

2008
ANNUAL REVIEW



INCORPORATING 40TH YEAR
COMMEMORATION POSTER

CEO Statement



“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”, Anton Wallich Clifford told a group of Trinity and UCD students in February 1969, inspiring them to start the first Dublin Simon Soup Run. For 40 years Simon has served people fighting for survival, robbed of humanity and dignity, seen as socially inadequate or isolated, suffering from addictions, mental health issues and unable to cope with life in the 20th Century; all needing nourishment, shelter, acceptance and respect. Despite the promises of move on accommodation and commitments to eradicate homelessness, the necessity for Simon still exists.

During 2008, three reports were compiled and published by the Homeless Agency Partnership, analysing in detail the profile of the homeless population, the system they were stuck in and where money was spent. A broad set of recommendations was submitted to Government, demonstrating the need for adequate provision of housing and supports. This submission formed the basis of the ‘Pathway to Home’ Implementation Plan, emphasising the need for continued collaboration and partnership between Statutory and Voluntary stakeholders to facilitate the transition from “managing” to “ending” long term homelessness and sleeping rough.

40 years since the founding of Dublin Simon we still have people sleeping rough on our city streets every night, and hundreds of people in Emergency Shelters. The actions in “Pathway to Home” place the person at the centre of all our efforts ensuring we prevent homelessness, support people who are homeless and provide housing with supports for people. Our challenges and responsibilities are identified and clear. We must find the energy and courage to deliver and break the cycle of unfulfilled promises.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sam'.

Sam McGuinness **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**



Chairperson's Report



There's no doubt that 2008 was a very challenging year on a number of levels, not least the impact of the deteriorating economic climate both at home and abroad.

Against this background Dublin Simon Community has proven itself to be resilient and positive in its determination to continue meeting the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. The challenges of providing the comprehensive range of services which we do stretched all our resources; human, physical and financial. However, through the determined and consistent efforts Dublin Simon Community continues to be a powerhouse in meeting these many challenges.

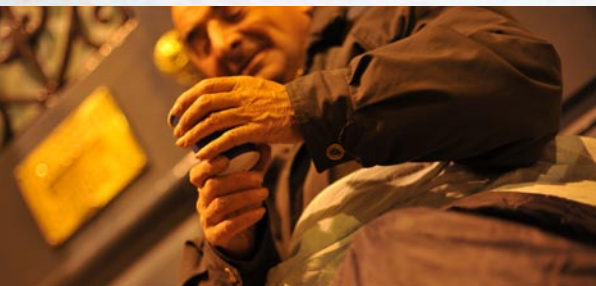
Throughout the Board has provided its support and guidance to the organisation to assist it in meeting its targets and achieving its potential.

During the year a significant amount of consultation amongst all our stakeholders was conducted and preparatory work completed for the drafting of the organisation's next Strategic Plan 2009 – 2011. This plan will also be informed by the Government's new homeless strategy entitled "The Way Home" in which it's envisaged that long term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated by 2010. The partnership approach taken by Dublin Simon Community in its role in tackling homelessness is a very constructive and welcome one.

In 2009 Dublin Simon Community celebrates its 40th anniversary. There is so much we can be proud of in our efforts and achievements in helping to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that we will commemorate the tremendous contributions made by volunteers, staff, donors and funders throughout the years.

Dympna

Dympna Dolan **CHAIRPERSON**



Focusing on What Works Best

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 - 2011

In 2008, following extensive consultation within the organisation Dublin Simon Community created its new three year strategic plan from 2009 until the end of 2011. Taking into consideration the changes in infrastructure to the homeless services in Dublin and the needs of people accessing our services the three objectives of the new plan are:

- 1. Provide leadership in the re-structuring and consolidation of our homeless services to ensure that the maximum experience of homelessness is six months.**
- 2. Provide a range of high quality, effective homeless and housing support services to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.**
- 3. Be a sustainable organisation, attracting resources and supporting service users/staff/volunteers to reach their full potential.**

To achieve these Dublin Simon will continue to develop and expand its street outreach team helping increase the understanding of the rough sleeping population and providing proper and appropriate good quality sheltered accommodation.

Dublin Simon will also address the need of having local services in local communities so that its homeless services are not solely concentrated in the city but accessible to people in their local areas.

We will provide opportunities to our staff and service users to develop their skills so that the service we provide improves over the three years.

Throughout all the above we will work other local authorities and the Health Service Executive, and will monitor the progress of the Plan so that we are focused on achieving our aims and providing quality services that are effective in reducing the homeless population of Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow.



Services Development in 2008

RESETTLEMENT AND TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

Providing move on, prevention and sustainment to individuals in tenancies these services worked on over 380 cases in 2008. Overall 90% of cases were successfully closed with individuals sourcing appropriate accommodation for their needs and receiving the support they require to maintain it.

Many of the cases throughout 2008 were referred to the services by both local authority and local services for individuals whom they were concerned about because they are unable to manage budgets or growing addiction presenting in the household.

ROUGH SLEEPING TEAM EXPAND SERVICES

In 2008 the Rough Sleeper Team worked with over 1100 individuals who were seeking accommodation or referral and access to other services. The provision of an out of hours Needle Exchange and Information service also had a significant impact on the work of the team and proved to be a valuable tool for engaging individuals they encountered sleeping rough. This service worked with over 500 people in 2008.

To enhance the service further Volunteers now assist the Rough Sleeper Team on street searches, accompany individuals to accommodation and provide information of services available.



Services Development in 2008

DUBLIN SIMON PROVIDES 28 NEW BEDS TO ROUGH SLEEPERS IN 2008

ISLAND HOUSE

Throughout the year a need was identified to increase the capacity of emergency accommodation in Dublin City. In conjunction with Dublin City Council, Dublin Simon opened a 17 bed low threshold night shelter in Island House. This shelter opened in June, reaching and maintaining 96% occupancy since. The service has been a success in reducing the need for people to sleep rough while also assisting the move-on of individuals to more appropriate services. This service continues to operate in 2009.

DUN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN NIGHT SHELTER

In partnership with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council a night only shelter was opened in February 2008 as part of the cold weather strategy. Through working closely together and assessing the needs of service users the service was extended to stay open until lunch time in September. This extension allows for increased referrals to more appropriate local accommodation, nursing intervention on site as well as links to learning and development and other mainstream services. This service operates a very active social programme which is carried out with the help of full-time Volunteers.



Services Development in 2008

SERVICE USER PARTICIPATION

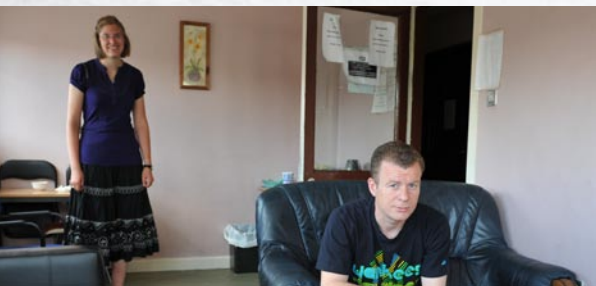
SUSS (Service User's Support Service) continued throughout 2008 with fortnightly meetings. Staff and service users were represented from rehab, Harcourt St., Sean Mac, Canal Road, North Circular Road and Tenancy Sustainment. During the year the SUSS newsletter was successfully published and Dundalk Service User Participation Group visited for a day to exchange ideas. Both groups met for a morning session to discuss initiatives that they have been involved in to date and to share information on what has worked and where there have been challenges.

Also ongoing throughout the year were the establishment of exit interviews for service users, promotion of SUSS, review of key working contracts, input into complaints policy and a service user satisfaction survey. Work continues on developing structures to enable service users access volunteer opportunities and on identifying opportunities with FEANTSA for trans-national projects.

VOLUNTEER NUMBERS INCREASE

The number of full time volunteers increased from 11 to 23 in 2008. Throughout the year over 200 part-time volunteers also worked throughout the Community. A highlight of the year was the establishment of a Dublin Institute of Technology certificate for volunteering – the first course of its kind for volunteerism and recognised throughout Europe.

The Volunteer office also secured 'European Volunteer Service (EVS) Youth Pass' funding for the year. These placements bring a wealth of diversity to the organisation, keeping with our volunteering ethos.



Services Development in 2008

TREATMENT SERVICES WORK WITH OVER 200 CASES

In 2008 111 individuals, mainly rough sleepers, accessed the Dublin Simon Community alcohol medical detoxification unit, specifically for homeless persons. Service Users spend up to 21 days in this programme and receive 24 hour medical care (visiting GP and Nurse on duty 24hours a day). This unit increased from 8 beds to 9 in 2008 with the support of funding from ESB Electric Aid and will look to increase further to 11 beds in 2009.

DSC also provides a safe supportive residential addiction rehabilitation unit for 11 homeless persons for a 3 month duration. 53 individuals were resident in the service this year.

Following the 3 month duration in residential rehabilitation, service users are supported by DSC Addiction Support workers in an aftercare programme. The aftercare programme is twofold, providing addiction support and aftercare accommodation for service users who need accommodation and providing addiction support for those who are accommodated elsewhere in the homeless services and who are endeavouring to move out of homelessness. The Aftercare service worked with over 70 people during the year.

STATS OVERVIEW 2008

SERVICE	NUMBER ACCESSING SERVICE	NEW TO SERVICE IN 08
Rough Sleeper Team	1159	941
Harcourt St. Emergency	199	149
Eblana Hse Emergency	52	38
Island Hse Emergency	130	130
Dorset St. Transitional	19	6
Hazelwood Hse, Low Support	19	0
North Circular Rd. High Support	28	7
Sean McDermott St. High Support	24	4
Detox	111	56
Rehab	53	33
Aftercare	73	46
Resettlement	170	120
DCTS	213	94
Learning & Development	131	99

Fundraising

Due to the continued growth in demand for our services amid an unstable economic climate, 2008 saw the fundraising team at Dublin Simon face one of its biggest challenges to date. Fundraising income is vital so that Dublin Simon can continue to maintain existing services throughout the year. Thankfully, through hard work and dedication the team raised over €3.3 million. This could not have been done without the support of our donors, individuals, community groups and businesses. To everyone who has helped us provide our vital services throughout 2008, thank you.

In 2008 we had a variety of fundraising events and campaigns including;

- Hikes - Climbing Kilimanjaro & Trekking Patagonia.
- The 25th Anniversary of our 5 mile Fun Run in the Phoenix Park.
- Direct Mail '08 – Thank you for your overwhelming support!
- The Longest Night – The 21st of December saw us launch our 24 hour Carol Singing event on Grafton Street, and musical gig in the Button Factory.
- Church Gate Collections – We increased the number of Church Gate Collections within the Dublin area and are extremely grateful for the support of the various Churches and the volunteers who made it possible.
- Carol Singing – Singers throughout Dublin, Wicklow & Kildare sang their hearts out for Simon.
- Coast to Coast – A group of hardy walks took on the mammoth task of walking 188 miles from Dublin to Newport along the beautiful canal route and being lead by Irish Writer John Mulligan.
- House of Cards – A big thank you to the Irish Times for their continued support of this campaign which marked its 10th year in 2008. We would also like to thank all the Irish Companies for making this appeal so successful.
- Numerous other events organised externally by Dublin Simon Supporters, such as Simon Survival Challenge, Simon Poker Challenge, 24 Footie Match, Marathons, Table Quizzes, Golf Classics, Bridge and Community Clubs, local bucket collections and everything else!
- We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our corporate partners for all their support in 2008. There are so many that we can not list them all but they have provided funding, food for our projects, staff volunteering & holding events – we look forward to your continued support.



A black and white portrait of an older man with a full, grey beard and mustache. He is wearing round, thin-rimmed glasses and a dark, high-collared coat. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and beard, and deep shadows on the right side of his face and in the background. The background is dark and textured.

Living with loneliness

In memory of forty years of Dublin Simon and Anton Wallich-Clifford we are repeating an extract from an interview given by Anton Wallich-Clifford during his lifetime when he talked about himself and the people he worked with. It was entitled LIVING WITH LONELINESS, extracts of which were published in the March/April and May 1981 issue of Link.

COULD YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR LIFE PRIOR TO THE FOUNDING OF THE SIMON COMMUNITY?

I had a normal British background. Lost my father at eighteen months and was brought up in a strongly Catholic atmosphere. I always believed that I had a vocation so I joined the Capuchins. Then, with the start of the war I thought that I should get involved, so I joined the R.A.F and saw action at home and abroad. After the war I asked myself whether I had to 'turn my collar around' – whether I couldn't in fact be a pastoral, caring person in a lay capacity? So I decided to stay out of the seminary for a year and did some freelance writing. During that time I still felt that I hadn't made my mind up, so I drifted into social work and have been involved in it now for almost twenty-eight years.

Business

YOU WORKED AS PROBATION OFFICER FOR SOME TIME?

Yes, I gave myself what I call 'my apprenticeship'. Because I had had such a cloistered background I felt that I hadn't the maturity that the job required. I needed to learn about life. After doing some youth work, I did social work in the Approved School Service and then applied for Probation service. During my eight years with them, I served in the Juvenile Courts, then in the normal Magistrates Courts – all the time becoming more involved in the problems of the Homeless. I was allowed great liberty to experiment and so I took on London as my parish. Wherever there was a hostel for the homeless and the rootless, I worked with them and for them.

DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS YOU HAVE WORKED WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE 'OPTED OUT' OF SOCIETY FOR MANY REASONS. HOW GREAT A PART DID LONELINESS PLAY IN THEIR LIVES?

My own personal belief is that loneliness is the causal factor, the greatest social cancer of our age. The precipitating factor might be alcoholism or drug addiction. It might even be criminology or some form of mental breakdown. But these are only precipitating factors. I see loneliness in the big cities, in 'bed-sitter land', in offices and so forth. I see it at all levels.

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME 'SOCIAL INADEQUATES'?

'Social inadequates', or 'social isolation', is only another jargonised term for loneliness. It means you haven't in yourself the ability to easily make relationships, certainly not lasting ones. You've experienced transitory relationships in a home, probably a broken home, or maybe a borstal or orphanage. All the time you're being pushed in on yourself, you don't relate to society, so when these other precipitating factors take over, it's much easier for you to drop down, down to the very bottom of the ladder. And that's why I think social workers, priests and magistrates 'miss the boat' so often. They say, 'look at the chances we've given you. You've come out of prison, you've got somewhere to live, why don't you stand on your own two feet and go get a job?' And all the time, all that's really happening is that they, the ex-prisoners, dropouts, and so on, are being condemned back to that loneliness. Sometimes the social workers don't realise that by getting a job they are putting you in a position where you have workmates by day but what happens at night when you go back to the loneliness of your room? You're going to buy companionship, aren't you? Going down to the pub, buying friendship for the price of a beer. Sooner or later you're hooked and end up back in prison.

THE CAMPFIRE DIDN'T REMOVE INDIVIDUAL LONELINESS?

No. And it could never remove the final one. They always died alone, away from the group, in some derelict house.

WE'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT LONELINESS. IN YOUR LIFE, HAVE YOU AT SOME STAGE EXPERIENCED IT?

I made a commitment to a particular way of life. Over the years this has meant that I have desocialised myself. When I was a probation officer I had money in my pocket. I could buy my own clothes, I could take a girl out for a meal. I could do all these things as an independent, allegedly

“...within myself I think I am now as socially inadequate as those with whom I work and I have to try and meet that inadequacy.”

adequate being. Now I have got used to a coarse way of life in which four letter words are the order of the day. When you get involved in this you reach a stage where you find first of all that you don't read as much, or if you do you tend to read only those works which are connected with your field of interest. So already you are narrowing your mind.

“...I'm bursting

You stop going to the cinema, to the theatre. You're working with a group where you're not going to get the same intellectual stimulus that you had before, where the level of conversation may in fact for days on end, revolve around drink and sex. When I say that the dirt rubs off, what I mean is that gradually you become one of those awful bores who can only talk shop. I only come alive when I'm talking shop. I find its very hard now, to go into a pub and talk about

football, or theatre, because its not my world. And I have to sit silently. I don't make conversation any more easily as I used to. I find that I am trapped inside myself. Particularly when you carry on your shoulders the responsibilities of being a trustee or a director, or even as a consultative, means inevitably that when you arrive in a house you are mentally carrying on your shoulders a Brigadier General's pips. And therefore you bring your own pressures and you also bring your own loneliness, because everyone is mentally jumping to attention, or saying we better get all these problems on to him quickly and ask his advice about this. And they are isolating you. You're isolating yourself. The man at the top, that is where the buck stops. That's the lonely man. And so these are lonelinesses that I've had to experience. But within myself I think I am now as socially inadequate as those with whom I work and I have to try and meet that inadequacy.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOMENT OF GREATEST LONELINESS?

I would say on at least three occasions when my depressions took me into what people have come to call my really black depressions. When I find that I really can't communicate at all. There's no-one...I'm bursting to say things...My mind is going 'round nineteen to the dozen'. I can't talk to my wife. I can't say 'let's sit down and have a chat'. I think I'm a bad father and a bad husband. I don't relate as easily anymore. And there's no-one else I can talk to. And then I think there's someone in London and I say 'shall I go up to London to see John Morrison – an old friend of mine?'. Sometimes I do..Or to Mary Hamilton's – an ex colleague...But those times when I can't make that move anymore, when I can't even work up the energy to go to someone and communicate ... that's three days spent completely within myself. This has happened on three occasions. One just recently

Extracts from an interview with the late **Anton Wallich-Clifford**, founder of the Simon Community.

IN A WAY YOU ARE A VICTIM OF YOUR OWN ENTHUSIASM?

Absolutely. I'm certain of this, and I have discussed this with my psychiatrist. Would I admit being under a psychiatrist? Quite happily had I been the man I was before. Now I admit it because I need case work. Before I had natural case workers around me, who if I had a bad day in court, would say, 'come on Anton, you've had a bad day, let's have a beer and chat about it'. 'But you see now I haven't got a peer group, so I quite happily admit that I've got a psychiatrist, because I need someone to case-work me.

to say things. ”

MOST OF US HAVE COME TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS WINOS AND SO ON FROM SALLY TRENCH'S BOOK, 'BURY ME IN MY BOOTS'. DID YOU KNOW SALLY?

Oh, yes indeed. We were engaged to be married. I was and am very much in love with Sally, because we are absolutely on the same level, intellectually and spiritually. And we've had this tremendous relationship which has withstood all the pressures and tensions. In '65 we worked closely together in Simon. We did talks together, we were turned off by the police fuzz from Waterloo station, with our hands behind our backs and told as bums to 'get off'. At the moment she's living in London running an experimental project for truant children. But she's essentially giving service, she's still herself.

“...what we are trying to do is spread this influence. It's not just committing ourselves but everyone who helps.”

HAMMARSKJOLD SAID, 'PRAY THAT YOUR LONELINESS MAY SPUR YOU INTO FINDING SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR, GREAT ENOUGH TO DIE FOR.' ANY COMMENT?

That's something I'd love to live up to. It's the kind of thing I have as my aim because I'm certain that in everything we're trying to do in our movement, we're trying to recognise the needs of others in our involvement with them. And if we recognise our own loneliness, then we can say that what we are doing is worth our full commitment. Unlike lots of charities, we never let people off the hook. They think they can escape by just signing a cheque. Once they send us money then we send them a Newsletter which personally talks about people in community in an attempt to get them involved. Okay, you can say it means another cheque next year, but what we are trying to do is spread this influence. It's not just committing ourselves but everyone who helps. And surely this is worth trying for... worth dying for.

BEING HOMELESS IS HARD FOR ME.
SLEEPING IN ALLEYS AND DOORWAYS IS
NOT HEALTHY FOR ME, COULD YOU PLEASE
LOOK IN YOUR HEARTS AND SEE AND SPARE
AND

THANK
YOU GOD
FOR ALL







Photographs by Paulo Nunes Santos
(Except page 8 and where indicated)



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