



**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Library Association of Ireland Annual General Meeting**  
Broadcast through Zoom  
Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 10.00am

**A. Welcome and Introduction**

Niall O'Brien convened the Annual General Meeting, with Marian Higgins in the chair as LAI President.

Marian opened the meeting by expressing sympathies to those who have lost loved ones during the ongoing COVID19 pandemic.

**B. Convene Meeting: Attendance and Apologies**

**Attendance:** Robert Alfis, Mona Atkinson, Esme Baldwin, Emer Bowen, Fintan Bracken, Michelle Breen, Jane Buggle, Eileen Burgess, Leona Burgess, Jane Burns, Alexandra Caccamo, Jane Cantwell, Alan Carbery, Aine Carey, Stephanie Chen, Philip Cohen, Laura Connaughton, Isabelle Courtney, Clare Conneally, Ciara Cunnane, Katie Dickson, Stacey DiFazio, Lorna Dodd, Audrey Drohan, Johannah Duffy, Mary Dunne, James Durkan, Sophie Evans, Helen Fallon, Linda Fennessy, Joanna Finnegan, Delia Foley, Catherine Gallagher, Stuart Hamilton, Marian Higgins, Eva Hornung, Michaela Hollywood, Margaret Irons, Aoife Kerr, Patricia Keenan, Aisling Kelly, Louise Lawlor, Aoife Lawton, Lai Ma, Cathal McCauley, Barbara McCormack, Fiona Morley, Patricia Moloney, Kathleen Moran, Eileen Morrissey, Samantha Morrissey, Elizabeth Murphy, Hugh Murphy, Mary Murphy, Noeleen Murtagh, Lara Musto, Mairea Nelson, Eibhlín Ní Chearbhaill, Máire Ní Chonalláin, Patricia Nolan, Niall O'Brien, Finbarr O'Donovan, Marie O'Neill, Ann O'Sullivan, Liz O'Sullivan, Daniel Sheridan, John Shortall, Aisling Smith, Mary Stuart, Milena Taylor, Brendan Teeling, Shona Thoma, Helen Crawford Walsh, Catherine Watters, Marie Caffrey, Blathin Hurley.

**Apologies:** Renate Ní Uigin

**C. Approval of Minutes of AGM 2020**

Marian Higgins advised that the LAI annual general meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 have been circulated to attendees and asked if attendees could confirm by proposal and seconding that they are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Marian Michelle Breen proposed, while Eva Hornung seconded.

**D. Presentation of the Hon Treasurer's Report**

Marian Higgins called on Lorna Dodd, Honorary Treasurer, to offer the financial report of the Association and took the opportunity to thank the groups and section for returning their accounts and thanked Lorna for the detailed work both in the compiling of the financial report but also for her work throughout the year on the management team, ensuring that the accounts are always up to date and in good standing. Lorna

Dodd advised that there was quite a lot of financial activity up until March 2020 mainly in preparation for what was supposed to be the IFLA conference with the expectation of future income throughout the course of the year. There was relatively little financial activity once the pandemic hit. There was an increase in institutional members, but a decrease in personal memberships. LD said that the Association ran an operating loss this year, but the current account and reserves remain relatively stable due to the lack of activity. Given the extraordinary nature of 2020, it is expected that next year's accounts will return to profitability. Overall, the accounts that have been circulated to all members were deemed by the Treasurer to be healthy.

Jane Burns proposed the accounts, while Mary Murphy seconded.

## **E. Presentation of DRAFT LAI Annual Report**

Marian Higgins presented the draft LAI report with the following remarks.

“From the outset I would like to extend my appreciation to our Association’s members and others who gave so generously of their time to support the activities of the Association throughout a difficult year. In a pandemic you might think people in our sector would be less busy but I know from personal experience and speaking to colleagues in all sectors nothing could be further from the truth. Compiling the annual report was therefore a little trickier but thanks to the strong engagement of members I am in a position to present this annual report.

What you might notice is the absence of photographs and a proliferation of screenshots and graphics, that in itself is an indication of the times. 2020 will be a historic year for our Association, for many reasons and not for the wrong reasons but the right reasons. As a profession, librarians and information professionals have been solution driven and creative in their innovative approaches to delivering services, resilient and dynamic and as such a profession we should all be incredibly proud of. The report captures this creativity, innovation and resilience of our membership in combating the challenges.

As this Council set out on the work commitments for the 2020-2021 period, commitments we set out to complete were postponed or cancelled to be pivoted and adapted in ways we could not have anticipated, which we delivered upon. As an Association, renewed focus was placed on supporting our colleagues through networking opportunities, training, mentorship and engagement. As the year progressed, we all became familiar with Zoom and other online platforms to network, engage and support each other and whilst we all look forward to a new horizon ahead, when we can enjoy physical interaction again, the Covid environment has opened up new opportunities for engagement.

I would like to extend my thanks to John Blake who put in significant hours into the design and layout of the report and Trish Nolan, Robert Alfis and Niall O'Brien for all their work compiling this report.

It is timely to also offer the Association’s appreciation to a former LAI President Liam Ronayne of Cork City Libraries who retired in the last year and we hope he enjoys a blissful retirement.

I have selected a small number of activities from the many, again evidence of the commitment, engagement and creativity of our members. I would urge you to look through the report there are indeed many achievements, I have identified only a few so apologies to those groups and sections not mentioned.

- Firstly, an important item of governance was progressed this year and a new Constitution and rules will be brought before you later at this meeting.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the importance for libraries to be able to provide services to users through digital channels. As such, it has thrown a new light on many of the questions that already existed about whether, and under what terms, libraries can acquire and give access to eBooks and other resources. The LAI in cooperation with the Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL), Irish Universities Association Librarians' Group, and the Technological Higher Education Association Librarians' Group issued a call for action on this crisis and the Association will continue to work with others on this matter.
- Online event management training was organised by Council and delivered by the skilful Elaine Bean (Maynooth University) Sept 2020
- Congratulations to Robert Alfis (Deputy LAI Secretary), Conor Lynott (Web Officer Assistant), Lara Musto (LAI Co-Ordinator for IFLA – Library Map of the World) and Trish Nolan (Annual Report Secretary) who were appointed to the voluntary roles mentioned above in Nov 2020
- Social Media served an important role in communicating with members and activity increased substantially on these platforms with an increasing reach, a huge thank you to Shona Thoma the LAI social media officer.
- The Academic and Special Libraries section ran a lively event 'Taking Charge of Your Career- Adapting to New Environments'
- The Health Science Libraries Group had an extraordinary year, a year when their skills, sourcing, evaluating and providing access to high quality health information became highly valued on the world stage, their seminar 'You Can't Handle the Truth' provided a fascinating insight into health-related library work
- The Association delivered a successful Library Ireland Week campaign aptly titled 'Libraries Endure: Continuity in a Crisis' and a big thank you to the Task Force Chaired by John Shorthall and all those who engaged.
- In order to counter the spread of misinformation and fake news during the Covid 19 pandemic the Association and the Literacies Committee were involvement in the 'Be Media Smart' campaign and it is timely to remind all of the current 'Be Media Smart' campaign. We have all seen impact that a lack of access to reputable information can have on a society and libraries will play an increasingly important role in this area.
- A series of popular online interviews under the theme 'A World of Change: Libraries Survive and Thrive' were delivered by the Public Libraries Section with attendance reaching 400 at one session
- The newly formed Library Publishing Group went from strength to strength with a substantial number of activities undertaken in the last 12 months

It would be remiss of me not to mention IFLA World Library and Information Congress. Our Association has been on a roller-coaster and we most certainly have had our ups and downs. I would like to sincerely thank all who have been involved to date for their enthusiasm, hard work and commitment. I look forward to 2022 when IFLA will finally grace our shores.

In conclusion, personally I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues in Kildare Library Service, I am very fortunate to work with such a great crew and my colleagues in Kildare have always been there to support both the Association and me. I would like to thank all Council members, for their support, advice and

camaraderie over the course of my Presidency. A huge thank you to our management committee Cathal, Eileen, Sandra, Lorna and Niall. The work of the Association is done on a voluntary basis and in particular, I am only too well aware of the important role that Lorna and Niall play within the Association so enormous thank you. I have made incredible friends, I have learned much more than I have given and as ever, my belief in the importance of the library profession within society has been reinforced.

I look forward with optimism to our future years and the opportunities for the Library Association of Ireland and our membership.

So as one of my final acts, I ask you to accept this Annual Report, and if I can have a proposer and seconder”.

Joanna Finegan proposed the draft annual report and Jane Buggle seconded.

## **F. New LAI Constitution**

Marian advised the meeting that a significant piece of work has been undertaken by LAI Council to bring the Association’s governing documents in line with current legislation. She said that the Association is guided and governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The current Memorandum and Articles of Association were passed by an EGM on 15th March 2012. A small team comprising of Cathal McCauley, Lorna Dodd, Eileen Morrissey then undertook the review of these governance documents. The team were further supported by legal experts in the field. The draft Constitution and Rules were brought before the Management Committee on 25th Jan 2021, recommended to Council on 16th March and finally is being brought to the AGM of 27th April 2021 for adoption. Cathal McCauley explained that two documents which have shared with members are designed to ensure the Association’s practices are in line with the Companies Act 2014. The constitution document sets out how the governance of the Association works, while the rules document functions as an operational document. CMCC offered his thanks to the consulting solicitor, Elaine Keane as well members of the management committee and LAI Council, who proofread and offered feedback on various iterations of the documents now before the meeting.

Proposed by Marie O’Neill, seconded by Patricia Nolan, and accepted by those present by majority online vote.

## **G. Election of Officers & Council Members**

The following officers of the Association were elected:

President: Cathal McCauley, Maynooth University  
Vice President: John Shortall, Carlow County Library Service  
Vice President: Eileen Morrissey, Wexford County Library Service  
Honorary Treasurer: Lorna Dodd, University College Dublin  
Honorary Secretary: Niall O’Brien, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

The following members of LAI Council were elected:

Clare Conneally, RCSI  
Brendan Teeling, Dublin City Libraries

John Shortall, Carlow County Library Service  
Christoph Schmidt-Supprian, Trinity College Dublin  
Marian Higgins, Kildare County Libraries  
Mary Murphy, Meath County Libraries  
Eimear McGinn, Offaly County Libraries  
Stuart Hamilton, Local Government Management Agency  
Jane Buggle, Dublin Business School  
Jane Burns, Athlone Institute of Technology  
Catherine Gallagher, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council  
Yvonne O'Brien, Louth Council Council  
Melanie Cunningham, Waterford City and County Council  
Marie O'Neill, CCT College  
Mary Stuart, Westmeath County Council  
Alan Carbery, University College Cork  
Michelle Breen, University of Limerick  
Eileen Morrissey, Wexford County Council  
Aoife Lawton, Health Service Executive  
Joanna Finnegan, National Library of Ireland  
Fintan Bracken, Institute of Technology Carlow

The names above were proposed by Jane Burns, seconded by Eva Hornung. There were 57 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

## **H. Presidential Speech**

Marian Higgins expressed her delight at the success of all officers and members in being elected and offered her congratulations to her colleagues Cathal McCauley on his election as the new LAI President.

Cathal McCauley thanked the attendees (as gaeilge agus as bearla) for electing him as president and expressed how proud he was to be elected. He added that he was humbled in being approached to consider running as LAI President as he considers it an honour to simply be a member of the profession. He said that for the past 20 years he has worked exclusively in libraries and has enjoyed his time thoroughly. But he knows that the role is a humble one as it is the LAI's groups and sections that are the lifeblood of the Association. He relished the opportunity to engage beyond his own domain of academic librarianship. His focus during this tenure will be awareness, engagement and impact for the profession. A main area of focus will be the preparation for IFLA in Summer 2022. He hopes to work with many members both in person and online to achieve new levels of engagement, awareness and impact.

## **I. IFLA Update**

Cathal McCauley asked Philip Cohen for an update in relation to IFLA 2022. Philip Cohen offered thanks for being invited to give a presentation at the AGM and offered thanks to Cathal and Marian. Philip advised that the Conference has been postponed but it has been confirmed in the past week that the conference will be coming to Dublin in the August and will be a traditional onsite, in person conference and will have some additional online elements. This represents a unique opportunity to showcase our work and achievements here in Ireland and to make connections with international colleagues. There remains much to sort out and Philip encouraged encourage all to become involved.

**J. LIW Library Staff Champion Award**

Cathal McCauley said it was his great pleasure to ask the new vice president of the Association and Chair of the Library Staff Champion Award, John Shortall to announce this year's winner of the award. JS said that they were delighted to announce the shortlist for the award at the recent LAI CILIP Joint Conference. He added that it was most important at this time to acknowledge the important work of our library colleagues to our communities and sectors. Thanks to Johanna Archbold and Hazel Percival. Happy to have 19 nominations, the most ever. It was also great to have the involvement this year of CILIP Ireland to make it an all Ireland initiative for the first time. On behalf of the Library Ireland Task Force, John wished to thank Marie Cullen of Maynooth University on being this year's winner of the Library Staff Champion award.

**K. Interview with LIW Library Staff Champion Award winner**

There followed a conversation between outgoing President Marian Higgins and LIW Library Staff Champion Award winner 2021, Marie Cullen of Maynooth University.

**L. Conclusion**

New LAI president Cathal McCauley brought the meeting to a close by thanking Marie Cullen and Marian Higgins for the engaging interview and all for attending the AGM and being so active in the Association.

**The meeting concluded.**