

cork *simon* **com-** **muni-** **ty** *annual report 2010*

For forty years Cork Simon has been accepting people for who they are. We've been growing, changing and developing to meet the needs of people who are homeless in Cork. We've been meeting those needs for which, "no adequate provision" existed. Over those forty years, literally thousands of people have found their pathway out of homelessness through Cork Simon.





**Cork Simon Community,
at the heart of Cork for
forty years.**

the chair's report

Forty years ago a small group of volunteers, concerned at the levels of rough sleeping and homelessness in Cork, got together and organised the very first Soup Run. The volunteers were guided by the philosophy and principles of Anton Wallich-Clifford, the founder of Simon in London in 1963.

Anton travelled to Cork in 1971 to address a public meeting. He talked about the need to accept people as they are, not as we would want them to be. Just as he had done with Trinity College students in Dublin the previous year, Anton told the Cork meeting that, "Simon aims to come in where others leave off and to work for those unable to accept existing help or for whom no adequate provision exists." That meeting marked the beginning of Cork Simon Community.

For forty years Cork Simon has been accepting people for who they are. We've been growing, changing and developing to meet the needs of people who were homeless in Cork. We've been meeting those needs for which, "no adequate provision" existed. Over those 40 years

literally thousands of people have found their pathway out of homelessness through Cork Simon. They rebuilt their lives and became part of the wider community.

For forty years we've seen our own Community flourish — a vibrant Community of residents, of people using our services, of volunteers, of staff and of generous supporters. A Community of people believing in people, believing that people, no matter what their circumstances or life histories, can and do leave homelessness behind them — and should have every opportunity to do so. As Anton Wallich-Clifford put it, “We are all important and none of us can do without the others.” That Community spirit has been so important to us: guiding us, supporting us and encouraging us through tough and challenging times.

Forty years on our Community is stronger than ever. The handful of Soup Run volunteers has grown into 700 active volunteers. A team of volunteers still takes the Soup Run out onto the streets every night. Whilst they may not be meeting nearly as many people sleeping rough as they did forty years ago, they are meeting people who are lonely, isolated, damaged and fundamentally hurt; people for whom the Soup Run is a life saver. As one young man who was supported by the Soup Run last year put it, “Without the Soup Run, I would have starved. I'd probably be dead by now.”



Cork Simon Community has always been a campaigning community to ensure the changing needs of people who are homeless are met.

Just as the Soup Run marked the beginnings of Cork Simon forty years ago, today it often marks the beginning for many people of their journey out of homelessness. The Soup Run and Outreach Team are gateways to a better life, a better world; a world of possibilities for people to start rebuilding their lives through emergency accommodation, one-to-one advice and support, healthcare, addiction counselling, training, education, employment opportunities, long-term housing, tenancy support, and so much more.

We've come a long way in those forty years. The warm-hearted generosity of so many people in Cork has helped to make it happen. Companies, groups and many, many individuals have donated literally millions of Pounds, Punts and Euros over the years, helping to make sure that those who were most vulnerable, most marginalised and most in need had somewhere to turn to when all else had failed. So many more volunteered their time, energy and skills, helping to break down barriers, rekindle hope and keep the spirit of those first volunteers alive.

That combination of compassion, energy and enthusiasm has been the wind at our backs as we highlighted the needs of those people, "for whom no adequate provision" existed. It has been the driving force behind our ability to put in place effective responses to meet their needs. It has given us confidence to work closely with local and national Government, State Agencies

and other organisations, helping to make sure the voices of those people who were forgotten, excluded and alone were heard; that their issues were on the political agenda.

What we've achieved together over the last forty years truly represents Cork at its best: Cork people from all walks of life believing in people, believing that we can make a difference; that we can influence change; that we can make things better. Even in the most challenging times, Cork people have been digging deep — into their pockets and into their hearts, appreciating that there are people less fortunate, less able to make their way in the world, less able to cope with the complexities of life. That understanding has helped put us on a firm financial and moral footing to deal with the many challenges that lie ahead.

When Anton Wallich-Clifford travelled to Cork in 1971 he inspired a small group of volunteers to care, to think big and to believe in people. Forty years later we've reached the point where we have enough emergency beds in Cork so that no one has to sleep rough. We got there through hard work and determination; by national and local Government, State agencies, businesses, community groups and many, many individuals working together to a common cause. But, as Anton put it, "Simon has to be as new as tomorrow's headlines. It cannot be static and it must never fear change." We need to use all the experience we have gained over the last forty years to look for new and better



Believe in people.

solutions as different problems impacting on homelessness emerge. We need to urgently address long-term homelessness — people staying for long periods of time in emergency shelters because they have no other option. We need to address people's problem drug and alcohol use, and their poor mental health. We need to look at the needs of women and young people who are homeless to determine what will work most effectively for them. We need to make sure there's a range of appropriate housing available to meet a range of needs.

We will continue to be innovative, continue to bring a fresh approach to the changing faces of homelessness. With your help and continuing support, we will respond to all of these issues — and whatever new issues may emerge. Above all, we must continue to believe in people.

Dave Ronayne
Chair, Cork Simon Community

Through good times and bad, Cork people have always been committed supporters of the work of Cork Simon Community.



the acting director's report

Back in 1971, when Cork Simon's first Soup Run was hitting the streets, the most pressing problem for people who were homeless was finding shelter from the elements; a roof over their heads. Forty years later, all the organisations responding to homelessness in Cork are working together to ensure we have enough emergency beds so that no one has to sleep rough. Throughout 2010 our Outreach Team was active in making sure that people got off the streets and into those beds as quickly as possible.

In the early days that might have been the beginning and end of people's journey out of homelessness. Today, it marks just the beginning as we now have in place a suite of housing, healthcare and one-to-one supports that enable people to start taking responsibility for managing their health, tackling their demons, controlling their addictions, socialising again, participating in arts and creative activities, going back to school, enrolling in training programmes, preparing for the future. In other words, people have opportunities to begin piecing their lives back together.

These opportunities are the result of forty years of responding to the changing faces of homelessness. Throughout those forty years Cork Simon pushed for change when needed, responded to change when challenged and implemented change when asked. 2010 was no different.

As the year drew to a close Cork Simon was given the go ahead to extend our house on Boreenmanna Road to provide three extra places for people who are very sick and need very high levels of round-the-clock care. We got to work immediately. The extension represents a small but important step in addressing long-term homelessness — people staying for long periods in emergency shelters because they have no other option. People who are long-term homeless tend to have severe health problems that require this high level of care. 16% of residents in Cork Simon's Emergency Shelter in 2010 were long-term homeless.

Much has been achieved in recent years establishing and developing a range of suitable and appropriate healthcare in Cork for people who are homeless. The team of doctors, nurses and counsellors has proven to be an invaluable resource in providing direct and accessible healthcare to vulnerable people. The team's GP, Dr. Don Coffey, received the Fiona Bradley Medal recently in recognition of his work in contributing to better healthcare for people who are disadvantaged. Our second annual health snapshot of people using Cork Simon projects and services over the



In the early days emergency accommodation focused on shelter, food and a friendly ear. Today, Cork Simon's Emergency Shelter never forgets those basics and offers so much more — a gateway to a better life.



Forty years of Cork Simon has only been possible by the fundraising efforts of literally thousands of volunteers — donating to, organising and participating in a huge variety of events.

course of one week in 2010 highlighted the staggering severity of the health and related issues facing people who are homeless: Homelessness Makes You Sick found that 59% of people had an underlying physical health problem; 66% had an underlying mental health problem; 27% indicated problem alcohol use; 26% indicated problem drug use; 13% self-harmed; and 8% had attempted suicide over the previous six months. The findings underlined the need for round the clock care in high support housing for some people, the challenges we face in making sure people who are long-term homeless have the housing and support they need to start piecing their lives back together, and the critical importance of specialist healthcare for people who are homeless.

Of equal importance are opportunities for people who are homeless to develop a range of life skills so that they too can take their place in society and make a contribution. Cork Simon long recognised the gaps that existed in people's access to recreational activities, education, training, employment and personal development opportunities — all necessary if people are to move out of homelessness, reconnect with their local communities and re-establish supportive social networks. With the help of funding from Pobal in 2010, Cork Simon established an Employment, Training and Education Project that facilitates and supports people who are homeless to access education, training, work experience and employment opportunities. The

programme is tailored to meet each person's unique needs, supporting their personal development, skills' building, independence and reintegration into the wider local community. The project has had an immediate impact, with people participating in literacy classes, certified education and returning to employment. The Pobal funding runs out this year, but the project has been such a success that Cork Simon is committed to retaining the project this year and beyond.

The strength of Cork Simon is Community: a Community of people believing in people. That strength was clearly evident during our third annual Simon Week in October which set out to celebrate the thousands of people in Cork who are doing whatever they can so that people who find themselves homeless and clearly have a mountain to climb to overcome their crippling health difficulties and related challenges, have the opportunities to make that journey out of homelessness; have the belief in them, and the support they need, to weather the setbacks and to triumph over adversity. During Simon Week we saw plenty of examples of that triumph - people finding their voice through drama, poetry and writing; people expressing themselves through photography and art; people slowly but surely participating in the wider community, beginning to feel a part of society — no longer scorned or forgotten, but valued, appreciated and understood. John Lonergan summed it up best when he joined us during Simon Week, "When we find ourselves in

difficulty, what we all appreciate more than anything else is a place of comfort, care and support.”

2010 was a difficult year for everyone, yet we never gave up. Cork’s big-hearted generosity never gave up. We continued to work hard together to make sure that place of comfort, care and support was always there for people who needed it most. But for the work that we’re doing together to be truly effective requires Government that is determined to tackle homelessness; that is intent in making sure people’s needs are met, and that is committed to ensuring the resources are available to help make it happen. Despite the enormous pressures on the public finances, the Government, in tandem with Cork City and County Council, HSE, Cork Homeless Forum and other State Agencies, has been doing just that, and it’s helping to make a big difference.

Just before the recent General Election, all the political parties signed a pledge in our Emergency Shelter, “We believe in people and pledge to work with all organisations to ensure that housing, healthcare and other supports are available to everyone at risk of or experiencing homelessness.” If ever there was a need to make sure that those who are most vulnerable get our understanding, care and support, it is now. As one young man said during Simon week, “Life’s pretty good now. If I could bottle this feeling up and keep it, it would be brilliant.” This is what we can do when we have a committed Government working

in tandem with 700 active volunteers and over 6,000 generous supporters. As we look back at forty years of Cork Simon, we must stay focused and build on that incredible work. We must always have enough beds in our city so that no one has to sleep rough. We must always be active in making sure that people get off the streets and into those beds. We must always make sure that we have the housing, healthcare and supports to help those most in need — the people with multiple health problems and crippling addictions, so that they too can say, “Life’s pretty good now.” Working together and believing in people, we can continue to help make that happen.

Aaron O’Connell

Acting Director, Cork Simon Community



For forty years Cork people have been supporting Cork Simon Community in all sorts of ways. At the end of the day, that's what counts.



**Taking time to share a cup
of tea, believing in people.**

3 new high- support beds at

boreenmanna rd.



Cork Simon Community has forty four places in five High-Support houses for people who are very sick and vulnerable and who need high levels of round-the-clock care.

Towards the end of 2010, the Government, in tandem with Cork City and County Councils and HSE, gave Cork Simon the go ahead for the development of an additional three places at Cork Simon's High-Support House on Boreenmanna Road. Work got underway immediately.

Clanmornin House was Cork Simon's first High-Support House. Originally an old farmhouse, it was demolished and replaced with a single story, eight-bed High-Support House. Clanmornin House was officially opened in 1991 by President Mary Robinson.

This new development of three extra High-Support places at Boreenmanna Road represents a small but important step in addressing long-term homelessness — people staying for long periods in emergency shelters because they have no other option. People who are long-term homeless tend to have severe health and related issues that require this high level of care. 16% of residents in Cork Simon's Emergency Shelter in 2010 were long-term homeless.

The three new High-Support places are due to be completed and occupied by summer 2011.

**The Soup Run was Cork
Simon's first project in 1971.
To this day volunteers still
take the Soup Run onto the
streets every night of the year.**





**Believe in people to believe
in themselves.**

jobs, training and



education project

Cork Simon long recognised the gaps that existed in people's access to recreational activities, education, training, employment and personal development opportunities — all necessary if people are to move out of homelessness, reconnect with their local communities and re-establish supportive social networks.

In 2010, with the help of funding from Pobal, Cork Simon established an Employment, Training and Education Project that facilitates and supports people who are homeless to access education, training, work experience and employment opportunities. The programme is tailored to meet each person's unique needs, supporting their personal development, skills' building, independence and reintegration into the wider local community.

The project has already facilitated literacy classes and FETAC certified courses in Communications, Preparation for Work, Work Orientation, Personal and



Cork Simon Work Project
in 1987 — training and
employment are an
important part of the mix of
supports necessary to tackle
homelessness.

Interpersonal Development, Stress Management, Maths, IT Skills, Food and Cookery, Art & Design and Drama. People are participating in certified courses in Manual Handling, SafePass, Artic Truck Driving, Drain Laying and Food Hygiene.

A total of 58 certificates have been awarded already.

The Cork Simon Employment, Training and Education Project liaises with local companies, identifies suitable employment opportunities, and works with people to prepare them for the work place. Already eighteen people have secured jobs — two people on the Community Employment Scheme and sixteen people with local companies.



In the days before Cork Simon had the use of a van, the Simon Pram was a common sight on the streets of Cork — used to collect people's donations of food and clothing.

homelessness makes you sick

During the first week of July 2010, Cork Simon conducted a health snapshot study of people using Cork Simon projects and services.

'Homelessness makes you sick' highlights the staggering severity of the health and related issues facing people who are homeless in Cork.

All 188 people using Cork Simon projects and services during the week of the snapshot study were included:

- 59% had an underlying physical health problem.
- 66% had an underlying mental health problem.
- 20% had both a physical and mental health problem.
- 27% indicated problem alcohol use.
- 26% used a combination of two or more drugs.
- 14% were intravenous drug users.
- 13% self-harmed
- 8% attempted suicide in the previous six months.

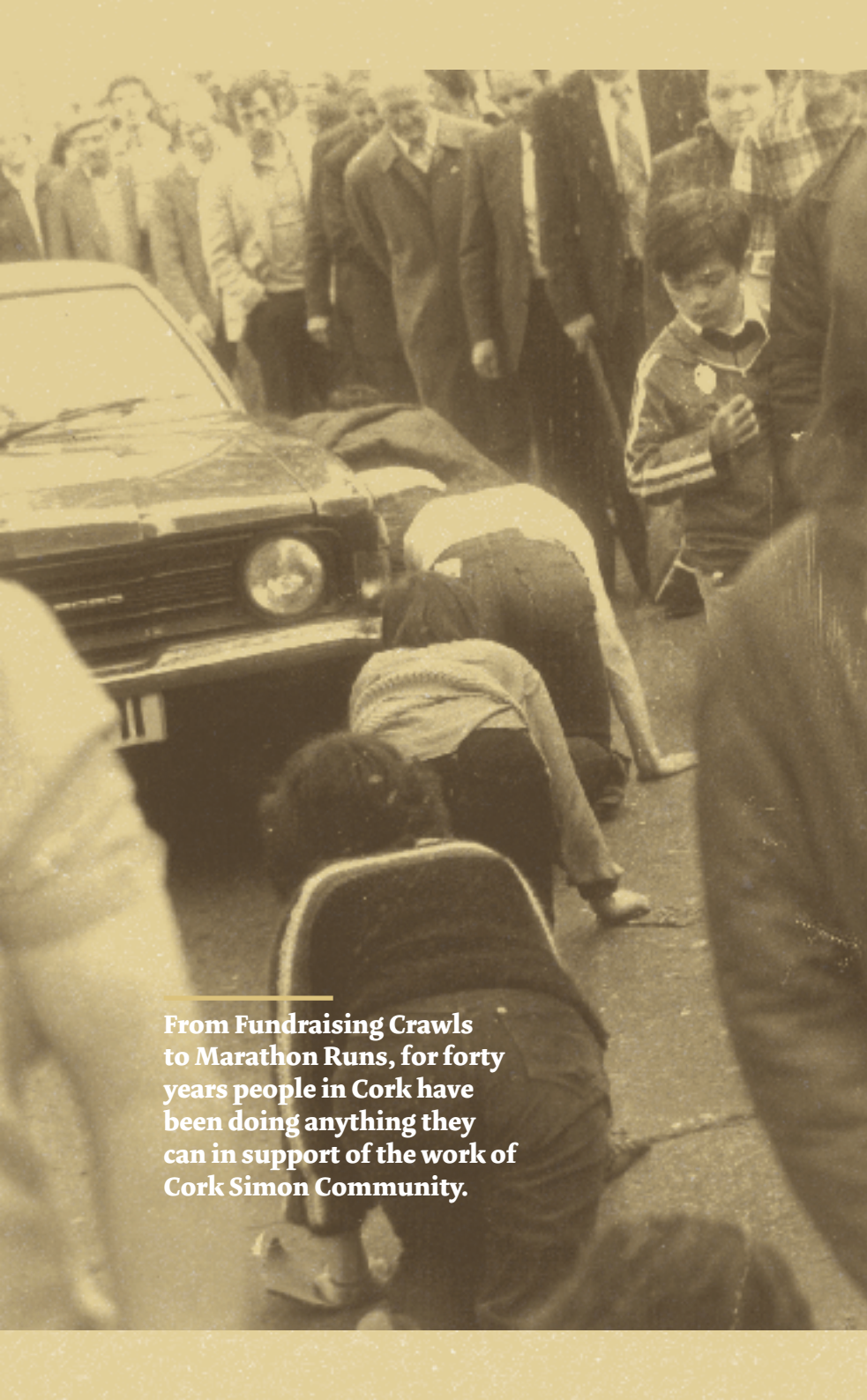
- **51% required medical treatment during the week of the Study — 282 health referrals in all.**
- **14% were admitted to A&E during the month of July — 46 admissions in all.**

‘Homelessness makes you sick’ found the highest rates of undiagnosed mental health conditions, admissions to A&E and of challenging behaviour were among people who are long-term homeless — defined by Government as people staying in emergency accommodation for six months or longer.

The snapshot study underlines the need for round-the-clock care in High Support housing for some people, the challenges we face in making sure people who are long-term homeless have the housing and support they need to start piecing their lives back together, and the critical importance of specialist healthcare for people who are homeless.



Volunteers have always been at the heart of Cork Simon. Over the years they have helped mentor and support individuals in developing such life skills as; gardening, painting, decorating and office administration work. They have also been a key element in all fundraising activities.



**From Fundraising Crawls
to Marathon Runs, for forty
years people in Cork have
been doing anything they
can in support of the work of
Cork Simon Community.**

cork simon community

forty years on

What started as a handful of volunteers in 1971 has grown into a vibrant Community of 6,000 donors, 700 active volunteers, State Agencies, local and national Government and voluntary groups and organisations all working hard together to make sure people who are sick, tired, homeless and alone have the housing, care and supports they need to rebuild their lives and reconnect with their local communities.

Cork Simon Community works with some of the most vulnerable and excluded people in Cork. Forty-four people stay every night at the Emergency Shelter — people who are sick, isolated and in need of high levels of care and support. A further forty-four people live in five high-support houses every day — termed high-support because people living there have severe health and related needs that require high levels of round-the-clock care.

Twenty-seven people are supported everyday in their ongoing journey out of homelessness in Cork Simon flats — people who have survived homelessness and are on track to rebuilding their lives. Cork Simon also supports people living in private rented accommodation, in city and county council houses and in accommodation provided by various housing associations.

A Cork Simon Youth Homeless Drugs Prevention Project (YHDPP) is a key resource for young adults who are at risk of becoming, or who have already become, homeless. Throughout 2010 up to a fifth of all people using Cork Simon projects and services were in the 18-26 year old age group. The YHDPP works with this age group — young people that have little or no direction in their lives, have poor relations with their families and have little experience to call on.

The Soup Run was Cork Simon's first project in 1971. In 2010 the Soup Run and Outreach Team met an average of 27 people each night. Whilst the Soup Run may not be meeting nearly as many people sleeping rough as they did forty years ago, they and the Outreach Team are meeting people who are lonely, isolated, damaged and fundamentally hurt; people for whom the Soup Run is a life saver. The Outreach Team is committed to linking people in with appropriate services within twelve hours of meeting them.

Throughout 2010 almost 800 people turned to Cork Simon Community for support.

484 people stayed at Cork Simon's Emergency Shelter — an increase of 10%. The Emergency Shelter was full every night.

- The number of women staying at the Emergency Shelter increased by 46%.
- The number of people long-term homeless at the Emergency Shelter (staying six months or more because they have no other option) increased by 40%.
- The number of people using the Emergency Shelter for the first time increased by 22%.

59 people stayed at Cork Simon's five High-Support Houses throughout 2010.

- 27 people moved on to other housing options — 42% of them to private rented housing or a Cork Simon flat.
- There were 18 new residents at Cork Simon's High-Support houses — 44% were long-term homeless.

89 people were supported by Cork Simon's Housing Plus team — supporting people in their ongoing journey out of homelessness.

- 49 people were in a Cork Simon flat.
- 15 people were in flats provided by other housing associations.
- 15 people were in Private Rented housing.

There were almost 2,500 appointments with the team of doctors, nurses and counsellors.

homelessness

government commits

The Government in Ireland plays an important role in addressing homelessness.

It is responsible for a national strategy on homelessness, The Way Home. It provides funding that contributes to the establishment and running of many projects and services for people who are homeless. That funding comes via local Government, a variety of State Agencies and Government Departments.

Despite the enormous pressures on the public finances, the Government's commitment to helping maintain those projects and services was reflected in its funding announcement in 2010 for three additional high-support beds at Cork Simon's house on Boreenmanna Road for people who are very sick and need high levels of round-the-clock care. Those additional beds will go some way to addressing long-term homelessness.

Just before the recent General Election, all the political parties, including now Taoiseach, Enda Kenny on behalf of Fine Gael, signed a pledge in Cork Simon's Emergency Shelter, "We believe in people

and pledge to work with all organisations to ensure that housing, healthcare and other supports are available to everyone at risk of or experiencing homelessness.”

If ever there was a need to make sure that those who are most vulnerable, most in need of our understanding, care and support, it is now. The new Government must honour that pledge, must continue to work in tandem with 700 active volunteers and over 6,000 generous supporters, building on the progress of the last forty years, listening and responding to the needs as they emerge and continuing to believe in people.



“We pledge that if elected to Government we will ensure that tackling homelessness will be one of our top priorities.” — *Cork Simon*
Emergency Shelter, Feb 2011

Statement of Financial activities year ended December 31, 2010

	Restricted Funds	Restricted Homeless Foundation Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Total Available Funds
Incoming Resources	€	€	€	€	€
Voluntary income	235,521	—	618,623	—	854,144
Bequests	—	—	136,460	—	136,460
Activities for generating funds	125,629	—	1,527,057	—	1,652,686
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3,818,743	—	371,720	—	4,190,463
Investment income and other	—	17,442	96,342	—	113,784
Total incoming resources	4,179,893	17,442	2,750,202	—	6,947,537
Resources Expended					
Charitable expenditure homeless services	5,586,887	—	133,547	—	5,720,434
Cost of generating funds	—	—	618,357	—	618,357
Campaigning and research	2,000	—	148,510	—	150,510
Governance costs	—	—	42,950	—	42,950
Total resources expended	5,588,887	—	943,364	—	6,532,251
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	(1,408,994)	17,442	1,806,838	—	415,286
Capital Assistance Scheme Repayments relieved	—	—	324,730	—	324,730
Transfer from restricted building fund	—	—	24,803	—	24,803
Transfer from unrestricted fund	1,410,511	—	(1,540,511)	130,000	—
Net incoming resources before other recognised gains and losses.	1,517	17,442	615,860	130,000	764,819
Gain in value of investments	—	2,410	—	—	2,410
Net movement in funds	1,517	19,852	615,860	130,000	767,229

Balance Sheet year ended December 31, 2010

Restricted Building Fund	Total 2010	Total 2009
€	€	€
—	854,144	748,131
—	136,460	257,922
—	1,652,686	1,372,397
—	4,190,463	4,340,384
—	113,784	102,895
—	6,947,537	6,821,729

—	5,720,434	5,828,953
—	618,357	551,937
—	150,510	113,996
—	42,950	39,824
—	6,532,251	6,534,710

—	415,286	287,019
—	324,730	324,730
(24,803)	—	—
—	—	—

(24,803)	740,016	611,749
—	2,410	1,652

(24,803)	742,426	613,401
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	2010	2009
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	6,570,006	6,707,219
Financial assets — investments	457,191	437,339
	7,027,197	7,144,558

Current Assets		
Debtors	134,846	109,637
Cash at bank	3,243,772	2,551,886
	3,378,618	2,661,523

Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	(1,038,517)	(856,479)
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Net current assets	2,340,101	1,805,044
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Total assets less current liabilities	9,367,298	8,949,602
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Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year	(5,177,896)	(5,502,626)
	4,189,402	3,446,976

Capital and reserves		
Unrestricted funds	2,667,497	2,051,637
Designated funds	630,000	500,000
Restricted income funds	11,657	10,140
Restricted Homeless Foundation funds	457,065	437,213
Restricted building funds	423,183	447,986

Accumulated funds	4,189,402	3,446,976
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Current Board of Directors

Joe Finnerty
Kevin Fitzgibbon
Catherine Anne Fitzpatrick
Edward Hogan
Eoin MacCuirc (*Secretary*)
Bernadette McGonigle
Carmel Mulcahy
Maureen Mullen
John Murphy
Tomás O'Callaghan
David Ronayne (*Chair*)
Brendan Ryan

Thanks to the professional services of:

John J. Murphy Solicitors
PricewaterhouseCoopers
AIB, Patrick Street, Cork

Thanks to the Simon Communities of Ireland for their continued support, and to the Simon Communities in; Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, Midlands, Mid West, North West and South East.

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Cork Simon Community is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee.

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