



Athnuachan

Branch Renewal

CLÁR

1	Teachtaireacht ó Ardrúnaí CCÉ	2
2	Teachtaireacht ó Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ	3
3	Teachtaireacht ó Uachtarán CCÉ	4
4	CCÉ – Cad é • Who we are	5





TEACHTAIREACHT Ó ARDRÚNAÍ CCÉ

TOMÁS Ó MAOLDOMHNAIGH

Since its foundation in 1951, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann has been central to the preservation and propagation of all

aspects of national identity and culture, particularly our native music, song and dance traditions. Irish, our native language, is afforded a special status in Comhaltas and the movement is unreservedly committed to its promotion.

We can proudly state, at this juncture seventy years later, that what has been achieved has been outstanding in world terms. Our living cultural traditions are often favourably commented on by other nations and are the envy of many who are considering how to preserve their own native traditions.

The central role of the Branch in our work and achievements can never be downplayed or diminished. Tá ardmholadh tuilte ag gach duine sa Chomhaltas – oifigigh agus baill – as ucht an méid oibre agus díogras atá le feiceáil thar na blianta agus gabhaim buíochas libh ar fad.

The BUNREACHT states: 'The Branch is the fundamental and most important unit of the Comhaltas movement. It is the Branch which makes it possible for our native cultural characteristics to be propagated and strengthened in the community.'

Active and committed branches add greatly to success at all levels – strong leadership at county, provincial and nationally enhances and strengthens the aims and objectives as identified and proposed by our founders

in 1951. The impact of Comhaltas in the community, the music standards being achieved at fleadhanna, in concert performances, at festivals, on television and on radio – all of these are the result of quality teaching and mentoring by branches over the years and will continue to improve and impact our national identity into the future.

I wish to acknowledge the continued voluntary inputs from so many branch personnel who have shown admirable leadership and attention to achieving these aims and objectives.

As we plan ahead over the coming years and design new innovation in our education programmes to reach out to larger audiences, especially our young people, (who have a right to experience the wealth and intrinsic value of our native traditions), we cannot forget the importance of 'best practice' in how we carry out our duties as elected officers.

This publication aims to assist all officers in achieving 'best practice'. Athnuachan – Branch Renewal will assist and guide officers in achieving our aims and objectives as outlined.

Mar a deir an seanfhocal, 'ní neart go cur le chéile' – unity is strength. Let us together revitalize our branches and continue to protect and share our mission with all our people including the vast numbers of 'new' Irish who have come to our shores. Beirigí bua is beannacht.





RÉAMHRÁ Ó ARDSTIÚRTHÓIR CCÉ AN DR LABHRÁS Ó MURCHÚ

ATHNUACHAN signals renewal which in a post-pandemic era will be at the heart of the Comhaltas cultural movement. Through

imaginative and innovative programmes, we will expand, energise and enhance our unique cultural mission.

The branch is the bedrock of Comhaltas which reflects our role in the community and in turn is the nursery of our cultural traditions. The branch is the mirror of a community's aspirations which include a sense of place, nation and tradition.

Le breis agus seachtó bliain, tá Comhaltas Ceiltóirí Éireann ag saothrú an chultúir Ghaelaigh in Éirinn agus ar fud na cruinne. Tá an chraobh lárnach san gaisce agus saothar seo. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

This ATHNUACHAN booklet is a guide and aid to help the branch achieve its full potential. In the hands of those with leadership qualities and ideals, this booklet can assist the branch to harvest the best qualities for maximum outcomes.

The ATHNUACHAN booklet is more than a reference document. It can be used as a training aid – a measurement of progress and potential – for all the members. It will be an essential element of the ATHNUACHAN programme over the coming decades. As we do now in the present era, future generations will appraise how we overcame the challenges and harvested the opportunities on the road to securing and embellishing our cultural traditions.

Comhaltas is the beneficiary of a legacy from those who have gone before us. You know of them. They have been the visionaries, initiators, innovators and doers. To-day, we see the fruits of their endeavours at the classes, sessions, concerts and Fleadhanna. We see the fruits of their steadfastness and creativity over the decades. Even in the most difficult of times, they nurtured the seed to ensure that we would have an abundant cultural harvest. They have passed the flame to a new generation.

Buail an t-iarann fad is atá sé te. Dúthracht is dícheall a thugann fairsing go fial. Tá ré nua in ann dúinn agus is féidir linn bheith i lár an aonaigh sa bhaile agus thar lear. Cuir luath agus bain luath. Táimid ag braith ar an gcraobh agus cinnireacht na craoibhe. Bí linn ar an ród seo.





FOCAL Ó UACHTARÁN CCÉ ÉAMONN Ó hARGÁIN

Tá áthas orm mar Uachtarán Chomhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann fáilte a chuir roimh an treoirleabhar tábhachtach seo,

Athnuachan – Branch Renewal. Agus COVID-19 beagnach taobh thiar dúinn tá tábhacht ar leith leis an treoirleabhar mar acmhainn luachmhar d'oifigigh an Chomhaltais agus muid ag ullmhú don toadhchá.

Much of the success of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann can be credited to those who hold office at various levels of the organisation on a voluntary basis. As we celebrate our 70th. anniversary Comhaltas has never been more successful, and this is due to the many thousands of people who on a daily basis keep the wheels turning. We owe this to the people who came together in Mullingar in 1951 and took on the challenge of reversing the fortunes of Ireland's rich cultural traditions.

This guidebook is a valuable source for office holders and for potential office holders at all levels of Comhaltas and sits alongside other Comhaltas resources that shape our organisation.

The guidebook will provide a one-stop source of information for office holders. There has never been a more appropriate time to introduce these guidelines for Comhaltas units on the island of Ireland and abroad, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic after two years.

All Comhaltas units at various levels will be as active or as inactive as we the members want them to be. Therefore, it's vital that every assistance be provided to Comhaltas office holders to assist you in your very important work in building and developing the organisation at all levels.

Good practice in volunteer management is key to unlocking the potential of volunteering in Comhaltas. The guidelines in this guidedbook provide an introduction to the key principles of good practice in Comhaltas and how to apply them to your unit.

The handbook aims at having well-trained and developed voluntary officers which will provide quality services to your members and to the public in general. The guidelines are a critical ingredient to planning, service delivery and to achieving Comhaltas outcomes.

As a cultural movement, Comhaltas is dependent on its volunteers at all levels for the precise application of knowledge and skills in promoting Ireland's rich cultural traditions. There is therefore a greater need for training and development initiatives to equip Comhaltas officers with new and relevant skills to deliver services.

Tá mé cinnte go mbeidh an lámhleabhar seo ina chabhair iontach d'oifigigh an Chomhaltais ag gach leibhéal agus go mbeidh toradh ar ár gcuid oibre dá réir.





CCÉ – CAD É • WHO WE ARE

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is the largest group involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music. We're a non-profit cultural movement with hundreds of local branches around the world, and as you can read in our history we've been working for the cause of Irish music since the middle of the last century (1951 to be precise). Our efforts continue with increasing zeal as the movement celebrates 70-plus years of excellence and makes plans for the future.

AN CHRAOBH • THE BRANCH

The Branch is the fundamental and most important unit of the Comhaltas movement. It is the Branch which makes it possible for our native cultural characteristics to be propagated and strengthened in the community. The formation of a branch is a relatively simple task along the following lines and in accordance with the Bunreacht:

- (a) Notify the County or Regional Board of your intention and obtain permission for same
- (b) Call a meeting of all those interested in the movement and invite the County or Regional Board to send a representative
- (c) Elect the required officers, collect the membership fees and make the required returns, including Ciste payment, to the County or Regional Board. (Please note, the Ciste payment is not required for the first year of a new branch.)
- (d) The County or Regional Board will assist the Branch in planning a programme of activities, and will generally advise the branch on matters relating to Comhaltas
- (e) After formation, the Branch will fully involve itself in County or Regional Board affairs.

AIDHMEANNA AGUS CUSPÓIRÍ • AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- (a) To promote Irish traditional music in all its forms
- (b) To restore the playing of the harp and uilleann pipes in the national life of Ireland
- (c) To promote Irish traditional dancing

- (d) To promote and foster traditional singing in both Irish and English
- (e) To foster and promote the Irish language at all times
- (f) To create a closer bond among all lovers of Irish music
- (g) To co-operate with all bodies working for the restoration of Irish culture
- (h) To establish Branches throughout the country and abroad to achieve the foregoing aims and objectives.

OUR VISION, OUR VALUES, OUR MISSION, AND OUR ETHOS are guided by many principles:

- The essence of our movement, as we interpret it, is that it is all-embracing and inclusive of everyone regardless of race, religion, or ability.
- The core values of our services have always been underpinned by honesty, openness, fairness, recognition of the dignity and humanity of each person, free from harassment, anti-sectarian and anti-racist.
- We believe in the intrinsic value of every person, and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our movement.
- We want each individual to avail of opportunities for self expression in the pursuit of traditional music, song, dance and language.
- We promote inclusivity, equal opportunity for all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief or lack thereof, race, ethnicity or nationality.





CAD A DHÉANAIMID • WHAT WE DO

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann has often been likened to a tree, and just as a tree depends on its roots for growth, so Comhaltas is dependent on its roots — the branches throughout the world — for its life's blood. For that reason, it is most important that all branches are vibrant and active units of the organisation. The active branch shows leadership, has good public relations and is active in the community. The branch also needs to develop growth in the digital environment to be more efficient and effective.

The **branch of the future** considers the following:

- Creating a positive environment
- Online systems – fast, easy, secure
- Integrate people, process, and technology
- Understand data needed
- Learn from the past
- Take a strategic approach.

CUR CHUIGE • HOW WE DO IT

TREOIR • LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. The five main leadership skills are:

- Self-development
- Team development
- Strategic thinking and acting
- Ethical practice
- Innovation.

Any organisation is only as strong as the leadership given to it by its officers, and Comhaltas is no exception. Let us ensure that at the inaugural meeting of the Branch, or at the Annual General Meeting of the Branch, we elect officers who will provide such leadership skills. Let us therefore ensure that the A.G.M. is not confined to five members. Encourage the parents/guardians of those who are enrolled in the classes to join. Let them know that Comhaltas would welcome them and that Comhaltas can afford them the opportunity to work towards their ideals. If we succeed in getting these people to a meeting, our chances of getting suitable officers are considerably improved. Let us bear in mind

that we should never propose somebody for office just because he/she is sitting nearby, or is a neighbour, or is a popular character. Very often we elect people to office who already hold office in several other organisations, and who therefore may be unable to cope with the extra duties. Before proposing somebody ensure that:

- He/she is suited to the office in question.
- He/she has sufficient interest in the aims and objectives of Comhaltas to motivate him/her to carry out the duties of the office.
- He/she has the time to carry out such duties.

OIFIGIGH • OFFICERS

CATHAOIRLEACH

The Cathaoirleach is responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the Bunreacht and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. The Cathaoirleach must make the most of all his/her committee members, building and leading the team. The Cathaoirleach is one of the cornerstones of the unit and is responsible for the efficient working of that branch.

- The Cathaoirleach controls the meeting.
- Inspires confidence in its members.
- Must use initiative and leadership.
- Must be familiar with the philosophy, aims and objectives, and structure of the organisation.
- Must be familiar with procedure of meetings and rules of debate.
- Must steer the business of the meeting with patience, perseverance, persuasiveness, fairness and tactfulness.
- Should discuss the Agenda with the Rúnai prior to the meeting and stick to this agenda.
- Should ensure that the meeting commences on time and does not drag to a late hour.
- Should keep speakers to the point, and ensure that the discussion does not get personal, or that individuals not present to defend themselves are subject to accusation.
- Should clarify motions if a vote needs to be taken.





- Should ensure that decisions taken are implemented.
- Should assist other officers in the course of their duties and consult with them between meetings.

LEASCHATHAOIRLEACH

The Leaschathaoirleach should make himself/herself familiar with the duties of the office of the Cathaoirleach, and be prepared to act in the absence of the Cathaoirleach. It is recommended that the Cathaoirleach should, from time to time, allocate some duties and specific projects to his/her deputy.

RÚNAÍ • SECRETARY

The position of Rúnaí is one of the vital links in any organisation. The duties attached to this office are many and varied and call for a high degree of dedication. The Rúnaí should be a good organiser, methodical, tactful and above all reliable. With the Cathaoirleach and other officers, the Rúnaí is part of a team and is vital to the success of the branch. Among the many duties of a Rúnaí are:

- In consultation with the Cathaoirleach, prepare the agenda for meetings and notify officers and members of such meetings at least seven days in advance.
- Create a minute of each meeting. Minutes are a brief, general and accurate record of the business transacted at a meeting. Included should be a record of the attendance, the names of the proposer and seconder of all motions, the record of voting on such motions, as well as details of major contributions to the debate.
- Reply to all correspondence received. If the nature of the correspondence is such that it has to be placed before the next meeting, an acknowledgement should be sent, with a note to the effect that the matter will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Keep an up-to-date list of members – Family, Senior and Junior – affiliated for the current

year. All registrations should be in Gaeilge, as far as possible. (A copy of *Sloinnte Uile Éireann* by Seán de Bhulbh will assist here).

- Membership and registration of the Branch is done via <https://admin.comhaltas.ie>. The Rúnaí must ensure they are up-to-date with any changes or developments to this site.
- Prepare an annual report, giving details of the year's activities, and circulate copies to fellow officers and members, and to the Co. Board.
- Keep P.R.O. informed of all forthcoming events, as well as results of competitions etc. to ensure that they receive the maximum publicity.
- Notify County Board/Regional delegates of all meetings seven days in advance.

MOLADH I dTAOBH MIONTUAIRSCÍ • PROTOCOL IN RELATION TO REPORTS AND MINUTES

Occasionally it is good practice to remind ourselves of the protocols relating to both Minutes and Reports and we understand that both are very different from one another.

MIONTUAIRISCÍ • MINUTES

- Minutes are the official written record of the meetings of an organization or group. They are not transcripts of those proceedings.
- They highlight the key issues that are discussed, motions proposed or voted on, and activities to be undertaken.
- Often minutes record the start of a process, the progress or the conclusion or final decision.
- Some issues under consideration are noted as being 'confidential' for a variety of reasons – the content may be sensitive or the matters under consideration have not been concluded at that particular time.
- The unit should assume the minutes are confidential to that particular unit.
- They should also realize that, sooner or later, the minutes or part thereof, may be made public or disclosed in litigation.



- Minutes of any CCÉ Unit are confidential to the unit in question and should not be shared with a subordinate unit.
- Minutes are formally proposed and seconded from the floor and then signed and dated by the Cathaoirleach.

TUAIRISCÍ • REPORTS

- Reports are documents that are the decisions arrived at by a committee or show the most up-to-date progress on issues.
- Reports are important to provide information on issues and should be shared with the members.
- Ardchomhairle has adopted the sharing of reports from many different sub-committees and recommend that these reports (having been adopted by the Ardchomhairle) are widely shared among Comhaltas units.
- We recommend that the Buanchóiste Report is read in full and expanded on by delegates at subsequent Provincial, County/Regional Board and Branch meetings as soon as possible after the Ardchomhairle meeting.

CISTEOIR • TREASURER

The Treasurer is at all times responsible to fellow officers and members for the financial affairs of the Branch. The Treasurer's main duties are to

- Receive and record all monies acquired by the Branch.
- Lodge all monies received in a Bank Account agreed by the Branch.
- Record all payments made from Branch finances.
- Be in a position to give the current financial position of the Branch at each meeting.
- Prepare a Financial Statement at least two weeks prior to the Branch AGM and submit it to the Auditor for scrutiny and signature. Present a copy of it to each Officer and member at the AGM, in accordance with the Bunreacht.

- The Financial Statement should be entered into the online membership website, then printed and signed by the treasurer and the auditor. Three copies are sent to the County Board.
- Devise ways and means of augmenting the finances of the Branch.
- It is suggested that a Treasurer should have a: General Cash Book and Petty Cash Book.
- For the General Cash Book it is recommended that either an Analysis Book or Computer Excel Spreadsheet is used. The extra columns in the Analysis book can be used to record the items of cash received and paid out under various headings.
- The front of this book may be used for 'Income' and 'Lodgements' and the back portion may be used to record payments made, listing the details of cheques etc.
- The Petty Cash Book may be a smaller type book, wherein is recorded small items of cash paid out. From time to time these amounts should be totalled, and a cheque written for 'Cash' for the amount in question.
- To be familiar with different methods of online banking and banking software to make transactions more effective and efficient.

RÁITEAS AIRGEADAIS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT

When preparing the annual Financial Statement, please bear in mind that it should be in two parts.

Cuid a haon/Part one:

- All items of Income during the year should be listed in one column and all items of Expenditure in the other.
- Having subtracted one from the other, if there is a profit, this should be inserted at the bottom of 'Expenditure' to balance the total with the total of Income. If there is a loss, this should be recorded at the bottom of 'Income'.
- PROFITS or BANK BALANCE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR SHOULD **NOT** BE INCLUDED AS INCOME IN THE CURRENT YEAR.





Cuid a dó/Part two:

- List the total of Assets or Liabilities brought forward from the previous year. Having added or subtracted the profit or loss brought forward from Part One, the present Assets/Liabilities should be detailed as: Cash in Bank, Cash on hands, Investments, Trophies, Musical Instruments, CDs, DVDs, Office Equipment – computer, photocopier, etc.
- Both the Cisteoir and Auditor shall sign and date the Financial Statement indicating Bank Account details (name of bank and account numbers).

INIÚCHÓIR • AUDITOR

The Auditor should make himself/herself available to the Treasurer at all times, but especially prior to the AGM. Before signing the Financial Statements, he/she should scrutinise:

- All items of Income and Expenditure in the General Cash Book.
- All items in the Petty Cash Book.
- Ensure that the total lodgements agree with the total receipts.
- Check the Bank Statement against the record of expenditure.
- Ensure that the Financial Assets as shown on the financial statements tally with the total on the Bank Statement and the statement on the membership website.

OIFIGEAGH CAIDRIMH POIBLÍ • PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

In recent years this position has become one of the most important in any officer board. The holder of this office must ensure that only the best possible image of Comhaltas and the branch is projected to the public at all times. The P.R.O. should:

- Compile a list of outlets to whom and through whom publicity can be channelled.
- Include the names and addresses (including email addresses) of the editors and sub-editors

of the local papers, the names and addresses of local correspondents in the surrounding parishes, a list of national and provincial papers, and a comprehensive list of producers and presenters in Radio and Television.

- Submit details of Classes, Concerts, Céilithe, Féilte Ceoil, Fleadhanna etc. to media via press release. (Template is available at [Connecting with our public](#).)
- Work with fellow officers and members in ensuring that all known musicians, singers and dancers are contacted and welcomed to branch functions- preferably an Oíche Cheoil or Session.
- Make known the fact that there is a place in Comhaltas for everybody, irrespective of whether they can play, sing, or dance. (Some of the best workers we have in Comhaltas cannot play, sing or dance, but they are invaluable, as their dedication to the culture of Ireland is without question.)
- Make themselves aware of all social media platforms that will promote their branch and activities.
- Consider establishing a branch website and Facebook, Twitter pages, etc. to promote all elements of the branch and to keep branch members and public informed of all activities at any given time.
- Use every occasion and event to publicise the affairs of the branch, whether it is the monthly session, the concert or céilí, or the appearance of one of its members on radio/TV or on a Comhaltas concert tour.
- Arrange publicity and photographs for all presentations and other such functions.

P. R. OBJECTIVES

- Promoting participation: Involve parents in their children's progression musically – they may become involved in administration.
- Retaining young members. Target the 20-



35 year age group, who may have been very involved as children and in their teens in the Comhaltas scene. Encourage them to return to appropriate events.

- Launch a communications campaign on college and secondary school campuses linked to local branches.
- Setup branches in third level institutions – in particular during Fresher's Week in First Year.
- Form links with local clubs, societies, organisations, involved with history, culture and music – to organise shared events.
- Co-operate with a local historical society to organise a town/area traditional arts history exhibition.
- Promoting public awareness.
- Promote Comhaltas Live among the branch members.
- Arrange for performances to be presented in high profile settings, such as shopping centres, churches, nursing homes, agriculture shows and public/tourist information centres.
- Invite groups of visitors to the branch classes and events, such as school parties and other traditional arts associations and activity groups.
- Organise a community relations programme to promote understanding among local community leaders who would spread their knowledge to others.
- Improve (or start) the flow of news to local editors in readiness for an event.
- Develop in-depth understanding with relevant journalists by organising a series of visits for them.
- Seek more coverage of events on press, radio, social media and TV.
- Organise local and national coverage of Fleadh Cheoil winners.
- Organise a series of interviews on local radio for the Cathaoirleach on return from an overseas' visit.
- Issue news stories about unique personalities within the branch (unusual stories of human

accomplishment), e.g. late learners/winners.

- Issue and promote success stories – enlist the co-operation and tap the experience and good name of famous artists and performers, who were previously members of the branch. (Most will want to give something back, if asked).
- Submit appropriate articles to *Treoir*.

TREORAÍ NA GAELIGE

'Sí an Ghaeilge a chothú agus a chaomhnú gan teip' ceann des na haidhmeanna a roghnaigh Comhaltas sa bhliain 1951 agus atá leagtha síos sa Bhunreacht. Chuige sin, tá post lárnach ag Treoraí na Gaeilge sa chraobh chun cur leis an gcothú sin mar atá luaite seo leanas:

- Nósmhaireachtaí úsáide a bhunú agus a bhuanú. Establish and maintain language use, structures and habits.
- Teidil na nOifigeach i gcónaí i nGaeilge – i gcaint agus i scríobh. Constant use of Officer titles in Irish, both verbally and in writing.
- Ainmneacha na mball i nGaeilge a spreagadh. Encourage use of members names in Irish.
- Eolaire téarmaíochta an Chomhaltais a bheith ar fáil agus in úsáid. Availability and use of Comhaltas Eolaire of terminology.
- Agallaimh/altanna i nGaeilge ar na meáin chraolta. Encourage interviews/articles in local radio and print media.
- Tionchar ar pholaiteoirí agus ar údaráis áitiúla – comharthaíocht bhuan, logainmneacha, srl. Influence politicians and local authorities regarding permanent signage, placename, etc.
- Nuacht-litreacha a bheith dátheangach. Bilingual newsletters.
- Gur i nGaeilge amháin a bheadh inscribhinní ar thrófaíthe. Irish only on inscriptions on trophies.
- Gur i nGaeilge amháin a bheadh plaiceanna/clocha aitheantais. Irish only on public plaques and stones.





CRUINNITHE • MEETINGS

- Gnáth úsáid na Gaeilge a spreagadh. Encourage frequent use of Irish.
- Clár an chruinnithe a bheith dátheangach. Meeting agenda to be bilingual.
- Tuairisc ar shaothar agus ar thorthaí an Treoraí, a bheith ar an gclár ar bhonn rialta. Report of work and results of Treorai na Gaeilge to be on the agenda on a regular basis.
- Seicleabhar i nGaeilge. Chequebook in Irish.
- Altanna Gaeilge i *Treoir*. Articles in Irish in *Treoir*.

FLEADHANNA CEOIL

- Fógraí poiblí dátheangacha – córas méadaithe poiblí, ticéid, fógraí treorach agus eolais.
- Public notices to be bilingual – public address, tickets, etc.
- Úsáid na Gaeilge ag an gCeann Siamsa, láithreoir, riarthóir srl. in Éirinn agus thar lear. Bilingual presentation by MC, presenters, organiser, both in Ireland and abroad.
- Gur i nGaeilge amháin a bheadh inscribhinní ar thrófaíthe. Irish only on inscriptions on trophies.
- Comórtas Amhránaíochta Gaeilge – eolas a thabhairt ar chúlra na n-amhrán srl. Irish Singing Competitions – information on background of songs.
- Comórtas Comhrá na Gaeilge a spreagadh. Encourage Irish language competition.
- Comórtas na bhfuinneog Gaeilge i siopaí/gnóluchtaí. Window competition in shops and businesses.
- Ábhar a sheoladh chuig na meáin chumarsáide Gaeilge. Send information on a regular basis to Irish language media.
- Tacaíocht phraiticiúil do 'Ionad na Gaeilge' ag fleadhanna. Practical help and support for 'Ionad na Gaeilge' at fleadhanna.
- Cumarsáid trí Ghaeilge leis An Garda Síochána. Communication in Irish with An Garda Síochána.
- Ceolchoirmeacha, Seisiúin, Scoraíochtaí, Pléaracha srl.: Concerts, Sessions, Group

(themed) Competitions (Scoraíocht & Pléaracha)

- Léamh filíochta mar chuid de cheolchoim, scoraíochtaí, seisiúin. Irish poetry readings as part of concerts, scoraíochtaí and seisiúin.
- Tráth na gCeist leis féin nó mar chuid de sheisiún. Quiz in Irish on its own or as part of a music session.
- Comhrá dátheangach i scoraíochtaí. Bilingual conversation in scoraíochtaí.
- Amhráin agus bailéid i nGaeilge a chur san áireamh. Include songs and ballads in Irish.

RANGANNA • CLASSES

- Ranganna Gaeilge do dhaoine fásta agus óga. Irish classes for adults and children.
- Comórtas Amhránaíochta Gaeilge – eolas a chur ar chúlra na n-amhrán. Irish Singing Competitions – information on background of songs.
- Múinteoirí a spreagadh le Gaeilge a úsáid. Encourage teachers to speak Irish.
- Eolas a chur ar chúlra na bpíosaí ceoil – míniú ar bhrí na dteideal Gaeilge. Information on background to music tunes – explanation of meaning of Irish titles.
- Eolas ar logainmneacha áitiúla agus stair áitiúil a bhailiú agus a mhúineadh – go háirithe do chomórtas labhairt na Gaeilge. To include information on local placenames and local history in tuition or as projects – especially for Irish conversation competition.

IMEACHTAÍ EILE

- Bronnadh Fáinní. Presentation of An Fáinne.
- Aifreann/Seirbhís Eaglasta trí Ghaeilge. Irish Mass/Religious Service.
- Tráth na gCeist leis féin nó mar chuid de sheisiún. Quiz in Irish on its own or as part of seisiún. Malartú cuairteanna le craobhacha i nGaeltachtaí. Exchange visits with Gaeltacht branches.



COMHOIBRÍÚ LE FORAS NA GAEILGE AGUS EAGRAIS

GHAELIGE

- Comórtas Ghlór na nGael. Glór na nGael Competition.
- Páirt a ghlacadh san Oireachtas – idir chomhoibriú, freastal, thacaíocht agus iomaíocht. Active participation in An tOireachtas – co-operation, attendance, support, competing.
- Conradh na Gaeilge – Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- Oifigeach na Gaeilge i gCumann Lúthchleas Gael/sa Chomhairle Chontae/Údarás Áitiúil. Irish Language Officers in GAA/Co. Council/ other local authority.
- Scéim bhronnta scoláireachtaí chun na Gaeltachta do dhaoine óga a bhunú i bpáirt le CONCOS. Establish a Gaeltacht scholarship scheme for young people in co-operation with CONCOS.

OIFIGEACH NA nÓG • YOUTH OFFICER

Often the majority of members of the Branch are young people so it is important that in selecting Oifigeach na nÓg (under 25 years of age) support is provided for the needs of these members.

Suggested duties are as follows:

- Devise a programme to provide opportunities for performance outside of regular classes – organise regular youth sessions in suitable venues.
- Keep in contact with youth branch members who have ceased attendance at classes.
- Arrange exchanges with similar youth groups from other branches.
- Organise projects based on local history/ placenames/local songs, folklore, tunes and musicians. Liaise with Co. Board Oifigeach na nÓg to organise events/exchanges with other counties/regions. Promote participation in Fleadh Cheoil/SCT/TTCT/Scoil Éigse etc.
- Liaise with other branch officers in organising Féile Cheoil/Master Classes/Workshops etc.
- Work with PRO with regards to social media platforms and website development.

- Refer to Comhaltas Booklet: *Ré Nua na nÓg- A Youth Officer's Manual* (2017) for further guidance.
- Developing the 'branch of the future' by engaging with the digital environment.

TEACHTAÍ • DELEGATES TO COUNTY BOARD

While it is not absolutely necessary, it is recommended that at least one officer of the branch is elected to one of these two positions. While only two delegates can vote, it is recommended that more than two travel to meetings, thereby gaining experience for the future. Delegates are reminded that at all times they are expected to:

- Put forward the views of their Branch – not necessarily one's own personal views.
- Submit reports (which include Buanchoiste/ Ardchomhairle and Provincial Council Reports) from the County Board to each Branch meeting, and an item to this effect should always be included in the agenda.
- At all times be aware that they are the liaison officers between the Branch and County Board, and if they fail to attend even one meeting, there is a breakdown in the communication structures.
- Attend the Annual Convention of the Provincial Council – and even more importantly – attend Annual Congress.

OIFIGH EILE • OTHER OFFICERS

Branches should also consider electing other officers, for example:

Uachtarán – President: Preferably somebody who has given good service to the Branch and to the ideals of Comhaltas in the past. Such person could be invited to present trophies or medals on the occasion of competitions.

Membership Officer: His/her brief would include:

- Making contact with prospective members – not alone adults but juniors also, as they will be the adults of tomorrow. Also consider recommending family membership to students attending class.





- Ensuring that all members receive their Membership Card, as well as *Treoir* where appropriate.
- Exploring ways and means of selling extra copies of *Treoir* to interested individuals, as well as to other cultural organisations in the area.
- Liaise with PRO on how to increase membership and promote the branch.

Coistí • Committees

A strong branch should also consider setting up sub-committees. Delegating authority is always appreciated as it is a vote of confidence in those who are not officers. As an example:

- A Catering Committee could be selected. This committee would arrange for the traditional 'cupán tae' and sandwich, scone etc. will be available for patrons at the Oíche Cheoil or session.
- Finance Sub-Committee might also be considered. This Committee would work with the Treasurer in devising ways and means of boosting the Branch's finances; participating in the Comhaltas 'Big Draw'; organising church gate collections.
- Youth Committee under the direction of the Youth Officer to encourage the younger members to be more involved in their branch.

Teamwork is extremely important. With a full complement of officers, it should now be accepted that they would work together as a team. Extra members may be co-opted to the Standing Committee, and this committee should meet at least monthly, with a meeting of the whole Branch arranged quarterly as per Bunreacht.

- The Standing Committee should plan activities for the whole year ahead, and progress should be reported at each subsequent meeting.
- The Co. Board is informed of all planned activities.

Members are part of a great national movement, and every word and action should be aimed at improving the stature and image of Comhaltas.

COSAINT LEANAÍ AGUS DAOINE SOGHONTA • CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSON PROTECTION DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

A Designated Liaison Person is nominated and appointed (NOT elected) by each Comhaltas Branch each year. The appropriate form is filled out and sent to the County Board/Regional Board and to Head Office. The DLP has responsibility for managing child protection issues within the branch. The role and responsibilities of the DLP are to:

- Implement and promote the unit's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Assist in providing a vetting with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) for any branch personnel who have FREQUENT ACCESS to children and vulnerable adults – supervisors, mentors, tutors, and organisers of events. Officers and others who only have OCCASIONAL ACCESS (once or twice annually) to children/vulnerable adults do NOT require to be vetted.
- Write and update a CHILD PROTECTION POLICY document and share with all officers, tutors, etc. and provide this document to parents/guardians of children attending music, singing, dancing or language lessons if requested.
- Act as the main contact for child protection within the branch.
- Look after Child Protection and Safeguarding on behalf of the branch members and to liaise with TUSLA or AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA if required.
- Provide information and advice on child protection for the branch membership.
- Create awareness of the importance of child protection.
- Communicate with members on child protection issues.



- Keep abreast of developments and understand the most recent information on related issues – data protection, confidentiality, legal and other, that impact on child protection.
- Encourage good practice and support of the procedures involved.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and the action taken and to liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure that they have access to all necessary information.
- Regularly monitor and review the branch Policy and Procedures.

Training & Support for DLPs

The HSE has developed an e-learning programme, *An Introduction to Children First*. The programme has been developed and is approved by the HSE, the Department of Health and the Inter Departmental Over-Sight Group of the Irish Government. It is available through the HSE Learning and Development Website. It is an interactive programme of about 1.5 hours duration and issues a certificate on completion of the programme.

The e-learning programme covers:

- Personal, legal, and organisational responsibilities in relation to protecting children and reporting a concern about child welfare or abuse.
- Recognising a child protection or welfare concern.
- Responding appropriately to a child protection or welfare concern.
- Reporting a child protection or welfare concern
- Comhaltas may periodically provide updates and deliver further training and information modules.

USEFUL LINKS

HSE Children First Website: www.hse.ie/childrenfirst

Child & Family Agency: www.tusla.ie

Department of Children & Youth Affairs: www.dcyu.gov.ie

IMEACHTAÍ CRAOIBHE • BRANCH ACTIVITIES

The success or otherwise of the branch depends on the level of activity within the branch. There are many that will feel they have been cheated unless there is visible activity within the branch. The basic philosophy of Comhaltas is passing on from one generation to the next all that is best in our culture with special emphasis on the traditional music, singing and all forms of Irish dancing. Activities could include:

- Weekly classes in music, inclusive of dance music and slow airs; traditional singing in English and Sean-Nós i nGaeilge; dancing classes in sets and céilí, sean-nós and traditional dance; agus ranganna/ciorcail cainte sa Ghaeilge.
- Preparing for participation in SCT Exams, fleadhanna/concerts/branch exchanges/tours, etc.
- Participating in Scoraíocht and Pléaracha.
- Hosting the annual Comhaltas Tour Concert.
- Hosting annual County/Regional Fleadh, Provincial Fleadh or even Fleadh na hÉireann.
- Hosting Pléaracha/Scoraíocht Competitions, Ceol an Gheimhridh etc.
- Organising a Féile Ceoil, Masterclasses or Workshops.
- Organising a Céilí or Concert.
- Co-operating with local organisations in the promotion of our native culture.
- Stream session, céilithe, concerts etc.
- Organising regular/virtual sessions in suitable venues.
- Organising virtual concerts or recitals.
- Organising an annual dinner if so desired.
- Organising annual church gate collection.
- Organising special presentations of SCT certificates, prize winners' awards, etc.
- Arranging visits to the Cultúrlann, Regional Resource Centre, Fleadh Nua and other places of interest.
- All Officers and Members of Comhaltas are expected to use every opportunity to promote





the Irish language, and every effort should be made to use Gaeilge at meetings, in minutes, on posters and in circulars etc. At sessions, there is no reason why such terms as 'Dia dhuit', 'Fáilte' or even 'Slán' should not be used. *Eolaire*, published by Comhaltas, will assist here. Organising special presentations of SCT certificates, prize winners' awards, etc.

FOILSEACHÁIN AN CHOMHALTAIS • COMHALTAS PUBLICATIONS

- Bunreacht – Constitution Bunreacht
- Rialacha Fleadhanna Ceoil – Fleadh Rules
Rialacha Fleadhanna Ceoil
- Cothromaíocht – Respect, Equality, Opportunity
- *Treoir*
- Tuarascáil Bhliantúil
- An Ré Nua – Community Cultural Development Programme
- *Ré Nua na nÓg* – Youth Officers' Manual
- Connecting With Our Public – Guide for Public Relations
- *An Fhleadh Cheoil – Event Organisation Manual*
- *Ag Múineadh na hAmhránaíochta Traidisiúnta*
– *Teaching Traditional Singing* Ag Múineadh na hAmhránaíochta Traidisiúnta
- Focal ar Fhocal – Aid to teaching Irish Focal ar Fhocal
- Trad is Fab – Introduction to Irish Traditional Music
- Eolaire – Glossary of terms i nGaeilge
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
https://comhaltas.ie/images/press_room/child_protection_policy_2021.pdf
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Comhaltas Education Policy Education
https://comhaltas.ie/press_room/detail/bullying_harassment_prevention_policy/
- *Foinn Seisiún – Session Tunes* Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4
<https://comhaltas.ie/shop>
- ComhaltasLive video clips – www.comhaltas.ie to access daily video clips.



Nótaí/Notes

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