

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

For AGM (20 December 2022)

2021 was a successful year for Places of Sanctuary Ireland, despite the fact that most activities had to be carried out online because of the continuing Covid pandemic, with greatly increased activity in Schools of Sanctuary in particular, better financial stability and an end-of-year Strategic Review on the way forward.

There were four new accredited Schools of Sanctuary in Dublin, Galway and Wexford and 30 schools across nine counties were working towards becoming Schools of Sanctuary. A new project with 10 participating, *Schools of Sanctuary across the Border*, began in the autumn. A well-attended webinar on the refugee experience, organised in conjunction with NUI Galway, was held in March.

Trinity College Dublin became the seventh accredited University of Sanctuary. Dublin Central Mission (Methodist) became the third Church of Sanctuary in Dublin. Five more churches expressed an interest in becoming Churches of Sanctuary.

There was a constructive meeting between six Sanctuary Ambassadors and the Minister for Equality and Integration, Roderick O'Gorman, in May.

There was £100,000 in the bank account in September, with grants from the St Stephen's Green Trust, the Horizon Trust, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund among others.

The Dublin group held a webinar on trauma and sanctuary in April. The Belfast group were working hard with Belfast City Council to make Belfast Ireland's first City of Sanctuary.

A Strategic Review, carried out by Dr Maria Quinlan of Pink Flower Research, was completed in December. This outlined a shared vision for PoSI's next three years of operation (2022-2025), including an improved all-Ireland network, a multi-year fund-raising model and a robust governance structure.

The Universities of Sanctuary network hosted two public webinars: one in September 2021 in response to the change of regime in Afghanistan, in particular in the context of the curtailment of girls' and women's education; and the second to explore the Community Sponsorship model for HEIs, which was held in November.

Three HEIs successfully applied for re-accreditation. These include DCU, UCC and UCD. It was agreed that going forward HEIs applying for (re)accreditation be required to pay a fee of €1,000 p.a. to offset administrative costs.

Dr [Veronica Crosbie](#) (DCU) stood down as Chair of UoSI after 4 years in the role. Prof Lorraine McIlrath (MIC) has taken on the role for the next three years.

PoSI's two part-time employees, Tiffy Allen and Homayoon Shirzad, continued to work considerably harder and longer than the two days they were paid for.

Andy Pollak