



**Comharchumann Cumarsaide  
Pobal Bhaile Atha Cliath Thoir-Thuaidh Teo**

RCN: 20205453

# **Annual Report 2023**

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## Chairperson's Report

Fáilte romhaibh go léir.

I wish to welcome all share-holding members of the Near Media Co-op to our annual general meeting. Last year was another busy period for the Co-op and I wish to formally thank everyone who contributed in helping to make it another successful year.

Our investment in our future by installing new studios continues apace. A special word of thanks of the design team, who have driven this project. I would like also to acknowledge the financial help of all of you in achieving this major investment goal. This where your small monthly contribution goes and €10,000 from members is a substantial input from membership. Thank you.

A warm welcome to the new members of the co-op. No doubt, you will make a contribution to the work of the station. At this point, I would like to acknowledge the work of presenters, who are stepping back from the microphone because of personal reasons. I wish you well.

Last August, we lost an active and long-standing presenter on Near FM. Austin McCoy was a loyal servant of the co-op for many, many years. He is missed.

The management of the co-op is overseen by a very dedicated committee, who regularly meet to ensure that our organisation is operated efficiently as possible. The obligations and regulations seem to increase yearly but I am happy to inform you that these are being diligently attended to.

Near Media Co-op is operated on a day to day basis by a hardworking staff. Their input is gratefully acknowledged.

Our organisation is grateful for the continued support of Dublin City Education and Training Board, Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education, INTREO, Coimisiún na Meán and Dublin City Council.

I look forward to our co-op continuing to serve our community in the coming year.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Declan Cahill  
Chairperson  
Near Media Co-op

## Secretary's Report

The Near Media Co-op Committee of Management is a working committee which met on a monthly basis in 2023. There was a gradual return to in-person meetings with the adoption of a hybrid model of virtual and in-person to allow for greater participation amongst the committee. Members of staff and shareholding members attended these meetings during this time.

The Committee of Management has a responsibility as the governing body of Near Media Co-op to report on a regular basis to multiple statutory bodies. The Committee provided oversight and governance in respect of support provided by the Departments of Education, and INTREO at the Department of Social Protection, as well as the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) and Dublin City Council. The Broadcasting Authority became Coimisiún na Meán as we now know it.

The Committee of Management is fully committed to good governance and in operating in an open and transparent environment. During 2023 we continued to positively engage with the Charity Regulator. This culminated in the filing of the compliance record with the regulator again this year on time and in full. This demonstrates our commitment to compliance with legal and statutory frameworks and that our organisation operates to high standards of governance and administration. Our registered charity number is 20205453.

Please allow me to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of Dave O'Connor to ensuring that good governance is a key priority in all work done by the Committee and the wider co-op.

Without this, we would not have been able to embark on one of our most exciting projects to date with the refurbishment of studio 1. This was the result of several years of building the co-operative nature of Near, implementing a membership model, identifying diverse funding streams and ultimately overseeing a project that was delivered on time and to a very high standard. It is a huge mark of pride that our community radio station has facilities to rival that of commercial entities and this belongs to the members of this organisation. Plans for the refurbishment of studio 3 also began and shareholding members have provided the vital funding to carry out these works.

There are a number of serving members, whose terms of office have ended this year. These are Declan Cahill, Dave O'Connor and myself, Sabrina Ryan. I want to thank them for their work and dedication to the organisation. During 2023, Debbie Hutchinson stood down from the Committee of Management and again, I wish to acknowledge the input and work of Debbie during her time on the committee. In order to ensure that the work continued, Mel Hughes was co-opted on to the committee to fill this vacancy. This AGM will see a proposal for her election and I look forward to working with her.

We look forward to the year ahead and the challenges and successes that it brings but most of all continuing to grow the Near Media Co-op and re-affirming our commitment to community media and the community which we serve.

Sabrina Ryan

Secretary  
Near Media Co-op  
June 2024

## Treasurer's Report

### Introduction

2023 showed a level of stability within the finances of our organisation. The continued increases in cost of living did present some minor challenges in managing cashflow, and I need to knowledge these. We continue to manage cost on a weekly basis and actions in this regard have allowed for sustainable small gains in our overall financial position.

At this time, I want to acknowledge the support given by our funding partners.

City of Dublin Education and Training Board, Department of Social Protection / INTREO (formerly FÁS), Coimisiún na Meán's Sound & Vision scheme, from the TV licence fee, Members of Near, and Dublin City Council. All played a vital role in supporting Near Media Co-op during 2023 and continue to support our community media organisation.

Our audit shows management and control of funds, the Co-op closed 2023 with a planned manageable over run on our expenditure line. We need to position this against large infrastructure capital investment programs undertaken during the period. These programs will serve our organisation well into the future and will provide a platform for Sustainable growth.

Due to changes in some areas of our funding model our income granted through some programming schemes did reduce during 2023 versus previous years, we have initiated plans to mitigate against this adjustment.

### Outlook

The forecast shows steady progress into 2024 and the organisation has embarked on a further capital expenditure program. The Co-op produces consistent audits which result from continued policies towards maximising access to grant income, whilst closely monitoring expenditure patterns.

Vincent Teeling,  
Treasurer  
Near Media Co-op

## Near FM

### Community Employment

The project was renewed for a further 3 years. The Programme and Development, and Financial monitoring found the project Compliant with the Intreo guidelines.

### Sound and Vision Radio Programming

Through the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Sound and Vision scheme, Near FM continue to produce high quality radio series on an annual basis, collaborating with new and diverse range of community partners, in order to achieve high quality in tandem with our ethos. Here are some highlights for productions that began in 2023:

**Green Horizons** is a Climate Action series (6 episodes) produced in partnership with Mount Temple Transition Year students. Four students got engaged in the production as part of their Community Work and two of them used the series as their Year Project. The series started its production in October, interviews were with Global Action Plan's CEO Hans Zommer, Meteorologist and Maynooth Professor Emeritus John Sweeney, SEAI education officer, Aoife Cannon, NESCs Niamh Garvey and Trinity Time's Alannah Murray, The episodes will look into What is Climate Change, Energy, Biodiversity, Food Waste, Fast Fashion and Environmental Law. The series is to be completed by mid May, to coincide with the end of the TY course.

#### **New Drama Hour series 4**

We continued to produce exciting and thought provoking audio drama written by women writers. The following plays were produced in 2023: Brave by Maura Campbell about how a woman in 50's with autism navigates the world. High Spirits by Méabh de Brún in which three siblings and one in-law gather after a patriarch's burial to honour a very unusual letter of wishes. And The Whale and the Swan by Fiona Browne tells the story of Marie, pregnant at a young age and finds herself in the care of the nuns. Sound design on all radio dramas by Gavin Byrne.

#### **One for All—The story of Donaghmede Men's Shed**

This inspiring radio documentary tells the stories of the members of the Donaghmede Men's Shed branch as we experience at first-hand the machinations of this incredible movement. Devised and produced by Enda Roche.

#### **Hedge Schools: Beyond the Shrubbery**

Producer Berni Dwan created an eight-part history lesson concentrating on a unique aspect of Irish culture, heritage, and experience – the Hedge School

#### **Hungry Gap, Fat Friars, Food Poverty**

Produced by Berni Dwan, this series explored food and drink production and consumption in Ireland and Britain over one thousand years starting at 1000 and ending in 2023 and learn how our ancestors coped during the good times and the bad times.

#### **A Fishy Tail of Sound and Fury**

Written & produced by Berni Dwan. Directed by Brendan Laird, a radio drama on food snobbery and copy culture <https://listenagain.org/?p=48906>

## **Near TV**

### **Training**

In the last year Near TV continued to deliver training to our staff members and to other members of the Co-op. Over the year we've had training workshops in Camera Operation, Vision Mixing, Sound Recording and Recording Vox pops. Along with technical training we also conducted workshops in other production skills such as directorial training, interviewing skills, pre production skills and Archiving material.

### **TV Production**

#### **Our Northside Stories**

Our big project for last year was finishing off the 4 Part Documentary Interview series Our Northside Stories. This was a BAI funded series and in each episode we were introduced to 3 different people who brought us into the lives of someone they admired. They introduced the person explaining why they had chosen them and we then followed them as they went on to meet the person to interview them. The series celebrated how extraordinary the ordinary people in our lives really are and focused on a lovely cross section of the local community. The series was broadcast on DCTV in March and all episodes are available to view on our website [www.nearthv.ie](http://www.nearthv.ie)

#### **Preparing For Life - The Health Effect Revisited**

Our next funded project is a follow up documentary to *The Health Effect* and focuses on the PreParing for Life programme that was developed in Darndale through the Northside Partnership. Since we made the original documentary this early intervention programme has gone on to be rolled out Nationwide by Tusla and is also being trialed in the USA , demonstrating how local initiatives can have a global impact. At the moment we are in the pre production phase with filming due to start at the end of June.

## Outreach

### Women behind the Mic media and broadcasting skills course

In April and May 2023 we ran a media and broadcast course predominantly led by women for women, 7 weeks, 2.5 hours per week. Three women of this course have since joined Near FM as presenters.

### Media and broadcasting skills course for local people

In September and October 2023 we ran a media and broadcast course predominantly for people in our catchment area, 7 weeks, 2.5 hours per week. Two participants have, since completion, started a fortnightly programme and one participant is in pre-production phase.

### Outside Broadcasts

Outside broadcasts are outreach events that continually allow us to showcase to the community in a vibrant and local way. This helps to attract people to training who normally may not engage with training in a formal manner. It also allows staff, CE participants and members to work together in a different environment and to meet people in the different communities locally.

- February 26th 2023, Hugh Lane, Sunday at Noon concert series, prerecorded
- March 8th 2023, Women in Leadership Forum - commissioned and organised by Co-operative Housing Ireland, marking international women's Day
- May 7th 2023, Hugh Lane, Sunday at Noon concert series, prerecorded
- June 16th 2023, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, scheduled 2.00-3.30pm
- July 12th 2023, KCCP, Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme, scheduled live afternoon.
- July 15th 2023, Rose Festival St Anne's Park, 12.30-3.30
- October 2023, OB from Darndale Golden Years

### June 16th 2023- National Community Radio Day

National Community Radio Day, celebrated the Traveller community on Friday June 16th from 11.00am-5.30pm with a mix of live guests and pre-recorded interviews from Near FM and sister community radio stations including a live broadcast from Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre from 2.00-3.30pm. This broadcast was shared and disseminated by other community radio stations around Ireland. National Community Radio Day is an initiative of Craol- The Community Radio Forum of Ireland with support from Coimisiun na Meán.

### Get your message across workshop

'Get your message across - Interactive and practical media skills training for radio interview' was run for groups of 6-8 participants in November 2023. **Content:** Identifying your message, dealing with nerves, delivering a message with confidence. Prepare for going on air. Another is planned for May 2024

### Tours to groups and individuals

Access through open door policy and guided tours is one of our key strategies to invite and connect with members in our community and we met with several groups over the year, for example a visit by *Together Academy* in January 2023, service users of the *Central Remedial Clinic* in July, service users and staff of *Praxis Care Clongriffin*, Day Service in August, members of the *Donaghmede Men's shed*, *Marino/ Fairview Men's Shed* and *Coolock art group* marking positive aging week, a group of fellow presenters from *Dublin Digital Radio* and a number of local secondary pupils and teachers for example *St Mary's School Baldoyle*.



### **Other General Outreach**

We continued our work with the Broadcasting Authorities 'Sustainability network of broadcasters' and Sustainability Network, which is partly based on the UN Sustainable Development goals. Co-op member Michael Sullivan is representing Near Media Co-op on the network.

We continually worked on developing our partnerships in strategic and relevant areas and played an active role with important local, national and international networks. Some of our staff and some Near Media Co-op committee members continue to represent us on these bodies; the Northside Community Forum; the PPN; CRAOL (Community Radio Forum of Ireland) The BAI's Sustainability Network; the Community Television Association; the Community Media Forum of Europe and Amarc, the International Association for Community Radio.

We are part of the AONTAS supported Community Education Network (CEN) and working with the CEN broadens the possibilities to develop partnerships with Adult and Community Education groups and we may be able to bring some new groups on board.

Dorothee Meyer-Holtkamp took on the role of community director in January 2023 at the *Northside Partnership*. Some staff members are part of the [Media Literacy Ireland Network](#)

### **European Projects**

**SMART Trainers** Walther Moser, one of our European projects' partner, approached Near to be part of an online train the trainer course. Near Media Co-op was paid for the work.

**The Learning Ethnical Media Online** (LEMON) project (coordinated by Near Media Co-op and funded by Léargas) came to an end on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The e-learning platform was tested, and it is now available here: <https://inclusivemediatraining.eu/> Final report was accepted, and the last tranche of funding was received in autumn 2023.

**MILES** (Media and Information Literacy- Evaluation and Strategies) Erasmus + partnership is an exchange of concepts, ideas and experiences for teaching Media & Information Literacy (MIL). With a collection of good practice and resources bringing brought together partners with different traditions in media literacy, but also with different backgrounds such as community radio or television, training organization and participatory video producers.

Activities over 24 months include structured exchanges, local research, five partner meetings, and a teaching/learning event to engage partners, trainers, and trainees. The results of this process will be recorded in best practice folders in English, German, Spanish, Swedish, Hungarian and can be found at our lead partner **COMMIT's** homepage. The project was completed in May 2023.

Partners: Civilradio (Budapest/HU), Radio ARA / Graffiti (Luxembourg), Bradford Community Broadcasting (Bradford/UK), Radio Kärnan (Helsingborg/SE), Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) (BE), NearFM (Dublin/IRL), Teleduca (Barcelona/ESP), COMMIT (Vienna/AT).

## Online

### Nearcast

The podcast sector continues to grow not just in Ireland but worldwide. At Near FM we recognised the growing trend back in 2016 and set about developing [Nearcast](#), a podcast platform primarily for the community, voluntary, NGO and charity sectors. Our approach is to offer a complete podcast package to clients including support with idea development, production, post-production, RSS population and promotion. To date we have worked with many national and local clients as our podcast network continues to grow. Organisations who are looking to create a podcast can contact [paul@near.ie](mailto:paul@near.ie) or [dorothee@near.ie](mailto:dorothee@near.ie)

Our commissioned podcast work in 2023 included podcasts with *The Irish Foster Care Association*, the *Prevention and Early Intervention Network*, *Aoibhneas* and the *Tallaght Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce*. All Nearcast podcasts are available on Spotify, Apple or wherever you get podcasts. Visit [www.nearcast.ie](http://www.nearcast.ie) for more.

### Listen Again Site

In the past year 1355 new pieces of audio have been uploaded to the website bringing us to a total of 12,593 interviews and programmes available on the site.

In 2023 we had 32,333 downloads from the site.

The most downloaded in the past year:

- Asian Talents – Episode 23
- Northside Today – Remembering Pat Farrell
- Lifeline - Dean Russell and Kilmore Celtic
- Northside Today – Betty Stenson (Irish Writers' Centre)
- Lifeline - Fireman and poet Ger Devine
- Lifeline – Habit Change Coaching

### Livestream

Total Listener Minutes over the last year - 6246922 (Approximately 12 years) 8.15 Terabytes of data. Peak listeners was 193 on October 28th.

### Web Hosting

In 2023 we moved all of our web and email hosting to a new company. This means our websites are now running much faster than they were in the past and are all secured with SSL which improves how friendly our sites are to search engines and end users. We now have more capacity to grow and develop the websites with redesigns in 2024. Email is now also more secure with no limits on capacity and the ability to completely sync email across multiple devices.

### Social Media

In 2023 we added accounts to Mastodon, BlueSky and Threads