

outhouse Ltd.

Annual Report 2001

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Introduction

outhouse is a community and resource centre in Dublin for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.

The purchase of our new home at 105 Capel St. dominated our activities in 2001. Much effort was spent making the building suitable for our needs. We also welcomed several new staff members.

Premises

Our former premises at South William Street were held on a lease from 1997 to 2000. From 2000 this was only being extended on a quarter by quarter basis and we started looking for a new more permanent home in conjunction with the Eastern Regional Health Authority, our main funder.

Notice to quit our South William St premises was given by our landlord in December 2000 and the search for new home intensified. The board of **outhouse** Ltd. devolved responsibility for the identification and negotiation of new premises to 2 of the board members most experienced in the area. A number of buildings were examined and a building at Capel St was identified in January as the most suitable of the alternatives. The building cost £600,000 and the sale was closed on May 17th.

The deposit for the building was covered by 2 donations obtained during 1999 and 2000 with a combined value of £75,000. The remaining £525,000 was covered by a mortgage from TSB Bank. An agreement was reached with the East Coast Area Health Board (ECAHB) to give us additional funding of £40,000 per annum for initially 5 years to cover the mortgage costs. The centre's funding was also split into two strands, one for specific activities and another for general service provision. It should be noted that no State agency has given us capital funding towards the acquisition or renovation of our premises though as a charity we were exempted from Stamp Duty on the purchase of the building.

Our new home at 105 Capel St is a listed 4-storey over basement building of about 460m² dating from about 1760. It had formerly been used as retail space with 4 apartments on the upper 2 floors. It is well located and suitable for the variety of uses accommodated in **outhouse**. We moved into the building over the weekend of 25th May.

The NLGF, who had being sub-tenants in our South William St premises, did not move with us and moved to a temporary home at Dominick Street.

The initial focus was on making suitable office space on the 2nd floor for our own staff and those of the Gay Men's Health Project. The GMHP offices were made ready at the end of June. The apartments on the top floor were changed into two meeting rooms towards the end of the year. Redecorating commenced on the first floor, which comprises 2 fine rooms. It is intended to open a café on the ground floor in 2002 to provide pre-packaged refreshments and coffee for users of the centre. In the longer term it is hoped to renovate the basement as a performance and/or bar space.

Meetings were held with state agencies and community representatives to identify how best to proceed with the provision of disabled access. Discussions were inconclusive due to conflicts between the protected status of the building and requirements to make the building accessible. Work is ongoing in this area.

As our building is listed, most of the building work will require planing permission.

Usage of the centre

In the first quarter **outhouse** was dealing with around 340 enquiries per month. During the Spring and Summer centre usage was affected by the move of premises and the loss of many facilities pending renovation works. This luckily proved to be temporary and most groups who used our facilities in Sth. William St resumed their meetings as rooms became available.

In October, with several meeting rooms in operation, 55 meetings or other events were held in the centre compared with 53 in October 2000. Since monitoring at 105 Capel Street began **outhouse** averaged 175 enquiries per month from community members. With the café due to reopen in 2002 it is hoped that we will soon have more callers than in our old home.

Publicity

We held a "Sneak Preview" of the building on June 30th for Dublin Pride which was the first opportunity for many people to view our new home. A Community Consultation Meeting was held on Oct 22 to outline **outhouse's** plans for development of the centre. There were 48 attendees and the minutes were published on our website.

GCN ran a number of items about the move to our new building over the year.

Our websites, www.outhouse.ie and www.pink-pages.org were updated continually during the year.

outhouse did not hold any major fundraising events during the year as staff and board resources were concentrated on the building.

Staffing

Our current staffing comprises a full-time manager, Administrator, Outreach worker, and Building Project Manager. An Enterprise Worker was employed until October 2001.

outhouse has three places on a joint Community Employment Scheme. The roles are Coffee Bar worker, Cleaner and Assistant Librarian. Due to the current economic climate it has been difficult to fill each of these posts.

Staffing at end of 2001:

Manager		Frances
Administrator	Jim	
Outreach Worker:		Denise
Building Project Manager	Oliver	

Community Employment Scheme Participants at end of 2001:

Canteen Worker	Alan
Assistant Librarian	Kevin

There were a number of changes to personnel during the year. Rosemary, Richie, Marie, Patricia and David left during the year. Justin acted as temporary administrator for several months prior to a permanent appointment. Following interviews in May, we appointed Jim as Administrator and Frances as Centre Manager. They both commenced employment in July. David, who had been acting as Temporary Centre Co-ordinator until the appointment of a new Manager, stayed on a special projects officer till the autumn and was thus able to assist Frances in her early months and take over some of the Enterprise function formerly carried out by Patricia.

Resource issues, particularly our limited staff numbers, constrained expansion of centre activities. Our application to the ECAHB for 2002 has asked for increased funding to allow expansion of staff numbers as well as for salary increases for existing staff.

A group of around forty volunteers were active during the year, assisting in canteen work, redecoration, drop-ins, library and information delivery, group facilitation, packing and moving. The Saturday "working bee" became an established feature of the week in the centre.

The board would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their dedication and perseverance which have transformed our new building over the past few months.

Enterprise Development

The Enterprise Development Worker, funded by FAS, provided information and referral services, mentoring, and developed a database of LGBTT friendly services. This post ceased in the final quarter of 2001.

It is hoped to develop the database further in 2002 and make the information available to other community groups and telephone helplines throughout the country.

National and International Projects

outhouse staff and Board contribute to the development of national policy and pan European projects. In 2001 this has included:

- Membership of the Equality Authority Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals
- Participation in the development of training programmes for the Garda through the Gay HIV Strategies partnership
- Submissions re volunteering for the International Year of the Volunteer
- Be Equal Be Different European equality training project

Tenants

The Eastern Regional Health Authority's Gay Men's Health Project is based in the Centre.

Until May 2001 **outhouse** also provided office space for Ireland's lesbian and gay community newspaper Gay Community News (GCN).

The National Lesbian and Gay Federation's national archive of material relating to the LGB community is currently housed in the Centre.

Development

In the second half of 2001 **outhouse** has also focused on internal developments to ensure the organisation meets good practice standards as a service provider and employer.

In particular, policies and procedures relating to human resources, the building, financial procedures and service users have been developed.

Board and Company Membership

There was no change to the membership of the company or board of directors. The outgoing board comprised

- Margaret O'Flanagan (Chair)
- Malcolm Hickson (Co. Secr.)

- George Robotham
- Bob Jordan
- Deryck Fay

Financial Report

The East Coast Area Health Board has committed to a service agreement of £40,000 per year for the next 5 years. This will be in addition to the funding we already receive from them towards some staff costs and the overheads for the Gay Men's Health Project. This brings the total grant from the East Coast Area Health Board to £144,000 per annum.

Income

Income in 2001 was £185,898, compared with £128,958 in 2000. Almost all income sources showed an increase, but the main sources of funding continued to be the East Coast Area Health Board. There was no income from fundraising activities during the year.

Expenditure

Expenses for the year were £152,593, resulting in an operating surplus of £33,305 before interest. The major items of expenditure were salaries, mortgage repayments, repairs and maintenance and professional fees.

Full accounts are available in a separate document at http://www.outhouse.ie/accounts_2001.pdf

Appendix 1 - Current Activities in outhouse

- a drop-in information centre
- a health outreach service
- meeting rooms for groups in the community
- temporary storage the National Lesbian and Gay Federation Archive
- a venue for conferences, performances, exhibitions and large community meetings
- an identifiable focus for community activities
- a home for pre-existing activities which would otherwise dispersed over a number of more expensive commercial venues
- a platform for new groups and new ideas by bringing together people excluded from (or simply unaware of) existing markets.

The main groups meeting in 2001 were:

- Iris
- Melting Pot
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Queer Discussion
- Trekkies
- Shambala
- OutYouth
- Bi Irish
- Time Out
- Meditation Group
- Gay Spirituality Group
- Icebreakers
- Gay and Lesbian AA Group
- Women Together AA group
- Johnny
- LUBE