Ireland Active | Leisure, Health and Fitness Association

AGM 8th October 2021

Activities Report 2020-2021

Ireland Active is the representative body for the leisure, health and fitness sector representing over 350 leisure centres, swimming pools, gyms, activity centres and education providers.

TO LEAD, PROMOTE AND UNITE THE IRISH LEISURE, HEALTH AND FITNESS SECTOR

IRELAND ACTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

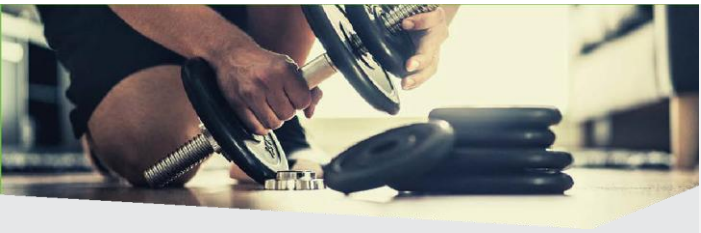
Chairperson: Joe Cosgrove, MD, Kingfisher Club
Treasurer: Clodagh Kilmurray, CEO, Swan Leisure
Secretary: Liam Cunningham, GM, Athlone RSC
Brendan Loughnane, Independent, Communications and Public Affairs
Guy Thompson, GM, Castleknock Hotel
John Windle, Manager, UPMC Institute for Health
Lorna Brady, CEO, SPORTSCO
Tina Dowling CEO, The Watershed
Kilkenny Michael Harrison, Head of Sport, WIT
Siobhan Tighe, MD, Coral Leisure
Scott Walker, Independent, IT, Strategy and Governance

IRELAND ACTIVE STAFF

Chief Executive: Karl Dunne

Projects & Events Officer: Tiffany Heary
REPs Ireland Administrator: Daire Hancock
Leisure, Health & Fitness Skillnet Administrator: Alma Osmic
Garda Vetting & Accounts: Helen Beattie
Marketing and Communications Officer: Sean Daly

IRELAND ACTIVE PARTNERS



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Introduction from Chairperson

Joe Cosgrove

Nobody could have anticipated the changes that would have occurred in the industry over the past year. 2020 saw the biggest challenge to the sector and indeed the country since the recession a decade ago and presented Ireland Active with an opportunity to support our members through this difficult time and prove the value of an industry body which speaks as one voice and comes together to represent our interests.

We would not have been able to support our members without the ongoing support from Government and from Sport Ireland and Skillnet Ireland who have provided support for the office and our members through training and programmes across the past year. Both partners committed to a three-year investment in Ireland Active in recent years which shows confidence in our work and that of our members, and we want to acknowledge and thank them for their continued support. The LHF Skillnet provided fully funded training during the COVID-19 crisis which allowed our members to re-open safely and to upskill during periods of closure/restrictions.

The Department of Sport, both Minister Martin and Minister Chambers and their officials in the Department, have been supportive in our efforts to deliver on government policy and gain supports for the sector. During the progression of the pandemic the Department included Ireland Active in regular discussions and meetings with Ministers and officials to put across the challenges in the industry which has been very helpful. Again, we want to acknowledge and thank them for their support.

Our lobbying work has continued throughout the year. The retention of the 9% VAT rate in Budget 2021 was positive, and so was some of the measures in the July Stimulus and Budget 2021 were called for by Ireland Active, including: the extension of the wage subsidy scheme, improved restart grants, low-cost loans, commercial rates exemption, swimming pool grants and standard VAT rate reduction. However more work will need to be done in 2022 to gain more supports for the sector and we will be working to that end with Sport Ireland and the Dept.

One of the positive outcomes from the recent pandemic has been an increased engagement between Ireland Active and our members through webinars and training, and this is something which we will continue.

Our CEO since 2016, Conn McCluskey, resigned from his position in December 2020 and the Board undertook an extensive recruitment process which resulted in the appointment of Karl Dunne as the new CEO, taking up the position in February 2021. Sarah O'Shea provided Interim CEO cover and we thank her for her calm and reassuring assistance during the transition period. We want to take this opportunity to wish Conn all the best in the future, following his significant contribution to Ireland Active over the past five years, and we look forward to working with Karl as he leads the Ireland Active team into the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members and the staff in the office for the commitment they continue to show to Ireland Active. Thanks, are also due to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Sport Ireland, Skillnet Ireland, Europe Active, IHRSA and our partners in Swim Ireland for their continued support.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to pay a special thanks to Guy Thomson who retires from the board today for his many years of service to Ireland Active. Guy has been on the board for the past 13 years, having stayed on an additional year at the request of the board. He has made a great contribution to Ireland Active and has always been a fantastic supporter and contributor to board meetings and events over his term on the board. He's been a great representative for the hotel industry and Ireland Active and we will genuinely miss him.

A final word of thanks to Ireland Active's suppliers and commercial partners and of course each of the members who have supported us in recent times and to ensure that there continues to be a strong industry body.

Yours in fitness,
Joe Cosgrove
Chairperson

Ireland Active | Leisure, Health and Fitness Association

Advocacy, Representation & Partnership

Pre-Budget Submission & COVID-19 Stimulus

In 2020 we made a number of submissions for support for the sector and were successful in our asks around the wage subsidy scheme, commercial rates, restart grants, swimming pool grants, low-cost loans, warehoused tax and reduced standard VAT rates.

Our submissions were sent to every member of the Oireachtas. The National Sports Policyallows for the exploration of tax initiatives for the sector and Budget 2022 presents another opportunity to put forward our asks for the industry.

National Fitness Day

Ireland Active launched its sixth National Fitness Day in 2021 as part of the European Week of Sport and this was hosted successfully in over 100 facilities and 150 schools across Ireland on 23rd September 2021. Minister Jack Chambers TD,Dr Una May, CEO Sport Ireland, Nathallie Lennon and Andy Moran were on hand to help launch the initiative which was supported by both Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland.

Europe Active- Active Aging & Communities Project

The Active Ageing Communities (AAC) programme is a community-based intervention for older adults designed for fitness and recreational sport environments with the main aim of creating communities for active and healthy ageing. The programme is based on international recommendations and scientific evidence. The AAC main objective is to create communities for healthy and active older people in 18 fitness centres from 6 European countries, and in different community settings. The AAC programme was set-up by the University of Southern Denmark experts and addresses behavioral, mental, and socioeconomic barriers to physical activity in later life by proposing a mix of methodologies from already successful projects together with the new piloting based on an innovative intergenerational approach.

Sport Ireland Active Aging Project

The Active Ageing programme aimed to keep older adults, including older adults with disabilities active during the winter months and to keep a connection with their local community leisure centre/gym. The initiative was for adults aged 55+ including older adults with disabilities who may have been isolated due to reducing their social contacts due to COVID-19.

A number of Ireland Active member facilities have signed up to take part in this programme to help support the physical activity needs of older adults in their local communities

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Ireland Active | Leisure, Health and Fitness Association

Policy & Standards

National Sports Policy

The actions contained in the policy were agreed by the Sport Leadership Group, of which Ireland Active is a member. The National Sports Policy provides the policy context in which sport and physical activity will operate over the next 10 years. Ireland Active strongly endorses the National Sports Policy and, as the recognised association for the leisure, health and fitness industry, will have a lead role in some of the key operational and strategic challenges contained within the Policy.

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REPs Ireland

REPs Ireland has maintained continued growth over the past year with now over 950 registered members and some exciting advancements to operations. In March an Education Provider Forum was held. Providing REPs Ireland approved providers an opportunity to network, share knowledge and experiences in dealing with a post Covid-19 landscape as well as organisational updates.

REPs Ireland hosted a briefing session in July for new education providers that are interested in getting their fitness programs endorsed by REPs Ireland. The next available opportunity for new providers to come on board will be in February 2023. REPs Ireland looks forward to welcoming new education providers on board in the months to come and continuing to work with our current providers to raise industry standards.

After five years Stephanie Mac Sweeney (Registrar) finished up in the organisation. Stephanie was instrumental in supporting the growth of REPs Ireland. Including launching a new website and registration system which provides users and website visitors ease of access to information and improved the function of the register and administration services. In addition, Stephanie was influential in the growth of education providers seeking REPs Ireland accreditation and CPD approval, which has greatly enhanced industry standards. Daire Hancock was appointed as full-time administrator, and this has greatly supported the register growth in the last number of months.

REPs Ireland have also developed a strategic plan which will run from 2021-2024, this strategy has set out objectives for the organisation going forward. Partnerships with stakeholders have further developed over the last year with stronger links being formed and more regular communication taking place. There is also an increased number of education providers seeking accreditation and CPD approval.

Finally, REPs Ireland have continued to host member webinars and have further plans to host a number of member webinars with the help of our kind sponsors the National Dairy Council.

CEN European Fitness Facility Standards Group

As part of the European standards development work, Ireland Active have fed into a new European 'Technical Specification' for dealing with infections outbreaks which has been developed in response to Covid-19. The specification named; *Guidelines for the safe operation of fitness centres during an infectious outbreak* is currently in review for publication.

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As well as this Ireland Active have contributed to the development of the European Standard for; *Requirements for centre amenities and operation - Part 2: Requirements for supervision and staff.* This standard is also under enquiry ballot for publication in the near future. Ireland Active will continue to work with the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), National Mirror Committee and CEN Standards Group to contribute to standard development for the sector.

Services & Events

Garda Vetting

The Garda Vetting service has continued to grow over the past number of years. The number of applications have risen since 2021, with facilities back to full operational capacity and are getting back to pandemic numbers. It was expected that mandatory re-vetting would be introduced, however this has been delayed for the foreseeable due to Covid-19.

Member Meetings

Member webinars were a constant over the past 12 months. These virtual sessions allowed us to reach out to members and to create new ways of networking. We will continue to deliver these webinars along with moving back to in person events and meetings with members over the coming months to support the membership base.

Annual Conference

The annual Conference was held on the 19th November 2021, in the Castleknock Hotel in line with Government guidelines. This gave members the opportunity to meet and network for the first time in 2 years. We will be hosting our annual conference in the Slieve Russell Hotel & Golf Resort on the 25th November 2022. We look forward to being able to meet with our members once again where we can continue to share knowledge, discuss and debate the many topics affecting the industry.

National Quality Standard Awards Dinner

The National Quality Standard Award had a successful year with over 74 organisations taking part We commend these 74 facilities' commitment and dedication to achieving such high standards during an extremely difficult time. The Ireland Active National Quality Standard Awards ceremony for 2021 was held as a lunch time event after the annual Conference on the 19th November 2021. It was hosted by Rob Hartnett in the Castleknock Hotel. It was a great opportunity to recgonise and commend members for all their work over the last number of years. We look forward to hosting the NQS Awards Dinner in the Slieve Russell Hotel & Golf Resort on the 25th November 2022.It is important that NQS grows over the coming years and we ask all members to take part and maintain high standards in the industry going forward.

Leisure, Health and Fitness (LHF) Skillnet

We secured funding for 2020-2022 for developing training in the sector and we have hosted a number of training events to support members in development and to prepare for re-opening throughout the Covid-19 period. As we near the end of the three year funding agreement, we are looking to developing the network further for the next three years (2022-2025). We are grateful to our funders Skillnet Ireland for their support in developing the network for our members, Cliodhna MacNamara LHF Skillnet manager &Alma Osmic LHF Skillnet administrator. The LHF Skillnet Steering group which is a sub-committee of the Board have met 4 times over the past year to develop training plans and funding applications.

Industry Training

Ireland Active has continued to deliver Pool Plant and Safeguarding training courses online throughout 2021 - 2022. The progress on the updated syllabus for the Pool Plant course has been slow but the aim is that it would be completed by the end of 2022. There is the intention to move some of these courses back to face-to-face training to further develop and assit the learners. .

Organisational Excellence

Governance Code

The Board of Directors have been working through the requirements of the Governance Code towards full compliance at the end of 2021.The Board are currently working with Board match Ireland on the final part of the governance code and will be completed by year end.

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Attendance of Board Directors at Board meetings since AGM 2020

Board Director	6th Oct 2020	16th Oct 2020	9th Nov 2020	3rd Dec 2020	26th Jan 2021	25th Feb 2021	23rd Mar 2021	27th April 2021	14th May 2021	22nd June 2021	9th Sept 2021	Total attendance (out of 11) – 50% required
Brendan Loughnane	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	6
Scott Walker	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Siobhan Tighe	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
Michael Harrison	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	10
Clodagh Kilmurray	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	9
Lorna Brady	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
Liam Cunningham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	10
Joe Cosgrove	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Guy Thompson	1	0	1	o	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	8
Tina Dowling	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
John Windle	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10

Organisational Excellence

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We would like to thank those that have contributed their time to our committees over the past year and welcome new members from our membership, from which we will seek to introduce new representatives over the coming year.

Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee met three times over the past year and we thank the independent Chairperson Dermot Gaynor for his time and expertise during this time. Other members include Ed Wyeth, Independent (Accountant) and Joe Cosgrove. The committee was established to ensure compliance with the Governance Code and to ensure that proper checks and balances are in place for financial and organisational risk.

Governance Committee

The Committee is in place to ensure we are progressing on the Governance Code journey and complying with our constitutionaland legal requirements. The Committee is chaired by Sarah O'Connor (Independent, governance and legal expertise) and includes Siobhan Tighe, Joe Cosgrove, Guy Thompson.

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HR and Renumeration Committee

The HR and Renumeration Committee met 4 times over the past year to review and make recommendations to the board on the HR review and the process and appointment of the CEO. The committee includes Joe Cosgrove, Clodagh Kilmurray, Liam Cunningham, Guy Thompson and Scott Walker.

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Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee. The Committee is chaired by Clodagh Kilmurray and members include Joe Cosgrove (IA Chair), Sarah O'Connor (Independent) and Scott Walker (Independent Director).

Standards Committee

The Committee met twice in the past year and considered the National Quality Standard in the context of COVID-19 and how the process would work in 2021. The committee is comprised of Michael Harrison (Chair, REPs Ireland Council), Barry Walsh, Joe Cosgrove and Iain Foulger.

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Commercial and Conference Committee

The Committee has met twice in the past year and considers venues, budget and format for the conference and awards each year. The committee are comprised of Barry Walsh, Susan Grady, Lorna Brady and Joe Cosgrove.

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REPs Ireland Council

The REPs Ireland Council is comprised of representatives from the education sector, facility operators, exercise professionals and nominees from Sport Ireland and the HSE. The Council has met 5 times in the past year and is comprised of:

- ✓ Chairperson & Ireland Active Representative: Michael Harrison, Waterford IT
- ✓ Health: Shirley O'Shea, HSE
- ✓ Education: Niamh Foley, Athlone IT
- ✓ Education: Teresa Richardson, IT Tralee
- ✓ Education: Maeve Clegg, Crumlin College
- ✓ Sport: Michael McGeehin, Sport Ireland
- ✓ Leisure: Gavin Finn, Swan Leisure
- ✓ Leisure: John Windle, UPMC
- ✓ Leisure: Brian King, University of Limerick Sport
- ✓ Leisure: Ciaran Murtagh, Coral Leisure Group
- ✓ Leisure: Celine Szpara, GymPlus Group
- ✓ REPs Member: Joe O'Connor, Exercise Professional
- ✓ REPs Member: Graham Byrne, Exercise Professional
- ✓ REPs Member: Rory O'Connor, Exercise Professional

Sub-committees have also been established in the following areas: Education, Membership, Health and Exercise with representatives from the Council on each.

Financial

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The organisation has been working to diversify its income streams as well as building existing financial resources, in particular membership, training, REPs Ireland and the National Quality Standard. Significant funding has been received from Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland to develop National Fitness Day, partnerships and core operations. In addition, we received core funding from Sport Ireland in 2019-2021 for which we are grateful and look forward to further developing our relationship with them. Skillnet Ireland have funded the Leisure, Health and Fitness Skillnet for 2020-2022.Our overall financial position is summarised below and is set out in detail in the audited accounts presented to the AGM.

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Financial Summary	2020 €	2019 €
Turnover	**3,175,689**	***689,067***
Administrative expenses	**(3,117,742)**	***(649,586)***
Operating profit	**57,947**	***39,481***
Tax on profit	**(7,111)**	***(4608)***
Profit for the financial year	**50,836**	***34873***
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	**57,644**	***22,771***
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	**108,480**	***57,644***

Office

Ireland Active has office space in Irish Sport HQ which is at the heart of the National Sports Campus and the hub of Irish Sport. We have 8 members of staff which are there to support our members and implement the strategic objectives of the organisation. All members of staff have been working from home over the past eighteen months but will soon start back in our new offices in Irish Sport HQ, we thank Sport Ireland for facilitating this.

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