



## Annual Report 2021

We began the year with the challenges of Covid 19 and another lockdown which turned out to be longer and more difficult than any that we experienced in 2020. However, it also was a time of hope as both staff and service users began to receive their vaccines and there seemed to be some prospect of light at the end of this long Covid tunnel.

So what have we, the Board of Windmill, been doing over the last year.

Governance is in the media more and more these days and not the good governance stories but the ones where there was a serious lack of proper and adequate Governance. Only last night I watched the John Delaney story and so I will begin with ....

### **Governance -**

Early in 2021, we developed and published our Statement of Strategy for 2021 – 2023 and we spent some valuable days and hours working on our new Mission, Vision and Core Values Statement.

Our job now is to ensure that both of these are not simply words on a page but a living document that drives us each and every day and a living statement that we embody with every interaction and activity that we do at all times.

We worked hard also on a new Memorandum and Articles of Association for Windmill which will enable us to carry on and expand our services while maintaining good governance.

We had work to do to ensure that we were ready to meet the requirements of the Charities Regulator's Compliance Code. This meant putting further policies, procedures and documents in place and we believe that we now have the ability to fully sign up to all the requirements of the Code. Again you can have all the documents in place but that is not enough. We have to ensure that these are applied. So we will carry out checks, audits and risk manage to the best of our ability so that we, the Board, can have that assurance.

We again reviewed the Board membership to ensure that we have available the right mix of experience, skills and knowledge to lead us forward in these challenging times. We welcomed Ann Ryan back after a few years absence. We set up Sub Committees to help, advise and assist the Board in our work. These Sub Committees, chaired by a member of the Board, have Terms of Reference under the following heading :

Governance

Finance and Audit

Risk Management

Health & Quality

Communications

Fund Raising

Independent Living Programme

We invited parents and staff to join the Sub Committees and there are parents represented on both the Finance and Audit and the Independent Living Programme. We hope more parents will consider offering to join the committees into the future.

### **Our Service**

We had begun our search for a third premises, in the winter of 2020, to enable us to resume a greater level of service while maintaining the required social distance. After considering many properties and viewing a short list, we identified a suitable property in an ideal location i.e on the Main St. We then worked to achieve the necessary funding. This would also enable us to consider 2021 school leavers joining the service and achieve a greater social distance for all. The HSE agreed to fund the rent and we signed the lease only to encounter 2 further challenges. Firstly we had a serious water leak in the week after signing but we moved quickly to resolve the damage through insurance cover. Then Wexford Co Co informed us that unlike our 2 other properties, Main St would be subject to rates at c e3000 per annum. This was a major setback but after negotiation, Wexford Co Co agreed to 50% reduction this year only and HSE agreed to fund the cost for each year. This is greatly appreciated as otherwise we would not be able to continue to lease this property.

### **Managing our Service**

As we expand our services, increase the number of service users each year and extend to 3 premises, we considered our management structure to ensure that Joan and her team were adequately supported, had the flexibility to cope with emerging challenges and were best placed to drive our new Mission and Vision into the future. We set up new Management posts on the HSE Team Leader scale and appointed new managers to bring the Management Team reporting directly to Joan from 2 to 5 managers. We also lost valuable staff members over the previous year and we worked to recruit suitable replacements across a no of specific roles including a New Directions Co - Ordinating Manager.

The new Management Team is as follows ;

Siobhain Matthews, role XXXX

Clare Kelly, “

Liz O Connor,

Brenda Johnston,

Linda Kelly.

### **Our Staff**

The Board are very aware that we are now operating in a changing world for staff retention and staff recruitment. We would like to be in a position to offer a career structure for Windmill staff and an

employer pension contribution for all staff. We have been battling to try to have HSE provide funding for an employer contribution. Without that funding we are unable to offer pension contributions for all staff. We continued with our battle on that with an FOI request and our latest meeting with the HSE earlier this month. We will now extend our negotiations to talk with the National Federation of voluntary Bodies and the Dept of Health to try to progress this aspect.

We have also been in discussion with the HSE on a career structure. We are reviewing our staffing structure, the role and responsibilities and number of each post e.g Key Worker and Support Worker post and the pay scale associated with each. HSE are supportive of this plan and we will work towards having this advanced by year end.

### **Conclusion**

So as they say ...lots done but lots more to do ...

As Chair of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity firstly to thank my fellow Board Directors for their dedication, their enthusiasm and their ongoing support ..Thank You

I couldn't finish without a huge thank you to Joan and to her team ...the enormous effort in time and energy that they have put in ...the endless challenges that they have faced and overcome to get us to this stage ...on behalf of the Board ..Thank you so much and we do so appreciate it ..please pass on to all the staff.

On a personal note ...without Windmill ..the Board, Joan and her team...I just can't imagine how I would manage without the support you all provide ...Thank you .. you are amazing ..

Maria Meyler

Chair

Windmill Therapeutic Training Unit Ltd