



## THE LIVING TRADITION

CEARNÓG BELGRAVE, BAILE NA MANACH, CO. ÁTHA CLIATH

Phone: 01-2800295. Fax: 01-2803759

Email: [eolas@comhaltas.ie](mailto:eolas@comhaltas.ie)

Website: <http://www.comhaltas.ie>

### **COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS**

#### **Communication No. 34**

**We are beginning to see the fruits of the steadfastness and creativity of the last twelve months. Many members, even in the most difficult of times, nurtured the seed to ensure that we would have a cultural harvest in the light of the new dawn. Virtual classes are blooming at home and abroad. FleadhFest is taking root in each County. AGMs, with a touch of reconfiguration, are over the line. All of which augurs well for the future. *Ní fhanann uain ná taoide le haon daoine.* Opportunity and tide wait for no person. *Faigheann rún daingean an chraobh.* The steadfast purpose wins the laurels.**

- Branches are invited by the Ardchomhairle to apply for a financial subvention towards appropriate projects. All applications in 2020 have been successful. County Boards will bring this long-standing fund to the attention of Branches. It has delivered hundreds of significant projects. Since its inception, there has been a multi-million investment in this fund.
- Provincial Councils still have funding available for branches which are financially challenged. In some cases, the stated subvention may be increased. If required, further funding for this scheme will be made available to Provinces by the Ardchomhairle.
- 30 Counties have now availed of the subvention towards their FleadhFest project. They have also indicated that they will set up a production team to plan and deliver the County FleadhFest.
- The National FleadhFest will be held in Sligo from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> August. This will have 8 hours of television coverage by TG4. It will be preceded by 4 one-hour television programmes in the provinces.
- The 7 re-vamped Meitheal Teams, covering the whole island of Ireland, now have increased funding. Over the next 12 months they will deliver new projects as required.
- All 18 cultural centres have availed of supportive revenue funding. Many have also availed of capital funding.
- The national fundraising Draw will again be subvented in 2021.

## **CISTE**

This is an important element of our funding strategy. It is a levy which was introduced by the Ardchomhairle in conformity with our Bunreacht. As will be appreciated, it is expected that in order to qualify for public funding we would demonstrate a level of financial self-sufficiency. Given the structure of the organisation, the Ardchomhairle has limited access to raising funds in its own right. The main areas are membership, CISTE and sponsorship

## **TRAINING**

Dún Uladh, under the leadership of Brendan McAleer and assisted by John O' Neill of Venturel, are currently developing a series of training courses for Comhaltas volunteers and officers across the worldwide Comhaltas community. Over the next few months pilot training courses will be delivered first in Ulster online via webinars alongside downloadable resources. The pilot course will then extend to the other provinces. The modules include governance, fundraising, managing and recruiting volunteers, marketing and engagement and branch planning. This programme will allow volunteers to connect and engage with others and to create development plans for the upcoming years. It is hoped that this project will enlighten our Comhaltas communities and encourage our members to plan for the future.

## **WHO WE ARE**

**OUR VISION, OUR VALUES, OUR MISSION, And OUR ETHOS are guided by many principles:**

- **The essence of our movement, as we interpret it, is that it is all embracing and inclusive of everyone regardless of race, religion or ability.**
- **The core values of our services have always been underpinned by honesty, openness, fairness, the dignity and humanity of each person, free from harassment, anti-sectarian and anti-racist.**
- **We believe in the intrinsic value of every person and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our movement.**
- **We want each individual to avail of opportunities for self expression in the pursuit of traditional music, song, dance and language.**
- **We promote inclusivity, equal opportunity for all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief or lack thereof, race, ethnicity or nationality.**

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is a Volunteer-driven community based cultural movement, with charitable status and registered under the Literary and Scientific Acts, which was founded in 1951. This is at the heart of our success at home and abroad over the last 70 years.

Comhaltas is governed by our Bunreacht, a constitution which expresses the will of our membership as decided at Annual Congress. The Bunreacht comes up for review every six years and is again due for review in 2026. Any change in the Bunreacht requires a two-third majority and must be notified to the Charities Regulator.

**FINANCE** We have been notified by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media that our annual grant for 2021 will be increased. We wish to express our appreciation to Minister Catherine Martin, T.D. and the Department for their continued support and encouragement. As in the past, over 75% of this grant will be distributed to the regions. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Department of Foreign Affairs for their support to Comhaltas abroad.

**ANNUAL REPORT** The Annual Report is now available. It reflects the challenging year which was 2020 and also going forward. This is set against the background of 70 years of endeavour and achievements on the Comhaltas journey.

**TREOIR** The first issue of 2021 is now available. Among other things, it highlights FLEADHFEST at local, national and international levels. It demonstrates the impressive initiatives and innovations throughout the pandemic. It travels down bóithrín na smaointe (memory lane) to reflect the Comhaltas journey of the last 70 years. It will be an extra shoulder to the wheel as County Boards and Branches go the extra mile to ensure a speedy distribution of TREOIR to the members. This will be another link in the chain of communication. [Ní neart go cur le chéile](#). TREOIR will also be available online.

**NEW SCT RESOURCE PORTAL** The Comhaltas SCT is launching a new online resource portal aimed at assisting candidates and teachers with preparation for upcoming SCT examinations. This is under the leadership of Ardchláraítheoir Majella Bartley and SCT Director Oisín Mac Diarmada. In light of the challenges faced by many music learners and teachers over the past year, SCT have developed a grade-by-grade resource to help familiarise candidates with the various elements of the exam. To access the online resources, users need to set up a profile at [www.sctexams.com](http://www.sctexams.com) by clicking on the "SIGN IN" menu option at top right of screen. We hope that this resource portal will prove helpful in preparing for upcoming exams, and that further content will be developed based on the experience of users in 2021.

**THE SONGS OF WEXFORD** Paddy Berry is one of those people who in song, story and service epitomises the old Gaelic spirit which embraces a sense of place, nation and tradition. This proud Wexford balladeer has brought the story of his native county to the four provinces of Ireland and to many more far flung places worldwide.

I have many unique and treasured memories of Paddy Berry but one that will never dim is that of him and the other boys of Wexford delivering Boulavogue in the 1916 Pageant in Cusack Park, Ennis at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Here was all the passion and pride which marks us a nation beyond compare.

As before, in this his forthcoming third book of Wexford's song lore, Paddy Berry delivers a further significant contribution towards a fuller understanding and appreciation of the ballad makers' and poets' role in the community and national expression of a people on many subjects and aspirations. Paddy has again mined deep and well to give us gems which sparkle with wisdom, uniqueness and humour.

**SLÁN LEAT,  
JOE**

The passing of ace-accordionist Joe Burke was greeted with profound sadness and recollection throughout the Irish traditional music world. The Galway supremo's influence for over 60 years on the fortunes of our native music is beyond compare. He was described by his fellow-accordion player and long-time friend James Keane as Ireland's "Five Star Ambassador". Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal ceolmhar. We extend our sympathy and support to Joe's wife Ann Conroy-Burke.

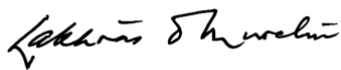
**AR SLÍ NA  
FÍRINNE**

We have lost so many fine Comhaltas colleagues and friends throughout the pandemic year. In recent times, we recall with affection Mae Uí Cheallaigh, our Trustee Padraig's wife; Joe Troy and Sonny McDermott who served on the Ardchomhairle; Tom Blee, a Dún Uladh stalwart; Birmingham's Tommy Boyle, Kathleen Lawrie's husband; and so many more. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

**Tá Samhradh an Cheoil romhainn, le cunamh Dé. Beidh áthas arís ar na ceoltóirí, amhránaithe agus rincooirí. Beidh baill An Chomhaltais ag saothrú an Chultúir Ghaelaigh sa bhaile agus ar fud na cruinne. Beidh gliondar in ár groíthe agus beart de reir ár mbriathar. Casfar na daoine ar a chéile arís!**

**Slán go fóill ó Bhuanchoiste An Chomhaltais.**

Mise, le mór-mheas,



---

Labhrás Ó Murchú  
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ