

Annual Report 2021

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG



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Mission Statement, Vision, Values

The Mission of The General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG is: To support, enhance and develop the efficient operations of the Fellowship of AA on the island of Ireland to ensure that the still suffering alcoholic will be supported to become involved in AA and receive the help they need'. The document 'Terms of reference' supports this mission statement very clearly.

Vision

“Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

Alcoholics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship dedicated to helping one another. The Twelve Step programme is AA’s suggested programme for recovery from alcoholism and its effects.

AA’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can relieve the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become an active participating member of his/her family and society as a whole.

AA’s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which AA maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.

There are approximately 500 AA Groups in Ireland with an estimated 13,000 – 15,000 AA members and meetings held each week nationwide.

Full Information is available from our website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

The General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG will actively promote policies to protect its mission and values.

Values

This Code of Ethics is based upon a foundation of strongly held values. The commitment of the Board and staff to the ethos of the service guides all those involved in formulating and adhering to the Code of Ethics that follows:

Members and their desire for sobriety are the priority of GSBAA. GSBAA ensures that the services which it provides are of the highest possible standards. Equality, fairness and confidentiality in the delivery of our services are some of the core values of the service.

Introduction from our Chairperson – Cindy O’Shea

Welcome to General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG Annual Report for 2021, in which we round up the activities of the past year. In reviewing this period I am very proud of the way the Board has managed to continue its work and the way the office team have continued to offer the excellent service it has always delivered despite the challenging circumstances, This year’s Annual Report has a new look and format, which we hope will give you an insight into the range of activities carried out and give a more professional summary of and insight into our work during 2021.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, the impact on both the Fellowship and on the General Service Office staff as well as the Board was immediate. We urgently needed to transition our work from an in-person service to an online short-term response and adapt the office work to adhere to all public health guidelines. The General Service Office staff team have worked tirelessly to ensure that business carried on at the same professional level as always and the Board would like to acknowledge the work of the staff team over this period of time.

The Board continued to meet and through the dedication of our trustees, for whom we secured key worker status, we were able to keep our work on track throughout the lockdowns and respond to the increased number of challenges presented to us as a result of the pandemic crises. I would like to acknowledge the time and commitment of each member of the board, who grappled with new technology, the vagaries of zoom and the need to travel when it was possible despite numerous challenges. We welcomed three new members to the Board this year - Aisling Hussey (Non-AA member Director), Emmet O’Hanlon as Director/AA Trustee for Leinster and Rory Hannon as Director/AA Trustee for Connaught. Brian Fitzpatrick will step down soon as Director/AA Trustee for Ulster and we would like to thank him for his work. A big welcome to Seamus Boylan, as he begins his term as Director/AA Trustee for Ulster. The generosity of spirit and willingness to get stuck in was really admirable and I would like to thank each one for their work.

One of the key challenges during the year was the impact on our finances due to the absence of in person meetings. Thanks to the generous support of the fellowship throughout the year we have weathered the storm and finish the year in good financial health, which you will see in the audited accounts. While the Board run the office on behalf of the fellowship, we could not continue to deliver the service without your support, so this is really appreciated.

Another major challenge faced by GSBAA was the huge increase in the number of calls from people in crises and needing support, while this was a regrettable aspect of Covid 19, it gave us the opportunity to design and develop a pilot project whereby we developed a phone support response service which is delivered by a panel of AA members on behalf of the GSBAA. This has been a huge success and we have been able to ensure people were either helped directly or signposted to relevant agencies for support. You will see a breakdown of the service included in the Annual Report.

We will continue to review and monitor the service and develop it as needed.

More than anything, this year has highlighted the importance of human connection. We were able to travel to three of the four provinces/intergroups and meet Conference delegates and Intergroup Secretaries, who gave us great insight into some of the challenges on the ground as well as giving us an opportunity to build relationships and establish better communication between us. Unfortunately, due to the Omicron variant we had to delay meeting our Munster colleagues, but this will happen soon at the annual Convention planned for Munster in April. We would also like to compliment Connaught on a well-run and innovative Convention run in 2021 and the very first convention run completely online. Thanks to the Connaught team for an amazing job and very successful convention which gave several hundred people the opportunity to be present and to connect with others around the country and further afield.

As I write this report it looks likely things are a bit more hopeful, I hope that easing of coronavirus restrictions will mean we can get back to focusing on the core work of the organisation. But I also hope that we will have the opportunity to reflect on the positive learnings from the past two years and ensure we continue to be there to support the fellowship in a relevant way. To reach everyone who needs us, we must reflect the communities that we're part of and ensure we are continuing to help the fellowship to meet the need of the still suffering alcoholic. I look forward to continuing to contribute to the work of the Board and to work with you all in the coming year. It has been an interesting year and I will finish my role as Chair at next month's AGM. I would like to thank you all for the privilege of working with you and for your support and generosity.

Warm regards,
Cindy

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland CLG

The company name of the registered charity known as AA or Alcoholics Anonymous, a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital and registered under the Companies Act 2014.

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (GSBAA) Trustee/Directors

The GSBAA consists of seven Trustees/Directors. These comprise of four AA Member Trustee/Directors (also known as Provincial Trustees) and three Non-AA Member Directors.

The main responsibility of the GSBAA members is to manage the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland in accordance with the Constitution of the Company as approved by the company members.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and the General Service Office is GDPR compliant.

Our Privacy Statement is available on our website at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Board of Directors

- Brian Fitzpatrick
- Martin Crowley
- Peter R. Hannon
- Emmet O'Hanlon
- Cindy O'Shea
- Elizabeth Cullen
- Aisling Hussey

Company Secretary

- Anthony O'Carroll

Company Information

Registered Company in Ireland 64287

Charitable Status CHY 6014

RCN 20010010

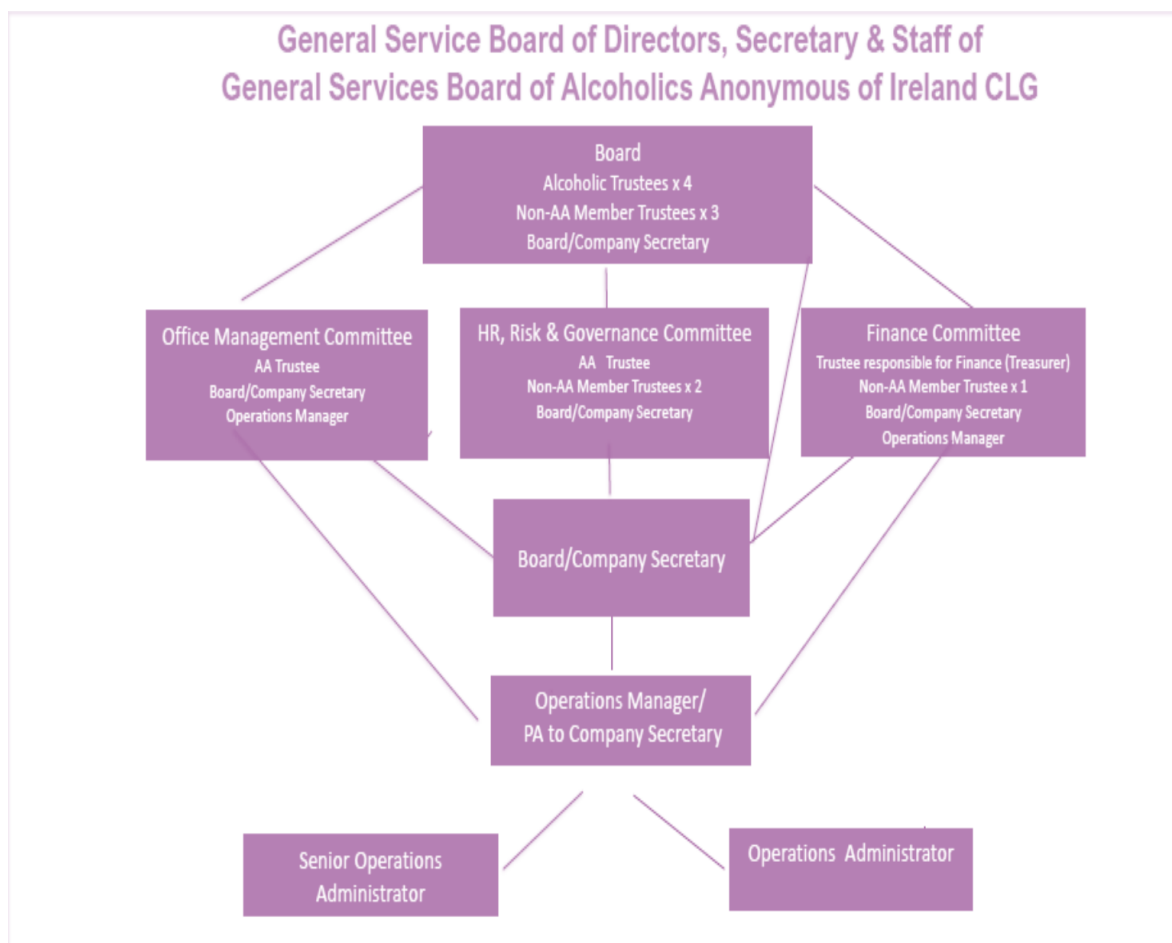
Premises

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG, (GSBAA) is in legal possession of two properties.

These are, the General Service Office (GSO) at Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Dublin 9. This property is held on a 20-year lease, which commenced in January 2007.

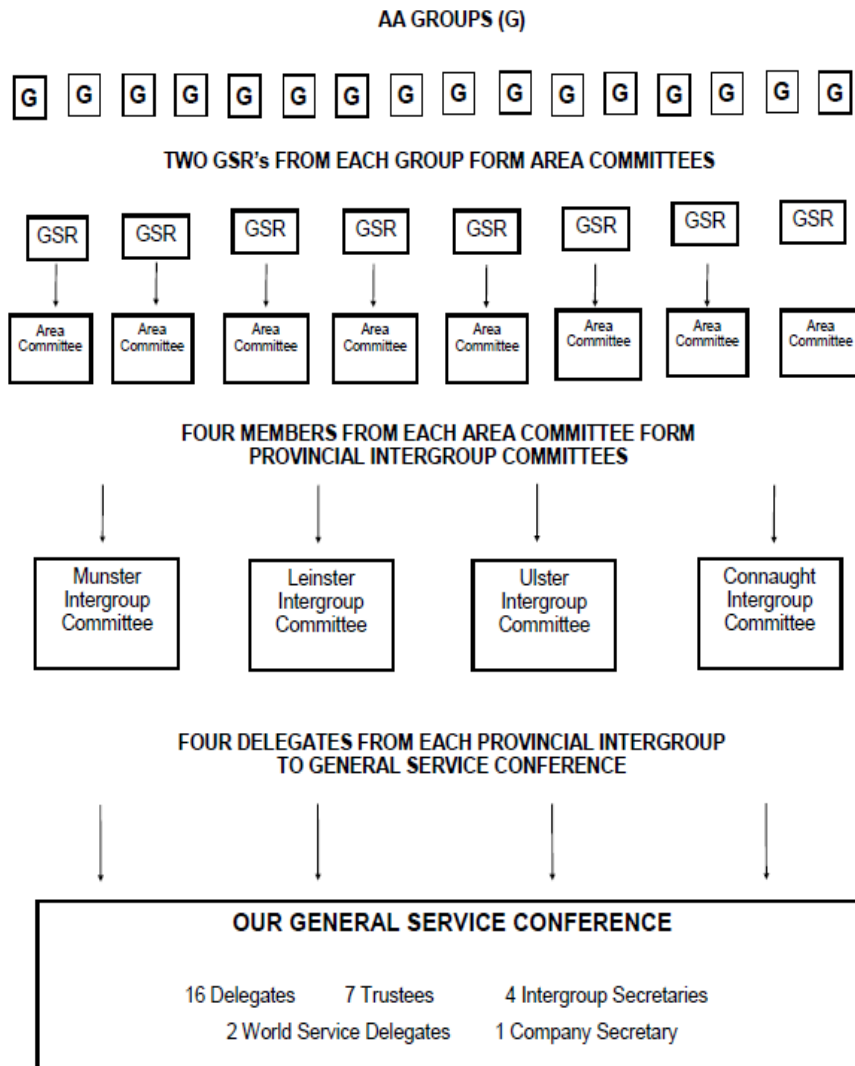
The second property is the Central Service Office, located at Unit 11, North City Business Centre, 2, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GG. This property is held on a one-year renewable agreement.

GSBAA Organisational Chart



Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland

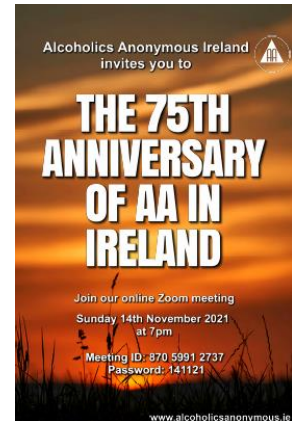
STRUCTURE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN IRELAND



Highlights for 2021

Celebrating 75 Years of AA in Ireland

With the continuing challenges of Covid-19, the GSBAA decided to hold an online Zoom meeting to mark the anniversary of AA being 75 years in Ireland. We had speakers from each of the four provinces sharing their experience strength and hope, combined with many interesting history details about how AA came to be in Ireland. While many groups had arranged their own celebrations to mark the occasion more than 740 visitors popped in to join the occasion.



The Roadback & News Sheet

This year we combined the News Sheet into the Roadback so that our members could have all of the latest information in one publication. We changed the frequency to quarterly to allow us to spend a little more time putting each edition together. In last winter's publication, we changed the theme to be a special 75th Anniversary Edition. We included a history of AA in Ireland, a timeline of notable dates, along with readers stories and much. We also took the opportunity to include reports from September's conference meeting, along with all of the recommendations that were agreed.

Media & Public Information

We continue to respond to all requests from the media for interviews, whether it be in print, television or radio. Additionally this year we have cooperated with our national broadcaster providing props and set help for one of their soaps along with a mini drama series which has recently aired on national TV. We have completed many radio interviews on national and local stations, along with many newspaper interviews. We plan to focus a lot more on National PI this year as we acknowledge that a lot more people will be seeking our services.

Social Media

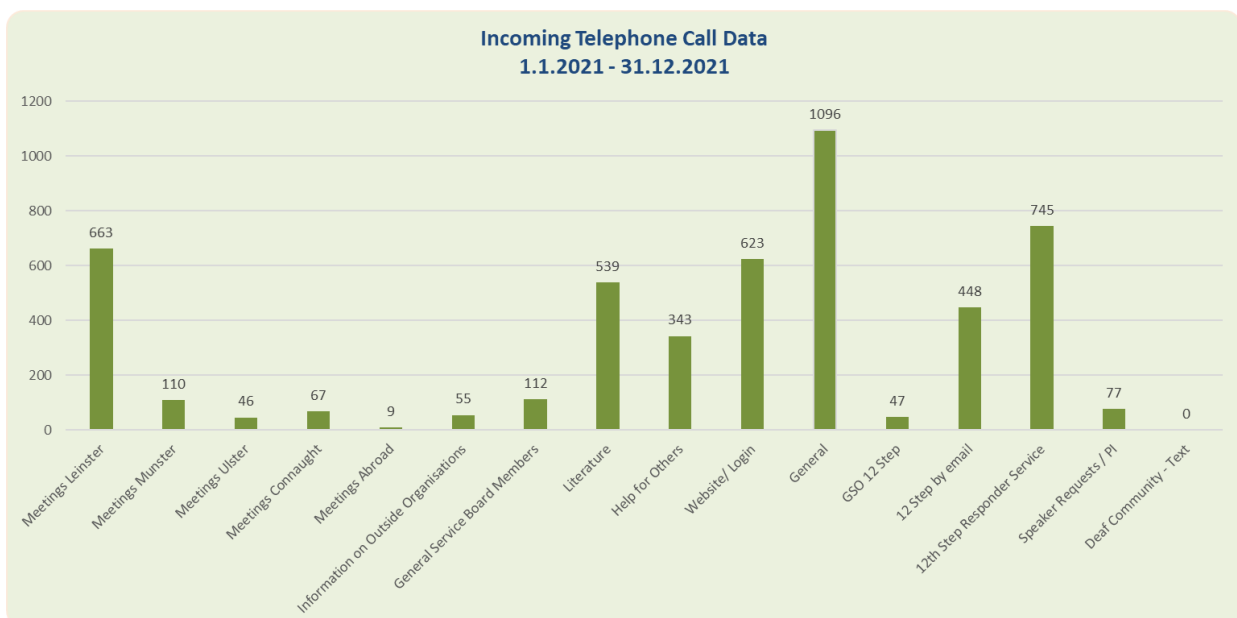
Early in 2021, as a pilot project, we developed a twitter account which went live in the springtime. We tweeted current and useful information regularly to our followers. It is envisioned that this will continue into the future, in the capacity of us pushing information and tweets, rather than an interactive service. We will continue to evaluate other social media platforms for their suitability

General Service Office (GSO)

Throughout this year the pandemic caused considerable challenges to the operations of GSO & GSBAA. While the staff operated from home, the service to members went unhindered. All calls were answered, meeting listings continued to be updated and our website became a critical go to point for the latest HSE guidelines. Information that was provided by the HSE in relation to guidelines for AA meetings was constantly updated. The shop remained closed for physical collections, but online order processing continued without break. The shop has since opened on a part time basis but will reopen fully once HSE endorses a back to work policy.

Phone Service for members through GSO

More and more telephone calls were coming to GSO from new members looking for help with their drinking. The staff are not AA members and while they were willing to answer calls, we found there was an urgency to fill the void. We launched a pilot program, whereby when you ring GSO, you could select an option to talk to an AA member. This was then routed to an AA responder who would try to help. This has been a tremendous success, especially for new members. It has also allowed the staff in GSO to carry on with their principal duties, which in turn provides a much better service to everybody that they deal with, and gives the callers the support that helps them by talking with a fellow alcoholic. These figures are reflected in the graph below.



Finance

When our face to face meetings stopped, so too did the majority of contributions that normally flow through AA. We made a decision to make our 'Contribute' Button on our website much more accessible to all members. Thankfully this was well received and because of members contributions, we were able to operate without dipping into our prudent reserve. Of course, there were many other contributing factors, including a significant cost saving by having our Annual General Conference online. AA meetings, Board meetings, Office management meetings all continued online providing a significant cost saving to the total operating costs.

First Online All-Ireland Convention

During the year, Connaught Intergroup hosted at short notice, the very first All-Ireland Convention online. They overcame many challenges, and in a short time successfully ran an event that attracted hundreds of attendees in a way where the AA message was carried, in a safe and friendly manner.

Coming soon, our new look website: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie



We've been working behind the scenes to update the infrastructure and internals of our website for the past few months. We've invested in a format that will be more cost effective and much easier to maintain going forward. We hope to include many improvements to the website content, how meetings are found and the general look and feel. The shop has been completely revamped, we are putting the finishing touches to the new 'Just for Today'

section, our online 'Big Book' section along with other pamphlets in pdf format. We've removed the need to login for members, and you will be able to submit meeting information much easier. It should also be a lot more useable when using your phone or tablet. We also plan to have a region area for each intergroup.

Financial Information

2021 has been successful from a financial perspective. Contributions from the fellowship amounted to €275,023, an increase of €3,252 over 2020. Similarly, the sale of literature income has increased by €19,144 totalling €71,775. In addition, overheads have decreased as a direct result of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic impact, they continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis and maintained at present levels where possible.

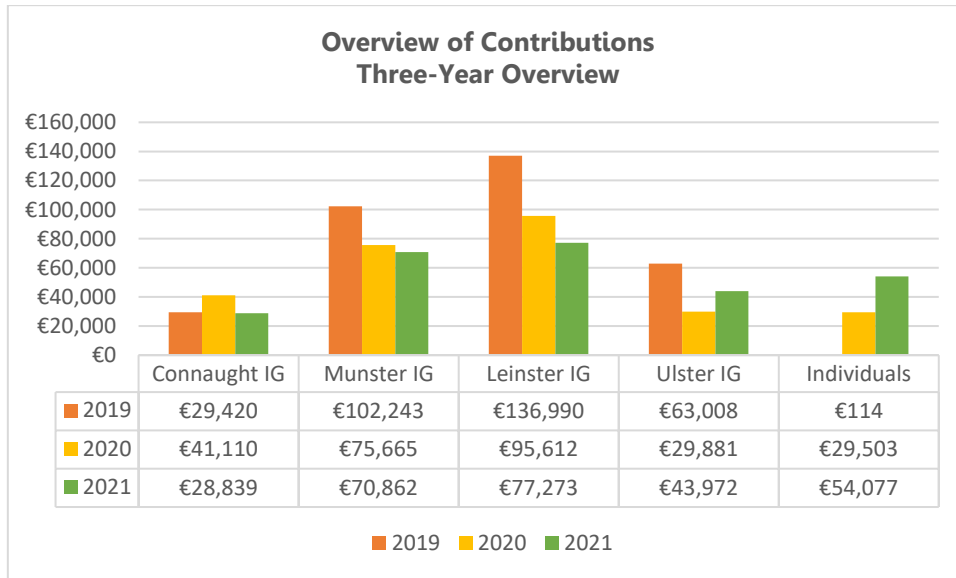
	2019	2020	2021
Contributions	€331,775	€271,770	€275,023
Sale of literature	€106,946	€52,631	€71,775
Sale of Road Back	€2,772	€0.00	€0.00
Annual Convention Surplus	€3,438	€0.00	€0.00
	€444,931	€324,401	€346,798
	2019	2020	2021
Overhead Expenses	€335,362	€314,645	€289,744
Stocks	€47,841	€30,698	€21,407
Debtors	€28,851	€27,490	€30,712

Alcoholics Anonymous remains self-supporting through the contributions of its members, whose generosity permits the General Service Board to serve the fellowship in all its service areas which include maintaining our General Service Office and all its day-to-day operations.

There is no doubt that these are challenging times for the fellowship, due in part to the speed that technology changes and indeed the speed that governmental regulation changes. AA's employees and voluntary Office Management Committee members continue to keep abreast of these changes and implement those that impact the fellowship as this becomes necessary. The resources available to the company are coming back to a more healthy position and it is to be hoped that this will continue in the coming year.

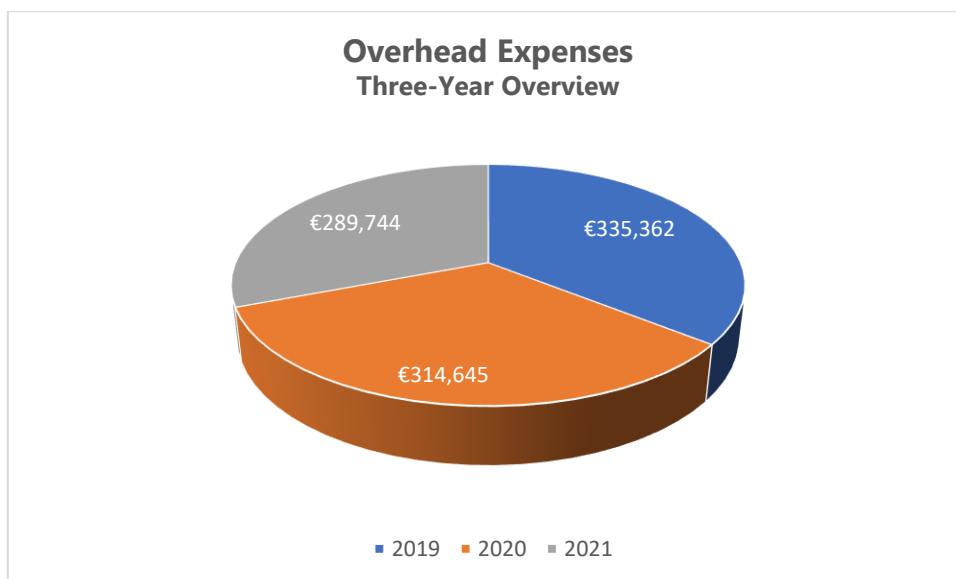
INCOME

The following chart shows the variances in income for the last three financial years.



OVERHEAD EXPENSES

The following chart shows the variances in Overhead Expenses for the last three financial years.



Overview of Audited Accounts for Year Ended 31st October 2021

	2021 Current €	2020 Prior Year €	Variance €
Income			
Sale of Literature	71,775	52,631	19,144
Connaught Contributions	28,839	41,110	-12,271
Munster Contributions	70,862	75,665	-4,803
Leinster Contributions	77,273	95,612	-18,339
Ulster Contributions	43,972	29,881	14,091
Individual Contributions	54,077	29,503	24,574
	<u>346,798</u>	<u>324,402</u>	<u>22,396</u>
Administration costs			
Wages and salaries	124,988	123,498	1,490
Employer's PRSI contributions	13,662	13,599	63
Staff defined contribution pension costs	13,596	13,596	0
Website	8,340	4,744	3,596
European Service Meeting	860	118	742
News Sheet	0	527	-527
Meetings of conference	8,651	14,329	-5,678
Rent payable	30,446	35,626	-5,180
Rates	206	0	206
Insurance	4,084	3,807	277
Disallowed Vat expense	9,181	12,291	-3,110
Light and heat	2,681	3,085	-404
Cleaning	3,069	4,371	-1,302
Premises Expenses	0	928	-928
Board Expenses	20,720	22,508	-1,788
IT & Licencing	13,371	11,323	2,048
Printing and stationery	4,400	3,107	1,293
Postage	1,341	3,672	-2,331
Telephone	5,423	2,758	2,665
Service Contracts	7,507	8,663	-1,156
Archives	377	126	251
Company Compliance Training	1,598	1,100	498
Legal and professional	2,768	15,859	-13,091
Auditor's remuneration	4,770	5,020	-250
Bank charges	3,001	2,335	666
Depreciation of freehold property	4,704	4,704	0
Depreciation on fixtures, fittings and equipment	0	1,770	-1,770
Profits/losses on disposal of tangibles	0	1,181	-1,181
	<u>289,744</u>	<u>314,645</u>	<u>-24,901</u>
Operating profit/(loss)	<u>18,957</u>	<u>-41,802</u>	<u>60,759</u>
Closing Stock	21,407	30,698	-9,291
Debtors	30,712	27,490	3,222
Bank and Cash	510,010	464,554	45,456
Current creditors	25,618	10,520	15,098

Contact Information

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG

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