

outhouse Ltd.

Annual Report 2002

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Introduction

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

2002 was dominated by the continued upgrading our new home at 105 Capel St. and the introduction of new centre facilities including a café.

Premises

A lot of work was carried out on the ground floor during the early part of the year to make it suitable as a café space. This included replacement of the flooring, construction of kitchen units and general redecoration. The café was opened on May 25th and its appearance has been widely praised.

A burglar alarm and CCTV system at the front door were installed early in the year and the fire alarm system commissioned in April. The fire alarm system is connected directly to the fire service. Emergency lighting was installed later in the year.

During 2002, the main office moved from the second to the top floor. It is planned that Outyouth will take up part-time residence in the front office on the top floor alongside the holistic therapy room.

The windows at the rear on the 2nd and 3rd floors are in poor condition and we plan to replace them early in 2003. Other work planned for early next year is completion of fitting out the former main office on the 2nd floor as a computer training room based on CAIT funding.

Usage of the centre

Usage of the centre increased in 2002 as more centre services were added and new groups started using our facilities. Amongst the highlights of the year were:

- A symposium on the problem of suicide in the LGBT community in March
- Breakfasts in the café on "Pride Saturday"
- a talk by Ailbhe Smith as part of the "Queer Talks" series on December 16th

Publicity

The café opening on May 25 by drag king Sid Viscous drew a large response and was covered favourably in GCN.

A joint fundraiser "Fabulous Flickers" was organised in the George and the proceeds split between the Irish Queer Archive and **outhouse**. The event was considered a great success and **outhouse** would like to thank Tonie Walsh of the IQA for his help with its organisation.

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

Staffing

There were a few changes to personnel during the year. Interviews for a new Centre Manager took place in November and the successful candidate, Louise Tierney, will start early next year.

At the end of the year our staff comprised:

- Temporary Centre Co-ordinator - Terry
- Outreach Officer - Denise
- Building Project manager - Oliver
- Administrative Officer - Jim
- Café staff - Anne

In May Kevin moved from our component of the Community Employment scheme run by NLGF to their own part of the scheme. We approached Dublin Aids Alliance to see if a participant on their scheme could be assigned to outhouse. DAA responded positively and we have placed Anne on their scheme.

Staffing issues continued to constrain expansion of centre activities. The operation of the canteen put a particular strain on resources but this has eased since Anne joined us through the CE scheme. Our application to the ECAHB for 2003 has again asked for increased funding to allow expansion of staff numbers.

Volunteers played a large role in centre activities both in the canteen and working on building improvements.

An application for a CDP worker was submitted in October.

Board and Company Membership

There was 1 departure from the board of directors during the year. The outgoing board comprised

- Margaret O'Flanagan (Chair)
- Malcolm Hickson (Co. Secr.)
- George Robotham
- Deryck Fay

Most of the board members have been serving for several years and it is acknowledged that "fresh blood" is essential to reinvigorate management of the centre. It is planned to set up a Management Committee and recruit members for this and for the board in 2003.

Our solicitor, Dermot Simms, started work on revising our Articles of Association during the latter part of the year with a view to removing the references to the outhouse "club" which are legally unworkable. It is planned to adopt them early in 2003 and to operate the 2002 AGM under the new Articles.

Financial Report

Both income and expenditure showed small increases over 2002. We closed the year with a surplus of €20,568, a reduction of €23,000 from the previous year's surplus. Despite the reduction this should enable us to remain in credit until the 1st instalment of the Health Board grant.

With the help of good financial management by our manager and the board and careful planning we managed to stay in the black for the entire year even though the size of the 2002 grant was not confirmed by the Health Board until October 2002, making financial planning very difficult.

Two of the board met Pamela Brennan and Vivienne Fay of the ECAHB at their Dun Laoghaire office in October to discuss funding for 2003. The meeting was very cordial and the Health Board officials were invited to visit the centre in 2003.

We obtained a grant of about €8,000 under the Community Application of Information Technology (CAIT) initiative in the latter part of the year. This will be used to install PCs and associated networking and Internet access for training courses.

We applied unsuccessfully to the Ireland Funds during the year.

Income

Income for 2002 was €241,596. The main sources of funding continued to be the East Coast Area Health Board which increased slightly compared with 2001. There was a reduction in income from the café in 2002 compared with 2001 as the new café does not attract the same patronage as in our old premises at Sth William Street. The amount of donations was considerably down but the figure for 2001 includes an exceptional gift of €25,000 which, unfortunately, cannot be expected every year. Other income showed an increase due the greater number of meetings and groups using the rooms at the centre.

Expenditure

Expenses for the year was €221,028, compared with €193,753 in 2001. The major items of expenditure were salaries, mortgage repayments, repairs/maintenance and insurance. There were major increases in the latter two headings due to the amount of capital intensive work required in the building and the rapid inflation of insurance costs. Salary costs fell slightly due to the temporary replacement of the centre manager by a part-time co-ordinator pending recruitment of a new manager.

Increases costs also arose due to the introduction of tagged rubbish bag system by Dublin City Council during the year.

KSI Faulkner Orr were appointed auditors to the company.

Full accounts are available in a separate document.

Appendix 1 - Current Activities in *outhouse*

- a drop-in information centre
- a health outreach service
- a café
- meeting rooms for groups in the community
- 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 2002 were:

- Iris
- Melting Pot
- Gay International Group
- Trekkies

- OutYouth
- Bi Irish
- Time Out
- Meditation Group
- Gay Spirituality Group
- Icebreakers
- Gay and Lesbian AA Group
- Women Together AA group
- Johnny
- LUBE