

**Comharchumann Cumarsaide Bhaile Atha Cliath Thoir-Thuaidh
Teoranta**

Annual Report

2024

Contents	Page
Chairperson's Report	2
Secretary's Report	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Near FM	5
Outreach	7
Near TV	10
Online	11
Appendix: Audited Accounts	

Chairperson's Report

A warm welcome to the shareholding members of the Near Media Co-op to our Annual General Meeting.

Any organisation that wishes to evolve and develop must continue to invest in so many ways.

Over the last couple of years, the co-op has invested heavily in new studio equipment. We can now say that we have state-of-the-art studios, and I hope all of you who regularly use them are happy with them.

Our big project in recent times was the input of so many people in the preparation of our new strategy. A big thank you to all who contributed to the process. This has charted a map for us to follow in the immediate future. It has identified many challenges and tasks to be tackled so that we will be ready to meet the new media environment that is coming over the horizon, and yet for us to keep loyal to our core ethos. We now need to produce work plans to achieve the various objectives of our strategy and we will need the assistance of all members to make this happen.

Another area which has been successful is in the area of training of staff and new presenters. It is particularly encouraging to see more women becoming involved in the research, production and presentation of new programmes; and it is gratifying now to hear these new voices complementing those well-established broadcasters on Near FM.

All this excellent work would not be possible only for the commitment of the management team of the co-op, the dedication of the management committee and the loyalty of staff and co-op members.

I would like to thank all those who support what we are striving to achieve - Colaiste Dhulaigh/CDETB, INTREO, Coimisiun na Mean, Northside Partnership, Community Law and Mediation, Dublin City Council, CRAOL, Dublin Community Television, Citizens Information Centre and MABS (Money, Advice & Budgeting Service).

Finally, let us all continue serving the community to the best of our ability.

Thank you.

Declan Cahill,
Chairperson,
Committee of Management

Secretary's Report

The Near Media Co-op Committee of Management is responsible for the governance and legal oversight of the organisation. This entails reporting to multiple statutory bodies, including the Department of Education, INTREO at the Department of Social Protection, Coimisiún na Meán, and Dublin City Council. Our strong commitment to good governance is further demonstrated by our ongoing positive engagement and compliance with the Charities Regulator. Our registered charity number is 20205453.

This governance foundation enables the vibrant and creative work that Near Media Co-op delivers. With the continued support of our shareholding members and the statutory bodies mentioned above, we completed one of our most exciting projects to date: the full refurbishment of our studios.

This milestone reflects several years of dedicated effort to strengthen the co-operative nature of Near. It involved the implementation of a membership model, proactive stakeholder engagement, the identification of diverse funding streams, and a steadfast commitment to ensuring that Near Media Co-op remains a dynamic community media organisation that consistently punches above its weight.

It is important to pause and acknowledge the commitment of everyone here today. Your contributions to the education, entertainment, and development of our community are invaluable.

In accordance with our rules, two serving members are concluding their terms this year: Kasia Sudak and Declan Ralph. On behalf of the Committee, I thank them sincerely for their dedication and service to the organisation. I also extend heartfelt appreciation to all members of the Committee of Management for their ongoing work, and for generously offering their time and expertise.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we anticipate both challenges and successes. Most of all, we remain committed to growing the Near Media Co-op and strengthening our dedication to community media and the community we are proud to serve.

Sabrina Ryan
Secretary
Committee of Management

Treasurer's Report

Introduction

The financial performance of Near Media Co-operative in 2024 reflected a year of overall stability, with particular focus on the diversity of funding that has served us well. The organisation continued to manage our affairs with consistent financial oversight and prudent cost control on a weekly basis. These efforts enabled us to achieve modest yet sustainable gains in our overall financial position against reduced expenditure.

We wish to formally acknowledge the invaluable support of our funding partners. Their continued contributions were instrumental in sustaining our operations and enabling our community media mission. Our sincere thanks go to:

- City of Dublin Education and Training Board
- Department of Social Protection / INTREO (formerly FÁS)
- Coimisiún na Meán's Sound & Vision Scheme, funded through the television licence fee
- Members of Near
- Dublin City Council
- Our social Enterprise partners

Each of these partners played a critical role in supporting Near Media Co-op throughout 2024 and continue to underpin our work in the community media sector.

Financial Overview

Our audited accounts confirm sound financial stewardship. The organisation closed 2024 with a forecasted overrun on expenditure. This is partly due to the Intreo figures and how they appear in our main accounts, and partly attributed to our continued capital investment program. These investments are expected to yield long-term benefits, enhancing our capacity for sustainable growth and innovation.

It is important to note that income from certain programming grants declined compared to previous years due to changes in the external funding landscape. While income from EU funds and Leargas did fall, this needs to be viewed over a 3 year period and we were able to compensate in other areas. In response, we have initiated a series of internal measures to mitigate the impact and adjust our funding model accordingly.

Outlook for 2025

The financial outlook for 2025 is stable. Through careful planning and sustained support from our partners and members, Near Media Co-op hopes to remain well-positioned to meet future challenges and continue delivering value to our community.

Vincent Teeling

Treasurer

Committee of Management

Near FM

Near Media Co-op's Community Employment project was renewed for a further 3 years. The Programme and Development found the project Compliant with the Intreo guidelines.

European projects

The Learning Ethical Media Online (LEMON) project (coordinated by Near Media Co-op and funded by Léargas) came to an end on 30 th April 2023. The e-learning platforms was tested, and it is now available here: <https://inclusivemediatraining.eu/> The national agency carried out a financial audit of the project in 2024 and find that the administration and management of the project was excellent. The media literacy group EMIL, which is supported by the European Platform for Regulatory Authorities, Council of Europe and European Commission, invited Sally Galiana to make a presentation about the resources created by Near's European Project, such as Ethical Media for Active Citizenship <https://ethicalmediatraining.eu/>

Sound and Vision

Green Horizons was 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 with interviews to Global Action Plan's CEO Hans Zommer, Meteorologist and Maynooth Professor Emeritus John Sweeney, SEAI education officer, Aoife Cannon, NESCI Niamh Garvey, and Trinity Time's Alannah Murray. The episodes looked into What is Climate Change, Energy, Biodiversity, Food Waste, Fast Fashion and Environmental Law. The series was completed in May and broadcasted in May-June, and can be found here: <https://nearcast.ie/category/green-horizons/>

Podcast series

Our podcast content continues to grow in 2024. Our approach is to offer a complete podcast package including support with idea development, production, post-production, publication and promotion. To date we have worked with many national and local clients as our podcast network continues to grow. Our podcast work in 2024 included podcasts Candid Conversations, Stories from Foster Care, The Aontas Podcast, Perspectives on Prevention and Survive and Thrive. All our podcasts are available on Spotify, Apple or wherever you get podcasts. Visit www.nearcast.ie for more.

We have also started to list some of our long running radio series as podcasts on Spotify and other platforms. These radio series now available as podcasts include The Hugh Lane Concert series and Trinity Talks.

Current Podcasts

Launched in September 2024, one of our current Podcasts is Candid Conversations Podcast with Mary Oyediran, where she meets members of the African diaspora to discuss their personal experiences living in Ireland. The series explores, in a candid and open manner, the impacts of racism on minority communities. We'll hear about the cultural experiences and focus on the many positive contributions the African diaspora make to enrich Irish society.

Sound and Vision Radio Programming

Through the Coimisiún na Meán Sound and Vision scheme, Near FM is supported to produce high quality radio series, collaborating with new and diverse range of community partners, in order to achieve community co-operation in-line with our ethos. Near Trainees get the opportunity to work on these professional productions.

Unearthed – Dublin Working Class Literary Voices Produced by Ciaran Murray, with Paula Wiseman, trainee with Near FM is the production assistant role.

Unearthed was a five part series that captured a wide diversity of Dubliners reading their original poetry and prose. In many cases we hear Dublin working class accents and voices not often associated with the literary world. Many of the writers featured are drawn from the Working Class Writing Archive (WCWA). Through performance and discussion, we celebrated their writing and examine why writing from this background is often excluded from the mainstream Arts sector. We also heard from practitioners, academics and established writers from working class backgrounds.

The Unearthed Radio series was launched by Paula Meehan on October 11th 2024, with invited guests and live poetry readings.

The Hugh Lane Concert series gives us plenty of opportunities to upskill our trainees in various production aspects, including recording on location, microphones techniques, health and safety in a location production setting. One of our trainees Gabor Zajzon has become an integral part of the team, as well as assisting in the production he is also tasked with some post production duties, and he also drives the Near FM van for transporting equipment to the Hugh Lane gallery. This is a great step forward for a trainee and great to have on a CV to enhance future job and further education prospects. Here is the latest episode. You can listen and follow the The Hugh Lane Concert series on Spotify to get all the latest episodes and listen back to 30 feature length episodes.

The Hugh Lane Concert series episode 31

‘Air’ a concert from the Art of Collaboration, featured Aoife Ní Bhriain (Violin), Paul Roe (Clarinets) and Mick O’Brien (Uilleann Pipes). A classical/traditional fusion concert of Carolan, Baroque and Norwegian music, as well as tunes from the Goodman Collection and original compositions from Anna Murray and Stephen Gardener. Our host Cliodhna Ryan sat down with the musicians for an in depth conversation, and an engaging audience reaction to the concert. Seven Stages, for Seven Ages

Produced by independent producer Berni Dwan and assisted by Near FM trainee Declan McGlade Shakespeare covered the seven stages of life better than most in a speech called The Seven Ages of Man in a play called As You Like It. Shakespeare’s speech was all about boys and men, but our series is all about girls and women. Join us on our seven-week journey through the ages stopping off at all the stages from child to teenager, from mother to grandmother, from work to retirement, from multitasker to multi-talented, from social commentator to mould breaker, and everything in between.

Outreach

Tours to groups and individuals

Access through Near FM's open-door policy and guided tours is one of our key strategies for inviting and connecting with members of our community. Staff of Near FM continued to meet with groups and individuals in 2024 of different ages, backgrounds, and experiences.

Media training and Podcast production

In April and May 2024 Near FM ran a 4 week training and podcast production course with a group of teenage girls from Sphere 17 Darndale and produced SphereCast, a four part pilot podcast series about local, positive role models in our community. Abbey, Charlie, and Ruby took on the role of producer and presenter to interview community leaders from their area of North Dublin. This series has been supported by their youth workers Marius McGarrell and Katie Walsh.

Episode 1 features Ava Henry, European Youth Champion in boxing.

Episode 2 features 'The gayest, most slayest Tik-toker' Jack Swift.

Episode 3 features Youth workers Marius and Katie.

Episode 4 features Sphere 17 Board Member and local positive community representative, Maria Williams.

Outside broadcasts

Outside Broadcasts are outreach events that showcase the community in a vibrant and local way and allows staff, CE participants and volunteers to work together in a different environment and to meet diverse people and communities locally.

- Family fun festival, KCCP, Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme, July 2024.
- Rose Festival, St Anne's Park, July 2024
- Hugh Lane Gallery, Sunday at Noon Concert Series, December 2024
- Open Day Coláiste Dhúlaigh, Autumn 2024
- Golden Years Event at Darndale marking Day for older people in October 2024

Throughout the year many on location recordings are recorded and broadcast through portable recorders, voice recorders of smart phones and live links from and at various community groups, local and city events and sporting matches (e.g. Clontarf Cricket Club, Sensoria Festival, live links to Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education).

Young Community Leaders (YCL) programme

Near FM delivered two by 3 weeks media literacy training courses to two groups of young adults that are part of the YCL programme (Young Community Leaders) Programme.

In Spring 2024 we trained a group of about 15 young adults at Kish House, Northside Partnership and in December 2024 we worked with about 14 young adults in the Youthcentre in Kilmore West Youth Project and Near FM's studios to discuss media, media literacy, critical thinking, inclusive programme production, media law and recorded some stories and interviews in our studios.

YCL is a 10-month training programme for young people aged 16 – 25 that aims to

- Enable young people to develop practical skills for personal, work, or student life.
- Give young people the opportunity to use their energy and talents in the community.
- Offer support from other young leaders.

Women behind the Mic Media and Broadcast Training

12 women took part in the Women behind the mic media and broadcasting course from October to December 2024 with discussions on inclusive radio production, media literacy, analysis, privilege, creating (and acting) a running order, recording, editing, and a lot of fun! Four of the participants since then have become regular contributors and presenters.

Media Literacy Training with Travelers in Athlone

Staff Ciarán Murray facilitated a half-day-long workshop on media literacy and critical thinking in Athlone with a group of 20 Youth Workers, Travellers' Voice Magazine staff and administration staff in December 2024.

Near FM celebrates Africa Day

Mary Oyediran, presenter and staff of Near Media Co-op attended Africa Day in May 2024 as a Near FM community media ambassador. Mary who is originating from Nigeria told her own story of her journey as a community broadcaster, her development in different roles and skills at Near FM, the power of community media for telling positive stories and giving voice to people often under- or mis- represented in media.

Mary produces the Podcast 'Racism is real in Ireland' and presents the fortnightly programme 'International Writers Network' and the magazine programme 'Northside Today' on Friday mornings.

Production support to newer independent producers

Ife Uzor, independent producer approached Near for production support for her podcast The Growing Up On The Island of Ireland Podcast, funded by the Arts Council in early 2024 with its launch in May 2024 including a panel discussion at the EPIC! Irish Emigration Museum. Further outreach and networking

Near FM continually develops partnerships in strategic areas and play an active role with local, national and international networks. Staff and members continue to represent Near and work with the Northside Community Forum, the Public Participation Network (PPN), the Community Education Network (CEN) supported by AONTAS (The Irish National Adult Learning Association), Northside Partnership, CRAOL (Community Radio Forum of Ireland), New Communities Network, CnaM's Sustainability Network, Community Television Association (CTA), Community Media Forum of Europe and the International Association for Community Radio (Amarc).

Awards

The Green Horizons Podcast and High Spirits Radio Dram have won the CRAOL (Community Radio Ireland) Gold Award in the categories Sustainability (Green Horizons) and Commissioned Programme (High Spirits) in October 2025. Green Horizons is a Climate Action series (6 episodes) produced in partnership with Mount Temple Transition Year students. Listen back to Green Horizons here: <https://nearcast.ie/green-horizons-podcast-series/>

High Spirits, audio drama, summary: Three siblings and one in-law gather after a patriarch's burial to honour a very unusual letter of wishes. Their late father wants to be contacted in the afterlife and so begins a dark comedy full of suspect séances, family secrets and the undeniable bond of siblinghood. Written by Méabh de Brún, directed by Anna Nugent, with Caoimhe Mulcahy as Rachael, Méabh de Brún as Mags, Patrick de Monfort as Mike and Paul Nugent as Richard.

Get your message across workshop

Near FM ran 2 workshops 'Get your message across - Interactive and practical media skills training for radio interview' in 2024. The first one with 8 staff from SIPTU in May 2024, the second with 6 staff from the Community and Law Mediation Centre in December 2024.

Content: In this workshop we look at identifying your message, dealing with nerves, delivering a message with confidence. Prepare for going on air. Split group into pairs: each participant took on the role of presenter and guest and recorded a 3 min interview, followed by playback and group feedback.

Near TV

Near TV report This year's main video project for NearTV has been the Preparing For Life Documentary. This documentary is a follow on from a documentary we made 5 years ago called the Health Effect <https://neartv.ie/?p=2313> ,which explored why there were health inequalities in North Dublin and looked at the effect of positive social programmes in the area. One of these programmes was Preparing For Life which is a mentoring programme for parents and children aged zero to five. In this latest documentary we revisit the families we met then to see how the programme has affected their lives. We also look at how PFL has developed from a local initiative developed by the Northside Partnership, to being adopted by Tusla and rolled out nationally. We see how a positive local initiative can have global effects, exploring how the programme has now also been picked up by the university of Chicago and is being rolled out in the city area with a view to a possible national adoption. We have spent the last year documenting the lives of those involved in the programme and are delighted to have been able to capture such a strong and positive story coming from the local community of Darndale.

We also increased our working partnership with DCTV this year, filming projects such as The National Women's Council report Launch on the North South Cooperation to Tackle Violence Against Women and a series called Community Connects, where Near FM's Mary Oyediran interviewed members of the African Solidarity Centre about their lived experience in Ireland. Along with these projects we have continued our approach of getting out in the local area recording vox pops around the community. See some examples below. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E69g57oR6UY>
<https://neartv.ie/?p=3543> <https://neartv.ie/?p=3074>

Along the way we've been keeping up with our training initiatives running workshops and also taking on Colaiste Dhulaigh students for work experience, and have also been joined by new CE participants Ciara and Sean who have been a wonderful asset to the team and have thrown themselves into all aspects of the production process with great gusto, from operating cameras to sound recording, editing to animation there has been no challenge that they haven't been enthusiastic about giving a try.

Online

Listen Again Site

In the past year 1244 new pieces of audio have been uploaded to the website bringing us to a total of 14,553 interviews and programmes available on the site.

Overall amount of downloads since stat collection started in 2012: 394,230

Most listened to was

Northside Today: On the Mitch The tale of a Dub. - 160

Hedge Schools Beyond the Shrubbery – Episode 1 – Learning in All Weathers - 100

High Spirits Audio Drama - 98

Lifeline: Kilmore Celtic football clubhouse - 93

Lifeline: Bridge Association of Ireland, C.B.I.A. -86

Nearcast

Nearcast is our dedicated podcast only service. Overall there have been 232 podcasts published on the service with 17347 downloads.

Most downloaded podcasts have been:

Stories from Foster Care – Lisa Clancy - 951

Irish Stand Ep 7 - 488

Stories from Foster Care – Dr. Danielle Douglas - 467

In Awe of Mná Episode 6 - 429

Stories from Foster Care – Dr. Danielle Douglas - 388

Livestream

9234919 minutes of audio (That's the equivalent of 17 and a half years)

Peak was September 1st at 8am with 201 listeners.

Webcam

In 2024 we put in place a new webcam feed from the studio. We currently have a multicam system in place with the idea that we can send a broadcast of a live programme to DCTV and there are currently 2 live debates from Northside Today available in video format on our Listen Again site. So far it has generated 8306 unique views.

Website

The Near FM website has been revamped and now has a flatter cleaner design and integrates the latest uploads from Listen Again onto the front page.

Audio Drama

We completed and broadcast series 4 of the New Drama Hour and one of the plays High Spirits was shortlisted at the International Radio Drama Festival in Canterbury.

We're currently working on series 5 of the New Drama Hour with 4 plays recorded and in post production. A 6th series is currently being developed at the application stage.