recognition and the availability of sign language interpretation for the full inclusion of deaf people into society. They also underlined that recognition alone is not enough: Only the full implementation of this legislation in the Member states can make sure that deaf Europeans have access to fully university qualified

interpreters. However, the speakers pointed out that, while the situation of sign language recognition and interpreting is very diverse between EU member states, there generally is a severe lack of fully university qualified sign language interpreters in the EU, with a ratio from 8:1 to 2500:1 sign language users to sign language interpreters. This is, among other things, strongly linked to their difficult working conditions, which are highly inadequate, considering that they require a high degree of language proficiency as well as a university degree in interpretation in order to be qualified interpreters.

Finally we would like to thank three Irish MEPs, Liadh Ni Riada, Luke Ming Flanagan and Sean Kelly for sponsoring the Irish Delegates to the EU Parliament.

**On 23<sup>rd</sup> of November**, the European Parliament voted on a resolution on sign language and sign language interpreters, written by several Members of the European Parliament, including deaf MEPs Helga Stevens and Ádám Kósa. The resolution points out the importance of providing accessibility for the Deaf through sign language interpretation as well as the measures that need to be taken in order to improve the provision of sign language interpretation at EU and national levels.

We are very happy to see the overwhelming support that the Members of Parliament have lent to the resolution: 661 Members voted in favour, only 6 voted against and 23 abstained.

**Eddie Redmond**

# Broadcasting

## Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

The IDS attended two meetings with the USER CONSULTATIVE PANEL in 2016

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
- The BAI were supposed to review the rules in 2016 but this has been postponed to early 2017.

The User panel consultation group is currently looking for new members, if interested, please contact [susan@irishdeafcommunity.ie](mailto:susan@irishdeafcommunity.ie) who can pass on details.

## RTE/TV3

RTE used to hold regular meetings but unfortunately none was scheduled for 2016.

The IDS main issue with RTE in 2016 was the lack of planning and communication regarding airing of ISL interpreters at the 1916 centenary events.

IDS last met with TV3 in January 2016 where we discussed our continual disappointment 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, their subtitles remain a problem.

## Other channels/Platform providers

IDS continues to communicate and work with providers such as UTV Ireland, TV3, TG4, Setanta, Eir, Sky and Virgin.

## 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:

RTE EMAIL: [Feedback@rte.ie](mailto:Feedback@rte.ie) [subtitle@rte.ie](mailto:subtitle@rte.ie)

TV3 EMAIL: [subtitles@tv3.ie](mailto: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 – Digital Media Manager**

## Website and Social Media

The Irish Deaf Society webpage was launched in October 2014; all permanent content is translated into ISL (except previous AGM and Financial Report). We have made minor changes to the website and plan to do a mini upgrade in early 2017.

Sections include:

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

### Facebook (as of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016)

1. Irish Deaf Society (main Facebook page) has 5380 'likes' (last year's report for 21<sup>st</sup> December was 3777 'likes')
2. Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign has 2071 'likes'
3. (New) Irish Deaf Charity Shop page has 462 '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*.

If you would like the IDS to display your events on Facebook – please email [facebook@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:facebook@irishdeafsociety.ie)

### Twitter (as of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016)

We set up a @irishdeafsoc twitter page; we now have sent 1183 tweets and have 3300 (subscribers) to our page (last report was 2111 followers)

**Susan Whelan – Digital Media Manager**