



# OPERATIONS & PROCEDURES MANUAL

PART 1 OUR ETHOS AND PHILOSOPHY

Near Media Co-op complies with the Charities Governance Code. Our registered charity number is; RCN: 20205453.

**The ethos and philosophy, policies and procedures outlined within this handbook apply to all Near media Co – op shareholding volunteer members and staff**

## Table of Contents

### Tip... Control & Click to follow the link

QUERIES & CONTACTS .....	3
QUERIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: .....	3
NEAR MEDIA CO-OP MISSION STATEMENT .....	5
WELCOME TO NEAR MEDIA CO-OP .....	6
NEAR MEDIA CO-OP .....	6
NEAR FM .....	6
NEAR TV PRODUCTIONS .....	6
RITA .....	6
OWNERSHIP / MANAGEMENT .....	7
COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT .....	7
THE CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE.....	7
STAFF.....	7
SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBERS.....	7
TRUSTEES .....	7
FINANCE .....	8
COMMERCIAL INCOME .....	8
THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY MEDIA SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBER.....	9
COMMUNITY RADIO .....	10
HOW TO BECOME A RADIO SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBER WITH NEAR MEDIA CO-OP.....	10
RESEARCH INTO COMMUNITY RADIO .....	12
MEDIA LITERACY .....	12
THE ALTERNATIVE TO MAINSTREAM MEDIA.....	13
COMMUNITY TELEVISION .....	14
BROADCASTING .....	15
PRODUCTION PROCESSES .....	15
PROGRAMMING AND CONTENTS COMMITTEE.....	15
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA .....	16
ARCHIVING .....	16
OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS .....	17
THE SOCIAL BENEFIT OF COMMUNITY MEDIA .....	18
PROMOTIONS.....	19
SOCIAL FUNDING .....	19
PUBLIC.....	20
COMMUNITY.....	20
SCOPE OF SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP, INCLUDING TERMS AND CONDITIONS.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
PRIVATE.....	22
LOCAL AND GLOBAL.....	23

THE COMMUNITY RADIO CHARTER FOR EUROPE .....24  
    COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS .....24  
NEAR MEDIA CO-OP SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBERS CHARTER .....25  
    A SHAREHOLDING VOLUNTEER MEMBER IS OBLIGED TO .....26

## Queries & Contacts

Queries should be directed to:

Ciaran Murray (Near Media Co-op Project Co-ordinator) – [Ciaran@near.ie](mailto:Ciaran@near.ie)

Sally Galiana (Near FM Radio Co-ordinator) – [Sally@near.ie](mailto:Sally@near.ie)

Sabrina Ryan (Near Media Co-op Secretary) – [Sabrina@near.ie](mailto:Sabrina@near.ie)

## Useful Contacts

Near Media Co-op Committee of Management:

Declan Cahill (Chair) ([Declan@near.ie](mailto:Declan@near.ie))  
Sabrina Ryan (Secretary) ([Sabrina@near.ie](mailto:Sabrina@near.ie))  
Vincent Teeling (Treasurer) ([Vincent@near.ie](mailto: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 (Governance Lead)

## Staff Contact List

Based at the Northside Civic Centre ( 8671190)

Radio Coordinator - [sally@near.ie](mailto:sally@near.ie)

Technical & Studio Issues - [gay@near.ie](mailto:gay@near.ie)

Technology & Website - [gavin@near.ie](mailto:gavin@near.ie)

Administration - [alan@near.ie](mailto:alan@near.ie)

Overall Project Coordinator - [ciaran@near.ie](mailto:ciaran@near.ie)

All other queries – [Reception@near.ie](mailto:Reception@near.ie)

Based at the Coolock Development Centre (8485211)

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Productions and Specialist Training - paul@near.ie  
Outreach, Introductory Training & OBs - dorothee@near.ie

Good communications is key to the smooth operation of the co-op, therefore it is one of the key duties of all shareholding volunteer members to communicate effectively with regards to the operation of the co-op.

## 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 !

### ***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 legally registered as: Comharchumann Cumarsaide Pobal Bhaile Atha Cliath Thoir-Thuidh Teoranta or, Dublin North-East Community Communications Co-operative Society Limited.

The term NEAR is an acronym for North East Access Radio. Since being awarded a community radio licence in 1995, we've added TV, Online activities, an outreach service, a drama group and we 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 at [www.nearfm.ie](http://www.nearfm.ie)

### ***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.nearTV.ie](http://www.nearTV.ie)

### **RITA**

Stands for Radio, Internet, Television and Ancillary activities. These include Near Drama Company, Outreach, Media Literacy, Training and Consultation. Our listen again service 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. NearCast is the podcasting platform of the [Near Media Co-op](http://www.nearmedia.co-op). It is your community podcast network. Listen to podcasts about society, people, poetry, board games and many other topics. Other activities are constantly being added to this list such as 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](http://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 shareholding volunteer members 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 shareholding volunteer members 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 volunteer 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 monthly with other members of the Co-ordination committee to administer the day-to-day affairs of the society. They receive regular 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 shareholding volunteer members is by CE staff. The entire operation is supervised by a salaried Project Co-ordinator.

### ***Shareholding volunteer members***

Anyone wishing to support the ideals of democratic ownership of media may apply to become a shareholding volunteer member. Shares cost €5 for an individual and €25 for an organisation. Shareholding volunteer members can attend and vote at the AGM. Each shareholding volunteer 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 Near Media Co-op Operations & Procedures Handbook - Part 1 Ethos. Last reviewed February 2023



other relevant legislation. Near Media Co-op is a registered charity (RCN 20205453). Each shareholding volunteer member of the Committee of Management are also Trustees.

## 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
- \* Shareholding volunteer membership. In accordance with Rule 5 of the Co Op Rules, shareholding volunteer members are required to pay an annual fee. The amount of the fee will be determined by the Committee of Management.

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. Put simply we don't usually play 'Ads', but rather we provide information to listeners about local businesses and services.

Our announcements contain the following information:

"The name of the business or service, the business address and general description of the types of services or products that the business or service provides. These statements must not contain references to convenience, durability or desirability, or

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contain other comparative or competitive references. They can contain information about the 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 these businesses and services.

Our announcements are generally produced in-house. 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.

As a shareholding volunteer member 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 Shareholding volunteer member.**

Part of the title of our Co-operative is 'Community Communications',

- 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.
- We want to enable people to express themselves on their own terms,
- We want to grow our community, on our terms and in our way, beyond the need for facilitation by any outsider.
- Personal and communal empowerment is our primary objective.

We seek to animate the citizens in community. This is an important aspect of our activity.

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This is an entirely different approach to all other media. Other media don't see the process of empowerment as being their remit. We do !

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



In becoming a 'community radio shareholding volunteer member' you have joined a global movement which is emerging on every continent.

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. So, 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 shareholding volunteer member with Near Media Co-op**

1. Complete the induction training course; modules include: Introduction to community media, media literacy, Media law and libel, How to use the studios, How to use portable recorders, equipment, 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 to get a deeper knowledge of how a programme is done (max of three times). Check what programme you would like to sit in, check what day and time would be good with you and inform Dorothee Meyer-Holtkamp at [dorothee@near.ie](mailto:dorothee@near.ie) who will then contact the presenter and get back to you.

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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 the reception area for available time slots. You can do that by coming in and signing your name into the book or by contacting the reception to book you in for a certain day and time 01.8671190 / [reception@near.ie](mailto:reception@near.ie). The studio can be booked for one hour at a time.

4. Apply for your own programme- Fill in a New Programme Proposal (Summary of programme, genre, treatment, what times you are available, what additional help you may need, etc) Once sent back to [dorothee@near.ie](mailto:dorothee@near.ie), it will be forwarded to the Programme committee who will provide you with feedback and we will look for a suitable time slot.

5. Programme agreement and shareholding volunteer member warranty form - Once both sides (Near Media Co-op and you) have agreed on your programme, a programme agreement will be set up for the initial period of 12 weeks. The committee will review the programme prior to the end of the agreement period. The agreement and warranty form needs to be signed and returned to Dorothee.

6. If you have already been involved in an established programme as a regular guest or as a former staff member, you will still need to complete the training, sign the programme agreement and fill in the shareholding volunteer member warranty form.

7. Become a shareholding volunteer member- We are a shareholding volunteer member member-led organisation with a fee of a recommended monthly payment of €8 per month (€5 minimum payment). We will send you the Near Media Co-op shareholding and membership forms with our bank details so you can set up a standing order from the month you will start your programme.

Note: While this is aimed specifically at radio shareholding volunteer members this is also relevant for people involved in other areas of the co-op

Some things to note, keep in mind:

- You can **book portable recorders for compiling recordings** through Alan or Gay [Alan@near.ie](mailto:Alan@near.ie), [gay@near.ie](mailto: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](mailto:alan@near.ie).
- Promote your new programme in the newsletter which is sent out regularly

- 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

We generally don't subscribe to radio listenership surveys, as they are very expensive and concentrate on commercial radio.

However, some research was carried out in the past 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).

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

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.

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.

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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**

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 shareholding volunteer member 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

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.

In contrast to commercial television, we use our medium for personal empowerment, media literacy training and community development. Our community television:

- Provides access to training and production facilities to allow groups to promote their objectives.
- Enhances diversity in media content and open education options not otherwise available.
- Permits communities' access to tell their own story.
- Deepens media literacy and critical viewing skills.

Community television is a means of making the many community development activities visible. Of bringing the community together and of encouraging a growing sense of community.

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

We have set ourselves the task of devising programmes that are entertaining, educational and communally beneficial. The range of activities we propose are broader than either public service or commercial television. Including training as a key tenant of the work we do.

## ***Broadcasting***

Programmes made by Shareholding volunteer members: Shown on [www.dctv.ie](http://www.dctv.ie) and on DCTV

Programmes made by community groups: for training purposes & can also be shown on [www.dctv.ie](http://www.dctv.ie) as requested.

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## ***Production Processes***

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

## **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 shareholding volunteer members, however they reserve the right to broadcast.



## Information Technology and Social Media

In recent years social media has become more and more popular. Many of our shareholding volunteer members and staff have their own twitter, facebook, Instagram accounts, or other social media accounts. We have set up @Near FM @Near TV across a number of social media platforms, and try to use this 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 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 shareholding volunteer members 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 shareholding volunteer member will be to facilitate others in acquiring the knowledge to harness these technologies for community development and empowerment.***

## Outreach and Community Relations

Outreach and Community Relations are the means by which we seek to establish strategic and co-operative relationships with people, voluntary community organisations, schools, statutory bodies and local business in our area.

Outreach and Community Relations is a two way dynamic, us informing the community of our aims and objectives and the community informing us of their needs and aspirations.

We strive for:

- Actions that ensure that the co-op remains an influence for good within our community.
- Actions that ensure continuous Community Awareness of our activities.
- Actions that mean we meet the community, and the community our members and staff.
- Actions that encourage access and empowerment.
- Actions that support the active involvement of our members.
- Actions that welcome and support the diversity of our community.

We operate Outreach in support of the AMARC Charter especially;

*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 our listeners;*

## **Community Media Policy 2021**

### **Defining Community Media**

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) has adopted the following definition of community media in an Irish context.

"A community media organisation is characterised by its ownership structures, its content production and/or dissemination activities, and its relationship with the community it is licenced to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for-profit organisation whose structure provides for membership, management and operation primarily by members of the community. Its content production and/or dissemination activities are based on access and participation by members of the community and reflect the special interests and needs of that community. Its relationship with the community seeks to reinforce other organisations and activities aiming to empower and develop that community."

### **The Social Benefit of Community Media**

The Broadcasting Act 2009 states that community media must seek to provide a social benefit to their communities. Drawing on the actual experience of community radio, the BAI supported the design and development of a Framework for Assessing the Social Benefit of Community Media<sup>1</sup>. The definition of social benefit included in this Framework, arrived at through a process of consultation, was as follows:

"Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about."

Six types of social benefit associated with community media are identified:

1. Individuals, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity and/ or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the Station
2. Individuals are enhancing their employment prospects, through gaining skills and confidence reinforcing community identity
3. Community members are informed and aware of what is happening around their community

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bai.ie/en/media/sites/2/dlm\\_uploads/2020/06/Community-Radio-Delivering-Social-Benefit-.pdf](http://www.bai.ie/en/media/sites/2/dlm_uploads/2020/06/Community-Radio-Delivering-Social-Benefit-.pdf)

4. Community members are responding more effectively to issues—local to global— because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information
5. Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.) are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity to achieve their goals
6. The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced through interaction and collective action.

The Framework is accompanied by a detailed methodology that can be applied by community media organisations to assess the level and nature of social benefits generated<sup>2</sup>.

This concept of social benefit is widely endorsed by the licensed community media sector, both radio and television, and is being applied by the BAI in assessing the value created by community media organisations in their communities. It is important to note that not all benefits have to be equally evident and that some are easier to measure than others.

## Promotions

Promoting all Near activities, Near FM, Near TV productions is also part of the function of Outreach and Community Relations.

We strive to:

- ✓ Make more people aware of our aims and our work.
- ✓ Publicise in a manner fitting with our aims and objectives
- ✓ Use new technologies and social media to support our aims

## ***Social Funding***

The relationship between our Co-op and its funders is as important as the finance. We regularly re-think and review our funding options.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bai.ie/en/download/134920>

## **Public**

Statutory bodies are 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 have developed our community/listenership/viewership support by encouraging individuals and community organisations to support our various fundraising events.

### **Shareholding volunteer membership:**

In accordance with Rule 5 of the Co Op Rules, members are required to pay an annual fee. The amount of the fee will be determined by the Committee of Management.

Our Terms of Reference set out the scope and policy of shareholding volunteer membership in Near Media Co-op. Membership fees will contribute towards the maintaining and the development of the co-operative. This includes the upkeep and updating of all of our equipment and resources, allowing us to keep independent voices from our community on air.

### **Scope of Shareholding Membership, including Terms and Conditions**

- 'Member' is short for 'Shareholding Volunteer Member' i.e. a shareholding member of the Co-op
- Only members are entitled to be involved with Near. New people who want to get involved after introductory training will become shareholding volunteer members.
- In order to become a member you must apply for shareholding in the Co-op and be approved by the Committee of Management. The Committee may at its sole discretion, decline to accept membership, from any person, without disclosing the reason
- The value of the share is €5
- The €5 once off share purchase is in order to become a shareholder and is taken out of your first months payment, so it's not an additional €5
- Monthly cost: €8\*/€5\* You can also pay annually. This rate may be modified over time in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- \*You can contact us if this is too much. The procedure for this is to contact, in absolute confidence, the "Membership Organiser" on membership@near.ie who has the authority from the Committee of Management to agree with you a reduced membership rate in line with the principle of all Co-operatives, that everyone involved pays something no matter how small.
- Everyone involved with Near (Programme makers, Presenters, Radio, TV etc ) must become members.
- Near Media Co op staff and external programme consultants who contribute to Near Media Co-op in an ad hoc way from time to time are exempt

- If as a member you would like to or can afford to pay more than the set membership fee this can also be arranged and this additional income will help the Membership Organiser in relation to the discretion they have to agree reduced rates.
  - Following agreement to become a member, a grace period of 8 weeks will be given to allow for processing of the application.
  - Payment will be accepted by way of standing order or pay-pal to a nominated Near Media Co-op account, collected on a monthly basis. Cash payments will be accepted by prior arrangement and only in exceptional circumstances. No cheques will be accepted.
  - All membership fees must be paid in full and or be up to date by 31st May each year. An audit will be conducted each year to ensure monthly and annual payments are up to date.
  - As a member there are some additional benefits:
    - Entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Co Op
    - Eligible to stand for election to Committee of Management
    - Studio access
    - Present a programme (after completion of induction and successful programme application)
  - The membership is unique to the individual to whom it is granted and cannot be transferred to another person by any means.
  - Membership fee can be cancelled at any time by the donor or by Near Media Co-op.
  - No request for a return of fees will be accepted.
  - The annual amount of fees collected will be available in the annual audited accounts of Near Media Co – op.
  - All personal information will be kept confidential. (as per Irish Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 and 2018)
- It is expected that everyone will pay their membership, however, there are sanctions available if membership fees are not paid, and the following process will be followed;
- A period of three months grace will be allowed for payment to be reinstated before any action is taken
  - The member will be advised that the grace period has passed and requested to recommence payment. 7 days to reinstate their payment method will be facilitated.
  - At the discretion of the Committee of Management, fees not paid in the grace period may be requested to be repaid in full.
  - If after this process the fee is not reinstated, membership will be indefinitely suspended. Suspended members shall not be entitled to any benefits of membership while suspended.
  - Suspended members may have their membership terminated at the following Annual General Meeting.
  - Membership may also be terminated if any member fails to follow and fulfil the regulations and/or policies of Near Media Co-op.
  - All members must be over 18 years of age.

Near Media Coop retains the right to make changes to these policies. *Last Reviewed March 2023*

### ***Private***

We seek local business commercial income, which is compatible with the Community Radio Charter. Caring organisations are 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 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 shareholding volunteer members, where possible, to support our community fundraising efforts.

### ***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.



## 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 shareholding volunteer members, 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 shareholding volunteer members.

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 Shareholding volunteer members Charter**

We recognise and respect the contribution of shareholding volunteer members, recognise the rights of paid workers to join trade unions and provide satisfactory working conditions for both.

Community Radio Charter for Europe Point 8.

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

### **A Shareholding volunteer member'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/their 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 Shareholding volunteer member is obliged to***

1. Understand and, by his/her/their 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/their 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 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.