



Policies, Procedures & Operations Handbook

Part 1 – Our Ethos and Philosophy



We confirm that our organisation complies with The Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland.

The ethos and philosophy, policies and procedures outlined within this handbook apply to all Near media Co – op volunteers and staff.

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Queries & Contacts

Queries should be directed to:

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Sally Galiana (Near FM Radio Co-ordinator) – Sally@near.ie

Elaine King (Near TV Co-ordinator) - Elaine@near.ie

Sabrina Ryan (Near Media Co-op Secretary) – Sabrina@near.ie

Useful Contacts

Near Media Co-op Committee of Management:

Declan Cahill (Chair) (Declan@near.ie)
Sabrina Ryan (Secretary) (Sabrina@near.ie)
Vincent Teeling (Treasurer) (Vincent@near.ie)
Debbie Hutchinson
Kasia Sudak
Declan Ralph
Dave O'Connor

Near Media Co-op CoOrdination Committee:

Vincent Teeling (Treasurer)
Sabrina Ryan (Secretary)
Ciaran Murray (Project Co Ordinator)
Declan Cahill (Chair)
Dave O'Connor

Staff Contact List

Based at the Northside Civic Centre (8671190)

Radio Coordinator - sally@near.ie

Technical & Studio Issues - gay@near.ie

Technology & Website - gavin@near.ie

Administration - alan@near.ie

Overall Project Coordinator - ciaran@near.ie

On-air promos & Schedules – adminsupport@near.ie

Based at the Coolock Development Centre (8485211)

Promotions – Promotions@near.ie

Publicity – Publicity@near.ie

Productions and Specialist Training - paul@near.ie

Outreach, Introductory Training & OBs - dorothee@near.ie

TV Coordinator - elaine@near.ie

Near Media Co-op Mission Statement

- To foster social justice, media literacy and promote civil society ownership of media.
- To be a democratic, independent, not-for-profit community building resource.
- To provide an alternative to mainstream media by offering an outlet for those underrepresented or excluded through training and access to distribution facilities.
- Through distinctive programming to contribute to the education, entertainment and development of our community.
- To defend the environment and human rights, particularly the right to communicate.

Welcome to Near Media Co-op

Failte romhat! أهلاً وسهلاً بكم

If Community Media is the answer...what is the question?

Near Media Co-op

Near Media Co-op is the legal entity that owns Near FM and Near TV Productions.

Near Media Co-op is registered as: Comharchumann Cumarsaide Pobal Bhaile Atha Cliath Thoir-Thuaidh Teoranta or, Dublin North-East Community Communications Co-operative Society Limited.

The term NEAR is an acronym for North East Access Radio and referred to the original licensed radio station. Since then we've added TV, Online activities, an outreach service, a drama group and a record label and now refer to the group activities under the name Near Media Co-op.

Near FM

Near FM is our community radio project, on air since 1995. It is licensed by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. It is open to all organisations and individuals in Dublin North-East. Near FM broadcasts 24 hours a day on 90.3fm and online.

Near TV productions

We operate a Community TV production facility, which is based in the Coolock Development Centre (CDC), just down the road from our radio studios and offices. It is not a TV station. Programmes are provided to Dublin City Television, and made available on our website, www.near.ie

RITA

Stands for Radio, Internet, Television and Ancillary activities. These include Near drama Company, Outreach, Media Literacy, Training and Consultation. Our podcast is a very large part of our online offering and we offer an extensive selection of programming online and provide training in podcasting so programme makers can make their own content available online. Other activities are constantly being added to this list such as Near Records a community music label and Near Choice, which offers a second chance to hear selected Near FM talk, drama and arts programmes overnight each weekend. We also have added a large archive of Near FM programming from over the years. (www.archive.ie)

Ownership / Management

We operate on a basic philosophy of equality and democracy. Over the years we have tried to use terms that are less hierarchical to describe what we do. However, it can be confusing for new, and indeed longer serving volunteers and staff. Here is a brief outline of the ownership and management structures of this Community Media Co-op, which we hope may help:

Committee of Management

This is the group of volunteers who manage the affairs of Near Media Co-op, and therefore the management of Near FM and Near TV productions. This group meets every month, sets policy and governance standards. The members of this Committee are elected at the Co-op's A.G.M. Only shareholding members of the Co-op can stand for election to the Committee of Management. This committee is the legal management body of the project.

The Co-ordination Committee

The Committee of Management meets after each AGM and elects a Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. These office holders are designated the Co-ordination Committee and they meet fortnightly to administer the day to day affairs of the society. They receive daily reports from the paid staff.

Staff

Each platform (e.g. Radio and TV) has a designated salaried Co-ordinator. We also have an Outreach, and Funding Co-ordinator. All of these positions are paid ones. Much of the support services provided for volunteers is by CE staff. The entire operation is supervised by a salaried Project Co-ordinator.

Shareholders

Anyone wishing to support the ideals of democratic ownership of media may apply to become a shareholder. Shares cost €5 for an individual and €25 for an organisation. Shareholders can attend and vote at the AGM. Each member has only one vote. Application for membership is open to anyone supporting the ethos of Near Media Co-op with particular emphasis of those living in or working in Northside Dublin.

Trustees

Charity trustees are the people who ultimately exercise control over, and are legally responsible for, the charity. Charity trustees have specific duties under the [Charities Act 2009](#) and must make sure that their charity complies with the requirements of other relevant legislation. Near Media Co-op is a registered charity (RCN 20205453)

Finance

We are established as an organisation “which is not run with a view to profit and ensure their independence by being financed from a variety of sources”

Community Radio Charter for Europe. Point 7.

Near Media Co-op is a not-for-profit entity. Commercial media makes content in order to make money. We make money in order to make content.

This Co-op was asked to fund itself from a mix of advertising, sponsorship, community and other fundraising, as part of our radio licence application. We have decided to forego full-blooded advertising, as we feel that this is incompatible with community programming.

We now secure our income from:

- * Publicly funded community development initiatives, including training.
- * A form of commercial income based on a Canadian model, and
- * A range of community supported fundraisers.
- * Publicly funded national and international initiatives, such as Sound & Vision funding by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and pan-European partnerships.
- * Friends of Near, a monthly donation received from those who wish to support Near Media Co-op

The accounts of the Society are audited each year by a Public Auditor and approved by the members at AGM. Copies of the annual accounts are available from the Secretary, as are full Co-operative rules.

Commercial Income

For example with radio we use a form of commercial funding from local business termed ‘Notifications.’ These return advertising to its original meaning of informing or telling people about available services in a more candid way which is defined as follows:

Announcements contain the following information:

"The name of the Notifier, the business address and general description of the types of services or products that the Notifier provides. These statements must not contain references to convenience, durability or desirability, or contain other comparative or competitive references. They can contain information about the Notifiers products, including price, name and brand name of the product."

We are encouraging this approach, as they are a more honest way to inform our listeners about local services available through local businesses, which are supporting our community station. Where possible, you should also seek to support our Notifiers

Such 'Notifications' are produced in-house by volunteers. They are broadcast on a bed of music and should be delivered in a neutral manner. See if you can spot the difference between them and ads on other radio stations.

Finally, on income you should know that all income becomes part of the resources of the Near Media Co-op and is spent across all platforms and activities in the best interest of the entire project.

So.....

As a volunteer or staff member with this community development project we hope you have found this information about our structures useful and we hope you will find your involvement enjoyable. We will do everything we can to keep you informed of, and involved with, developments.

The Role of the Community Media Volunteer.

Part of the title of our Co-operative is 'Community Communications', and the purpose of community communications is to create a non-directive community development process that is enhanced by Information and Communications Technologies.

- Our task is to facilitate community identification of needs and the fostering of local initiation of solutions.
- We want to use our media to allow people to act instead of reacting, enabling people to express themselves on their own terms,
- We'll provide direct channels of communication between the citizens and decision-makers to achieve accountability and dialogue about positive developments.
- What we are about is the initiation of an organisational process that the community build on to grow beyond the need for facilitation by any outsider.
- Personal and communal empowerment is our primary objective.

Across all of our media platforms and through the dynamic melding of these technologies we seek to animate the citizens in community. This is an important aspect of our activity. Community animation focuses on the process of change, on organising and mobilising the competencies of people, instead of the resolution of an issue as an end in itself.

This approach is true for any community development activity. However, as we work with information and communication technology, we need to ensure that the process of training, enabling and disseminating people's media creations is seen as a process of empowerment.

This will be an entirely different approach to all other media. Other media don't see the process of empowerment as being their remit.

That is why an aware community media facility is so important. For without its existence, such deep empowerment would not happen within the media. This is an entirely different media skill to being a smooth radio DJ, a coiffured TV presenter, or an elitist IT nerd.

As a Community Media Volunteer, you are here to facilitate real communication across all these media within our community.

Give up yer oul' hubris and take pride in your new media facilitation skills.

In becoming a 'community radio volunteer' you have joined a global movement which is emerging on every continent, e.g.

Around the world two types of Community Radio have emerged:

* Special interest: catering for jazz, classical or country music, educational, language or minority interests.

*Geographic community stations: which offer a mix of community development programming, local participation and special interest music. Near FM is in this category.

There is also the Community Radio Forum , CRAOL, which is the national organisation for community radio with almost 30 members.

We are attempting to democratise the communications media. Accordingly, part of your task will be to teach people in our community how to become broadcasters/users and help them to use the project for real communication.

How to become a radio volunteer with Near Media Co-op

1. Complete the induction training course; modules include: Introduction to Community Radio, Media Literacy, Law and Media, How to use the studios, How to use portable recorders, Research and Interviewing, Production Values, Running order, How to apply for your own programme.
2. Shadowing - Come into the studio and sit in with a presenter of an existing show a number of times in order to get a deeper knowledge of how a programme is done. See what programme you would like to sit in check what day and time would be good with you and inform Dorothee at dorothee@near.ie who will then contact the according presenter and get back to you.
3. Practice on the desk
Come in to practice the desk in studio 3 for playing music, recordings/editing. Check with the studio book at reception area for available time slots. You can do that by coming in and signing your name into the book or through ringing the reception and ask the person answering the phone to book you in for a certain day and time.01.8671190. The studio can be booked for one hour at a time.
4. Fill in a New Programme Idea Form
Providing summary of programme, layout, what additional help you may need, etc. This can be done online. We will email you a programme proposal sheet

which, once returned, will be forwarded to the Programme committee who will provide you with feedback and look into a possible time slot.

Some things to note, keep in mind:

- You can **book portable recorders for compiling recordings** through Alan or Gay Alan@near.ie, gay@near.ie 01.8671190.
- Check if there is somebody assigned to do **studio duty** on the day you are recording/presenting your programme/segment if you need assistance.
- After you have agreed to do a programme you need to sign the **programme agreement**. Usually slots are given for 13 weeks initially. You can apply for a 30min or 60min or 90min programme.
- Prepare a **promo** in order to let other people know about your new programme. Alan can assist with the promo: alan@near.ie.
- Promote your new programme in the newsletter which is sent out bi-monthly.
- If you'd like some assistance with designing a flyer or poster for your programme, get in touch with Dorothee, dorothee@near.ie
- Keep a **running order** of each programme and send it to the reception, the receptionist will archive it: reception@near.ie.

Research into Community Radio

Can community Radio achieve any of these tasks we have set for ourselves?

A report commissioned by the Independent Radio and Television Commission in 1997, two years after the first community stations went on air, found that community radios had a number of benefits, particularly the following;

- Establishing and deepening intra-community linkages and dialogues of all kinds
- Acting as a community 'watchdog' and campaign supporter, and
- Sustaining and renewing a sense of community identity.

And in 2002, a second piece of research commissioned by the Community Radio Forum and funded by the Broadcast Commission of Ireland found that;

- With reference to community and voluntary groups, 99% of respondents felt that community radio was a beneficial resource.
- With reference to collaborative work between community radio and local statutory bodies, 71% of respondents felt that the statutory sector could benefit in its work from community radio.

Since then, community radios have clearly established themselves as a significantly beneficial resource for community organisations and statutory bodies. And Near FM has been a prominent part of this development.

In 2012, research was carried out by Red C and Grey Heron Media on behalf of Craol the Community Radio forum of Ireland. The research showed that 84% of the population felt that community radio would add to the diversity of content available to them as listeners. Community Radio stations are not for profit, representative and accountable to the community they serve. However only 39% of those surveyed were aware that communities can set up their own licensed community radio stations. Currently just over 900,000 Adults 18+ are currently served by 24 fully licenced Community Radio stations.

Approximately 602,000 adults 18+ are aware of a local community radio station and approximately 370,000 have ever listened to one of the stations. Overall, 67% of all in the catchment are aware of any community radio station while 41% have listened to a station (Red C research). Near FM counts over 100 volunteers from the age of just 15 to over 70.

Community Radio is a rapidly growing third broadcasting sector and a force for community development, identity, and expression.

Tina Heffernan, Chair of Craol, explained that *“Community radio gives communities, and the groups and individuals within those communities a voice with which to be heard”*. She added *“The community not only gains in having a broader diversity in listening options, they also gain a forum for sharing experience, discovering fresh perspectives, and supporting community activity.”*

Under the 2009 Broadcasting Act, Community Radio was legally defined for the first time with a definition of being representative and accountable to the communities they serve, being not-for-profit, and delivering a social benefit to their community

Media Literacy

Media Literacy is a necessary new skill, made more urgent due to the fact that during recent decades, the media landscape and our media culture have undergone major changes giving rise to a constantly increasing supply of media products through many new channels, which are increasingly affecting our attitudes and behaviour.

As new entrants to the world of media we need to have the chance to come to terms with the new skills required of us, not just in our leisure time, as with movies, radio and television, but crucially in our own media creation and in the life of our community.

Being Media Literate permits you to use media in more communally beneficial ways. It will enable you to make more mindful content that is different from other media. Without a critical Media Literate awareness, we run the risk of establishing a parallel service instead of an alternative one.

Becoming Media literate means that you learn, not about what is, (mainstream media, status quo content.) but about what is not. (alternative and ignored opinions and worldviews.) You can begin to shift from being an unconscious participant,

consumer in society, to being participant-observer-facilitator, of your community, in aware dialogue.

The ultimate goal of Media Literacy and Community Media is to make a wider array of information available and wiser choices possible. Media Literacy is about, how even the slightest amount of awareness allows us to experience an event differently with new eyes, ears and sensibilities. Allowing us to sense the current poverty of, and the potential richness of media. Community media can benefit from your new awareness.

Media Literacy does not change the media so much as it changes us. It changes how we perceive and appreciate the constructed reality we see, hear and live every day.

Make an effort to become media literate - you'll benefit from it as will your programme and community.

The Alternative to Mainstream Media

This third sector in broadcasting is an alternative to both commercial and state media. Its most distinguishing feature is the participatory nature of the relationship between the project and its community. Both public service and commercial radio participate in some way in the lives of their listeners/viewers/users, announcing their events and playing their music. Most of these stations also offer their audience a chance to participate by requesting a particular song or by expressing an opinion on a topic selected by the station.

Community radio on the other hand, aims not only to participate in the life of the community, but also to allow the community to participate in the life of the station. Only Community media is based, unequivocally, on this reason for being. This is why it should always be distinguished from commercial and state media – neither of which seeks public participation, except when it suits them to do so. Other stations offer ready-made programmes; community media offers democratic access to the activity of programme making itself. Rather than being communicated at, people are offered the opportunity to communicate themselves.

Community radio has a completely different approach to almost all aspects of broadcasting, even music. Commercial stations can specialise in music, but only as a 'niche marketing tool'. For us special interest music is broadcast by lovers of these genres. We display more passion for our music, we have more informed comment and we are more committed to audience participation.

A restructuring of how information is assembled and presented will offer us, both inside the Co-op and outside, the power to control our own definitions of ourselves, of what counts as news and what is enjoyable and significant about our culture.

Both you as a volunteer and the people using our local community radio should be comfortable with our role. We have not been banished to the outer fringes of the media landscape, we choose to be here. We do not strive for the highest possible ratings but to create a medium of communication for local citizens.

We are not a failed, large commercial venture, but a successful, community radio. We are right where we should be to do our work effectively. We are not public service radio in a new guise, we are an accessible social and cultural tool to be used by our community for personal and communal empowerment.

Knowing who we are and who we are not will keep us focused on the tasks ahead. Our community Co-op has more in common with community development organisations than with the media sector. We will be more effective when we think of ourselves less as broadcasters and more as community activists. This won't stop you from developing your media skills, but it may help your other capacities.

Fundamentally, what we want to say to you is that community media is as flexible and spontaneous as the human mind. The only limit is your imagination. We hope you continue to enjoy working with us to develop community radio.

Community Television

As with radio, community television is growing across the world as an exciting resource for community development. There are literally thousands of community television channels in existence now for decades.

The growing global concentration of ownership of media, particularly television, makes it even more important to retain some part of the technology and output for community control and development.

In Ireland, the broadcasting act 2001 made provision for the development of a community television channel for Dublin. Our multi media centre is part of the process of developing content for this initiative.

In contrast to the thrust of commercial television, we will use our medium for personal empowerment and community development and the extension of the range of programmes to achieve this.

Our community television will:

- Provide access to training and production facilities to allow groups to promote their objectives.
- Energise community productions by providing equipment and advice to individuals and community groups.
- Enhance diversity in media content and open education options not otherwise available.
- Permit communities' continuous access to tell their own story.
- Deepen media literacy and critical viewing skills.

Community television will be an important means of making the many community development activities visible. Of bringing the many activists together and of encouraging a growing sense of community and citizenship.

Our task is to visually reflect the various communities of northeast Dublin, particularly the most excluded from existing television.

We should also inform ourselves about the hegemonic ideological nature of the output of commercial television and we should set about creating a more critically aware and media competent audience.

Near Media Co-op was active in the establishment of Dublin Community Television Channel. We fully subscribe to the principles of that body, which are;

1. Empowerment of communities currently facing disadvantage or blockages in achieving social, economic and cultural objectives;
2. Participation in every aspect of the channel, as well as in the governance and development of the city, for all the communities and people of Dublin
3. Diversity, both by celebrating and linking the great diversity of communities of all kinds in Dublin and by widening the range of programmes available for people, including minority audiences, to watch.

We intend providing a dynamic and empowering medium for our area, to explore and building partnerships and interactions between individuals and groups.

We have set ourselves the task of devising programmes that are entertaining, educational and communally beneficial. The range of activities we propose will be broader than either public service or commercial television and will stretch our resources to the limit. It would not be possible to plan such a rich diversity of activities without the involvement of our television volunteers.

Broadcasting

Programmes made by Volunteers: Shown on www.dctv.ie and on DCTV (NTL 802)

Programmes made by community groups: for training purposes & can also be shown on www.dctv.ie as requested.

Creative Development

Everyone needs to start somewhere it is important to get out and start developing your skills with other volunteers. The more you practice the better you can become.

Television production is rarely done alone so it is important that you get to know other volunteers. Whether you are holding a boom, interviewing people or using a camera your role is an important one. Working on different types of projects, whether they are documentary, short films or talk shows, helps you to develop different skills.

Please also appreciate the time and energy other volunteers are putting into a production.

Having your work critiqued is an important part of developing your skills and volunteers should endeavour to open their own work up to be critiqued by other volunteers and also input into the development of others work in an honest, kind and friendly manner. In this way all volunteers can develop on the skills they have.

Production Processes

There is a very distinct difference in the production process in community media when compared to commercial media. In community media part of the process is to treat people who are being interviewed with dignity and respect and in particular to include them as much as possible in how they are being portrayed.

While it may not be possible to include everyone in the editing process community media producers should endeavour to stay true to the context in which a person spoke rather than use editing to construct their own viewpoint.

Community TV is an alternative not just because of who is making it but also because of how we make it and how we treat participants. Ask permission to film someone and if they do not wish to sign a release form never use the footage. Also if they sign a release form and subsequently change their mind, be open to discussing their issues. People can fear ridicule through media be aware of this and take the time to discuss what you are trying to do.

Programming and Contents Committee

Programmes made using Near TV productions equipment or assistance should give a credit to Near TV productions.

DCTV aim to facilitate broadcast of programmes made by Near TV productions volunteers however they reserve the right to broadcast.

Your challenge as a volunteer will be to facilitate others to make community television and through your own productions to help Near Media Co-op to create programmes to achieve these objectives.

Information Technology

We are developing a series of methods of using IT systems to enlarge our range of actions in support of community development and personal empowerment.

Convergence

In recent years social media has become more and more popular. Many of our volunteers and staff have their own twitter or facebook accounts, or indeed other social media accounts. We have set up @Near FM @Near TV and others and try to use this new form of communication to promote Near media and to engage in dialogue with others who not have heard about near and wish to participate. We were first to use podcasting when it was in its early infancy and have invested in www.nearpodcast.org which is an audio and visual record of our podcasts. We train programme makers to be responsible for their own content in podcasts and encourage them to use different social media accounts to promote their online content.

As you can see, we are devising a wide range of uses for these technologies and an exciting range of activities for those who are interested in IT. The difference between our operation and others is the social use we wish to put this technology to. This is new territory for IT development and our IT volunteers have a great opportunity to help us shape such use, which could influence mainstream evolution of ICT.

Archiving

We are establishing an audio-visual archive to record and store the living history of our area. To make archiving possible it's important for programme makers to keep good running orders and a record of the content of their programmes.

Your challenge as a volunteer will be to facilitate others in acquiring the knowledge to harness these technologies for community development and empowerment.

Community Relations / Outreach

We seek to honestly inform our community on the basis of information drawn from a diversity of sources and provide a right of reply to any person or organisation subject to serious misrepresentation.

Community Radio Charter for Europe. Point 6.

Community Relations is not the same as public relations. Community Relations seek to establish Co-operative relationships with people, voluntary community organisations, statutory bodies and local business in our area.

A good Community Relations plan is one which encourages all of us to constantly appraise, both our own actions and those of others in relation to the service we are providing for our community.

Our Community Relations Plan will set out to achieve two things:

- * Our awareness of the community's needs and opinions of the Co-op, and
- * The community's awareness of the facilities and services available to them through the Co-op.

Community Relations is a two way dynamic. Us telling the community what our aspirations are, they telling us what they think of our efforts so far, us reacting positively to this information and the community responding with fresh insights....and so on. This will be done regularly through evaluation.

The purpose of our Community Relations programme is to ensure each platform is of benefit to our community and is getting the credit for it.

Our Community Relations Committee will undertake to monitor and implement the following actions:

- * Everything that will ensure that all involved (Staff and Volunteers) realises that they are part of the Community Relations Plan.
- * Actions to ensure that the station remains an influence for good within our community.
- * Actions to ensure continuous Community Awareness our activities.
- * Getting our people out to meet the community, and getting the community in to meet station personnel.
- * Ensuring that this community development project meets the needs of all.

The Community Relations Plan will engage in practical ongoing evaluation of the following areas:

- * How is the phone answered?
- * How are visitors to Near Media Co-op received?

- * How are queries and comments handled?
- * How responsive is Near Media Co-op to requests for access?
- * How much help is given in backup, monitoring and follow-up to specific areas?

Outreach also means to welcome the diversity of your community; to establish an open door policy allowing for all members of the community to become involved and to have equally easy access.

"Community radios promote the right to be different, to think with our own heads and to have our own tastes."

- José Ignacio López Vigil, Latin American Coordinator for AMARC

Promotions

Promoting Near FM, Near TV productions is also part of the function of the Community Relations Committee.

The most positive benefits of promoting are:

- a. People become aware of the Co-op's existence.
- b. The platforms become more popular
- c. Your work gets a larger audience, and
- d. Our Co-op becomes more effective in its community development work.

Social Funding

The relationship between our Co-op and its funders is as important as the finance. We will therefore develop the following funding strategy.

Public

Statutory bodies will be encouraged to provide core funding for our broad community development remit, also to provide programme-related grants and to contract us to deliver training services to eligible recipients.

Community

We will develop our community/listenership/viewership support by encouraging individuals and community organisations to support our various fundraising events.

Private

We will seek local business commercial income, which is compatible with the Community Radio Charter. Caring organisations will also be encouraged to fund relevant projects. e.g. training in programme making for persons in their particular sector.

Such an approach seeks to develop a 'Social Partnership' between Near Media Co-op and its funders who understand and support our broad community development aims.

We also seek to finance our Co-op from community events, such as pub quizzes and auctions and from grant aid from public and private bodies in relation to specific community development programmes and training projects.

All monies received go back into developing and promoting our project. We expect all volunteers, where possible, to support our community fundraising efforts.

Near Media Co-op – Glossary of Terms

Near Media Co-op operates on a basic philosophy of equality and democracy. Over the years we have tried to use terms that are less hierarchical to describe what we do. However, it can be confusing for new, and indeed longer serving volunteers and staff. The following list may help, we hope.

Near Media Co-op

Near Media Co-op is the working name for the group of media projects operated by the legally registered entity. * (see below for more detail)

Shareholder

Anyone wishing to support the ideals of democratic ownership of media can become a shareholder. Shares cost €5 for an individual and €10 for a group. This entitles shareholders to ownership of our three community media platforms (Near FM, Near TV productions and near online) Also, voting rights at AGM, access to membership of Committee of Management and policy decision-making.

Catchment Area

The catchment area is North East Dublin, or those portions included in our radio license to broadcast.

Near TV Productions

We operate a Community TV production facility, which is based in the Coolock Development Centre (CDC), just down the road from our radio studios and offices. It is not a TV station. Programmes are provided to Dublin City Television, and made available on our website, www.near.ie

Staff Co Ordinators

Each of the various platforms and activities has a dedicated salaried Coordinator. The project also has a Project Co-ordinator to ensure efficient and effective actions across the entire Near Media Co-op. This group meets weekly

Committee of Management

This is the group of volunteers to manage the affairs of Near Media Co-op, and therefore the management of Near FM and Near TV Productions. This group meets every month and sets policy.

Co-Ordination Committee

Is the operational body that meets fortnightly and co ordinates much of the daily management of the Co-op. This group is made up of some members of the Committee of Management.

* Dublin North East Community Communications Co-Operative Society Ltd, - Comharchumann Cumarsaide Pobal Bhaile Atha cliath Thoir-Thuidh Teoranta is the legally registered entity that is responsible for all activities within the Co-operative (Co-op). The Co Op is registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies since 1983. Near Media Co-op, operates Near FM, Near TV Productions and near online. It also operates a Drama Group, an Outreach Service, as well as Media Literacy, Training & Production and Integrated Culture.

Local and Global

Community media is both local and global in that we wish to use information technology to allow local people develop their communications skills and achieve their communications needs. While, at the same time, using new information technology, such as the Internet, to link our community with other communities around the world to share information and support each other.

To these ends, Near FM is part of CRAOL, the Irish community radio network, we are also affiliated to A.M.A.R.C.-Europe, and AMARC International, a global network of community radio stations similar to our own.

In this, and other ways, we are linked through aspirations and technology to similar community groups across the planet in an organically growing web committed to human rights, environmental rescue and cultural diversity.

And finally, can we paraphrase what James Joyce told Seamus Heaney:

"Let go, let fly, forget.

You've listened long enough.

Now strike your note.

You are fasted now, light-headed,

Dangerous,

Take off from here

....it's time to swim out on your

own and fill the elements

with signatures on your own

frequency."

Seamus Heaney. 'Station Island' Section XII.

The community radio charter for Europe

Recognising that Community Radio is an ideal means of fostering freedom of expression and information, the development of culture, the freedom to form and confront opinions and active participation in local life; noting that different cultures and traditions lead to a diversity of forms of Community Radio; this Charter identifies objectives which community radio stations share and should strive to achieve.

Community Radio Stations

1. Promote the right to communicate, assist the free flow of information and opinions, encourage creative expression and contribute to the democratic process and a pluralist society;
2. Provide access to training, production and distribution facilities; encourage local creative talent and foster local traditions; and provide programmes for the benefit, entertainment, education and development of their listeners.
3. Seek to have their ownership representative of local geographically recognisable communities or of communities of common interest.
4. Are editorially independent of government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties in determining their programme policy.
5. Provide a right of access to minority and marginalised groups and promote and protect cultural and linguistic diversity.
6. Seek to honestly inform their listeners on the basis of information drawn from a diversity of sources and provide a right of reply to any person or organisation subject to serious misrepresentation.
7. Are established as organisations, which are not run with a view to profit and ensure their independence by being financed from a variety of sources.
8. Recognise and respect the contribution of volunteers, recognise the right of paid workers to join trade unions and provide satisfactory working conditions for both.
9. Operate management, programming and employment practices which oppose discrimination and which are open and accountable to all supporters, staff and volunteers.
10. Foster exchange between community radio broadcasters using communications to develop greater understanding in support of peace, tolerance, democracy and development.

Near Media Co-Op Volunteers Charter

We recognise and respect the contribution of volunteers, recognise the rights of paid workers to join trade unions and provide satisfactory working conditions for both. Community Radio Charter for Europe Point 8.

Volunteering to produce social benefit is an expression of humanitarian concern, allowing an individual to make a personal contribution to life in the community. As a volunteer with Near Media Co-op you will have certain rights and responsibilities. We set out below the current charter for volunteers.

A Volunteer's Rights

1. The right to participate in the Co-op's policy making processes. This can be done by attending meetings and /or by applying for shareholding in the Co-op.
2. The right to information regarding the Co-op's affairs, its management structures policies, financial affairs etc.
3. The right to be heard, and to have his/her views and opinions taken into consideration in framing policy or in determining operational procedures, and rules and regulations.
4. The right to training and development.
5. The right to adequate grievance procedures.
6. The right to seek a change in role or function.
7. The opportunity to advance personal objectives, e.g. career training in communications or journalism, provided only that it does not clash with Co-op or Community media objectives.
8. The right to pre-agreed out of pocket expenses, where the Co-op's policies so permit.

A Volunteer is obliged to

1. Understand and, by his/her actions, support the aims and objectives of Near Media Co-op.
2. Have a commitment to the Co-op over and above merely presenting or producing in his/her own area. This means working on sub-committees, attending meetings, supporting our social and fundraising functions etc.

3. Accept the authority of the Committee of Management or its designate(s) in all matters affecting the Co-op, including management structure, programming policy, programme content and quality etc.
4. Accept the Co-op's right to establish rules and regulations.
5. Accept the Co-op's disciplinary procedures including the right to discontinue an individual's voluntary service.
6. Honour the commitment made to fulfilling the agreed role or function within the Co-Op, to the standards set by the Co-op.
7. Participate in and contribute to the Co-op's internal evaluation processes.
8. Conform to the legal requirements of radio programming and broadcasting.
9. Accept that all information compiled and all programme material made using the Co-op's equipment and facilities, is the property of the Co-op unless express permission is given to the contrary.
10. Maintain confidentiality about matters in regard to which the Co-op deems it necessary.